User generated dissent: a biographic case study of peer production mechanisms on Eksisozluk.com

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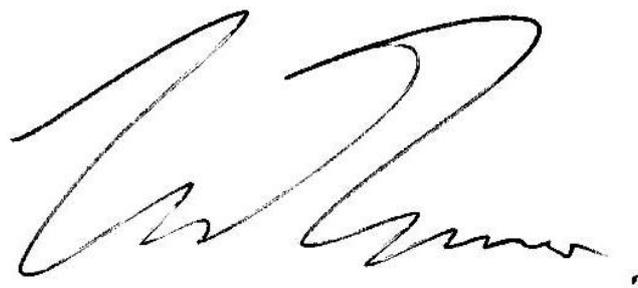
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ABSTRACT

In a public sphere wherein corporate monopolies of mass media networks prevail and anti-democratic practices suppressing the freedom of speech are the norm, the widespread adoption of the Internet in Turkey has engendered the emergence of a sphere of dissent wherein participants use social media and Web 2.0 platforms to engage in cyberactivism, participate in networked social movements, and express alternative, non-hegemonic political identities and discourses. Sözlüks, a genre of content hosting platforms that can broadly be described as urban dictionaries, are unique within this ecology insofar as they rely on collaborative mechanisms to produce and organize dissent. Affording the oppurtunity to express oneself to the Turkish-speaking online audience in an anonymous manner, sözlüks have become safe havens for free speech within the context of a country historically known for the censure of the press and the public sphere.

Although it has been argued that engagement in spaces similar to sözlüks constitute a form of digital labour, this dissertation argues that participation and the collaborative process found in sözlüks constitutes a unique model of peer production. The commons-based peer-production model used by sözlüks generates a constant steam of publicly accessible and at times, subversive information. *User generated dissent* explores communal, commons and automated aspects to the peer production mechanisms driving Ekşisözlük, the oldest urban dictionary in Turkish cyberspace in a holistic manner. It attempts to link the model of collaboration found on Ekşisözlük with other studies on different peer production models found elsewhere online.

Opting for a mixed methodology that combines ethnographic fieldwork with a socio-technical systems and Biography of Artefacts (BoA) approach, *User generated dissent* combines conventional data collection methods with using the Wayback Machine (WM) to build a longitudinal case-study to document the collaborative process that has made Ekşisözlük a unique and influential actor within the ecology of Turkish cyberspace.

Keywords: peer-production, cyberspace, Ekşisözlük, biography of artefacts, Wayback Machine

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INTRODUCTION

"How we make information, how we get it, how we speak to others, and how others speak to us are core components of the shape of freedom in any society."

Yochai Benkler, Wealth of Networks (2006)

Turkish society has experienced a drastic change over the past 30 years. The ongoing process of neo-liberalisation, which began in 1980 with the opening up of the economy to the global market has caused the gross national income (GNI) per capita in Turkey to jump from $2,030 in 1981 to $14,500 in 2010 and the gross domestic product (GDP) to reach almost $750 billion (Öniş & Şenses 2009). From the outside, the consecutive electoral victories of the Adalet and Kalkınma Partisi (AK Party) in 2002, 2007, and 2011 and the decreasing influence of the Turkish military in parliamentary politics seems to have helped Turkey to transition towards becoming more stable and better functioning democracy. However during the same period, Turkey has witnessed an astonishing regression in terms of civil liberties, press freedoms and most importantly, the freedom of speech.

A free press and the freedom of speech play crucial roles in the formation of the public sphere. The public sphere has been theorized as both a physical and discursive space wherein individuals and groups come together to discuss social matters of mutual interest and reach a common opinion or judgement that can be the basis for collective political action (Hauser 1999). Looking at its historical evolution, Jürgen Habermas suggests that the "public sphere in bourgeois societies needs to be seen as a regulatory institution against the authority of the state" (Habermas 1989: 27). As such, the concept of the public sphere is central to the theories of governance and participatory democracy. The fundamental premise behind these theories is that true democratic authority and legitimacy in governance is derived from being able to listen to the opinions of the population. In other words, laws and policies of the government are held accountable, and need to be steered by the public sphere (Benhabib 1992). Looking at it's historical evolution, Habermas puts forth the following conditions necessary for the formation and functioning of what he describes as the bourgeois public sphere:

- Media allowing for the formation of public opinion

- Access to all citizens
- Conference in unrestricted fashion (based on the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association, the freedom to expression and publication of opinions) about matters of general interest
- Debate over the general rules of governance (Habermas 1989:27).

The freedom to assemble and debate means that the public sphere is also a "sphere of dissidence" wherein alternative visions of society can be articulated and debated, and collective action organized in freedom (Aouragh & Alexander 2011). As such, one needs to think of the public sphere as a space to articulate intellectual challenges to dominant ideas about the social and political order. In Habermas's theory of the public sphere, mass media and the actors active in mass media are of particular importance as they constitute the means with which public opinion is formulated. Habermas (2006) identifies media professionals and politicians as two key actors vital to the formation of public opinion (Habermas 2006). On top of these two, there are five other kinds of actors one commonly encounters in the mediaspaces of any public sphere:

- Lobbyists who represent special interest groups

- Advocates who either represent general interest groups or substitute for a lack of representation of marginalized groups that are unable to voice their interests effectively

- Experts who are credited with professional or scientific knowledge in some specialized area and are invited to give advice

- Moral entrepreneurs who generate public attention for supposedly neglected issues

- Intellectuals who have gained, unlike advocates or moral entrepreneurs, a perceived personal reputation in some field (e.g., as writers or academics) and who engage, unlike experts and lobbyists, spontaneously in public discourse with the declared intention of promoting general interests (Habermas 2006:416).

Other than human actors, technical means needed to circulate ideas and opinions of human actors is the other essential component needed for the formation of and public opinion. Accordingly, Habermas suggests that formulating public opinion requires "specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it" (Habermas 1989:136). To communicate as a cohesive body, the public sphere requires specific means for transmitting information *en-mass* and

influencing those who receive it. In other words, the public sphere depends on mass communication technologies that can distribute information to an audience.

In theories of democratic governance, the implicit understanding is that actors responsible for the formation of public opinion will act for the benefit of the public good rather than for the benefit of interest groups. As Herman and Chomsky (1988, 2003) skilfully demonstrate in *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, the reality is rather different. Instead of working to enlighten the public, mass media in democratic systems are actively involved in what Walter Lippmann (1922, 1997) described as the "manufacture of consent". Opinion makers active in the mass media, work on behalf of powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests have agendas that they wish to advance, and are well positioned to shape public opinion with media professionals and politicians under their payroll. As mass media transformed itself into becoming a propaganda vehicle for the powerful, the legitimacy of the public sphere in democratic systems has been undermined.

The current situation of the public sphere in Turkey seems to mirror many of the observations one encounters in *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*. As such, much of the mass media in Turkey is owned by the corporate oligarchy. This trend, alongside the authoritarian and controlling tendencies of the current government has created a situation wherein it is extremely difficult to express anything other than the status quo on mass media networks. It is now widely accepted that the mass media networks characterizing the public sphere in Turkey are used by media magnates as a weapon to safeguard their corporate interests and apply pressure to extract favours or curry support from the government. At the same time, the government sees the corporate interests of mass media oligarchs as the soft underbelly of the public sphere in Turkey, either effectively manipulating media patrons into submission through fines or recruiting them through patronage. On the other hand, the state and media professionals enjoy a tenuous relationship at best. As it will be explained in detail in the next chapter, the number of imprisoned journalists in Turkey is one of the highest in the world. Despite starting accession negotiations for European Union membership in 2004, Turkey has not taken the necessary steps to ensure the freedom of speech or the independence of press. On the contrary, there is evidence that the mass media in Turkey is currently being enclosed by corporate and political interests. What this suggests is mass media in Turkey works for the interests of corporations and the Turkish state, rather than the public good.[1]

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    In an ironic twist of events, the Turkish government prosecuted Fatih Tas, owner of the Aram editorial house, two editors and the translator of the revised (2001) edition of *Manufacturing Consent* for "stirring hatred among the public" (per Article 216 of the Turkish Penal Code) and for "denigrating the national identity" of Turkey (per Article 301). The reason given was that the Turkish edition's introduction addresses the role of Turkish mass media in censoring news on the state suppression of the Kurdish population during the 1990s. Although all were acquitted, the story demonstrates

In contrast to the mass communication mediums such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television which constitute the basis of the Habermasian theory of the public sphere (1965:46), Yochai Benkler (2006) argues that the global adoption of the Internet as a communication medium has created the possibility of a networked public sphere. He defines the public sphere as "a set of practices that members of a society use to communicate about matters they understand to be of public concern and that potentially require collective action or recognition" (2006:177). Building on this, Benkler portrays the networked public sphere as an online space that is less subject to state authority and corporate interests than the Habermassian public sphere. Ideally, Benkler's networked public sphere is a space where anyone can participate in the formation of public opinion and wherein a system of collective filtration highlights issues of greatest concern and that warrant collective action or recognition. Although there are some issues needing to be addressed in Benkler's definition of the networked public sphere, the appealing aspect of his argument is that the Internet has lowered the barriers to participating in the formation of public opinion and has also altered the risks of doing so. This observation applies not only to the sharing of information and opinion but also to engaging in communities and collective action. For those with access to the Internet, it is less costly and more convenient to publish one's views and easier to find similar minded people. For those that aspire to inspire others to act or become civic leaders, the Internet as a mass communications medium offers the means for making one's case and seeking to recruit others. The distributed and horizontal form of networked communication afforded by the Internet makes it an ideal place for the articulation of dissenting voices in societies such as Turkey.

Over the past decade, the Internet in Turkey has turned into an agora for the freedom of speech, for the organization of political or social dissent and the expression of alternative and marginalized identities. In light of the ongoing enclosure public sphere, wherein dissenting journalists receive lengthy jail sentences for publishing news that go against government or corporate interests and where state-appointed commissars can nationalize private satellite television channels or newspapers overnight, people actively turn to the Internet in an attempt to both access alternative (non-state or corporate) broadcasting outlets and to express their dissent against the policies of the current regime in Turkey.[2] Accordingly, one can argue that the situation in Turkey has led to the emergence of an extremely unique and culturally-specific Turkish cyberspace.[3] Just accessing any popular social media platform such as Twitter or Facebook through a Turkish-speaker's account and spending several hours online would provide ample proof

how the government takes active steps to stifle free speech in Turkey.

2 Most recently, journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül have been arrested and put on trial for publishing a story that demonstrates the involvement of the Turkish government in arming the Syrian conflict. Both journalists face sentences up to life imprisonment.

3 The term specifically refers to definition of cyberspace that mediates content (aesthetics and factual information) and allows the formation of public political spheres online (Aouragh & Alexander 2011)

of how the Internet has been integrated into Turkish social life as a sphere of dissent.

The framing of Turkish cyberspace as a sphere of decent seems to echo the observations made by Manuel Castells (2015) in his recent book on networked social movements. Castells argues that cyberspace allows for free communication between actors who are discontent with the social order. Drawing this observation, he argues that "the existence of an Internet culture, made up of bloggers, social networks and cyberactivism is the pre-condition for the emergence of networked social movements" (2015:95-96). As the numerous case-studies he presents in *Networks of Outrage and Hope* demonstrate, the mobilization of networked social movements throughout the world tends to follow a similar pattern. All movements begin online (in what Castells would call cyberspace) and then move onto urban space, often resulting with the occupation of a symbolic public square as material support for both debates and protests. The affordances of the Internet as a free space of communication play a major role in spreading images and messages that carry the potential to mobilize people. As such, one needs to imagine cyberspace as an ecology of different platforms wherein participants can debate and take the decision to call for action and to relay decisions and information to the population at large. In societies like Turkey, wherein the public sphere afforded by mass media is heavily censored directly and indirectly by governmental and corporate interests, the Internet has become the principle communication medium to coordinate collective actions and organize dissent from below in a horizontal manner.

The unique potential of the Internet to inspire networked social movements has not gone unnoticed by successive Turkish governments, particularly after the 2013 Gezi Park Protests. As a result, access to Turkish cyberspace has become increasingly restricted through state-sponsored censorship and an increasingly draconian surveillance legislation aimed at curtailing the right to assemble and speak online. Groups of users bankrolled by the government, the so-called notorious "AK Trolls", attempt to disrupt any form of ongoing dialogue within the communities hosted on the platforms of Turkish cyberspace with hostile comments and petty threats.[4] Ordinary users can be arrested or fined by the government on dubious legal charges. These measures, intended to silence and instil fear within the Turkish online public have not been entirely successful in pacifying the potential of the Internet to organize grass-roots dissent against the regime.

An example of how the Internet affords the possibility to organize networked collective political action in Turkey is the "Internetime Dokunma" (Don't touch my Internet) protest that took place on the 17th of July 2010 in Istanbul with over 40,000 participants. During the first months of 2010, there were rampant rumours that the Turkish state was going to introduce pre-built filters for new accounts offered by commercial Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Depending on the setting chosen, these filters would actively censor access to certain websites on behalf the users. The

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4   http://www.muhalefet.org/haber-ak-trollerin-ag-haritasi-cikarildi-56-16957.aspx

filters themselves would be developed and provided by the Turkish Telecommunications Bureau (TİB), an agency of the Turkish state. There was no explanation given as to why the government had reached a decision to implement an Internet filtering policy or how the state had managed to convince commercial ISPs to accept such a policy.

On the 13th of April 2011, bianet, an online-only independent news network, opened a Supreme Court case against TIB to reverse the new policy. Bianet's position was that the state's attempt to regulate the Internet through filters was a breach of both constitutional freedoms and human rights. According to the lawyer assigned to the case, Ayşe Altıparmak, the new policy would allow the state to limit access to websites in an ad-hoc manner and without prior consultation, thereby creating an opportunity to expand the scale of Internet censorship. The malignant aspirations of the state seemed to be confirmed on April 21st 2011 when a number of hosting firms received an email from the state authorities containing a list of websites that needed to be taken offline. Amongst websites needed to be taken offline was the website hosting the Ekşisözlük community (eksisozluk.com), a forum building wiki (myfastforum.org), an educational website about abuse and rape and finally the Pink Life LGBTT organisation's website (pembehayat.org). Following the list of websites, on the April 27th 2011 Turkish hosting companies received a list of banned words from the TIB. According to the email sent out by TIB, hosting companies were legally obliged to take offline sites containing any of the banned words on the circulated list. The TIB's response to allegations regarding the seemingly arbitrary nature of the list was that the words were compiled from the frequency of complaints received from their hotline. In the following days, a coalition of activist networks and online communities began to organize a series of protests against the policy. Firstly, on the 19th of June 2010, a platform against censorship ("İnternet'te Sansür'e Karşı Ortak Platform Toplantısı") was organized at Kadir Has University with representatives from the following organizations:

- İNETD (Internet technologies foundation)
- NETDAŞ Hareketi ('The Netizen Movement')
- Sansüresansür ('Censorship against Censorship)
- Korsan Partisi Oluşumu (Pirate Party Platform)
- Alternatif Bilişim (Alterative informatics association)
- Sansüre Karşı Ekşi Sözlük Zirvesi ('Ekşi Sözlük meeting against censorship')
- Sansüre Yeter! Kampanyası ('Enough to Censorship' campaign)
- Yeşiller (Green party movement)

After this initial meeting at Kadir Has University, a public declaration was made regarding the need to take collective action against the filtering policy. The call for collective action began to be circulated in the networked public sphere and soon found its way onto community hosting websites. One by one, online communities began to sign up to participate in a demonstration against the government policy. The websites supporting the demonstration were:

- ankara.net
- bildirgec.org
- bobiler.org
- engellerikaldir.com
- fizy.com
- hafif.org
- oyungezer.com.tr
- inci.sözlükspot.com
- istanbul.net
- itusözlük.com
- izmir.net
- komikaze.net
- penguen magazine
- seslisözlük.com
- sözlük.sourtimes.org
- uludagsözlük.com
- uzman.tv
- tomshardware.com.tr
- zargan.com
- zaytung.com

The 17th of July 2011 was agreed as the date for the "Internetime Dokunma" ("Don't touch my Internet!") demonstration. Once the decision to mobilize was reached, the call to action was circulated on larger, more popular platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The results of the call were an astounding success. The call gathered more than 40,000 participants, many of whom belonged to online communities. After the protest, the government agreed to negotiate with the anti-censorship platform and review the policy, eventually making Internet filters an opt-in only policy.

What this story shows is that as a sphere of communication, the Internet played a crucial role in facilitating a call for collective action against censorship and eventually actualizing the call into a mass demonstration. Once a public declaration was made in favour of collective action, the call was firstly circulated within a number of different community-hosting websites. The existence of these websites afforded their participants a space to assemble, discuss a response towards the public declaration and then organize participation for the demonstration. Afterwards, the call to

action was circulated on larger, more popular platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The list of websites that participated in this collective action included a number of closed, members-only friendship sites such as ankara.net or izmir.net, humour sites such as bobiler.org, komikaze, penguen or zaytung.com, and a genre of content hosting websites called *sözlüks*. The last group of websites, which are unique to Turkish speakers, host sizeable online communities and have a unique role within the ecology of Turkish cyberspace. Similar to urban dictionaries in the Anglophone world (see Peckham 2005), *sözlüks* are platforms that rely on participants to generate knowledge. However, what differentiates them from urban dictionaries is their reliance of a commons and the peer production mechanism they use to organize user generated content.

Within the wider social context of Turkey, these privately owned platforms have also become virtual safe havens that afford the right to free speech and the right to assemble online. Offering a shroud of anonymity to community members, the owners of these sites shield their participants from the prying eyes of the state or social surveillance mechanisms. Accordingly, one needs to imagine *sözlüks* as key actors within the context of a sphere of dissent and the greater ecology of Turkish cyberspace. The need to comprehend both their peer-production model and the wider social relevance of the ongoing *sözlük* phenomena constitutes the basic motivations for preparing this dissertation.

OUTLINE

The outline for this dissertation is as follows. The first chapter is devoted to the history of the public sphere and the political economy of mass media in Turkey today. It is argued that current situation of the public sphere in Turkey is a result of a historical process that started in the 18th century with the arrival of the printing press to the Ottoman Empire. The remainder of the chapter narrates how capital and the authoritarianism of successive administrations have shaped evolution of the public sphere from the Ottoman Empire into what it is today. Within the context of Turkey's public sphere and faulty democratic system, the arrival of the Internet has greatly reduced the risks and costs of personal expression and participation in civic life. In contrast to the public sphere in Turkey, wherein media networks are used by corporate and political actors to safeguard their interests and where censorship is a norm, the increasing availability of the Internet has afforded the emergence of a sphere of dissent wherein the Turkish-speaking online audience are able to access alternative informational resources and openly express their discontent towards the current regime.

The second chapter focuses on documenting the structural factors shaping the demographic structure of the Turkish speaking online public. It begins with a brief overview on the technological characteristics of the Internet as communications network and the Internet's historical evolution. Eventually, the chapter moves onto the Turkish context to narrate the history of the

Internet from a local standpoint. By providing key statistics on the demographics of Internet usage, a key observation put forth in this chapter is that specific segments of Turkish society have enthusiastically adopted Internet usage while others have been more reluctant. Although the rising number of smart phone users are now contributing to the narrowing of the digital divide, the Turkish-speaking online public has a unique demographic structure. It can be argued that the demographic profile of the online public explains the enduring popularity of sözlüks. These platforms cater to the cultural needs of a young, educated and highly engaged yet small online public who need a place to express themselves. Their need for anonymity is caused by the unpredictable nature of the Turkish state's censorship and surveillance activities. When looking through the content on sözlüks, visitors are typically presented with a complex collaborative process which is the result from the weaving together of many contributions. The mechanisms behind this collaborative process can be defined as peer production. Within the context of the sözlük phenomenon, one can argue that Ekşisözlük is the first platform in Turkey to use peer production mechanisms to organize user generated content.

The third chapter is an extensive literature review that unpacks the concept of peer-production. The first section defines the notion of the online knowledge commons and then outlines the different characteristics of peer production. The second part of the chapter introduces the notion of digital labour and discusses how capitalism has used the knowledge commons to create a new information economy. The third part of the chapter discusses whether participating in peer production constitutes a form of digital labour and provides the theoretical justification as to why the collaborative process on Ekşisözlük is a form of peer production.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to developing a methodology to study the peer-production mechanisms on Ekşisözlük. The methodology is a case-study approach combined with ethnographic fieldwork as well as a socio-technical systems (STS) approach. The chapter also acknowledges the limitations to conventional data collection methods and proposes to use the Wayback Machine (WM) to work around these limitations.

The fifth chapter presents the results of the data collection process. Results show that as a platform Ekşisözlük has evolved through a number of different phases or life-cycles in its 15 years of existence. Drawing from accumulated data hand, it is argued that Ekşisözlük has gone through four different phases (1999-2002, 2002-2005, 2005-13, 2013-) in its life-cycle. The evolution of systems guiding participants through peer production, the evolution of stratified organizational roles as well as the enforcement of communal policies and norms on Ekşisözlük are narrated in reference to these four phases.

The sixth chapter is an analysis of the data collected on the evolution of Ekşisözlük. It examines the affordances of the platforms as well as the peer production mechanisms and the

business model employed. The conclusion provides a summary of all the key arguments, ideas and concepts discussed in this dissertation. The epilogue returns back the discussing the position of Ekşisözlük as an actor within the ecology of Turkish cyberspace and gives some personal predictions regarding the future of anonymity and sözlüks in Turkey.

CHAPTER I: HISTORY OF MASS MEDIA AND THE PROPAGANDA MODEL IN NEOLIBERAL TURKEY

"Most biased choices in the media arise from the pre-selection of right-thinking people, internalized preconceptions, and the adaptation of personnel to the constraints of ownership, organization, market, and political power."

Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media (1988)*

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, in his book on Black Swans (highly consequential but unlikely events), describes a world made of extremely complex and dynamic systems wherein minuscule changes can have random and long term outcomes that are almost impossible to predict (Taleb 2010). He argues that as the world gets more interconnected through networking technologies and global finance, events such as Black Swans have even more consequential impact on human societies. Yet at the same time, such events are impossible to predict, let alone explain accurately in hindsight. One can draw a similar analogy for how humans perceive events. Events occur in society, yet it is impossible for individuals to fully comprehend both the causes and consequences these happenings will have on their lives. As a result, the individual in modern society opts for reductionist explanations that tend to work towards justifying their private beliefs about the cause and consequences of events. Interestingly enough, renown American reporter and political commentator Walter Lippman makes a similar observation about the relationship between the modern individual and society:

"(...) the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations. And although we have to act in that environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage it. To traverse the world men must have maps of the world" (Lippman 1922:16).

Although growing complexity accounts for a large part of the problem individuals have of trying to

make sense of society, Walter Lippman argues in *Public Opinion* (1922) and the *Phantom Public* (1925) that the attitude of the modern individual is also to blame. The modern individual simply does not have the time and resources to reflect on a world that is becoming increasingly complex by the moment. Events of consequential importance that occur far from the immediate habitat need to be mediated as the individual has little time and appetite for trying to find out more about the facts. Unable to devote time to trying to understand social complexity, everyone assumes that they have an incomplete understanding of the world and as a result, modern individuals, rather than acting on critical inquiry, instead choose to act upon pictures (representations) within their minds that are either self-constructed or constructed by others (Lippman 1922: 25).

Mass media communication technologies have become the principle method in societies through which events happening in the external world are communicated to the masses. During the process of communication, events have to be mediated and simplified for the modern individual to make sense of them. As such, mass media relies on a number of popular tropes such as stereotypes to craft narratives out of events (Lippman 1922). These narratives become the backbone of how the public interprets and forms an opinion of an event. Within this context, broadcasting technologies are also an essential component as they allow the crafted narrative to reach the masses. Mass communication networks, as vehicles for informational transmission, relay the interpretation of events to a wider population. Accordingly, formulating public opinion requires "specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it" (Habermas 2005: 136). These interpretations are prepared through analysis of the collected data by actors such as lobbyists, advocates who either represent general interest groups, experts, moral entrepreneurs and intellectuals. The interpretations relayed by media professionals to the masses are necessary for democratic governance as they shape the formation of opinion within the public sphere.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the implicit understanding in theories of democratic governance is that human actors responsible for the formation of opinion will act for the benefit of the public good. Furthermore the output of these actors tends to be vital as "the common interests" of the public are not immediately obvious in many cases, and only become clear upon careful analysis. Although what Lippman describes as the "manufacture of consent" is vital for collective action and the formation of democratically determined policies, this process depends to a certain degree on manipulating the representations that individuals rely on to take action in society.[5] In other words, the manufacturing of consent depends on the power of propaganda to establish certain pictures or representations in the minds of individuals (Lippman 1922: chapter xv).

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5 Lippman argues that these representations themselves originate from a "pseudo-environment" that is a subjective, biased, and necessarily abridged mental image of the world; therefore, to a degree, everyone's pseudo-environment is a fiction. Hence, people "live in the same world, but they think and feel in different ones". Human behaviour is stimulated by the person's pseudo-environment and then is acted upon in the real world.

As such, mass media is an immensely powerful tool for the consolidation of legitimate democratic governance. However, it is at the same vulnerable to social engineering and individuals wanting to manipulate the views of the masses for either malicious purposes or for the interests of specific social groups.

Drawing upon Lippman's observations about the power of mass media for political persuasion and manipulating public opinion, Herman and Chomsky (1988, 2003) examine the political economy of mass media to identify a number of key structural constraints that cause opinion makers to work on behalf of powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests have important agendas and principles that they want to advance, and they are well positioned to shape public opinion through media professionals and politicians. What is seen as newsworthy and what opinion makers take for granted as the premises of their work is largely determined by the topology of these prevailing structures. Looking from the vantage point of the political economy, Herman and Chomsky provide the following definition for mass media:

> "(...) a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfil this role requires systematic propaganda" (Herman & Chomsky 1988: 1).

Herman and Chomsky (1988) use the term "propaganda model" to describe the system which uses mass media to manipulate public opinion. The propaganda model describes forces both the political economy and the effects of what the mass media does, however it does not imply that any propaganda emanating from the media is always effective. Their theorization of the propaganda model aims to trace the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public. There are five main filters within their model which they summarize under the following headings:

> 1. The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms
>
> 2. Advertising as the primary income source of the mass media

3. The reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power

4. "Flak" as a means of disciplining the media

5. "Anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism (Herman & Chomsky 1988: 2).

The five filters outlined by Herman and Chomsky interact with and reinforce one another within the context of the Propaganda Model. The raw actuality of an event passes through these filters, leaving only a certain interpretation of the event fit for publication. These filters fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operations which are in actuality, propaganda campaigns. Amongst the five filters that Herman and Chomsky mention, the first has perhaps the strongest impact on shaping coverage of events. Dominant media conglomerates worldwide are quite large businesses; they are controlled by very wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces. Furthermore, they are closely interlocked, and have important common interests, with other major corporations, banks, and the government. One of the ways through which shareholders of media conglomerates control the interpretation of events is through advertising.

Prior to advent of advertising, the price of a newspaper had to cover the costs of doing business with sales. After the establishment and growth of advertising, mass media publications attracting ads could afford a copy price well below production costs. As such, advertising put publications without adverts at a serious disadvantage: their prices would tend to be higher, curtailing sales, and they would have less surplus to invest in improving the saleability of the publication. For this reason, an advertising tends to marginalize the mass media actors that depend on revenue from sales alone. The ad-based media receive an advertising subsidy which gives them a price-marketing-quality edge. This competitive advantage allows them to encroach on and further weaken their ad-free (or ad-disadvantaged) rivals. However, the advantage conferred by advertising is a double edged sword as it leaves publications at the mercy of advertisers and of the powerful corporate entities that back them. Any interpretations that invoke the displeasure of the advertisers can result in the withdrawal of subsidies. As a result, mass media publications tend to steer clear of any criticism of advertising and their corporate partners or strategies.

The third filter is caused by the reliance of mass media on information provided by provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power. The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful

sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. Mass media broadcasting outlets need a steady, reliable flow of news. They have daily news demands and imperative news schedules that they must meet. As a result, they cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all places where important stories may break. Economics dictates that they concentrate their resources where significant news often occurs, where important rumours and leaks abound. The state, makes sure that the media gets the interpretation they want to circulate by organizing press conferences that coincide with the pace of reporting in the mass media. If the press decide to obtain their information from sources other than the institutions of hegemony, then these institutions have an array of methods through which they can punish the mass media outlets in question. "Flak" is the term used by the Herman and Chomsky to designate the negative responses given by those in power to a media statement or interpretation (Herman & Chomsky 1988: 28). Within the context of North America, flak might take the form of direct and indirect forms of harassment and maybe be organized centrally, individually or may consist of the entirely independent actions of individuals. In countries with more authoritarian tendencies, flak might take the form of arresting those responsible for publishing the statement itself. If enough pressure is exerted upon mass media, this may lead to the withdrawal of subsidies by advertisers not wanting to associate themselves with an outlet generating negative publicity. The fear of drawing flak is an important deterrent for reporting news and events that might go against powerful institutions.

Finally, the fifth filter that Herman and Chomsky mention are the dominant ideologies or cultural values of any given society. Within the North American context, the authors mention anticommunism as the dominant ideology. In contexts such as Turkey, this may be secular nationalism in the form of Kemalism or Islam itself. Nonetheless, what remains important to understand is that dominant ideologies within a society work as a filter through which events are interpreted. Furthermore, media statements that go against the world-views espoused by these ideologies can cause the outlets in question to draw flak and be publicly ostracised by hegemonic institutions.

Following a similar argument, leagal theorist Yochai Benkler has suggested in *the Wealth of Networks* (2006) that the industrial structure of mass media networks characterizing the contemporary mediascape are responsible for the consolidation and enclosure of the public sphere by commercial, administrative and proprietary interests. What he refers to as the industrial structure of mass media seems to be based on first three aspects of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model.

Using examples from the early American, French and Dutch republics, Benkler demonstrates that the demand to supply news to a growing national audience meant that printed

publications had to either remain local or adopted industrial models relying on economies of scale. Those who remained local could not compete with more widely circulated publications which attracted larger and more lucrative advertising revenues. The structure that emerged as a result of economies of scale being applied to the printed media was typified by high-cost hubs (newspaper or magazine headquarters with in-house printers) and cheap, ubiquitous, reception-only objects at the ends (newspapers or magazines). This led to a limited range of organizational models available for the industrial production of printed media. These models were based on the fact that only those with sufficient start-up capital needed to set up a hub could participate in the production of mass circulation publications (Benkler 2006:179). As a result of the constraints imposed by capital and the need for economies of scale, a limited range of organizational forms, technical architecture and institutional models that could sustain a national public sphere emerged out of the late 19th and early 20th century. Rather than loosening the grip of economic necessity on mass media, the introduction of new communication technologies such as radio or television simply furthered the concentration and consolidation of the hub-and-spoke industrial model for mass media.

Drawing from this analysis, Benkler argues that the industrial model is the problem of mass media (Benkler 2003:198-9). He argues that the industrial model of contemporary mass media imposes a set of characteristics onto the forms of possible communication within society which end up enclosing the public sphere. Firstly, he argues that communication in mass media is always from a small number of professionals to an audience unlimited in principle in its membership except by the production capacity of the media itself. Secondly, the finished-goods style of mass-media products imposes significant constraints on the extent to which these products can be open to feedback. Third, for Benkler, the immense and very loosely defined audience of mass media affects the filtering functions of the mass media as a platform for the public sphere; the contents of mass media products aim to target the largest audience possible, effectively excluding the preferences of niche audience for the sake of profit. Finally, because of the high costs of organizing mass media, the functions of intake, sorting for relevance, accrediting, and synthesis are all combined in the hands of the same media operators, selected initially for their capacity to pool the capital necessary to communicate the information to wide audiences. These weaknesses inherit in the industrial model of mass media have been exploited in both authoritarian and democratic societies to the point wherein mass media facilitates democratic dialogue or represents the interests of the people. Essentially put, the industrial model of mass media has destroyed the ability of media to remain independent from administrative interests, perform it's function as the "watchdog" of society and identify important issues percolating in society. Due to it's reliance on an industrial model, mass media has become a problematic platform that ends up becoming a

propaganda outlet for the powerful in both developed and developing societies rather than being an institution concerned with the public good.

The Propaganda Model described by Herman and Chomsky as well as the analysis outlined by Benkler certainly holds much currency when applied to the Turkish context. In it's efforts to control the public sphere, the Turkish state has perennially, yet indecisively lurched between asserting and relinquishing it's control over mass media. Neither a European democracy nor fully authoritarian, one of the primary ways through which the Turkish state has asserted it's control over mass media is by aligning itself with clientalist corporate interests. After the arrival of neoliberal ideology with the 1980 military takeover, economics have provided the intellectual justification for state policies that have gradually opened up the ownership of mass media outlets to private transnational investors. As a result, mass media in Turkey is currently controlled by a small number of media conglomerates each of whom have allegiances to either the government or to opposition parties. In exchange for their silence, the owners of media conglomerates are handsomely rewarded with public contracts in lucrative sectors such as construction or health-care. Journalists and intellectuals who speak out against the status quo find themselves unemployed or, in certain cases, imprisoned. According to independent estimates, Turkey currently has the highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world (Pierini & Mayr 2013:3). Despite the existence of a small yet growing number of independent newspapers, radios and television channels, independent media within the Turkish public sphere remains marginalized to the point wherein one can argue that it simply does not exist. These bleaks observations seem to be confirmed by independent reports that consistently rank Turkey near the bottom of rankings for press freedoms.[6]

The current situation characterising the mass media can not and should not be solely attributed to the ideological convictions of governments that have ruled Turkey or to Turkey's faulty democratic system. Instead, it is the result of a historical process which began in the 18th century with the arrival of the printing press to the Ottoman Empire. As one shall see, mass media has always enjoyed a troubled co-existence with state authorities. Starting from the Ottoman Empire until today, mass media actors working for the public good have been almost always continually subjected to pressure from the state.

Much of the political discussion in the Ottoman public sphere of the mid-19th century tended to revolve around the power of the sultan and hence, the authority of the Ottoman state. Interestingly enough, the position of the sultan was almost never openly challenged in these political discussions. Instead the debate tended to revolve around whether an absolutist monarchy or a constitutional monarchy would save the Ottoman Empire from dissolution and collapse. The

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6 Reporters without Borders (2010) *World Press Freedom Index 2010-11 annual report.*

journalists and intellectuals of this period, mostly foreign educated Ottoman dandys bearing sympathies to Europe and Enlightenment thought, tended to support the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Absolutists were a small minority in these debates. As a result, Ottoman sultans tended to view the press as a potential threat to their absolutist regimes and hence held antagonist feelings towards media professionals by default. Drawing from this, it is no surprise that a censorship regime was in place even prior to the publication of the first privately owned Ottoman newspaper. After the establishment of the first privately owned newspaper, the historical nature of relations between the mass media and the Ottoman administration can be described as ambivalent and unstable. The press were granted considerable and liberal freedoms during the periods of constitutional monarchy, only to have them revoked and utterly suppressed with the restoration of absolutist monarchy.

1.OTTOMAN PERIOD

Tanzimat (1826-1876)

Although printing presses were already being used by religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire during the 15th and 16th centuries, Hungarian-born İbrahim Müteferrika was the first Ottoman Muslim to start a printing press in 1726.[7] As a result, one can argue that as a technology, the printing press was introduced to the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire roughly 300 years after the establishment of the Gutenberg Press in Europe. Under the patronage of Mehmet Said Efendi, an Ottoman bureaucrat bearing sympathies towards French Enlightenment philosophy, Müteferrika printed books in both Ottoman Turkish and Latin alphabets until his death in 1747. The publishing industry and the press in the Ottoman Empire had a relatively slow start after the introduction of the printing press. Asides from the publications printed by religious minorities, texts brought by Europeans and the periodical *Vakayi-i Mısriye* (1828) which was published by Mehmet Ali Paşa, the governor of Egypt, the first official Turkish language newspaper of the Ottoman court only began to be regularly published from 1831 onwards. *Takvim-i Vakayi* was used by the court to make legal or religious announcements, give reports about news from around the Empire and set the prices for certain types of goods. Soon afterwards, *Ceride-i Havadis* began to be published by Englishman William Churchill in 1840. Sponsored by the Ottoman state, *Ceride-i Havadis* became the first newspaper to generate an income by offering advertising services. As a sponsor, the Ottoman court quickly became the newspaper's most important client. Both newspapers were founded in a period of severe decline in the Ottoman Empire and were used by the court to promote pro-Ottoman sentiment amongst the population. However both publications had relatively

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7 The oldest printing press owned by religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire was established by the Sephardi Jewish community in 1493. It was followed by an Armenian printing press (1511) and then a Greek Pharonite (1627).

limited circulations amongst a largely illiterate Turkish speaking population and were hence unable to have a mass audience.

The first privately owned and independent Turkish language was *Tercüman-ı Ahvali*, a newspaper founded in 1860 by Agâh Efendi and İbrahim Şinasi Efendi (Topuz 1973:10). This publication resembled a newspaper in a conventional sense as it had a letters to the editor section, regular columnists, local news and published opinions of founder İbrahim Şinasi Efendi, all of which were published fortnightly. Inspired by the French Revolution and Europe, intellectuals such as Namık Kemal or Şinasi used their columns to strongly advocate the establishment of an Ottoman constitution and the transition to a constitutional monarchy. As a result, the founders of *Tercüman-ı Ahvali* often found themselves conflicting with the interests of the Ottoman court.

Prior to the first publication of *Tercüman-ı Ahvali*, a regime of censorship had already been in place throughout the Ottoman Empire. Anticipating that the press would become a formidable opponent, the Ottoman court had taken initiative by updating the criminal code in 1858 (Topuz 1973:42-43). According to the amendments, newspapers could be fined for publishing material that the court considered insulting. Any article running contrary to Islamic etiquette and nudity was also forbidden. Slander via pamphleteering was made illegal (Topuz 2003:44-5). A new decree (*Basmahane Nizamnamesi*) stipulated that printing houses needed to firstly submit printed manuscripts to the a local governor who would then forward the texts to the education commission (*Maarif Meclisi*) and the police. If the manuscript passed both inspections, it would finally be sent to the Sultan himself for a final inspection. Essentially, books in the Ottoman Empire could not be published without a personal decree from the sultan.

In 1864, the censorship regime of the Ottoman administration expanded. Although at the time there were only four Turkish language newspapers in circulation, the administration decided to put forward a degree to regulate the press (*Matbuat Nizammnamesi*) in 1864 (Topuz 1973:43- 6). The decree forbade the importation of news and newspapers from nations hostile to the Ottoman Empire. Printing a newspaper without an official permit, failing to submit a copy of an issue for inspection, negligence to print official announcements, articles jeopardizing general etiquette or the security of the state and directly criticizing any institution of the state were now all considered to be legal offences (Topuz 2003:48). Despite the attempts by the Ottoman administration to subjugate the press, newspapers opposing the sultan still continued to be published, albeit in increasingly dire circumstances. In another attempt to pacify anti-Sultanate sentiment, the administration used an ongoing geopolitical crises in Crete to shut down *Tasviri Efkâr* (a newspaper founded by Şinasi in 1862) with a direct decree (*Âli Kararname*) in 1867. The reasons given in the decree because the *raison d'etre* to shut down other newspapers and journals popular during this period.

Despite the presence of a draconian censorship regime, Turkish language newspapers

were flourishing. Young Ottoman intellectuals Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa began the publication of *Hürriyet* (1868) from London. In the same period, Basiretçi Ali Bey publishes the newspaper *Basiret* (1869), and *Diyojen* (1869), the first Turkish-language humour magazine. The censorship regime was temporarily suspended for two years after the declaration of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876. In 1877, the newly formed Ottoman parliament proposed a series of regulations to monitor newspapers and periodicals throughout the Empire. The bill was relatively progressive for the time and revoked the right for the Ottoman administration to close newspapers. Unfortunately the bill did not go down well with the reigning sultan, Abdül Hamit II, who was renown for his authoritarian tendencies. In 1878, citing national security issues, the sultan suspended the first Ottoman constitution and restored absolutist monarchy. Soon afterwards the bill was revoked by the sultan who introduced instead the infamous Martial Law stipulations of 1877. The ensuing 30 year period between the suspension and restoration of the Ottoman constitution was characterized by extreme censorship of the press in the Ottoman Empire.

Istibdat (1878-1908) & the second Ottoman constitutional monarchy (1908-1918)

The censorship regime perpetrated by the unpopular and despotic sultan Abdül Hamit II continued until the restoration of the constitutional monarchy on the 24th of July 1908.[8] During this period, the sultan used martial law to firstly close the Ottoman parliament and then crack down on any sort of dissent in the nascent Ottoman public sphere. During this period, the sultan used his power to systematically censor the press and shut down newspapers he perceived to be in opposition to him, while recruiting both local and foreign journalists to publish articles sympathetic to his regime and curtailing the flow of information between Europe and the Ottoman Empire (Topuz 2003: 54). During this period, the owner of publishing houses had to firstly send a preview of the publication to a relevant administrative institution prior to publication. All categories of printed material, including non-political periodicals and religious books were subject to this procedure. These administrative institutions would look through the manuscripts, physically block out any sections there were deemed to be subversive and return them to the publishing houses. Certain words that were supposedly banned by the sultan became the measure of determining whether a publication was subversive or not. If found, these words would be systematically blocked out by the censors. Books and publications that were considered to be too subversive or dangerous were confiscated from printing houses by the Ottoman authorities and burnt (Topuz 1973:47-66). Typographic errors could cause a printing house to be fined or have their publishing licence suspended. Privately owned Turkish language newspapers of this period were Aleksandr Safranyan Efendi's *İbret* (1870), Papadopulos's *Sabah* (1875) and Ahmet Mithat Efendi's *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* (1878). Amongst the

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8 This date was later declared as the Freedom of Press Day after the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

newspapers, Ahmet Cevdet's *İkdam* (1894) became the firstly Turkish language newspaper to achieve a wider daily circulation of 40,000 (Topuz 2003:69). A number of popular and long-lasting magazines also began to be published during this period. These including Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz's *Servetifünun* (1891), and Mizancı Murat Bey's *Mizan* (1897)

In 1908, the Young Turk revolution deposed sultan Abdül Hamit II and restored the constitutional monarchy once again. Martial law was lifted and the press bill proposed during the first Ottoman parliament was reintroduced. Capitalizing on the climate of openness created from the deposition of Abdül Hamit II, a large number of newspapers and periodicals were founded during this period. It is estimated that between 1908 and 1918, more than 918 different Turkish newspapers and magazines were published throughout the Ottoman Empire (Topuz 2003:87). Some of the prominent newspapers of this period were Abdullah Cevdet's *İçtihad* (1904), Abdullah Zühtü's *Yeni Gazete* (1908), Ali Kemal's *Peyam* (1908), Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Tevfik Fikret & Hüseyin Kâzım Kadri's joint venture *Tanin* (1908), Ebüzziya Tevfik's *Yeni Tasviri Efkâr* (1910), Ahmet Emin Yalman and Asım Us's *Vakit* (1917). During the same period, a number of mass circulation periodicals were also popular. These included Zekeriya Sertel's *Büyük Mecmua* (1919), Refik Halit Karay's *Ay Dede* (1920) and Şefik Hüsnü Deymer's *Aydınlık* (1921). The first Ottoman news agencies were also founded during this period. Despite the climate of openness during the Second Constitutional Era, journalism was still a risky business; four journalists Hasan Fehmi, Ahmet Samim, Zeki Bey, and Hasan Tahsin (Silahçı) were assassinated between 1909 and 1913. The perpetrators were never found.

2.WAR OF INDEPENDENCE & DISSOLUTION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1919-1923)

Fighting on the losing side of World War I, the Ottoman Empire capitulated on the 30th of October 1918 and signed the Mondros Ceasefire. Soon afterwards, Istanbul was occupied by English and French armed forces on the 13th of November 1918. In response, Mustafa Kemal, a high-ranking commander (paşa) in the Ottoman army, relocated to the Anatolian town of Samsun on the 19th of May 1919 and started a nationalist, revolutionary insurgency against the Ottoman Empire and the invading European imperialists. One of the effects caused by the uprising was the establishment of a nationalist press in Ankara, the chosen capital of the revolutionaries. In the meantime, some of the newer newspapers based in Istanbul such as *Akşam* (1918), *Yeni Gün* (1918) or *Vakit* (1917) were active supporters of the nationalist movement. These publications were heavily censored by the Ottoman administration. On the other hand, newspapers such as *Peyam-ı Sabah* (1920), *Alemdar* (1919) and *Türkçe İstanbul* (1918) were actively supported by the administration and published anti-nationalist propaganda. Eventually, as the conflict began to swing in favour of the nationalists, the Ottoman mass media began to be incorporated into the emerging nationalist public

sphere based in Ankara. Newspapers in Istanbul began to use the information supplied by the nationalist and state-owned Anatolian Agency (1920) and not the Ottoman Türkiye-Havas-Reuter Agency (1920) as a resource for local news. Rather than the Ottoman *Takvim-i Vakayi*, *Hâkimiyeti Milliye* (1920), the official mouthpiece of nationalist revolutionaries, became the official publication of reference for the press in Istanbul. As the civil war was winding down, a list of 150 public figures and journalists who had not supported the nationalist movement were prepared and circulated by the revolutionaries. These figures were either exiled overseas after the liberation of Istanbul on the 2nd of October 1922, or as in the case of journalist Ali Kemal, sentenced to public execution (Topuz 2003:110-6).

Another indirect effect of the civil war was the establishment of local newspapers in the peripheral Anatolian towns that actively supported the nationalist movement. Due to the lack of resources, most of the publications during this period were printed on single pages and were limited in terms of news coverage. Some of the local newspapers established during this period were *İstikbal* in Trabzon (1918), *İrade-i Milliye* in Sivas (1919), *İzmir'e Doğru* (1919), *Yeni Adana* (1918), *Babalık* in Konya (1910) and *Açıksöz* in Kastamonu (1919) (Topuz 1973:131-2). These publications contributed to the emergence of a nationalist mass media after the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

3. EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD (1923-59)

Censorship, an issue that had been prevalent during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, was also an endemic problem during the early years of the Turkish Republic. Soon after the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the relationship between the press and the newly formed one-party Turkish state began to rapidly deteriorate. Relations between newspapers and periodicals published in Istanbul and the nationalists in Ankara had already started to deteriorate immediately prior to the declaration of the Republic in 1923. Seen as a vestige of the ancient regime and hence a threat to new nationalist regime, the Republican administration made repeated attempts to clamp down on the press based in Istanbul. The first attempt was in 1923 when Istanbul-based journalists such as Hüseyin Cahit, Velid Ebüzziya, Ahmet Cevdet and Ömer İzettin Bey were arrested by national revolutionaries. Despite supporting the nationalist revolutionaries during the War of Independence, these journalists were arrested on charges of inciting pro-caliphate sentiments. The nationalists had abolished the Ottoman caliphate earlier on in the same year. Editors of the leading newspapers in Istanbul at the time, these journalists were tried in revolutionary courts (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) during the last months of 1923. Despite their eventual acquittal, the court cases of 1923 can be considered as the first attempt by the Republican administration assert control over the press and hence the public sphere in modern Turkey.

The early months of the year 1925 saw the rise of opposition movements and revolts throughout Anatolia against the nationalist regime. The largest of these revolts, the Şeyh Said revolt in the eastern province of Dersim (now called Tunceli), was violently suppressed by the Republican administration. When the leader of the revolt, Şeyh Said, confessed that the Anatolian press had helped him incite civil unrest, a government clampdown began on local journalists active in the region. Tried and arrested in revolutionary courts, these journalists became the first members of the press to be imprisoned by the republican state.

In the meantime, former revolutionaries disenfranchised by the nationalist regime started the first opposition party Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) in 1924, only for it to be suppressed the following year. In this climate of turmoil and widespread dissent, the Republican administration decided to declare martial law (*Takrir-i Sükun kanunu*) on March 4ᵗʰ, 1925. One of the effects of martial law was the total suppression of the freedom of speech. The administration reserved the right to immediately shut down or suspend the circulation of any publication that was seen as a threat to national security (Topuz 2003:147). Martial law lasted until 1929 and almost all the Istanbul newspapers were silenced during this period. Journalists were arrested and put on trial in revolutionary courts once again. This time, most of the accused received sentences and were exiled either abroad or to small towns in Anatolia. Until the repeal of martial law in 1929, press freedoms were under severe suppression in Turkey. Furthermore, the new Turkish alphabet that was based on Latin characters had been adopted as part of the nationalist reforms in 1928. These reforms caused a drastic decline in the number of newspaper and magazine readers as most of the population could not read the new alphabet. Only pro-nationalist newspapers such as Cumhurriyet (1924), which received financial support from the state, were able to survive through this period. Independent newspapers were forced to seek financial support from industrialists and capital owners of the period. As a result, the independent press in Turkey began to come under the influence of commercial interests during this period; something that is still an endemic problem in contemporary Turkey.

The second attempt at a transition to a multi-party democracy in 1930 with the establishment of the Free Party (*Serbest Fırka*) in 1930 caused a temporary relief in the working conditions of the independent press in Turkey. Disenfranchised with the censorial activities of the one-party regime, the independent press quickly became ardent supporters of the new opposition party. Feeling the pressure, the administration introduced the Press Reform bill of 1931 which relaxed censorship practices within the mass media. As part of the bill, the ministry for press affairs (the administrative instrument for applying censorship) was abolished and the licensing requirements needed to publish newspapers and magazines (a vestige of the press laws introduced during the second Ottoman constitution) lifted. Although the administration still reserved

the right to shut down any circulated publication deemed to be a threat to national security, censorship of the public sphere was relaxed. Unfortunately, this climate of openness did not last for long (Topuz 1973:150-52).

Towards the end of 1930, the second attempt to transition to a multi-party democracy failed and the Free Party was dissolved; the transition to multi-party politics would only be complete in 1945. In 1933, the ministry for press affairs was re-established and the criminal code reforms of 1936 intensified the pressure on the public sphere in Turkey. Imported from the Fascist Italian constitution of 1928, these reforms permitted the one-party Republican administration to openly prosecute the freedom of speech in Turkey. The reforms stipulated that it was now illegal and prosecutable to make public statements that undermined the national spirit, engaged in revolutionary polemic or propaganda and openly criticized the secular foundation of the Turkish state. The punishments and fines for these charges were doubled if the offending articles were published and circulated. This created a situation wherein independent journalists were only able to publish opinions with pro-republican sentiment. Publishing anything critical of the state ran the risk of persecution.

While the criminal code reforms of 1936 put tremendous pressure of the expression of free speech in Turkey, the press was still relatively independent from commercial and proprietary interests. This situation lasted until 1938, when the press reform bill of 1931 was amended and licences to print publications reintroduced. The legal amount of capital required to open a printing house was drastically increased. In other words, after the introduction of the amendment, only the rich could afford to run a publication. Furthermore, these publications would now need to turn in profits.[9] The reforms of 1938 in the Press Reform bill (1931) consolidated the control and influence of commercial interests over the independent press in Turkey; journalists and intellectuals no longer had any control over the means of production. As a result, mass media in this period began to be subject to control by bureaucratic or financial interests. As a result, there was no real opposition in the public sphere towards the neutral stance of the Republican state during the Second World War or the industrial policies pursued during this period. Any dissenting voices would be quickly silenced. This situation continued until the full transition to multi-party politics in 1946.

On the 1st of November 1945, İsmet İnönü, the 2nd president of the Turkish Republic, made an announcement in the Turkish parliament that officially invited the formation of opposition parties to the one-party rule of the Republican People's Party (CHP). One of the opposition parties formed

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9 One of the results of this transformation in the relationship between the independent press and capitalism was the emergence of promotional campaigns and marketing. The first promotion campaign was started in 1939 by Karagöz, the official mouthpiece of the Republican political party. It was a questionnaire that asked the following question: "who will win the war [World War II]?" Participants who managed to guess correctly would win a prize. The campaign was shut down one week afterwards by the ministry for press affairs under allegations of citing hatred towards friendly nations.

after İnönü's invitation was the Democratic Party (DP). The DP advocated economic liberalism and challenged the statist principles of the CHP. Despite losing the elections in the upcoming year to the CHP, the Democratic Party quickly became popular with a citizenry deeply discontent with almost 30 years of one-party rule. On the 14th of May 1950, the DP came to power with a landslide electoral victory. One of the key players in the electoral victory of the DP was the independent press that had now relocated from Ankara back to Istanbul. Discontent with the draconian censorship regime set forth by the CHP, the Istanbul newspapers actively supported the DP in their 1950 electoral bid. By the 1950s, the first mass circulation newspapers such as Hürriyet (1948), Millliyet (1950) or Yeni Sabah (1948) were established. These mass circulation newspapers relied on large capital investments to achieve economies of scale and used a combination of sensationalist reporting and high quality photographic prints to achieve daily sales of more than 100,000. These mass-circulation newspapers were key actors in securing the DP electoral victory.

Soon after the election of Adnan Menderes as prime minister, the DP made an extensive review of the Press Bill that had been introduced by the CHP in 1931. The most restrictive elements of the 1931 bill were jettisoned in favour of legal articles that favoured of a more liberal relationship between the Press and the state (Topuz 1973:177-79). Licensing requirements were lifted and newspaper owners were no longer legally liable for prosecutable content published by journalists. The prime minister would personally meet media magnates such as Ahmet Emin Yalman (*Vatan*) or Sedat Simavi (*Hürriyet*) on a regular basis to discuss relations between the press and the DP. In 1952, a new labour law was passed that allowed journalists to form unions, obtain social security and have the right for paid leave. The 1952 law marked the high point of relations between the press and the DP. Unfortunately, the honeymoon between the DP and the press did not last for very long; by 1954 a dramatic reversal had taken place.

By the mid-1950s, the popular support enjoyed by the DP had started to dwindle. The party was unable to deliver their electoral promises and this was causing discontent amongst the populace. Furthermore, there were rampant allegations of inner party corruption and the policies of the DP were severely criticized in parliament. Feeling confident, the journalists of the period began to investigate the corruption charges of DP officials and publish articles critical of the party. These gestures were considered treasonous by prime minister Menderes who had hitherto enjoyed friendly relations with the media magnates of Turkey. Despite their cordial relations, the media magnates were unable to persuade the journalists working under them to refrain from criticizing the government. As a result, the relationship between the media magnates and the DP soured very quickly. On March 9th, 1952, the DP proposed a new law to suppress the press (Topuz 1973:183-86). The proposed law permitted the Turkish state to fine or prosecute any published allegation or criticism and revoked the right for the accused to legally defend themselves (Topuz 2003:197). On

the 24th of September 1954, 70-year old journalist Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın was sentenced to 26 months on allegations of engaging in activities of defaming the Turkish state. This was the first blow struck by the DP to press freedom in Turkey - the democrat had become the dictator.

The relationship between the independent press and the DP hit an all-time low with the so-called Istanbul Pogrom which happened between the 6th and 7th of September 1955. Eager to publicize sensational news, an evening paper named *İstanbul Ekpress* ran an unconfirmed story that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's birth-home in Salonika had been bombed by Greek nationalists. Relations between the two countries were already tense due to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Cyprus. A series of events followed wherein a demonstration quickly turned into a pogrom targeting the 120,000 strong Greek community in Istanbul. Shops, churches and homes owned by Greeks were burnt down and pillaged by the protesters. The police could not (or did not) intervene. As a result of the pogrom, martial law was declared on the 8th of September. The DP openly accused the press of masterminding the pogrom; in reality the pogrom was used to create an excuse for the DP both to starting openly suppressing the press and to intimidate the Greek community of Istanbul into fleeing the city. Once martial law was declared over Istanbul, the army commander in charge began to systematically shut down independent newspapers and magazines. After martial law was lifted in 1956, the DP passed another law that restricted the freedom of expression even further. It was now a prosecutable offence to publish news with "malignant intent", to publish news that incited "excitement" or publish news that ran "contrary to the social etiquette and values of Turkish society" (Topuz 2003:200-01). The journalists union was shut down in 1957. By 1958, more than 1161 journalists had been prosecuted and 238 had received prison sentences. In other words, the freedom of speech in the Turkish mass media ceased to exist. At the same time, the DP actively supported pro-government publications by selling them paper at lower costs and financing their advertising revenue. This situation caused international outcry and pressure on the DP mounted; the International Press Institute wrote an open letter that condemned the DP for their suppression of democratic freedoms in Turkey (Topuz 1973:200-03).

In the meantime, the country was on the verge of economic collapse. The foreign currency reserves and gold accumulated during the war years had been exhausted by the profligate investment tendencies of the DP. Much of the invested capital had been lost to corruption and the government was forced to seek a loan from the newly founded International Monetary Foundation (IMF). The Turkish lira was suffering from devaluation and high inflation rates meant that the economy was not growing. On the 27th of April 1960, an inquiries commission of 15 DP members was formed in the Turkish parliament to clamp down on any form of public dissent that ran contrary to the party line of the DP. Exactly one month later, on the 27th of May, the army decided to intervene; Menderes was deposed and DP parliamentarians arrested. During his trial, Menderes

was accused of masterminding the Istanbul pogrom and attempting regime change. Him and two former cabinet ministers were sentenced to death and executed in 1961. The 1960 coup d'etat marks the beginning of a period of instability in Turkey characterized by military take-overs, political extremism and stagnant economic growth. It is also a period wherein the freedom of expression firstly experiences a great boon, only then to be entirely suppressed.

4. ERA OF COUP D'ETATS & POLITICAL INSTABILITY (1960-1983)

One of the first steps taken by the National Unity Committee (the military junta) was to abolish all anti-democratic laws introduced during DP rule. On the 12th of October 1960, a series of laws were introduced that allowed journalists to defend themselves against allegations in court and be re-included into the social security program. Working rights such as severance pay and death indemnity were also introduced. On the 2nd of January 1961, the junta founded the national press association to monitor relations between the state and pro-government media magnates. Essentially, the role bestowed to the national press association was to enforce and regulate ethical standards in mass media. By introducing legal reform and founding the national press association, the aim of the junta was to reduce the control media magnates held over their employees, thereby increasing the independence of the mass media and hence, the public sphere from commercial and political interests. Naturally, these reforms did not go down well with media magnates. One week after the founding of the national press association, nine of the largest newspaper magnates decided to go on strike and not print anything for three days. The employees of these newspapers, emboldened by the policies of junta, did not follow suite and broke the strike by publishing an alternative newspaper (Topuz 2003: 231). After three days, the newspaper magnates gave up and accepted the legal reforms that reduced their grip over working journalists, who were now legally classified as intellectual labourers.

The crowning jewel in the working rights of intellectual labourers was the 1961 constitution. Unsatisfied with the earlier constitution of 1924, the junta decided to prepare a much more liberal constitution that would safeguard the democratic achievements of the nationalist revolution. The resulting product was the most liberal constitution ever enjoyed in Turkey and guaranteed the freedom of speech to a large degree. Free communication became a right. The freedom of the press was guaranteed while censorship and banning publications became illegal. Licensing requirements and capital investments previously needed for publishing material were abolished. Preventing the spread of free ideas became a prosecutable offence. Finally, the state now guaranteed support to anyone wanting to use their right to communicate. The responsibilities of the citizen were to refrain from publishing material endangering national security, material amounting to personal attacks and material impeding judicial processes (Topuz 2003: 235). A last minute

clause added in 1962 constitution stipulated that citizens should refrain from unjustly criticizing the coup of 1960. Between the period of 1960 and 1971, Turkish society experienced a great boon in the freedom of expression in the public sphere. Increasingly, newspapers and printed publications began to allot space to intellectuals who became actively involved in discussions around economic and political issues. The daily readership of less sensationalist newspapers such as *Cumhurriyet* and *Milliyet* soared during this period. Being able to express themselves freely, the ideas and opinions of public intellectuals writing daily columns soon became the basis for activating political and social movements. One of the effects of the public sphere flourishing was the introduction of Marxism and revolutionary thought via Leftist public intellectuals to the national audience. As a result, the early 1960s can be seen as the birth years of anti-imperialist, anti-Kemalist revolutionary Left in Turkey. Sadly enough, this golden period for free speech was only going to last until 1971.

In the days preceding March 12th 1971, Turkey had entered into a deep economic and social depression. A collapsing economy meant that the country had started to turn to more extreme solutions espoused by radical political views. Tensions were running high on the streets between the radical left and right. The government and parliament were powerless to stop both the escalation in violence and economic collapse. Once again, on March 12th, the army intervened, publishing a memorandum that announced their arrival onto the political scene. Süleyman Demirel, the prime minister of time, resigned immediately. A decision was made in parliament to go for an early election. What happened instead was that the army declared martial law on the 27th of April, 1971. Rather than directly abolishing the parliamentary regime, the army appointed Nihat Erim as the interim prime minister and controlled the parliament through him. A crackdown ensued wherein the intellectuals, union leaders, socialist parliament members and leftist student activists were taken into custody. A large number of prominent journalists were arrested and imprisoned during this period. Newspapers with leftist policial leanings such as *Cumhurriyet*, *Akşam*, *Bugün* and *Yeni Sabah* were all shut down; some permanently, some temporarily. As a response, the political violence on the streets escalated even further, leading the 1971 junta to make legal amendments to scale back the personal freedoms guaranteed in the 1961 constitution.

Despite the attempts by the 1971 junta to defuse rising social tensions by scaling back the freedom of speech and clamping down on the revolutionary Left, violence continued to escalate. On the 1st of May 1977, unidentified gunmen opened fired at demonstrating workers from the DİSK union, killing 34 people in Istanbul. Between the 23rd and 27th of December 1978, clashes between the far-right and left-wing Alevi Kurdish workers in the south-western town of Kahramanmaraş resulted in 104 deaths. During this unstable era, intellectuals and journalists became open assassination targets. Journalists such as Abdi Ipekçi, university lecturers such as Prof. Doctor Cavit Tütengil, union leaders such Kemal Türkler were all assassinated between 1973 and 1980

(Topuz 2003:254). Society had come to a virtual standstill due to political violence and on the 12th of September 1980, the military stepped in once again to completely reconfigure the hard wiring of the democratic system in Turkey.

It has been argued that much of the social fragmentation and political extremism of the 1970s in Turkey had been caused by the failures of having a closed, import-substitution oriented economy. Bankrupt and heavily mired in international debt created a socio-economic situation wherein the governing elite of republican Turkey began to rapidly loose ground to increasingly radicalised challenges from both ethnic minorities and unrepresented political factions. In these circumstances, the only way of re-establishing social hegemony was through the implementation of a military coup. Previous military coups had pretty much preserved the economic system in Turkey; on the other hand, as Karadağ (2010) points out, the 1980 coup permanently altered Turkish society by tolerating the opening of the inward-looking, corporatist economy to international capital through an IMF led structural adjustment program. The program favoured investing in small to middle scale Anatolian entrepreneurs, thus eventually shifting the focus of the economy from Republican industrialists in metropolitan areas towards the provincial bourgeoise residing in developing Anatolian towns. One of the radical implications of the 1980 IMF structural adjustment program was that the Republican elite would eventually lose their monopoly on industry and capital in Turkey. In order to be able to implement such a radical re-structuring, a social *tabula rasa* was needed; the junta needed to destroy the ancient regime responsible for the calamities of the previous decade. In contrast with the coup d'états of 1961 and 1970 which had both tried to correct the perceived deficiencies in the Turkish democratic system, the coup of 1980 attempted to replace all political and civil institutions of democratic life in Turkey (Öktem 2011).To make way for the structural reforms imposed by the IMF, the junta (1980-1983) systematically destroyed political parties, trade unions, and any other form of associational life. Between 1980 and 1983

- 650,000 people were put under arrest.

- 1,683,000 people were blacklisted.

- 230,000 people were judged in 210,000 lawsuits.
- 7,000 people were asked for the death penalty.
- 517 persons were sentenced to death.
- 50 of those given the death penalty were executed
- 71,000 people were judged on account of the articles 141, 142 and 163 in Turkish Penal Code.
- 98,404 people were judged on charges of being members of a leftist, a rightist, a nationalist, a conservative, etc. organization.

- 388,000 people were denied a passport.

- 30,000 people were dismissed from their workplaces due to allegations

- 14,000 people were removed from citizenship.

- 30,000 people went abroad as political refugees.

- 300 people died in a suspicious manner.

- 171 documented cases death due to torture.

- 299 people lost their lives in prison.

- 14 people died in a hunger strike.

- 95 people were killed in "combat".

- 937 banned films

- 23,677 associations were shut down[10]

The junta also systematically targeted artists, intellectuals, journalists and public figures:

- 3,854 teachers, 120 lecturers and 47 judges were dismissed.

- 400 journalists were asked a total of 4000 years' imprisonment.

- Journalists were sentenced 3315 years and 6 months' imprisonment.

- 31 journalists went to jail.

- 300 journalists were attacked.

- 3 journalists were shot dead.

- 300 days in which newspapers were not published.

- 303 cases were opened for 13 major newspapers.

- 39 tonnes of newspapers and magazines were destroyed.[11]

Mass media was a prime target for the junta to destory. Between 1980 and 1983, eight mass circulation newspapers had their right to publish revoked for a total of 300 days.[12] In the same period, 303 court cases were opened by the state against 13 of the major newspapers in mass circulation and 39 tonnes of printed material were destroyed by the state. One week after the coup, the junta committee made changes to the martial law that allowed them to censor any kind of mass media. In 1982, another amendment to the martial law legislation allowed the junta the right to close down any institution producing material that was mass-circulated and the reserved the right to confiscate anything broadcast or printed. Owners of paraphernalia deemed to have provocative

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10 Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (2012:15) *Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu Raporu*
11 Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (2012:16) *Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu Raporu*
12 Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (2012:18) *Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu Raporu*

contents could be arrested and face a sentence of between 6 months and 2 years in prison. The arrests of intellectuals and the heavy sentences imposed onto the independent press during the junta has caused the permanent disfiguring of the public sphere in Turkey.

To safeguard the destruction wrecked on social life in Turkey, the junta introduced an entirely new constitution which drastically reduced personal freedoms and ensured that the banned institutions of the ancient regime would not return. By separating the right to express oneself from the freedom of thought, the new constitution curtailed the freedom of speech in a decisive manner (Topuz 2003:261). Article 25 in the constitution guaranteed the freedom of thought by stipulating that "no one can be forced to reveal their thoughts and opinions. No one can be accused of their thoughts". Although the freedom of thought is guaranteed, the freedom of expression is not. If broadcast on radio, television, cinema or any similar medium, thoughts can be monitored and prosecuted by the state (article 26, clause 2). Thoughts can not be publicly expressed using any languages banned by the Turkish state (article 26, clause 3). The public expression of any thought which directly targets the unity of the nation or state security is a prosecutable offence (article 28). Under heavy pressure from the junta, the Turkish public accepted this constitution in 1982 with a popular referendum. As of 2013, the basic principles of the 1982 constitution are still in place. By clearing the way for the structural reforms proposed by the IMF to reshape the Turkey into an export-oriented economy with brutal social repression, the junta leaders are directly responsible for much of the problems characterising both mass media and the public sphere in Turkey today.

5. TURGUT ÖZAL PERIOD (1983-1993)

Despite the transition to civilian rule in 1983, the coup of 1980 had radically altered the chemistry of Turkish democracy. Persecution of figures active in the public sphere continued to the point wherein the International Press Institute publicly warned prime minister Turgut Özal about the declining conditions of civil liberties in 1988. Public figures were arrested or intimidated while newspapers and magazines were either fined or entirely shut down. Investigative journalists such as Çetin Emeç (1990) and Uğur Mumcu (1993) were assasinated. In 1983, the press laws of 1950 were updated to reflect the legislation of the new constitution; maximum fines and sentences were greatly increased.

During the same year, a series of laws regarding a state of emergency were also introduced to combat the growing Kurdish insurgency in the south-east of Turkey. With the new legislation, the state reserved the right to ban and confiscate any sort of printed publication in regions wherein a state of emergency had been announced. All audio visual publications were subject to censorship and review. Theatre productions and film showings could be banned. Individuals spreading provocative news or rumours could be arrested. If the arrested individual was

spreading provocation through mass media outlets, then their sentence would be increased. In 1990, a change to the state of emergency legislation stipulated that the state reserved the right to prevent the press from accessing insurgency stricken areas. Any news circulated in the mass media about the regions in question would be prosecuted by the state. The state reserved the right to prevent the circulation of any broadcast or published material in emergency rule areas which were deemed to be provocative (Topuz 2003:278-9). The authority of state in insurgency stricken areas was increased even further with the 1991 Criminal Code legislation against terrorism. It was now a prosecutable offence to attend any public meeting that challenged the authority of the Turkish state. Broadcasting or publishing a criticism of the Turkish state also became a prosecutable offence. Until the lifting of emergency rule in 2002, one of the effects of the Kurdish insurgency has the been the emergence of a dual legal regime within the territorial boundaries of Turkey. As a result of this dual legal regime, the nascent Kurdish public sphere has been repeatedly suppressed by the Turkish state. Prominent Kurdish intellectuals such as Musa Anter (1992) were assassinated and the perpetrators were never found. Journalists and intellectuals working for pro-insurgency publications such as *Özgür Gündem*, *Özür Ülke*, *2000'e Doğru* and *Yeni Ülke* were murdered or assaulted by unknown assailants. The publications themselves were either entirely closed down or their right to publish was suspended by the state. Publications spared from direct censorship were subject to violence and threats.

On the other hand, commercial interests had began to consolidate their hold over the mass media mediums of active within the Turkish public sphere. In 1994, the Turkish parliament lifted the ban on private ownership of radio and television channels. The ban had already been penetrated by a satellite television channel named Magic Box that had started to broadcast from Europe to Turkey in 1990 (Elmas and Kurban 2010). Soon afterwards, other private television channels began to crop up throughout Turkey, creating the need for legal legislation. The need to regulate private broadcasting led to the creation of Law 3984 and the formation of the Radio and Television Council (RTÜK). According to Law 3984, private ownership of radio and television networks were allowed under the condition of permission from RTÜK.

The lifting of the ban opened the way for corporate entities to build up concentrated mass-media networks by acquiring publishing and broadcasting platforms. Law 3984 attempted to prevent the rise of mass media monopolies by stipulating that i) a corporate entity can only own one television and radio channel and ii) the total percentage of shares held in the ownership of broadcasting platforms can not be more than 20% (Kurban & Sözeri 2012:26). It has been argued that one of the effects of allowing private ownership of broadcasting platforms was that it opened the path for the nascent Islamist movement in Turkey to begin acquiring mass-media networks to publicize their political agenda (Tugal 2009; Navarro-Yashin 2002). The electoral successes

enjoyed by the Islamist Refah Partisi (RP) and it's successor, Fazilet Partisi (FP) during the mid-1990s is partially due to their effective usage of mass media networks for political persuasion.

6. COALITION GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY (1993-2003)

Despite the total suppression of democratic freedoms in the south-east Turkey and partial suppression throughout, Turkey was also experiencing a period of relative stability and growth. Former prime minister Turgut Özal became president in 1989 and there was little instability in the political climate. A lifting of the ban on politicians from the pre-1980 era allowed exiled leaders to return to Turkish politics. Then in 1993, the sudden death of Turgut Özal caused a new political crisis to begin in Turkey. Süleyman Demirel, the leader of Doğru Yol Partisi (DYP), became the nineth president of Turkey after three rounds of voting in the parliament. Tansu Çiller was voted in his place as party chairwoman. Demirel delegated Çiller with the responsibility of forming a new coalition government. The coalition between the DYP and the Sosyalist Halk Partisi (SHP) became the first of many coalition governments formed between 1993 and 2003.

Early elections were called after the collapse of the coalition between the DYP and the SHP in 1995. The political spectrum in the Turkish parliament became even further fragmented after the 1995 elections, with five parties polling between 21.4% and 10.7% and no clear winner. As a result, seven coalition governments were formed between 1995 and 2003. Refah Partisi (RP), an Islamic party, became partners in the ruling coalition in 1996, only to be deposed in 1997 by combined public and military pressure.

During this period, the suppression of democratic freedoms continued, as well as the assassination of intellectuals and public figures. In 1994, the Ankara offices of pro-Kurdish *Özgür Ülke* was bombed, killing one journalist and wounding 21 others. In 1996, journalist Metin Göktepe died under police custody. In 1999, writer and journalist Ahmet Taner Kışlalı was assasinated in front of his house. A year before the American Press Freedom Organization cited Turkey as being the 4th worst country for the freedom of communication (Topuz 2003:309). The situation became slightly better with the election of Ahmet Necdet Sezer as president in 2000. A retired judge from the Turkish supreme court, Sezer prevented the further suppression of personal freedoms and tried to prevent the monopolies in mass media ownership from intensifying. Despite his attempts, the persecution of the press still continued. In 2002 Turkey became the country with largest number of imprisoned journalists. The banking crises of 2001 caused a ripple effect throughout the Turkish economy that caused a number of the leading industrialists and corporations to go bankrupt. To cut costs, these corporations began to close down the mass media broadcasting outlets they'd acquired throughout the 1990s. The state had to intervene and became the largest owner of broadcasting and publication outlets overnight. Under the influence of the private investor lobby,

the state decided to make some amendments to television and radio ownership legislation (Bek 2003:262). Law 4756, which was enacted in 2002 to replace law 3984, changed the measure of ownership for radio and television channels from the total percentage of shares owned to the total percentage of the audience market share controlled by an entity. Accordingly, no entity was legally allowed to control more than 20% of the total audience market share. Also, law 4756 lifted the ban on corporate entities owning mass media networks to make bids for public contracts and be traded on the stock exchange.

In the long run, law 4756 opened up the way for ownership monopolies in broadcasting mediums, abolishing unions in journalism, destruction of small to medium scale broadcasting institutions and moving towards sensational, tabloid-style journalism in Turkey (Topuz 2003:347). It also created a "gold rush" for the corporations that had managed to survive the 2001 banking crises. Soon these corporations entered into a scramble to acquire bankrupted assets held by the state. This process quickly degenerated into a much publicized media confrontation between rival media magnates. After the arrival of the Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) in 2003, the remaining bankrupted platforms were sold off at extremely low profits to individual and corporations close to the new government. As a result, one can argue that the 2001 banking crises caused a massive turnover in the ownership of mass media outlets and led to the emergence of pro-Islamic mass media in Turkey.

7. AK PARTY AND MASS-MEDIA MONOPOLIES (2003-)

The period between the election of the first AK Party government in 2003 until the Gezi protests of summer 2013 is unique in many respects. Most importantly, newspapers have steadily lost their ground to television in terms of popularity. This is because televisions have become an affordable luxury over the past decade; by 2013 more than 98% of the households in Turkey have access to a television (Kurban & Sözeri 2012:16). Furthermore, the television audience in Turkey has expanded to become one of the most engaged audiences in the world, with Turks spending many more hours in front of the television than their European counterparts. This makes the medium of television an attractive investment for both national and international corporations seeking to wield influence in Turkey.

After the lifting of the ban on the private ownership of television and radio channels in 1994, corporations and industrialists scrambled to acquire broadcasting institutions. The loosening of restrictions led to an exponential growth in the number of mass media outlets and eventually to the concentration of these outlets in the hands of a number of media conglomerates. Looking back, there have been 35 national mergers and 30 international mergers in the mass media industry between 2002 and 2008. In reality, most of these mergers were acquisitions of broadcasting outlets

and companies bankrupted in the 2001 banking crises (Sözeri 2009). While ownership of broadcasting outlets are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the privileged few, ownership of broadcasting outlets by actors such as political parties, unions, cooperatives, professional associations and foundations remains prohibited (Kurban & Sözeri 2012:27). Only for-profit companies are legally allowed to own radio and television channels. Furthermore, international corporations can now claim ownership over broadcasting outlets in Turkey through local partnerships. In 2011, the AK Party government passed law 6112 which allows foreign investors to invest in Turkish media corporations and own up to 50% in shares. The stocks of these media corporations can now be traded on the stock exchange. Monopolization regulations have been relaxed even further; media conglomerates can now own shares in four outlets per medium. However, these conglomerates cannot posses more than 30% of the total market share in advertising revenues for radio and television.

It is now widely accepted that mass media networks are used by media magnates as a weapon to safeguard their investments in other sectors of the Turkish economy (Bek 2004; Adaklı 2006). Almost all of the media magnates in Turkey are corporate actors who have companies active in industries such as energy, telecommunications, finance or construction. Furthermore, there are now no legal restrictions to prevent media patrons from making bids for public contracts. As a result, mass media has now become an instrument wielded by corporate actors to safeguard their economic investments and apply pressure on both competitors and the government. Television has now become the primary mass medium wherein governmental, corporate and public interests clash. Within the current context, the notion of editorial independence has almost ceased to exist in mass media. Corporate acquisition of broadcasting outlets can result in the dismissal of an entire editorial staff. The current mass media landscape remains extremely polarized wherein a majority of the media corporations actively support the government and circulate pro-government propaganda due to mutual financial interests. The media corporations that attempt to remain independent and criticize the government have been increasingly marginalized and face pressure from the state. For example, Doğan Media Holding, the largest media corporation in Turkey, was charged a fine of approximately 2.53 billion USD for tax evasion in 2009. The media corporation has been critical of the AKP government ever since their rise to power in 2003. Aydın Doğan, the owner of Doğan Media Holding, made a public declaration that the fine was based on "subjective evaluations" and implied that the punishment had political motivations.[13] After intense negotiations between Doğan Media and the Ministry of Finance, the corporation paid a portion of the tax fine

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13 "Dogan Hit by $2.5 Billion Tax Fine in Erdogan Feud" (http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=awCtRMMmOGeA)

and thus resolved the issue. Soon afterwards however, the television channels and newspapers owned by Doğan Media stopped criticizing the government. In effect, the AK Party used and continues to use strongman tactics to silence independent opposition and criticism in the mass media. Despite the decline in the number of journalist and intellectual assassinations, media workers can still either be arrested or fired from their editorial positions due to government pressure.

8. EMERGENCE OF A SPHERE OF DISSENT ONLINE

The 2014 Freedom House reports and Reporters without Borders reports on Press Freedoms seems to offer the most conclusive evidence regarding the freedom of expression in Turkey.[14]
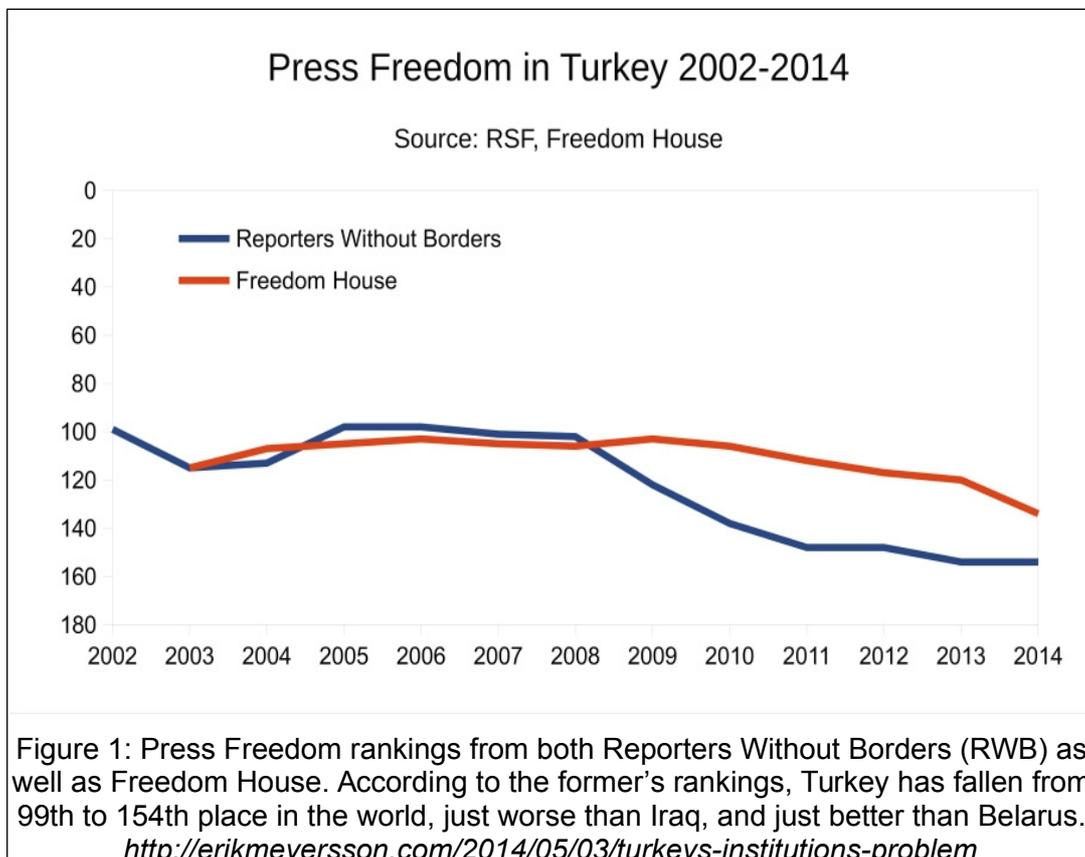
Figure 1: Press Freedom rankings from both Reporters Without Borders (RWB) as well as Freedom House. According to the former's rankings, Turkey has fallen from 99th to 154th place in the world, just worse than Iraq, and just better than Belarus.
http://erikmeyersson.com/2014/05/03/turkeys-institutions-problem

In the past year, Freedom House has downgraded press freedoms in Turkey to the lowest possible category - "not free". This downgrade puts Turkey into the same category as Russia, China, Iran and North Korea. It also makes Turkey the only country associated with European Union membership that does not have a free press. The Freedom House also ranked Turkey as the

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14 http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2014

country that experienced the 9th largest drop in press freedoms in one year, putting it ahead of troubled countries such as the Ukraine, Egypt and Syria. Furthermore, sliding ratings on judicial independence has created creating an "insitutional" problem in Turkey wherein stronger-than-average state powers combined with weaker-than-average citizens' rights prevail. Institutionally speaking, it has been showned that Turkey's institutions are correlated with countries that have significant authoritarian characteristics and strong security establishments.[15]

This institutional culture, when combined with the trend of intensifying media monopolies has created a situation wherein in it is extremely difficult to express independent and critical thought within the Turkish mass media. Journalists and intellectuals contrary to the party line of the government run the constant risk of either losing their jobs or being imprisoned. Mass media patrons supporting their employees run the risk of being financially ruined by the government. This political situation gives little room to manoeuvre for both intellectual workers and media magnates. The concentration of mass media ownership in the hands of the privileged few, the dependence of mass media on advertising for subsidies and political pressures shaping the journalistic intake of newsworthy information have become endemic weaknesses of the media landscape in Turkey. Looking at the past 30 years, one can claim that the arrival of neoliberalism has intensified the propaganda model active within the Turkish mass media and has perhaps weakened the public sphere to the point of no return. As it has been explored in detail elsewhere, much like other developing countries, the steady advance, and cultural power of marketing and advertising in the aftermath of the 1980 military takeover has caused the displacement of a political public sphere in Turkey by a depoliticized consumer culture.[16] One of the effects of this transformation has been the emergence of an alternative public sphere on the Internet. Journalists and intellectuals disenfranchised with the lack of freedom in mass media have turned to the Internet. In contrast to restrictions characterizing mass media in Turkey, Internet offers mediums wherein dissenting intellectual workers can freely, easily and openly express their ideas in a relatively free manner. Activists, academics and others critical of the current regime have followed journalists, expressing and circulating their dissenting views through a wide variety of different social media and Web 2.0 platforms.

Over the past decade, the Internet has turned into an agora for the freedom of speech and for the organization of political or social dissent. Alternative and marginalized identities in Turkey find it easier to express their views online. In light of the ongoing enclosure mass media, wherein dissenting journalists receive lengthy jail sentences for publishing news that go against

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15 http://erikmeyersson.com/2014/05/03/turkeys-institutions-problem/
16 Herman and Chomsky (188:21)

government or corporate interests and where state-appointed commissars can nationalize private satellite television channels or newspapers overnight, ordinary people actively turn to the social media and Web 2.0 in an attempt to both access alternative (non-state or corporate) broadcasting outlets and to express their dissent against against the policies of the current regime in Turkey.[17]

One might argue that users from democracies in the European Union and North America also use social media to express their dissent. However, the key difference is that within the context of Turkey, expressing dissent in public might result in the arrest and prosecution of the offending person. In the past, distributing a political pamphlet critical of the regime, or publishing stories in newspapers that run counter to the interests of the government have been considered as treason by the Turkish state. On the other hand, despite the attempts to censor access to sensitive material or to engage in surveillance, the state is less successful in policing Turkish cyberspace. This is precisely why, despite all the contraversies regarding commercialization, the services offered by Ekşisözlük, Facebook, Google or Twitter remain popular in Turkey. It is not that people are not aware that the corporations owning these platforms are among some of the wealthiest in the world. Instead, one can argue that users are faced with the pragmatic choice of having the oppurtunity to express themselves relatively openly on a corporate platform versus facing arrest or prosecution when expressing themselves on a radio or television channel owned by the mass media oligarchy.[18] The potentially never-ending demand for platforms hosting user-generated content is recognized by founder Sedat Kapanoğlu, who states that this demand is caused by the faulty democratic regime in Turkey:

> "the reason why they [sözlük-style projects] are not as popular abroad as in Turkey is because the freedom of expression abroad is not a privilege or favour. It is a right. Turkey, due to it's inefficient justice system, repressive social norms and political sensibilities that have been eroded away by successive military regimes, finds sözlük-style sites useful and necessary."[19]

Other than having a space for expressing dissent, the other key motivation for participation is accessing or sharing information that would not be circulated within the Turkish mass media. As

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17 For a mapping of the alternative media landscape in Turkey, see Çoban and Ataman's *Direniş Çağında Türkiye'de alternatif medya* (2015)

18 For example, on the 15th of January 2016, a woman introducing herself as a highschool teacher phoned into a popular talkshow to talk about the ongoing violence between Kurdish separatists and the Turkish military in the south-east of Turkey. Her message was quite simply in that she wanted the violence to stop. The audience started to applaud and the talkshow went into a commercial break. A few days after the event, the state launched an investigation on the participant and suspended her from her work. The reason given for the investigation was that the participant was making propaganda on behalf of the Kurdish separatists. The talkshow host was pressured by the channel owners to record a statement that apologized to the public.

19 http://www.bilisimdergisi.org/s140/pages/s140_web.pdf

the 2013 Gezi Park protests demonstrate, just as much as the Turkish mass media system prevents the expression of dissenting voices, it also censors access to alternative accounts of events. During events such the Gezi Park protests wherein the mass media purposefully avoid providing coverage, social media platforms as well as peer production platforms such as Ekşisözlük function as an informational resources for the online public.

Social media and urban dictionaries during the Gezi Protests

The Gezi Park protests started on May 27, 2013, with a small group of environmental activists determined to block government plans to replace a small park in Istanbul's Taksim Square with a complex of hotels, a shopping mall, and restaurants. As news of the occupation spread on social media, hundreds of people joined in, united by their frustration with the government's lack of accountability. The tipping point came on May 30th, when police attacked peaceful protesters with tear gas and water cannons. Images of the brutality circulated rapidly on social media. Outraged, tens of thousands rushed to occupy all of Taksim Square, effectively ending police rule in the area. What happened over the next two weeks was that the protests spread to 80 of the country's 81 provinces with more than 3 million participants venting their frustrations against the government.

The mainstream media in Turkey were slow to provide adequate coverage of the situation during the first few days of the protests. Notoriously, on the 1st of June, as fierce battles were being fought between protesters and the police, the Doğan corporation owned CNNTürk was showing a documentary about penguins. At the same time, CNN International was providing round-the-clock coverage of the events. Eventually some of mainstream media, including CNNTürk, managed to get their act together and provide coverage of the events. Pro-government channels such as NTV continued to ignore the situation, choosing instead to spin conspiracy theories about the protests. The initial reluctance of mainstream media to cover the first days of the Gezi Protests meant that the national audience in Turkey were pretty much left in the dark about what was happening in Taksim. On the other hand, social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook were abuzz with pictures, videos and commentary upload by individuals participating in the protests. Reports posted by users of these platforms were the only source of information available that described the situation to the wider public.

Although micro-blogging service Twitter has been the focus of most academic studies about the role of social media in providing information about what was happening on the ground or organizing participation (Demirhan 2014, Gerbaudo 2012; Leavitt 2009; Poell et al. 2015; Procter et. Al 2013, Tüfekçi 2013), urban dictionaries were also used by protesters. Ekşisözlük, the most popular one, temporarily become a platform for community members to communicate with one

another during the first few days of the mass media blackout. As the events escalated, the website administration temporarily suspended the membership system on Ekşisözlük; anyone with an email account could share real-time information about ongoing events through the website. The messaging client designed for community members was extensively used to this end. When communicating with one another, the usage of nicknames typical of Ekşisözlük was problematic insofar as they both provided anonymity and also an extra layer of unease; there was no way of checking if the information given by a community member was real or not. As the membership had been opened to all participants, the nickname on the other end of the messaging client could be anyone, including civilian police.

Asides from communicating with one another through the messaging client, the community commons of Ekşisözlük were used by protesters to publicize personal accounts of participation on specific pages, whose titles were also user generated. On Ekşisözlük, once a pages is opened up, then the entries that have been produced for the subject of the page are listed chronologically, starting from with the earliest contribution. Although such a layout does not make Ekşisözlük ideal for participants seeking to obtain real-time information about what was happening on the ground or for groups trying to organize themselves, more than 22,384 entries were being posted daily on the website between the 30th of May and the 5th June, when there was almost no mass-media coverage of the unfolding events.[20] On the 3rd of June, Ekşisözlük experienced it's 17th most busy day ever since 1999 with 6945 writers posting 27,279 entries under 4291 subject headers.[21] While many of the entries have now been retrospectively deleted by contributors, there still exists around 10,000 entries posted between the 31st of May and the 5rd of June that are related to the Gezi Park protests.

Just as much as facilitating real-time communication between protesters, one can argue that the community commons of Ekşisözlük allowed for a different sort of event-sharing that is ideal for capturing and expressing the experience of participating in the protests. As such, using Ekşisözlük created the possibility of crafting narratives that are appealing for those who would be interested in "how it feels to be there". Drawing from this, one needs to frame Ekşisözlük within the context of the Gezi Protests as a platform affording horizontal communication between participants in private and as a public "archive of everyday life" (see Furman 2013) during the protests. User contributions on Ekşisözlük ranged from tips about where the police were hiding to ambush protesters in the Taksim area to philosophical reflections about revolution, criticisms of the

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20 http://www.eksistats.com/index.php?
    page=entry&list=sec&sd=26&sm=5&sy=2013&ed=17&em=6&ey=2013&listele=Listele
21 http://www.eksistats.com/index.php?page=entry&list=gungun&sd=3&sm=6&sy=2013&%C5%9Eu+g%C3%BCn=
    %C5%9Eu+g%C3%BCn

mainstream media or the Turkish government and even Wi-Fi passwords in the Taksim area for free Internet access. Peer production mechanisms were extremely important in this respect as they allowed community members to identify misinformation as well as collectively contribute information of vital importance to the demonstrators on the street.

The Gezi Park Protests demonstrate that within the context of the Turkish cyberspace, platforms with a community commons have the capacity to be used by demonstrators to convey a specific range of communication to the wider online public. In comparison to other social media platforms such as Twitter which was used during the protests to exchange information or Facebook, which was used to organize events, urban dictionaries such as Ekşisözlük were used to communicate accounts and impressions of participation in the protests. As such, the affordances of these platforms can be thought as adding a unique dimension to communication within the context of Turkish cyberspace. This however, does not mean that either Internet spaces or platforms such as Ekşisözlük are predisposed to being used for revolutionary or counter-revolutionary ends. Instead, in a manner similar to the Egyptian revolution, activists and participants used whatever resources they had at their disposal to communicate and organize themselves (Aouragh and Alexander 2011). To a large extent, Ekşisözlük as well as other popular platforms were the choice of the Gezi protestors because they were already the spaces and tools that people of their generation had chosen for communication in daily life.

What the role of social media and Ekşisözlük during the Gezi Park protests demonstrates is the presence of an extremely unique Turkish cyberspace which can be imagined as a sphere of dissent. Theorizing Turkish cyberspace as a sphere of decent seems to echo the observations made by Manuel Castells in his recent book on networked social movements. Castells argues that cyberspace allows for free communication between actors who are discontent with the social order. Drawing this observation, he argues that the existence of an Internet culture, made up of bloggers, social networks and cyberactivism is the pre-condition for networked social movements (2015:95-96). As the numerous case-studies presented in *Networks of Outrage and Hope* demonstrate, the mobilization of networked social movements throughout the world tend to follow a similar pattern. All movements begin in cyberspace and than move onto urban space, often resulting with the occupation of a symbolic public square as material support for both debates and protests. The affordances of the Internet as a free space of communication plays a major role in spreading images and messages that carry the potential to mobilize people. As such, one needs to imagine cyberspace as an ecology of different platforms wherein participants can debate and take the decision to call for action and to relay decisions and information to the population at large. In

societies like Turkey, wherein the public sphere is heavily censored by both directly and indirectly by governmental and corporate interests, the Internet has become the principle communication medium to coordinate collective actions and organize dissent from below in a horizontal manner.

In the meantime, media corporations in Turkey have also capitalized on the technological affordances on the Internet by promoting Internet journalism. Some of the most visited websites in Turkey are the online editions of mass circulation newspapers. Offering access for free, the online editions of mass circulation newspapers make their profits from Internet advertising. The total shares of advertising revenues from the Internet are making a growing contribution to the profits of media corporations in Turkey (Çevikel 2004). On the other hand, the traffic volumes from independent news sources such as Bianet.org or T24 are still not enough for these online-only news networks to either generate any significant revenues nor to have a significant impact on the public sphere in Turkey (Tunç & Görgülü 2012). However what remains to be said is that the Internet has greatly enhanced the circulation of ideas and the possibility of ordinary people in Turkey to express themselves to a wider online public.

Before mapping some of the key actors of Turkish cyberspace, it is important to acknowledge and discuss the structural dynamics unique to the Internet and the online public in Turkey. Although there is a steady and growing literature on the digital culture of Turkish speakers on the Internet,[22] no comprehensive academic survey exists on the structural factors shaping the demographic structure of the Turkish speaking online public. As the Internet usage has spread around the world over the course of the past few decades, it has continually entered into different cultural and territorial contexts. Within the course of the past decade, the Internet usage has entered social milieus other than North America or Western Europe. As of 2015, North Americans constituted only 9.8% of the total percentage of Internet users around the world.[23] Social dynamics and demographic trends within these local contexts influence the demographic structure of online publics and the conditions of participation. Therefore, one can argue that the Turkish online public is a product of dynamics conditioned and structured by a combination of technology, economic behaviours, social patterns, and institutional structures or law.

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22 See for example, Mutlu Binark and Günseli Bardaktutan-Sütçü, "Türkiye'de İnternet Kafeler: İnternet Kafeler Üzerine Üretilen Söylemler ve Mekan-Kullanıcı İlişkisi," *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 41, no. 1 (2008): 113–48; Mutlu Binark, Gunseli Bayraktutan- Sütcü, and Fatma Buçakçı, "How Turkish Young People Utilize Internet Cafes: The Results of Ethnographic Research in Ankara," *Observatorio* 8 (2009:) 286–310; Hümeyra Can and Nilüfer Can, "The Inner Self Desires a Friendly Chat: Chat Metaphors in Turkish and English," *Metaphor and Symbol* 25, no. 1 (2010): 34–55, doi:10.1080/10926480903538480; Ayışığı Sevdik and Varol Akman, "Internet in the Lives of Turkish Women," *First Monday* 7, no. 3 (March 2002), doi:10.5210/fm.v7i3.937; and Ayşegül Tahiroğlu et al., "Internet Use Among Turkish Adolescents," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 11, no. 5 (October 2008): 537–43, doi:10.1089/cpb.2007.0165. Ogan, C. L. "Confession, Revelation and Storytelling: Patterns of Use on a Popular Turkish Website." *New Media & Society* 8, no. 5 (October 1, 2006): 801–23. doi:10.1177/1461444806067589.
23 http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats14.htm

When discussing online publics, one needs to take into account the growing recognition that "very local histories and cultures of use" (Goggin & McLelland 2007:17) have played an important role in shaping cyberspace ecologies within national contexts (Murphy 2008: 268–86). By prioritizing local culture and how pre-existing social formations have appropriated social media and Web 2.0 platforms, one can begin to understand how the enclosure of the mass media in Turkey has led to the emergence of a sphere of dissent within Turkish cyberspace.

CHAPTER II: CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKEY'S CYBERSPACE AND ONLINE PUBLIC

"Information is immaterial, but never exists without a material support."

McKenzie Wark, *A Hacker Manifesto*, p. 55

When one looks through literature that can be broadly described as "techno-utopianist" (see Segal 2005), the Internet tends to be presented as a potential panacea for curing the isolationist and repressive tendencies of democratically flawed regimes in the developing world. Unfortunately, much of such literature suffers a lack of contextualization. For example, Yochai Benkler's *Wealth of Networks,* much like other popular works that explore the relationship between Internet and society, does not give concrete examples as to how the Internet contributes to the democratic process in societies other than North America or Europe. These works tend to narrate and study the relationship between the Internet and society or even studies of digital culture or cyberspace from the vantage point of the North American, Anglophone sociocultural context. As Goggin and McLelland (2007) note:

"The United States is all too often taken as "the supposed vanguard of the information society," and there has been little attempt to generate a discussion between scholars working on different language cultures or to develop modes of analysis that do not take Anglophone models as their starting point" (Goggin and McLelland 2007:8).

While it is certainly important to acknowledge the strong influence of the North America in the shaping of both digital culture and social media or Web 2.0 platforms worldwide, online publics and their practices tend to be formed out of local demographics and social dynamics. Within the context of a similar argument, Mizuko Ito has pointed out that technologies are not universal; rather, it is necessary to attend to "the heterogeneous co-constitution of technology across a transnational stage" (Mizuko, Okabe and Matsuda 2006: 7). One can say that the heterogeneous co-constitution of the Internet operates through economy, government policies, institutional or legal structures characteristic of national contexts as well as practices and culture of different social milieus. The later plays a key factor in both shaping the structure of an online public and also the way different Internet-based platforms are appropriated for local usage. Put simply, the Internet becomes whatever people want do with it (Alleyne 2012). In prioritizing how the local online public has

appropriated social media and Web 2.0 platforms, studies sharing a similar point of view to the one espoused in this chapter look into how Internet users and communities "claim" online socialization spaces such as Second Life (Boellstorff 2008) or Facebook (Miller 2011) or "polymedia" (Madianou & Miller 2011) to create forms of narrations and selves unique to different cultural milieus. Similarly, this dissertation argues that the Turkish speaking online public has appropriated social media and Web 2.0 platforms to create a sphere of dissent distinct from the spaces of the mass media.

The following chapter will be devoted to framing the relationship between the Internet and society within the territorial context of Turkey. Accordingly, the first section begins with a historical account describing the evolution and expansion of the Internet as a communications network throughout North America and it's eventual arrival in Turkey. As it is explained in detail, the late arrival of the Internet as part of a governmental policy to import the technology wholesale into Turkey causes certain structural peculiarities that make the topology of the network unique in comparison to the Internet network topologies worldwide. The next section will describe the peculiarities of the network topology in Turkey as well as the (almost) simultaneous co-emergence of commerical and non-commercial networks. In the later half of this chapter, the structural effects caused by being a late adopter will be introduced and discussed with reference to a wider social framework. In this section, efforts of the Turkish state to control the Internet through the implementation of censorship and surveillance mechanisms will be covered. The next part of the chapter examines how all of these dynamics shape the demographic structure of the Turkish speaking online public and documents some characteristic practices. In the final section of the chapter, the sözlük phenomena will be introduced as well as Ekşisözlük, the platform whose peer production mechanisms will be explored in the upcoming chapters.

1. a) ARPANET: THE ORIGINS OF THE INTERNET AS A NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY

Over the past decade, Internet usage has rapidly spread around the world creating a global computer mediated communications network. As a communications technology, the Internet can be considered to be the product of a historical process that can be traced to the immediate period after the Second World War. In the period between then and now, a number of technical innovations have effectively kick-started the spread of the Internet firstly in North America and then around the world. The following section will be dedicated to narrating the historical development of the Internet as a network and provide a technical description of how the Internet works as a networking technology.

Contrary to the popular myth that the Internet was a networking technology developed by the American military during the height of the Cold War as system to keep communication running between military sites in case of nuclear war (see Ryan 2010), the Internet was created as a

solution for the need of scientific communities at American universities to share computer resources during the mid-1960s (Hafner & Lyon 1996). Sponsored by the Defence/ Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), the intention of the project was to build a communication network that could 'time-share' access to mainframe computers through local terminals.

i) A short history of computers and electric circuits

The origins of the modern computer can be traced to project Ultra, the famous attempt by the British government during World War 2 to decode German radio transmissions scrambled with the Enigma cypher machine. The Enigma was a machine developed by the Germans to scramble the Morse code used by the Wehrmacht for daily communications. Being a novel technology at the time, ciphered radio communications gave the Germans a strategic advantage and complicated the British war efforts. Understanding the threat posed by Engima, British prime minister Winston Churchill assigned a group of scientists from Cambridge and Oxford under the leadership of Alan Turing to crack the code. At Bletchley Park, the headquarters of project Ultra, Alan Turing and his staff built the BOMBE computer out of a pre-existing design developed by the Polish Cipher Bureau prior to Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939. BOMBE was a purpose build mechanical computer which emulated the scrambling technique of the Engima machine (see Winston 1998). Using the BOMBE, British intelligence was able to decode German transmissions and give a temporary boost to the British war effort. However, from 1941 onwards the Wehrmacht switched from using the Enigma cipher to the electromagnetic (and more complex) Lorenz cipher to scramble communication. This pushed Bletchley Park to develop a more complex computer called Colossus under the leadership of Tommy Flowers. Colossus became the world's first digital electronic computer which could be programmed for specific cipher-breaking purposes.

After the end of World War 2, Bletchley Park was disbanded and many staff members migrated to the U.S.A to pursue research careers at prestigious American universities. This migration across the Atlantic created the opportunity for American universities to refine the computing technologies developed at Bletchley Park and build supercomputers intended for scientific research. The first supercomputers began to be produced in the early 1960s, and their development coincided with the rising demand for machines from the scientific community which would be able to process complex and time-intensive mathematical computations. During this period, the cost and maintenance of these machines was extremely high and only the most prestigious American educational institutions could afford a supercomputer. Due to the prohibitive costs of maintaining a supercomputer, DARPA and the National Science Foundation (NSF), rather than giving every university a grant to build a supercomputer, decided instead to pursue a policy of building supercomputer clusters. Time-sharing, as a technique to optimize access times to program

supercomputers, was developed to overcome the constraints imposed by traditional batch programming which needed a computer operator to input each calculation request. Time-sharing utilized a system of terminals from which researchers could directly access programs on the supercomputer clusters from remote locations without having to rely on a computer technician. ARPANET (1968-1990) emerged as a networking solution to the problem of connecting computers located in remote locations around North America with supercomputer clusters. Leased copper telephone lines designed only for the ARPA network would form the infrastructure needed to build a network of computers across North America. In a resource-sharing network, many machines would serve many different users, and a researcher would be able to access programs on mainframe computers located across north America through local terminals. This vision of using a local computer to connect and utilize the resources of larger, more powerful computers, embodies many of the design principles (de-centred, dispersed and end-to-end) of the Internet; making ARPANET it's first historical predecessor.

The way ARPANET functioned as a de-centred, dispersed network was through the technique of packet-switching. Packet-switching allowed an electrical signal to automatically utilize the best available routes on a communications network to optimize the time taken to reach it's destination. Cables and servers capable of passing a signal along the best-available route meant that data transmissions could be exchanged without needing to rely on a central authority to re-route the signal from the sender to the recipient. When data was sent out from a computer, packet switching would break the data down into smaller parts and route them along open line on the network. Along the network, storage and forwarding servers would bounce the data packets around until they reached their final destination. Breaking data into smaller packets prevented bottlenecks from occurring on the network and optimized the usage of leased copper lines. As ARPANET began to grow, the network expanded to include government and U.S federal agencies who began to use it to exchange large quantities of data.[24] High costs incurred by setting up and using leased copper lines capable of carrying the ARPANET signals meant that the infrastructural backbone of the network would eventually need to be upgraded. This upgraded successor of ARPANET came to be known as NSFNET.

1. b) NSFNET, TCP/IP INTERNET PROTOCOL SUITE AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The NSF network, which replaced ARPANET in 1990 solved three important structural problems of it's predecessor. Firstly, by investigating and upgrading the network infrastructure of ARPANET,

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24 It was only at this point that the American military began taking interest in ARPANET as a networking technology and commissioned a study by the RAND corporation to examine the possibilities of using ARPANET for military communications. The study published by RAND, which concluded that ARPANET could be used as an alternative communications network in the event of a nuclear war, was the cause of the false rumour regarding the military origins of the Internet.

NSFNET made data transmission faster and more efficient. The network was upgraded in three phases, in 1986 the infrastructural backbone on the network could transmit 56 Kilobits per second. Then in 1987, the backbone was upgraded to T1 (1.5 Megabit per second) and finally in 1991 the backbone was upgraded to T3 (45 Megabits per second). Investment in the infrastructure of the network solved the problem of long waiting times for data transmission, eliminated the need for store-and-forward servers and diversified the possible uses of the network to include purposes other than access to supercomputer clusters. Another important innovation was the implementation of the TCP/IP Internet Protocol Suit for all communication on NSFNET. The TCP/IP Internet protocol essentially standardized the format in which end-to-end data transmissions on the NSF network were exchanged on the network. This meant that any institution with access to the NSFNET's infrastructural backbone could easily access and communicate with other nodes on the network in an end-to-end fashion without having compatibility issues. From the early 1990s onwards, the 'academic only' specification which limited the range of uses for NSFNET was relaxed and soon local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) began to provide commercial access to the network.

The standardisation of TCP/IP protocols can be seen as a keystone in the paradigm of how the Internet is organized as a de-centred, end-to-end and robust network. As a physical network, the Internet is now composed of a nodes which are connected together through Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and the Internet Protocol (IP). Each computer which has access to the Internet is assigned an IP number that is assigned to a host which is a table of existing IP addresses. Hosts are held in servers, which are the physical hardware containers within which the connections to the IP addresses are held. Communication between computers is facilitated by the Internet protocol suite which is composed of four layers:

Data transmission takes messages composed on the application layer through the transport layer which determines the address of the message delivery. Then the message is broken down into smaller packages and sent out through the Internet (or I.P) layer. It passes through the link layer which takes the data package from the source to a router connecting the computer to a wider network. Once the package reaches the designated host, it travels up through the link layer to arrive at the Internet layer. Then the packages are recombined by the transport layer into the original message which becomes accessible on the receiving host's application layer.

Network Topology

Host A → Router → Router → Host B

Data Flow

| Application | process-to-process | Application |
| Transport | host-to-host | Transport |

Internet ... Internet ... Internet ... Internet

Link ... Link ... Link ... Link

Ethernet ... Fiber, Satellite, etc. ... Ethernet
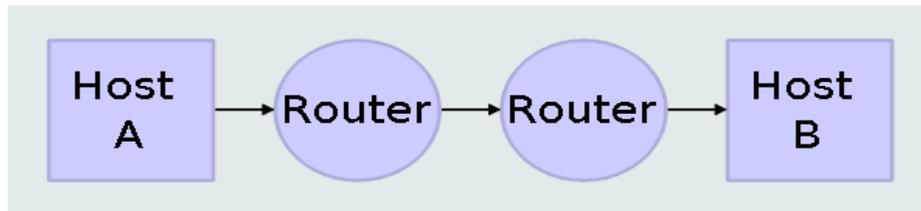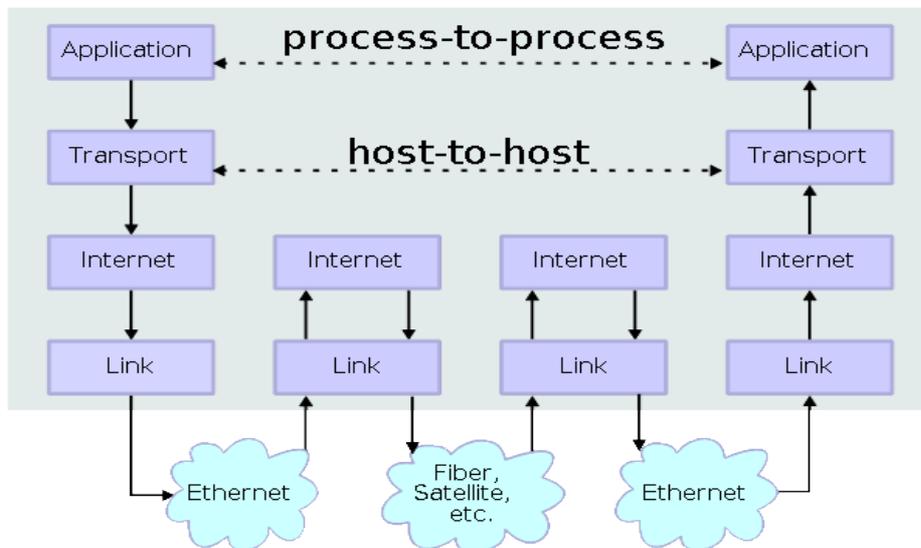
Drawing i: The network topology of the Internet. From
https://www.coursera.org/course/insidetheInternet

What remained as the final structural problem was to develop a system through which computers could find each other. The World Wide Web (WWW) was invented at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) by scientists Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailiau as a way of accessing scientific research papers located within CERN's local network.[25] The World Wide Web was based on the notion of the hyperlink, a reference (or in the case of a hyperlinktext, a word) to data stored elsewhere on the network. Inspired by the success of the web as a linking system on the CERN network, Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailiau wanted to develop the web so as to use it to find and access research papers on NSFNET. Around the same year (1991), Dr. Paul Kunz, a scientist at Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC), managed to compile a database of 300,000 research papers that he wanted to share with the rest of the global science community. Kunz, upon

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25 See Tim Berners-Lee's *Weaving the Web: The Past, Present and Future of the World Wide Web by its Inventor* (1999) and *How the Web Was Born: The Story of the World Wide Web (2000),* Robert Cailiau's personal account for more on the process of inventing the web.

learning about the web from his colleagues at CERN, began to use it as a way to offer easy access to his database and the first Internet server of born.[26] Despite having early competitors such as Gopher in the mid 1990s, the World Wide Web as an reference service eventually became inseparable part of using the Internet. Despite being used interchangeably in popular media, the Internet as a physical network and the network of World Wide Web are in fact two very different animals. As a reference service, the World Wide Web connects objects uploaded onto the Internet. On the other hand, the Internet is the networking technology that allows computers to communicate with each other.

1. c) THE 'BIG BANG' OF THE INTERNET IN 1994

As mentioned previously, the standardisation of the Internet Suite Protocols created the possibility of non-academic networks to connect and exchange information on NSFNET through commercial service providers. By 1994, NSFNET usage was growing at a rapid rate, mainly through commercial service providers. In the same year, Netscape built the first commercially available Internet browser. Internet browsers simplified access by acting as an interface for the Internet Protocol Suite protocol and facilitated the development of the domain name system (DNS) which translated TCP/IP addresses into user-friendly addresses based on the English language. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) was also founded in 1994 as a independent association which maintained industry standards for the web and protect it from proprietary balkanization (Severance, 2013). Programming languages such as Java Script were developed for building software intended to be used online. Looking back at these developments, one can argue that 1994 was the year in which the Internet was born. Investment in fibre optic infrastructure capable of transmitting data packages at extremely high-speeds meant that the new network being born out of NSFNET carried the potential to have a potentially unlimited amount of users. As NSFNET was being phased out and upgraded into the Internet, users from non-academic or technical backgrounds began using the network, sparking off a phenomena which has been described as 'the emergence of the ordinary users" (Bakardjieva 2005).[27] As the number of Internet users grew and diversified, the web expanded with an ever increasing number of IP addresses and hosts.

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26 See http://www.slac.stanford.edu/history/earlyweb/history.shtml for the story of how Paul Kunz developed the first web server.

27 In December 1995 there were 16 million users of the Internet which roughly equates to 0.4% of the world population. As of September 2010, there are more than 1,971 million users which equates to 28.8% of the total global population. This means that the number of Internet users has increased almost 123 fold in the past 15 years. (http://www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm)

Hobbes' Internet Timeline Copyright ©2012 Robert H Zakon
http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/

DATE	SITES		DATE	SITES
12/90	1		06/95	23,500
12/91	10		01/96	100,000
12/92	50		06/96	252,000
06/93	130		01/97	646,162
09/93	204		06/97	1,117,259
10/93	228		01/98	1,834,710
12/93	623		06/98	2,410,067
06/94	2,738		01/99	4,062,280
12/94	10,022		07/99	6,598,697
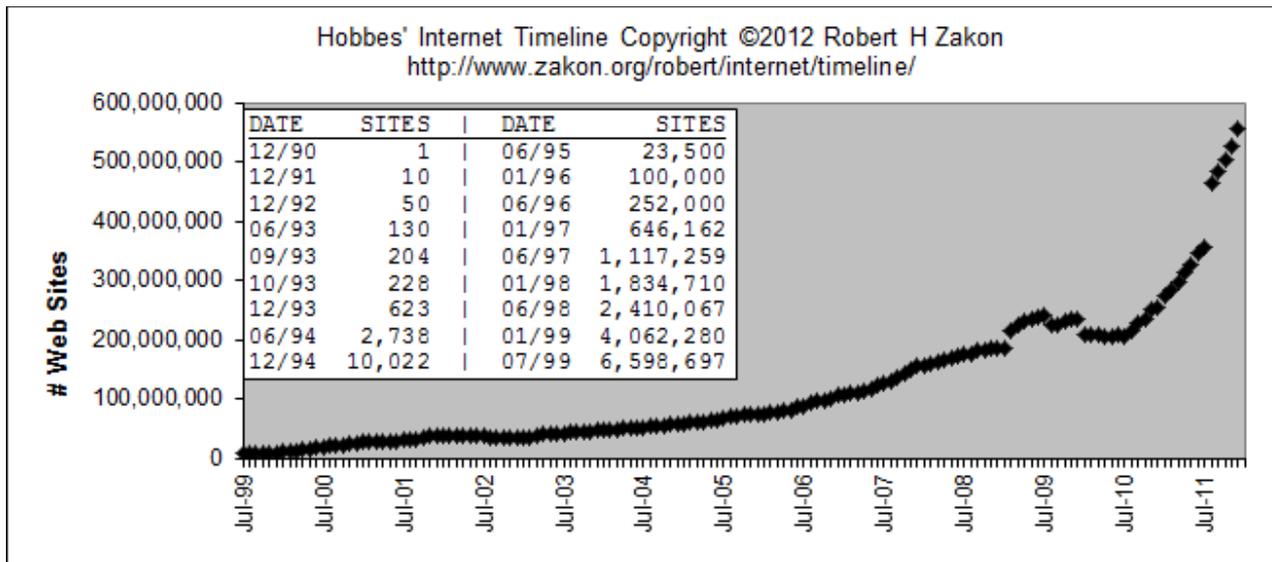
Drawing ii: A graph showing the growth in the # of websites from 1999 until 2011. *From http://www.zakon.org/robert/Internet/timeline/*

1. d) DOT COM CRASH OF 2000

The so-called "Al Gore Bill" of 1992 was a key moment in the evolutionary trajectory of the Internet. Opening Internet networks to commerce, the bill effectively set the foundations for the network to be appropriated by market forces. From 1992 onwards, a logic of commerce relying on the possibilities offered by the network technologies started to emerge in North America (Abbate 1999). Some of the key software technologies used in this early period of the Internet was the HTML, HTTP and URL web protocols which were used to organize access and the searchability of websites. ASP, PHP, JSP, CGI and PERL were the scripting languages used on servers and JavaScript, VBScript and Flash were used for client-side applications. ActiveX and Java were used to add downloadable components to websites.

Until the infamous Dot Com crash of 2000, the logic of early e-commerce was principally centred around using the Internet as a way of providing services for users.[28] In other words, the Internet was simply a network through which – paraphrasing Bill Gates's famous words – "capitalism could become friction free" (Gates 1995). This mode of thinking was centred around the post-Fordist economic model which relied on flexible, 'just-in-time' modes of production and relied on strong logistical distribution networks. In this context, the network infrastructure of the Internet was seen to have the potential to optimize the post-Fordist economic model and increase surplus value. Companies such as Amazon and Ebay benefited from reduced fixed costs by maintaining websites rather than retail outlets and utilized the Internet to streamline logistical distribution

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28 http://som.csudh.edu/fac/lpress/comm.htm

networks. This was complimented by the valorization of the Silicon Valley industries in the U.S.A which provided software solutions to the emerging digital economy.

From around 1995 until the Dot Com crash of 2000, there was an unprecedented amount of investment flowing from venture capitalists to small Internet companies specialized in providing online services. Essentially investing in the Internet was seen as a fail-safe opportunity and many start-up companies founded during this period operated with a sustained net losses in order to build up a market share and brand awareness over the service they were providing. For example, Amazon.com which was founded in 1994, did not return a profit on investments until the fourth quarter of 2001 (O'Reilly 2007). This created a dynamic in which companies attempted to broaden their customer bases as quickly as possible without bothering to balance expenditures. The rationale behind this "Get large or get lost" logic was that each company attempted to monopolize a particular online service with the hopes of eventually drawing a large enough customer basis that would allow for profits. This market behaviour was reinforced by public interest and investment in e-commerce which saw the value of loss producing companies to sky-rocket in very short periods of time. All of this came to an abrupt end during the early months of 2000, when a fluctuation in interest rates caused a decline in public investment and many companies which had been dependent on venture capital found themselves strapped for cash. As a result of this, many of the first generation of service oriented e-commerce companies went bankrupt and remaining survivors such as Google or Amazon had to make some changes in their business strategies.

Advertising expenditures and revenues constituted an important element in the "get large or get lost" business model. Dot Com companies prior to the crash of 2000 spent large part of their budgets on advertising to promote brand awareness and expand their user bases. Inadvertently, this caused Dot Companies to target and colonize both communicative spaces of the Internet and cyberculture. As previously, a legal framework that prevented the Internet from being used for commercial purposes had inadvertently protected cyberculture from commercialization. This made computer-to-computer networks had been legally off limits to capital until 1994. The marketing mentality of the first generation of e-commerce saw the pre-existing communicative spaces of the Internet some kind of virtual billboard that could potentially be filled up with advertising for services. One of the inadvertent results of Dot Companies investing in online advertising was a rise in the ratio of noise to communication on the network. As others have noted, spam (unsolicited bulk messages) the key component of "noise" online, constitutes the dark side to the logic of capitalism on the Internet (Brunton 2013; Parikka, Simpson, Tony ed al. 2009). As the logic of capitalism was allowed to become pervasive on the network, this not only created the e-commerce paradigm but also more anomalous forms exchange. In fact, as the infamous example of "Green Card" advertising on Usenet demonstrated, the first attempts to assert a profit paradigm into cyberspace

relied on the same logic of action that now characterises spamming. As a result, spam and other kinds of anomalous forms of exchange found online can be seen as an effect of capitalism being introduced onto the Internet. Unsolicited bulk messages soon became the common problem of all the communicative spaces of the Internet and the rising noise ratios eventually caused people to abandon certain kinds of communication technologies whose spaces had been saturated with spam. In the long run, the flight of users from certain kinds of communication technologies caused a loss in advertising revenues for e-commerce and contributed to the Dot Com Crash of 2000.

The fundamental problem with the business strategy of Web 1.0 was that rather then utilizing the unique potential constituted by the Internet as networking technology capable of producing value in itself, Web 1.0 treated the Internet as a medium to streamline economic operations normally made offline. To put it in another way, the technological potential of the Internet was subsumed to the demands of the economic model. As such, the first e-commerce companies had a very limited understanding of both the needs of the emerging online audience and the value-creating opportunities of the Internet as a network. The resulting Dot Com crises pushed companies to go back to the drawing board and re-evaluate the possibilities offered by the Internet for commerce. This economic restructuring in the early 2000s resulted in a new, non-intrusive business model relying on newly emerging content sharing technologies which catered to the demands of the emerging online audience. While democratizing distribution ("sharing is caring") was one mantra of Web 2.0, democratization of production and the easing of access to consuming content were the other two mantras of the Web 2.0 paradigm. Increased availability of affordable, easy to use digital equipment such as camcorders and smart phones during the mid-200s democratizatized production in a material sense; one was no longer required to have expert knowledge or a large disposable income to create media. On the hand, free and easy to use software such as blogs, wikis or digital editing tools for music or video democratized personal expression online. Improved search services augmented with ranking algorithms and recommendation engines allowed the supply of digital content to be connected more efficiently with the demand of the consumers. Since the mid-2000s, what one sees with the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies is a transition from a mode of economic rationality which subsumes the Internet into a pre-existing economic model towards a rationale of developing an economic model based on the potential of the Internet as a value generating entity in itself. The resulting economic model is what has been described as the "networked information economy" (Benkler 2006:2-7) or as digital, informatic, MP3 or informational capitalism (Fitzpatrick 2002; Fuchs 2008; Sennett 2006; Schiller 2000).

2. HISTORY OF THE INTERNET AS A NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY IN TURKEY

From the "Big Bang" year of 1994 onwards, the network of commercial Internet gradually expanded to include pre-existing European networks (for example, EUNet) and then networks in developing countries.[29] The popularisation of the Internet as a communications network in the developing world has caused a shift in the demographic and geographic distribution of Internet users world-wide over the past decade. For example, the percentage of growth in Internet users in the Middle East in 2010 was a staggering 1,825.3% more than the number of Internet users in 2000. Comparatively Internet usage in North America only grew by 146.3% during the same period.[30] As of 2012, there are more Internet users in the developing countries than from the developed world and over one third of the world population now has regular access to the Internet.[31] Much like the printing press in the Ottoman Empire, the Internet arrived in Turkey much later than it's European counterparts. Despite making the first connection in 1993, commercial Internet only became available to the wider public from 1996 onwards with the TURNET project and the subcontracting of Internet access to commercial service providers. In other words, the 'big bang' year for the Internet in Turkey is 1996, two years after the technology had started to become popular in North America. In comparison to the U.S.A where computer networking technologies had been in development since the 1970s, the Turkish government of the time decided to import Internet-based networking technologies wholesale in 1996.

i) The first connection: 12th of April 1993

While the U.S.A and Europe had been investing in the necessary infrastructure for commercial Internet since the 1970s, the Turkish state lacked the funding to invest in infrastructure that would eventually allow for commercial networks to flourish in Turkey. Although closed national-scale networks such as EARN (European Academic and Research Network), BiTNET (Because it's Time Network) and TÜVEKA (Turkish Universities and Research Institutes Network) had already been in use to communicate scientific data between various Turkish universities since 1986, the data transmission protocols between these networks were not standardised. The networks themselves lacked infrastructural capacity to be expanded into a nation-wide network. The standardisation of the TCP/IP during the mid-90s and the opening up of NSFNET to e-commerce in 1992 caused material infrastructure such as fibre optic cables and modems to be increasingly affordable on the global market. The effects of decreasing costs for building computer networking infrastructure and the standardisation of the Internet Protocol suite can perhaps be seen as the two key catalysts inspiring the Turkish state to begin investing in the Internet.

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29 See Appendix 2.1 for more data on the rapid worldwide adoption of the Internet.
30 http://www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
31 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/09/2012923232111323871.html#.UGAaphifQqQ.facebook

While there are competing accounts to be found online regarding the first international connection, most of the narratives seem to agree that the first connection out of Turkey was made on the 12th of April 1993 using a 64 Kbps capacity line and a modem in the Middle Eastern Technical University's (ODTÜ) Information Technology Centre.[32] Utilizing the TCP/IP protocol which had been recently standardised on a global scale, the call connected with a computer on the National Science Foundation Network (NSFNET) in North America and created the first international connection out of Turkey. The story behind the connection was that ODTÜ and TÜBİTAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) had been contracted by the Turkish government to collaborate on preparing a joint project that would allow for the establishment of both international and national-scale networks adhering to TCP/IP protocols. This research project was to become technologically feasible in 1993 when the state-owned Turkish Post and Telecommunications agency began to invest in telecommunications infrastructure for networking technologies. Turkey's the first connection to the NSFNET in 1993 was a result of the collaboration between ODTÜ and TÜBİTAK .

From 1993 until the end of 1994, due to the lack of adequate network infrastructure, the ODTÜ connection was the only international connection out of Turkey. Other universities such as the Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ) and the Bosporus University in Istanbul, Bilkent, Gazi and Hacettepe Universities in Ankara all built internal X2 (dial-up) links to the international connection at ODTÜ. Then, a second international connection was made in the beginning of 1994 at the Aegean University, followed by Bilkent and Bosporus Universities in 1995 and then finally Istanbul Technical University in 1996. Throughout this period, the connections to firstly NSFNET (until 1995) and then to the Internet (1995 onwards) were used by Turkish universities primarily for scientific research purposes. This meant that asides from engaging in file-sharing and data exchanges with international research institutions, there was also limited use of the web and email for facilitating researcher communication during this period.

ii) A tale of two networks: ULAKNET AND TURNET

After the success of the ODTÜ/TÜBİTAK collaboration on establishing and maintaining a permanent international connection to NSFNET, the next step was to make computer networking technologies available for a wider population. This was realized with two large-scale collaborative projects, TURNET and ULAKNET. One difference between the development of the Internet in North America and the development of the Internet in Turkey was that after importing Internet technology wholesale in 1996, the Turkish government decided to establish two separate networks, ULAKNET and TURNET. The Internet in North America had started out as an academic research

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32 See http://www.ulakbim.gov.tr/hakkimizda/tarihce/ulaknet/dunbugun.uhtml for more on the historical account of the first Internet connection in Turkey.

network that eventually evolved into a greater commercial network. In contrast, ULAKNET (the academic research network) and TURNET (the commercial network) never merged into one network in Turkey.

The later of the two, the National Academic Web (ULAKNET), was a state-sponsored project conceived to develop a non-commercial Internet network for educational and research purposes. The immediate aim of the ULAKNET project was to expand the points of access to global research networks from research institutions in Turkey and make the pre-existing national data-exchange networks compatible to the standardized TCP/IP Internet Protocols. In other words, the ULAKNET project was an attempt to eventually provide research institutions with stable and high-speed connection to global research networks and link these institutions together on a national scale. To implement this project, TÜBİTAK established in 1996 the National Academic Web and Informatics Centre (ULAKBIM) as a service support centre providing technical assistance to official institutions. As a support centre, ULAKBIM provided the technological expertise necessary to build up the ULAK network throughout Turkey. National-scale networks such as EARN and TÜVEKA (Turkish Universities and Research Institutes Network) which existed prior to the ULAK network needed to become compatible with TCP/IP Internet protocols and a new technical infrastructure had to be built for the implementation of the ULAKNET project. As a result, research institutions had to rely on state-sponsored funding through the ULAKBIM centre to build a new, national-scale research network. As of now, the ULAKNET network encompasses all Turkish universities, TÜBİTAK, the military and police academies, the government bureau for planning (DPT), the Turkish History Association, the National Library, Higher Education Association (YÖK), the national examinations centre (ÖSYM), the Turkish Atomic Energy Agency and the research and development units of the Turkish Armed Forces. According to ULAKNET's website, the network provides free and stable Internet access for 100,000 academic researchers and over 2,500,000 students throughout Turkey. The national network of ULAKNET with relative connection speeds is as follows:
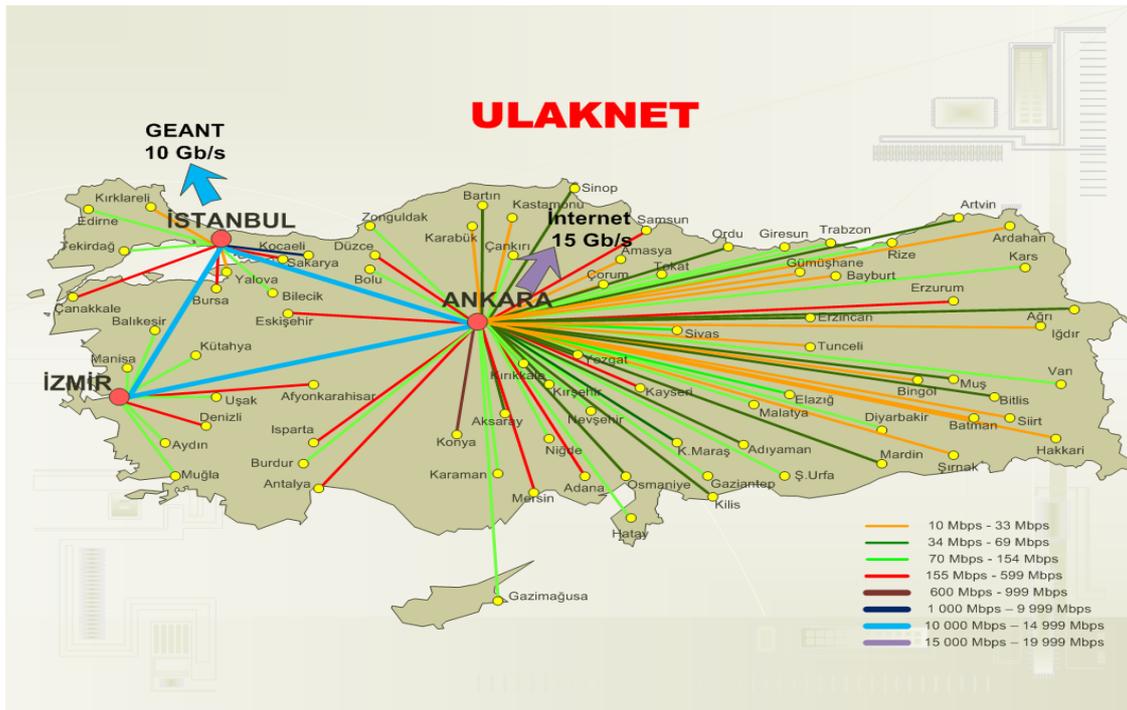
Diagram iii: network topology of ULAKNET with relative connection speeds on a national scale. *Courtesy of ULAKBIM.*

The national network of ULAKNET is connected to the international network of GEANT, which is a European-wide network comprising of National Research and Education Networks (NRENs). Prior to the GEANT network, ULAKNET was part of the TEN-34 research network which was operational from 1997 until 1998 and then the TEN-155 network which was operational until it was replaced by GEANT in 2001. The GEANT network facilitates the flow of data between European research institutions and connects national-scale research networks with each other. The topology of the GEANT network can be visualized as follows:
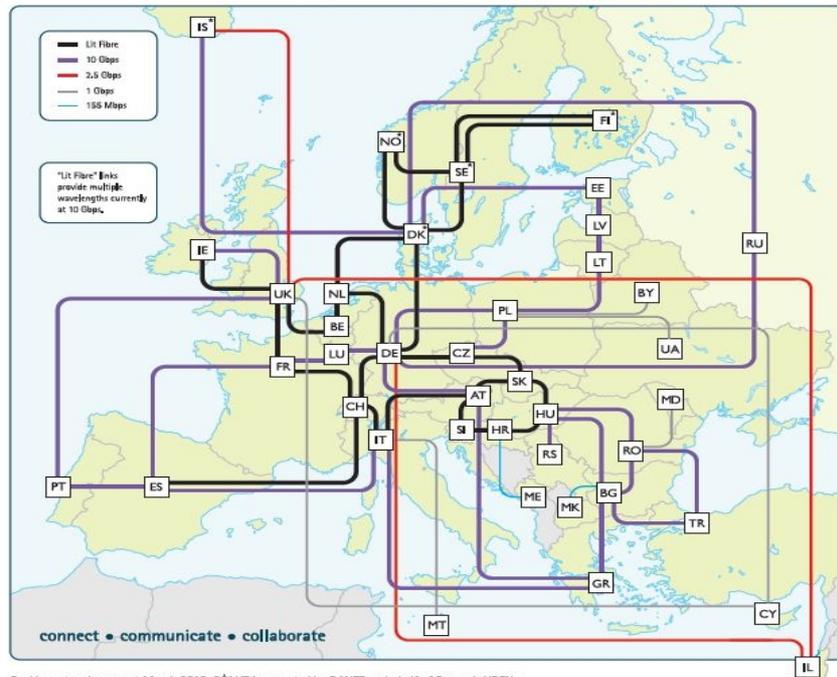
Diagram iv: Network topology of the GEANT research network. The node labelled as 'TR' represents the ULAKNET national network. *Courtesy of the GEANT project.*

The external connection from Istanbul in Turkey links up with external connections from Bulgaria and Romania and then to the rest of Europe. The colours of the links show the connection speeds of external connections. When the scale of the network is increased, we see that the GEAT network itself is connected through several nodes located in Europe to other supra-national research networks:
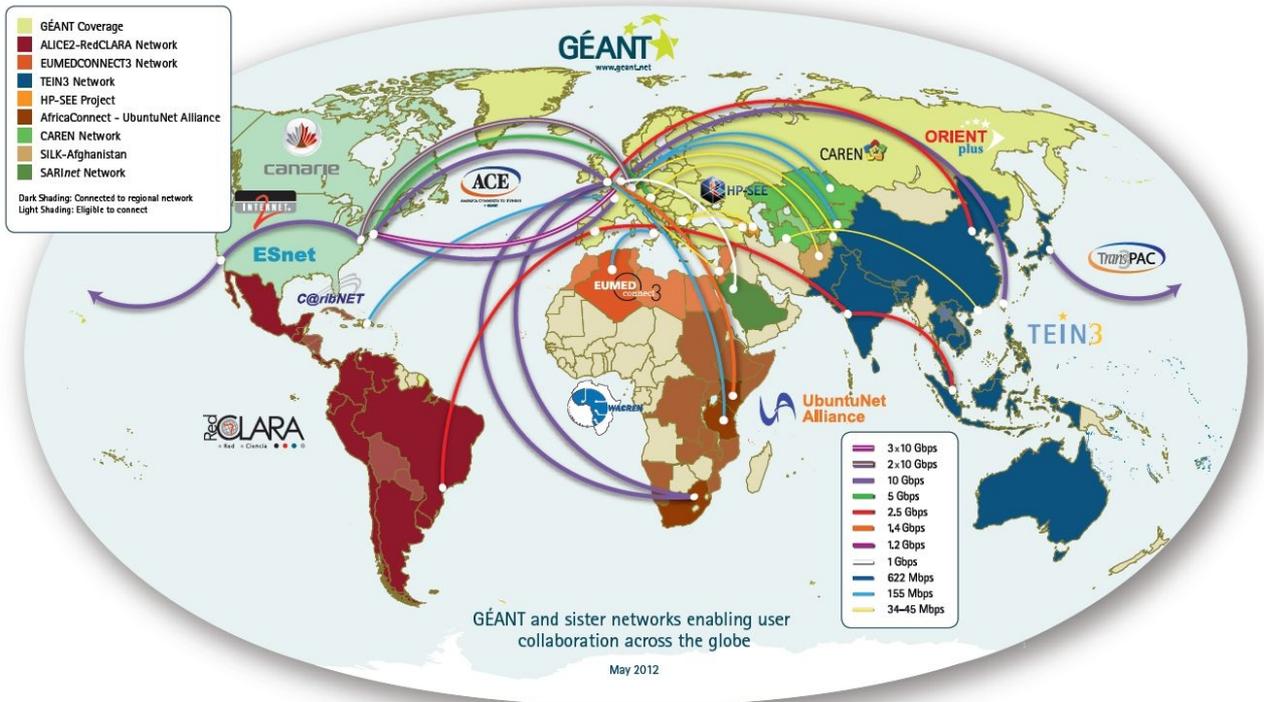
Diagram v: Global topography of research networks. GEANT is connected to other international networks through nodes located in Amsterdam, London, Paris, Madrid, Munich and Vienna. *Courtesy of the GEANT project.*

As it can be seen, the yellow shaded regions of the map belong to the GEANT network. The connection nodes within various European locations link the GEANT network with other regional supra-national networks. The colour of the connections indicate the connection speed while the colour of the country indicates which regional network the country belongs in.

The commercial Internet in Turkey began as the TURNET infrastructural project which was started by Türk Telekom in 1996 to develop the physical infrastructure needed for commercial Internet service providers. As a result of the TURNET project, three network hubs (two in Istanbul and one in Ankara) connecting Turkey to the Internet were built, finally making the Internet available for wide-scale commercial usage. Once the infrastructure for connecting to the Internet was complete, TURNET subcontracted national-scale connection services to private ISP companies by providing them with infrastructural access. In contrast to ULAKNET (which was a state-sponsored project with the goal to connect every research institution in Turkey to an international research network), the rate with which commercial Internet spread throughout Turkey

depended on free market dynamics; in theory ISPs would only supply Internet access in a specific geographical location if there was sufficient demand. As part of the agreed commercial ISP service with Türk Telekom, the companies offered memberships to users and supplied them with the necessary hardware (modems) and dynamic IP addresses that would allow them to connect with commercial servers and access the web.

By 1997, there were more then 80 companies offering Internet access to third-parties at competitive commercial rates.[33] In parallel with global developments regarding the popularisation of the Internet, the World Wide Web and the emergence of the ordinary user, the post-1997 period in Turkey saw a proliferation of different commercial online services including Internet banking, online versions of mass circulation printed media and shopping services. Despite the increasing availability of online services, the adoption rate of the Internet by Turkish users began to grow relatively slowly. By the end of 1997, the number of computers connected to the Internet in Turkey was 30,000 and the estimated user base was only around 250,000 out of a total population of 63.5 million. However, the percentage of regular Internet users has rapidly increased over the decade with now more than 30 million users going online daily. This makes Turkey the 15th largest country in terms of the number of Internet users, placed between Iran and Italy. The main service provider for the country is TT NET A.Ş, which according to a report by the National Telecommunications Authority for the telecoms market in 2007, had a market share of 95.7 percent in retail ADSL Internet access services. The other commercial ISPs are Superonline, Sabanci Telecom, Kocnet, Smile, Doruknet, DoganOnline, and IsNet. Türk Telekom still retains ownership over infrastructure for international flows of Internet traffic into and out of Turkey. It operates both the infrastructural backbone of the Internet in Turkey and owns TT NET as a subsidiary ISP provider. At the same time, it leases infrastructure and lines to other providers.

3. a) THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN TURKEY

Being a late-adaptor of Internet technologies created an urgency of having to 'catch-up' with the developed world in terms of building infrastructure necessary for the Internet. The outsourcing of ISPs to the private sector proved to be a short-term solution to the issue of enabling access to the emerging Internet network infrastructure within a limited time-frame. One downside of this strategy was that ISPs worked according to the laws of supply and demand; effectively causing some geographical regions of Turkey enjoy fast and ubiquitous access while skipping other regions with less demand. In other words, although the outsourcing of ISPs to private sector created a rapid proliferation of connection services throughout Turkey and increased competition in terms of connection costs, it also caused ISPs to neglect less prosperous or profitable geographical

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33 See http://web.archive.org/web/19990117023851/http://www.turnet.net.tr/ispler.html for the list of ISPs in business during 1997.

regions. This created an inter-regional 'digital divide' in terms of both infrastructure and access; the state neglected building network infrastructure in regions with low demands for ISPs. The uneven distribution of both infrastructural state-led investment and outsourced commercial services has created 'virtual black-holes' throughout Turkey.

According to TurkStat survey despite growing computer and Internet usage throughout Turkey, there is a significant gap between the number of urban Internet users and rural Internet users. The percentage of Internet in urban areas is 49.2% while only 23.7% of residents in rural areas regularly go online. Furthermore, investment in Internet infrastructure tends to be concentrated in the central, west and south western parts of Turkey, hence allowing residents of these areas more opportunities to go online. These areas are also the most populated regions of Turkey with roughly more than a third of the total population living in the Marmara region in the west, 15% of the total population living in south-west Aegean region and 12% living in the central region. At the same time, these areas are the most urbanized regions of Turkey with the three metropolitan regions of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir hosting roughly a third of the total national population. The relative prosperity in the central, south-west and southern urban centres is reflected in the percentages of regular Internet usage:

Percentage of Internet users* by Statistical Regions (%)

Region		Internet		
		Total	Male	Femal
TR	Turkey	47.4	58.1	37.0
TR1	İstanbul	60.9	70.9	50.5
TR2	West Marmara	44.0	52.6	35.5
TR3	Aegean	49.7	58.4	40.9
TR4	East Marmara	56.3	65.4	47.3
TR5	West Anatolia	57.1	67.1	47.6
TR6	Mediterranean	42.9	53.8	32.5
TR7	Central Anatolia	42.2	54.9	30.0
TR8	West Black Sea	38.6	47.3	30.2
TR9	East Black Sea	33.4	45.5	21.8
TRA	North East Anatolia	32.2	45.7	19.6
TRB	Central East Anatolia	34.1	46.0	22.4
TRC	South East Anatolia	29.4	44.2	15.6

Table i: Percentage of Internet users by Statistical Regions (%)

As table i. shows, 60.9% of individuals in the Istanbul region regularly go online while 57.1% in the West Anatolia region and 56.3% in the East Marmara region are regular Internet users. In comparison, poorer and mostly rural regions have much lower rates of Internet access in households: only 21.5% of the total population in the south-east Anatolia region have household Internet access. Regions with low rates of Internet penetration are also the most under-developed regions of Turkey. In these regions, social groups able to afford access have benefited from the socio-economic opportunities offered by the Internet while the poor unable to afford access have become even poorer; effectively exacerbating socio-economic inequalities in these regions. As a result, marginal groups in poor regions are now even less able to afford a regular Internet connection.

Access is one of the primary issues that contribute to the existence of a digital divide in Turkey. Owning a personal computer capable of going online and affording a subscription to a ISP still remains beyond the financial grasp of many in the impoverished regions of Turkey. In these regions, the Internet cafe has emerged as an organic, market-based solution to the problem of affordable Internet access (Gören 2003). Academic literature on the subject suggests that Internet cafes have become institutionalized in Turkey over the past decade and offer relatively standardised access conditions throughout the country. While access to the Internet at home and at institutions depends on some sort of pre-existing association with the space (for example, being a university student to access the university computer lab or being a family member/friend to access the home computer) Internet cafés in Turkey are the only public spaces in which individuals without any prior social association to a pre-existing community or institution can go online by paying small fee (Yıldız & Kaya-Bensghir 2002). Due to the tenuousness of the social tie between the access point and the user (only money), Internet cafés offer a more anonymous Internet experience and as a result are often subject to public scrutiny and government regulations (Yeşil 2003). Licences to operate cafés are strictly regulated by the Turkish state and are only provided through TT NET (the main ISP, placing these spaces under the surveillance of the state. For example, according to Turkish Internet Cafe Association (IIKO), café owners need to install state-approved content filtering software onto their computers in order to be able to obtain a license to operate an Internet café legally. Studies show that cafés are legally obligated to install filtering programs as well as 24 hours camera recordings at the place (Binark, Bayraktutan-Sütcü, Buçakçı 2009).

Although the concept of the Internet cafés originated in the metropolitan urbanized areas of Turkey, they have gradually diffused towards the peripheries of urban centres and to rural regions (Binark & Bayraktutan-Sütcü, 2008). Internet cafés today play a more important role in rural areas for Internet access: 27.7% of rural Internet users go online in Internet while only 13.7% do so in

urban areas. On the other hand, these spaces have also been criticized as being gendered places: only 6.1% of females access the Internet from a café in comparison with 22.2% of all males in Turkey.

Asides from Internet cafés, another way with which the digital divide in Turkey is being narrowed is through mobile technologies. Mobile usage in Turkey has rapidly grown over the past decade. The overall mobile penetration rate now stands at 93.8% from just 43 percent in 2008. The rate of mobile penetration rises above 100% if you exclude 0-9-year-olds.[34] Subscriptions have also grown significantly since 2001, leaping from 19.5m to 71.9m in 2014. There more than 56.8m million 3G subscription accounts that allow users access to the Internet from their mobile phones.[35] Furthermore, the rapid expansion of 3G infrastructure and services since 2008 has boosted smartphone ownership enormously. Consultancy firm Mediacells ranked Turkey 11th worldwide in terms of expected smartphone uptake, predicting that Turks will purchase 11.6m new smartphones in 2014.[36] Over 90% of smartphones are connected to the Internet and more than 75% of smartphone users are active on social media.[37] What these trends suggest is that smartphones connected to the Internet through 3G connections have become a way for the Turkish population to get online without necessarily owning a computer or frequenting an Internet café. As such, smartphones carry the potential to connect segments of the population that either are unable to own a computer due to financial or social reasons, and are also unable to frequent Internet cafés due to gender discrimination.

i) Defining the digital divide

In the context of Turkey, the digital divide can be seen as an effect of both the political economy of uneven development (Harvey 1996; Smith 2008) and of the policies pursued by successive Turkish governments to outsource Internet access to the private sector. The phenomena of the digital divide is illustrated by "unequal patterns of material access to, usage capabilities of, and benefits from computer-based information and communication technologies" (Fuchs & Horak 2007: 15-16). On a global scale, the digital divide is a structural effect of unequal exchange between nation-states. Therefore, when discussing the digital divide, one can the frame the problem in terms of scale, starting from the world system and eventually ending up in localized, micro contexts of unequal access to the Internet (Dewan & Riggins 2005). Studies on the international digital divide show that in comparison with developed countries, developing countries tend to have less access to Internet communication technologies (Wijers 2010). Although developed countries enjoy the

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34 http://www.oxfordbusineKapanogluruop.com/overview/young-and-tech-savvy-demographic-forces-are-driving-mobile-take-and-expansion
35 http://venturebeat.com/2011/11/10/turkey-mobile-revolution/
36 http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/jan/13/smartphone-explosion-2014-india-us-china-firefoxos-android
37 http://www.slideshare.net/burakBGpolat/smartphone-usage-according-to-gender-in-turkey

benefits of Internet communication technologies (ICTs) in almost all areas of life, developing countries do not benefit enough from these technologies. Being late adopters of digital technologies, developing or newly developed countries have to play a game of 'catching-up' in order to be able to reap the benefits offered by ICTs. On an international scale, less access to ICTs means that members of developing countries benefit less from the possibilities offered by the global exchange of information on the Internet. Studies suggest that societies with more expose to ICTs have better poverty reduction rates (Shirazi, Gholami, & Higón 2009), promote more efficient governance and have a positive correlation with economic growth (Bongo 2005). It has been argued that not every section of society or geographical region of a country benefits equally from exposure to ICTs (Fong 2009). Within the context of a global framework, some of the potential social benefits offered by ICTs has been theorised as follows:

- *Social equality*. ICTs have the potential to dispel disadvantages that may be associated with cultural barriers. For example, ICTs may be used to improve gender equality in education. Through ICTs, girls may undertake their education through e-learning at home in a society where cultural barriers isolate girls. In addition, they may be empowered to utilize high-end technology in their economic participation in later years (Daly 2003).

- *Social mobility* which refers to the upward movement in status of individuals or groups based on wealth, occupation, education, or some other social variable in a society where one status is not dictated or decreed by birth of origin. Advancements in ICTs are capable of bestowing advantages in education, job-training, health-care as well as social networking and quality of life that they could make a difference between upward social mobility and a declining standard of living. In other words, ICTs could improve life for those who are within reach of these technologies.

- *Economic equality*. Bridging the digital divide has implications in terms of fostering economic equality, educational potential, and earning potential.

- *e-democracy*. ICTs can be a powerful tool for increasing transparency and facilitating information and communication processes among stakeholders. ICTs may lead to increased democratization by enabling citizens or constituents to participate in the decision making process of policy-makers and government through the electronic channel. However, e-democracy has yet to reach its ideal level of actualization in the political participation process.

- *Economic Growth and Innovations*. Long-term economic growth has often been associated with technological progress (Fong 2009: 1-2).

As a country, Turkey entity is ranked 57th in the global ICT development index (IDI) in 2008, 43rd in the e-readiness rankings in 2009, 52nd in network readiness index of 2012 and 43rd in the digital economy rankings of 2010. Often sharing similar scores with other newly industrialized countries (NICs) such as Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico or South Africa, these rankings suggest that comparatively speaking, Turkey much like other newly industrialized countries, suffers from structural problems caused by the late-adoption of the Internet. Some segments of the population have better access to ICTs due to pre-existing regional and socio-economic inequalities. Therefore the issue of access and usage is inherently tied to the geographic, demographic, and socio-economic factors that shape the profile of inequality within the society in question (Ahmed 2007; Yuguchi 2008). The problem of the digital divide or 'digital inequality' (DiMaggio et. al, 2004) cannot be simply resolved by providing a society with more exposure to ICTs through infrastructural investment - greater exposure does not necessarily result to more people using ICTs. Instead the phenomena of the digital divide needs to be contextualized in relation to inequality causing concepts such as age, the education level, employment status, geographical location, gender and race (Bikson & Panos 1999; Neu, Anderson & Bikson 1999). Furthermore, the problem of the digital divide and the factors causing it need to be thought within the context of the political economy of Turkey as individuals unable to access information are increasingly put into a socially disadvantageous position (Cullen 2001), inadvertently intensifying pre-existing social inequalities (Chowdhury 2002).

ii) Statistics on the digital divide in Turkey

The Turkish Statistics Institute (TurkStat) has been conducting an ICT usage survey since 2004 to measure the extent of ICT usage in both households and workplaces throughout Turkey. The survey is an invaluable resource for discussing the extent of the digital divide in Turkey as it gives important statistics on ICT usage on a regional scale and examines how independent variables such as age, education, employment and location influence ICT usage in households and workplaces. The scope of the two-tiered survey is all private households and enterprises within the territorial entity of Turkey, covered by the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE) Rev. I & II. The enterprises included in the survey are: manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, hospitality, transport, logistics, real estate, mass media, finance, information and communication, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support activities and computer repairs. For the household aspect, residents of schools, dormitories, kindergartens, rest homes for elderly persons, special hospitals, military barracks and recreation quarters for officers are excluded from the survey. This is because most of these institutionalized residences are connected to either governmental or the ULAK network and

are hence not part of commercial networks in Turkey. The method of sampling for both tiers of the study is a survey and the sample clusters depend on the size of the household or enterprise. For both surveys are weighed to make up measuring discrepancies and the age covered is from 16 to 74. The data collection methods are computer aided personal interviews for households and a combination of face-to-face interviews and self-administered mail surveys for enterprises. Additionally, enterprises were offered the opportunity to use an online questionnaire. When looking at the usage of the Internet in Turkey, one can see that there is a significant gender gap between the percentage of males (58.1%) and females (37%).

Internet Usage (Total)	18.8	17.6	-	30.1	35.9	38.1	41.6	45.0	**47.4**
Male	25.7	24.0	-	39.2	45.4	48.6	51.8	54.9	**58.1**
Female	12.1	11.1	-	20.7	26.6	28.0	31.7	35.3	**37.0**

Table ii: Individuals using the Internet in the last 3 months by gender (%)

While the percentage of male users are above the national average (47.4%), the percentage of female users are below the national average. According to the OMD Digital report on female Internet users, 37% of female Internet users roughly correspond to around 10 million users in Turkey. From the 10 million users, 33% are from Istanbul, 9% from Ankara, 9% from Izmir, 5% from Bursa and 4% from Antalya. The rest is distributed amongst urban and rural areas of Turkey. 71% of the 10 million users are between the age of 12 and 34. 35% are high-school graduates, 19% university and 23% are secondary school graduates. Only 22% of the total female Internet users are mothers. In comparison with the growth rate of male Internet users (3.17%), female Internet users have been growing at a similar, albeit slower rate (2.86%). Despite the steady growth rate, the total percentage of female Internet users has almost doubled since 2007. For every male Internet user there is 0.63 female users.

As the gender ratio between males and females in Turkey is roughly 50:50, one would image that the gender distribution of the digital divide, or percentage of population who does not have access to ICTs would also be the same ratio. However, looking at the discrepancy between the ratio of male to female users one can say that pre-existing social structures make it so that the digital divide in Turkey impacts women disproportionately in comparison to men. In other words, women are more predisposed to being on the wrong side of the digital divide.

| Yıl Year | Yaş grubu - Age group | | | | | | | | |
| | 16 - 24 | | | 25 - 34 | | | 35 - 44 | | |
	Toplam Total	Erkek Male	Kadın Female	Toplam Total	Erkek Male	Kadın Female	Toplam Total	Erkek Male	Kadın Female
2009	59.4	74.1	46.0	45.1	57.2	32.9	30.2	40.3	19.9
2010	62.9	76.6	49.9	50.6	60.9	40.2	34.7	43.5	25.7
2011	65.8	76.5	55.9	55.1	65.4	44.9	39.7	50.4	28.9
2012	67.7	80.6	55.4	58.5	69.6	47.2	42.6	53.3	31.8
2013	68.7	80.1	57.5	58.8	69.1	48.4	45.6	56.7	34.4

Table iii: Individuals using the Internet in the last 3 months by age groups (%)

Age is an important determining factor in how the digital divide is shaped in Turkey. The youngest age group between 16-24 can be seen as 'digital natives' (Prensky 2001), meaning that they are a generation who do not remember communication culture pre-dating the Internet or computers. Naturally, this is the age group with the highest percentages of Internet access (68.7%). Despite growing up with the Internet, there is still a large gender gap between males (80.1%) and females (57.5%). If we look at the rate of growth for this age group, one can see that the rate of growth has slowed down since 2011 for both total percentage of Internet users and females aged 16-24. This suggests that the growth rates in this age group might have stabilized.

| Year | Age group | | | | | | | | |
| | 16 - 24 | | | 25 - 34 | | | 35 - 44 | | |
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2011	65.8	76.5	55.9	55.1	65.4	44.9	39.7	50.4	28.9
2012	67.7	80.6	55.4	58.5	69.6	47.2	42.6	53.3	31.8
2013	68.7	80.1	57.5	58.8	69.1	48.4	45.6	56.7	34.4

Table iv: Individuals using the Internet in the last 3 months by age groups (%)

Perhaps a similar observation can be made about the 25-34 age group. Despite the presence of a large gender gap between males (69.1%) and females (48.4%), the growth rate in the percentage

of Internet users in this age group seems to have stabilized since 2011. Women users in this age group have only grown on average 1.75% since 2011. Surprisingly, the age group with the fastest growth rates (2.65% yearly) in the total percentage of Internet users is the 35-44 age group. With a total growth of 5.5% and an average yearly growth rate of 2.75% since 2011, the total percentage of female Internet users in this age group have growth the most and the fastest in contrast to percentages of female users in the other two age groups. Despite this rapid growth rate, there still exists a large gap between the percentage of male users (56.7%) and females (34.4%).

Education is another important determining factor for the digital divide. Individuals with higher education tend to have larger disposable incomes and easier access to the Internet. On the other hand, individuals with lower educational achievements tend to have less access to the Internet. The following figures from the Turkstat survey of 2013 seems to confirm our assumptions regarding education:

Year	Secondary and vocational secondary school			High and vocational high school			Higher education		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2011	57.7	63.8	49.7	73.3	75.6	70.2	91.0	91.5	90.3
2012	57.6	63.8	49.4	76.4	79.7	71.3	93.0	93.1	92.8
2013	59.4	65.9	50.7	74.5	76.5	71.6	91.7	91.9	91.4

Table v: Internet access and educational achievement (%)

Individuals with higher education in Turkey tend to enjoy extremely high percentages of Internet usage (91.7%). Furthermore, the gender gap endemic to Turkey doesn't seem to exist in the category of users with higher education. Males (91.9%) and females (91.4%) have almost the same percentages of Internet usage. A potential conclusion to draw from these statistics would be that in contrast to age groups or employment, education is the most important factor in neutralizing the negative effects of the endemic gender gap in Turkey. As the education level decreases, the total percentage of Internet users decrease and the gap between genders increase. For example, the gender gap between males (76.5%) and females (71.6%) with high-school diplomas is still relatively narrow in comparison to males (65.9%) and females (50.7%) with secondary school diplomas.

The final independent variable important for the digital divide is employment. Employment is a broad category which is divided by the ICT survey into two categories: individuals inside or

outside the job market. Employers, employees, unpaid family workers and the unemployed are all considered to be included in the job market. On other hand, homeworkers, students or disabled individuals are all classified as existing outside the job market:

Year	Employer			Self-employed			Unpaid family worker		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2010	67.8	66.9	75.5	26.4	27.4	20.2	16.2	42.6	5.5
2011	76.6	77.0	**71.0**	28.1	28.0	**28.5**	16.5	37.8	6.7
2012	76.6	75.6	**91.0**	32.2	32.2	**31.9**	16.9	46.8	5.9
2013	78.6	78.5	**80.1**	33.8	33.3	**38.3**	**20.8**	**48.8**	**7.5**

Table vi: Employed individuals using the Internet in the last 3 months (%)

Within the category of individuals included in the job market, the widest gender divide is amongst male (48.8%) and female (7.5%) of unpaid family workers. Other than unpaid family workers, females in the job market tend to enjoy similar percentages of Internet usage as males in the job market. The same can be said about the percentage of female Internet users outside the job market.

Houseworks			Disabled		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1.2	-	1.2	-	-	-
1.5	-	1.5	-	-	-
6.9	8.3	3.0	0.6	0.0	1.2
10.0	15.1	9.9	4.5	5.9	3.1
12.4	15.9	12.4	5.3	5.5	5.0
14.3	19.1	14.3	5.0	7.9	0.0
18.3	17.5	18.3	4.9	5.9	3.6
19.9	16.9	19.9	6.3	9.8	2.8
19.1	18.5	**19.1**	**7.1**	**9.2**	**5.0**

Table vii: Individuals outside the job market and using the Internet in the last 3 months (%)

From groups outside the job market, homeworkers and the disabled have both low percentages of Internet usage. Interestingly enough, homeworkers show a relatively steady growth rate and the percentage of female homeworkers using the Internet is higher than male home-makers. On the other hand, disabled males (9.2%) and females (5.0%) have incredibly low percentages of Internet access. Looking at both tables iv and v, the highest average rate of growth (5.05%) in the percentage of Internet users is for female employers.

3. b) SMALL BUT ENGAGED ONLINE PUBLIC

Turkey, being a late-adaptor of technology and as a developing country with deep-rooted structural inequalities, has rather unique dynamics in terms of access and the growing rate of Internet users. In contrast to developed countries where the debate regarding ICT access has shifted in recent years from the digital divide to digital inequality, the digital divide still persists in Turkey as a phenomena caused (and exacerbated) by both pre-existing social and regional inequalities that have been generated by the political economy. As a result, much of academic research about the Internet in Turkey is dedicated to analysing and describing the digital divide. Looking at the reports

produced on the digital divide (Urhan & Kızılca 2011), the figures from the TurkStat survey on ICT usage and the programs of NGOs, one can make a hypothetical conclusion that the digital divide is felt most intensely by the people with disabilities, older people and individuals with lower education. People living in a rural area or the eastern south-eastern regions of Turkey are also disadvantaged in terms of having access to the benefits of ICTs.

Most importantly, much like in other developing countries (Korrup & Szydlik 2005) it seems that gender is perhaps the most important factor in determining on which side of the digital divide an individuals stands. This can be indirectly confirmed through other sociological studies on women in rural regions of Turkey which tend to suggest that despite the reforms of the 1920s, the mechanism of patriarchal domination in Turkey still remains intact until this day. According to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2011, Turkey is ranked as 122nd out of 135 in the Gender Gap index.[38] Important regional and socio-economic differences withstanding, studies about the general condition of women in Turkey (Necla Arat 1989; Yeşim Arat 1993; Kandiyoti 1988) suggest that females despite having legal rights, lead marginalized and precarious social existences within the confines of pre-dominantly paternalist and patriarchal society (Tekeli, 1995). Turkish women remain as the 'second sex' (de Beauvoir 1953) in Turkish society and remain repressed within under the triad of Mediterranean cultural codes of honour and shame, Islam and Kemalist ideology (Müftüler-Bac 1999). Smartphones, although touted by the mobile telecommunications industry as the gadget to bridge the gender divide in developing societies, seems to have perpetuated existing barriers to females accessing the Internet (Cotten, Anderson & Tufekci 2009). Although no academic research exists on whether smartphone ownership has narrowed the gender divide in access to ICTs or the Internet in Turkey, one must treat the hype around new technologies with a certain degree of scepticism.

One of the inadvertent effects of the digital divide described in this chapter is that it has impeded the formation of an online public which is truly representative of the Turkish population. In contrast to the high penetration rates enjoyed by developed countries, roughly only 45% percent of the Turkish population are regular Internet users. Those who tend to be excluded from the demographic profile of the 45% include women, people with disabilities, older people and individuals with lower education that tend to be located in rural areas or the eastern south-eastern regions of Turkey. The exclusion of more than half of the population from makes it difficult to speak of a networked public sphere as used by Benkler in *the Wealth of Networks* (2006) to describe the North American national context. Instead, it is perhaps more fitting to simply use the term online public to describe the wider category of Turkish speakers that use social media or Web 2.0 platforms. As such, it is important to acknowledge the imbalances such as the ratio of male to

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38 World Economic Forum (2011) *Global Gender Gap Report 2011*.

female users, regional differences or the (relative) absence of rural Internet users within the composition of the Turkish online public. Accordingly, the Turkish online public is smaller in comparison to more developed national contexts and that the social composition of the networked public is overdetermined by structural effects such as the digital divide.

On the other hand, the Turkish online public seems to be much more active and engaged than some of it's counterparts in western Europe. Studies show that Turks are one of the most engaged audiences on social-networking platforms and spend on average 32.7 hours per month socializing online, coming in third after the United Kingdom (35 hours) and the Netherlands (32.8 hours). Turkish users have the highest content consumption in Europe in terms of average pages visited per user. [39] At the same time, Turkish speakers constitutive the 4th largest population on the popular social-networking platform, Facebook and the 8th largest population on the micro-blogging platform Twitter wıth more than 4 million users.[40] Accordingly, one needs to contextualize the demographic structure of the Turkish speaking online public as less representative in comparison to the online publics of developed countries, yet extremely active and well engaged.

4. a) CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMERGING TECHNOLOGICAL PRACTICES

Similar to other developing countries, the late arrival of the Internet into Turkey meant that computer mediated communication was initially regarded as an alien technology by most of the population. This is also partially related to the cultural attitude in Turkey towards technologies imported wholesale from western Europe or North America. As Burçe Çelik describes in *Technology and National Identity in Turkey: Mobile Communications and the Evolution of a Post-Ottoman Nation (2011)*, technology is simultaneously a subject of fascination and a cause of guilt throughout 20th century Turkey. On one hand early nationalist reformers strongly believed that "the production of 'national technology' […] would make Turkey not only compatible with its Western counterparts but also more powerful" (2011:37) in the wake of the Ottoman Empire's collapse. On the other, the absence of technology was the proof of Turkish backwardness and justified the psychological melancholy caused by the loss of Empire. Çelik persuasively argues that this ambiguous duality still forms an important part of cultural attitudes towards technology in Turkey today. In this context, Çelik suggests that the national obsession with technology in Turkey is largely defined by "a practice of appropriation rather than production" and that the culture created out of the practice of appropriation creates a feeling of bodily exile and alienation within the technoscape (2011:71). The author argues that these feelings of unease are central to the way technological practices are performed in present day Turkey.

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39 http://en.webrazzi.com/2011/10/31/comscore-europe-most-engaged-users-are-in-turkey/
40 See http://en.webrazzi.com/2012/09/17/comparison-of-turkey-and-brazil-digital-industries/ &
     http://en.webrazzi.com/2011/05/30/turkish-twitter-user/

The feelings of bodily exile and alienation described in *Technology and National Identity in Turkey*, are central to understanding why the Internet was regarded as an alien technology by the Turkish public when it first became commercially available from 1996 onwards. The practices associated with going online were associated with doing something uncanny or undesirable, effectively mystifying participation in online communities as a subversive practice. The supposed mystique behind the practices socializing online quickly became a point of anxiety for adults unversed in the ways of computer mediated communication and sparked off a number of small scale "moral panics" (see Hall ed. al, 1978) during this period.

The first moral panic regarding the Internet can be traced to a series of teenager suicides which were dubbed by the Turkish mass media as the "Satanist Suicides". In 1998, two students from the German Highschool in Istanbul (a competitive and prestigious private school) jumped off the 14th floor of an apartment building in one of the wealthier suburbs of Istanbul.[41] A suicide note left behind on the wall of the apartment wrote "We love you very much, but we do not belong here". After an investigation by the police, satanism was suggested as the motive for committing suicide. The police report claimed that the two students were members of a satanic cult that used an abandoned gunpowder factory close the the crime scene for satanistic rituals. Despite no further proof that the two students had any relation to satanic sects, the hysteria around the suicides quickly escalated into a moral panic. Soon articles began to circulate in newspapers and television channels warning parents about signs of satanism amongst the youth. Tattoos, piercings, heavy metal music, participating in fantasy-role playing games (FRP), black or purple clothing and long hair were all considered signs that a person might be a satanist.[42] In 2000, Ceylan Konuk, another student from the German Lycée committed suicide by jumping off the 4th floor of the highschool building.[43] Ali Oğuz Konuk, the father of Ceylan, blamed FRP and the friends made on the Internet as the causes for his daughter's suicide.

A few years later, Lara Falay, another private school student living in a wealthy neighborhood of Istanbul, committed suicide by jumping off the Bosphorus bridge. Once again, the newspapers and television was rife with rumours of satanizm. The police investigation discovered that Lara had been frequenting IRC chat-rooms, used ICQ to make new friends online and had been visitng websites about satanism.[44] Furthermore, an investigation into the suicide discovered that Lara Falay was a member of the online community Ekşisözlük (nickname *pisicik*) and that another Ekşisözlük member, Nedim Biçaçi (nickname *zibidi*), had committed suicide a few days before Lara.[45] An even more striking coincidence was that both Lara and Nedim lived within the

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41 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-devil-is-in-istanbul.aspx?pageID=438&n=the-devil-is-in-istanbul-1998-07-05
42 http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2003/04/22/yasam/ayas.html
43 http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/01/18/yasam/yas00.html
44 http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/01/25/yasam/yas01.html
45 http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/02/03/guncel/gun01.html

same gated community on the Asian side of Istanbul. Although the two had never met in real life, both were Jewish, suffered from similar symptoms of depression and shared similar interests. Nedim had just graduated from university, was a drummer for a band and collected Magic playing cards (a fantasy role playing card game popular in Turkey throughout the early 2000s). Growing up in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s, Nedim felt insecure about his Jewish identity; most of the comments written under his nickname's entry on Ekşisözlük are about Jewishness. In various entries, *zibidi* tries to deny his Jewish identity ("I'm not a Jew") or express his self-disgust with being Jewish ("I'd never sleep with a Jew, not even *zibidi*").[46] On the other hand, Lara was a high-school student who also had an interest in fantasy-role playing and played in her own band. Her father Yasef Falay was friends with Ali Oğuz Konuk (the father of Ceylan Konuk) and was a part-time DJ at a local radio station. Occasionally Yasef would host his show with Lara who would sing and play Radiohead songs on her guitar. The allegations in the media were that Lara and the other kids had come in contact with a certain "A.E" (the real name was not disclosed to the public) on the Internet. This individual convinced them to commit suicide. The individual was arrested but then acquitted due to the lack of evidence. In the meantime FRP, online communities and Internet chat-rooms had become the focal points of the ensuing public hysteria. One could find articles in the mainstream media warning parents on the corrupting influence that IRC had on the Turkish youth or how ICQ causes teenagers to meet "bad" friends.[47]

Although the moral panic caused by the Satanist Suicides was relatively short-lived, it demonstrates the cultural attitudes in Turkey towards newly introduced technologies practices. Moral panics regarding the Internet have occasionally resurfaced throughout the 2000s in Turkey. Around 2005-2006, just prior to Facebook becoming open to the general public, there was another small scale moral panic regarding Yonja, a Turkish social-networking website.[48] Rampant allegations in the media of drug dealing activities and prostitution on the website eventually caused Yonja, the first Turkish-language social-networking site, to lose credibility in Turkey and then eventually surrender their customer base to Facebook. Most recently, Twitter has caused a moral panic amongst the more conservative elements of Turkish society during the Gezi Park protests wherein social media platforms were effectively used by the protesters to organize themselves against the police. The Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, made several public

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46 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/129747 & https://eksisözlük.com/entry/129809
47 See http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=70568 or
    http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/01/18/yasam/yas00.html
48 Yonja.com.tr was founded by Yonja Media Group in 2004 in San Francisco with the objective of becoming the first social network site exclusively marketed towards a predominantly Turkish speaking audience. The site initially enjoyed mainstream success and became the dominant social-network site in Turkey between the years of 2004 and 2005. The site was open to the public and used a referral system to invite new members. Anyone with an email account and knowing a Yonja user could potentially become a member of Yonja. The user-friendly and simple interface of Yonja, which offered free membership, made it an immediate hit with the Turkish audience. The design of Yonja was based on an earlier social-networking platform called Friendster.

appearances in which he described Twitter and social media to his conservative electorate as a "threat to society" wherein "lies and exaggerations prevail" and with which "society is terrorized through photoshopped corpses".[49]

i) Technophobia & the Fear of the Internet in Flawed Democracies

Although the emergence of an online public offers exciting possibilities for political change and the democratization of Turkish society, it has also caused the Internet to be perceived as an existential threat by the Turkish state. Even prior to the formation of the Turkish cyberspace, successive governments in Turkey since the late 1990s have both instigated and used the general mistrust of the public towards the Internet to justify the construction of an ever-expanding surveillance regime to monitor and censor the activities of Turkish citizens. Bluntly put, the Turkish state has been two-faced in their attitude towards the Internet. On one side, the suspicion (and fear) of the Turkish public towards the Internet as a communications technology has become the justification of successive governments to construct an ever-expanding surveillance regime to monitor the online activities of Turkish citizens. On the other, the Turkish state has been eager to promote Internet and ICT usage due to their beneficial contribution to development and economic growth. However, the Turkish state is neither unique nor alone in it's ambiguous and two-faced attitude towards the Internet.

What one is seeing in newly industrialized countries with relatively high levels of Internet penetration is an almost co-orchestrated attempt to limit user access to online information through censorship. Governments in the developing world share the popular belief (or fear) that the Internet is a clarion call for authoritarian rule due to it's de-centralized nature and potential to share information as *samizdat* (subversive material). This view, is perhaps enunciated most clearly in John Perry Barlow's (co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation) famous quote "(t)he Internet treats censorship as a malfunction, and routes around it", forms the basis for governments is to impose some kind of control over the Internet. As discussed by Evgeny Morozov in *the Net Delusion* (2011), the fear of open networks is causing governments throughout the developing world to attempt to restoring some sort of social regulation of the Internet through censorship.

According to the annual 'Internet Enemies' publication of Reporters without Borders, governments in the following countries were considered to be hostile to the idea of censorship-free Internet: Bahrain, Belarus, Burma, China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Countries that were sited as 'under surveillance' for 2012 were: Australia, Egypt, Eritrea, France, India, Kazakhistan, Malaysia, Russia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.[50] What is striking is that a large

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49 http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan_erdogan_twitter_denen_bir_bela_var-1135952
50 https://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-Internet2012_ang.pdf

number of the listed countries are either newly industrialized countries (NICs) or are under authoritarian rule. While countries under authoritarian regimes tend to be underdeveloped and without high levels of Internet penetration, the former group of newly industrialized or emerging market economies tend to both have a relatively high penetration rate and also some degree of censorship. What this suggests is that while governments in the developing regions of the world are not really restricting the penetration of networking technologies into their respective territorial boundaries, they are instead trying to restrict through censorship the range of communication platforms and content available to the user. Therefore, one can argue that Turkish state's stance is in line with most of the governments in the newly developed world.

4. b) CENSORSHIP AND SURVEILLANCE IN TURKEY

The 2009 Iranian election and the events of the Arab Spring have sparked off another global debate about different kinds of censorship and the potential of the Internet to topple authoritarian regimes in the developing world. In this global context, the Turkish state has been cited on numerous occasions by international watchdog organisations as actively trying to censor access to certain categories of content online. Censorship in Turkey achieved global notoriety in 2007 when the Turkish Telecommunications Bureau (TIB) decided to suspend access to Youtube after receiving complaints in compliance with article 8.1b of Law 5661. This law reserves the right to block access if the website in question 'insults Atatürk or Turkishness'.[51] The state decided to enact a blanket ban on Youtube until the video was removed from the website. As Youtube is owned by Google, which is based in the U.S.A (and doesn't have offices in Turkey), it is exempt from any legal requirements imposed by the Turkish state. In this situation, Youtube had no incentive to remove the offensive content and nor did the Turkish state have any incentive to remove the ban. As a result of this judicial deadlock Youtube remained banned in Turkey for two years until Youtube finally decided to remove the offensive content.

One of the results of this legal spat between the Turkish state and Youtube was the mobilization of Turkish activists to campaign against censorship and regulation. In comparison with digital divide researchers whose research tends to be supported by organisations such as the IMF, OECD, UNDP or the WB, censorship studies in Turkey tend to be supported by civil society initiatives such as the Turkish Human Rights Platform or European political foundations such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and have lively activist networks composed of a variety of professions, including academics, lawyers and software programmers.[52] These activist networks openly challenge the policies of the state and use a variety of public relations strategies to create

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51 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-11659816
52 Foundation for Alternative Informatics Association (http://www.alternatifbilisim.org), Internet Technologies Foundation (http://inetd.org.tr/), the Netizen Movement (http://friendfeed.com/netdas) are the most prominent activist networks involved in legally contesting state censorship in Turkey.

awareness about censorship. In a lecture for the 28th Chaos Communication Congress (28C3) in Berlin, members of *alternatif bilişim* (Alternative Informatics Association) used the following words to define the state of the Internet in Turkey:

> "(...) we have reasons to believe that the government is currently developing infrastructure to utilize methods like deep packet inspection (DPI) as weapons in a 'cyberwar', possibly against its own people. These methods will include monitoring and labelling of Internet users as well as blocking communication. We made use of our 'right to information' to inquire about the plans for employing DPI, but were `informed' that this is 'beyond the limits our right to information'"(Keleş, Kaymak, Fidaner, & Gürses 2011)

Evidence provided by the *alternatif bilişim* lecture on Internet regulation demonstrates that the Turkish state is engaging in censorship by both actively suspending access to websites and by engaging in surveillance activities of IP addresses registered in Turkey. The attempts by the government to regulate communication on the Internet have sparked off a number of critical inquires which try to describe and evaluate the rationale behind the process. Relying a theoretical framework which borrows on notions of biopolitics found in the later works of Foucault (2010) and the theoretical concepts found in Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972, 1980), critical studies on Internet regulation in Turkey discuss the possible ways of how the state can potentially use the Internet to spy on citizens or limit citizens from accessing certain categories of information. Thus far, the most contributions to this field (Akdeniz & Altıparmak 2008; Arslantaş-Toktaş, Binark, Dikmen, Fidaner, Küzeci, Özaygen, 2012) have focused either describing the mechanisms of Internet censorship in Turkey or how the state uses e-governance and digitalization to profile Internet users through their national I.D numbers.

4. c) STRATEGIES OF INTERNET SURVEILLANCE BY THE TURKISH STATE

Since the mid-2000s, there have been attempts by the Turkish state to move it's services online. The ongoing E-Devlet project offers citizens the possibility of paying taxes or municipal bills online or even booking appointments for the national health service. While the goal of the project is to make life easier for Turkish citizens and to cut through bureaucratic red ribbon, it also creates the possibility for the state to centralize the activities of Turkish nationals onto one database. The aggregation of a national database which is only accessible by the state has prompted fears of user profiling and accusations of surveillance.

In tandem with concerns about aggregating a national database from the E-Devlet project, there have been a number of whistle-blowing reports on the deep-package inspection (DPI) activities of the Turkish state. The most recent controversy leaked to the public has been around

the introduction of Phorm (a DPI system developed in the UK) into the TTNet infrastructure. Phorm is currently being used by TTNet to track Internet traffic and profile users for e-marketing purposes. The controversy regarding Phorm was that the Turkish state could use the software to profile Internet traffic on TTNet, which is a subsidiary of the former state-owned Türk Telekom. While there an official document confirming a commercial partnership between Phorm and TTNet, there is no reliable information on the allegations regarding surveillance. Despite this lack of tangible evidence linking Phorm to the online surveillance activities of the Turkish state, *alternatif bilişim* has decided to open a court case against TTNet and Phorm on the 18th of October 2012.

Asides from the ongoing controversy regarding the business partnership between TTNet and Phorm, the Bureau for Telecommunications's 'Anaposta' (Motherpost) project has also stirred up a reaction from activist networks based in Turkey. According to the head of the Information Technologies and Communications directorate (BTK) Tayfun Acarer, the 'Anaposta' project is developing a national search engine and email system which will eventually replace Google as the most popular search engine and email platform in Turkey:

> "As part of this project, 70 million of our citizens will receive an email account with 10 gibabytes of space. Each child on childbirth will have an email address recorded onto their I.D card. By giving each I.D number an email, we will ensure that 70 million citizens will be belong to a national network. As a result of this, we how to reduce the usage of unreliable and foreign search engines such as yahoo, hotmail and gmail. As the Islamic countries and Turkic republics will prefer to use our Internet, we hope to construct an international network independent from the Internet."[53]

Once again, due to the lack of transparency by the state, the aims and goals of projects such as Anaposta or E-Devlet remains impossible to access as a researcher. Nonetheless, the existence of these projects and evidence of DPI suggests that the Turkish state is trying to harness the potential of the Internet to spy on the activity of it's citizens.

4. d) STRATEGIES OF CENSORSHIP BY THE TURKISH STATE

i.) Bureau for Telecommunications (TIB)

Surveillance constitutes just one leg of the Turkish state's Internet policies. Censoring the web and limiting access to online content is the other strategy used by the state to interfere with network neutrality. The Bureau for Telecommunications (TIB), which was founded in 2006, is the bureaucratic institution capable of monitoring online traffic, enforcing the new legal requirements and executing judicial blocking orders. The TIB uses a hotline established to collect complaints

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53 http://www.eksisözlük.com/show.asp?t=anaposta&nr=y&pt=anaposta+projesi

from the public and accordingly block access to the offensive websites. Therefore the public plays an important role in monitoring online content and mobilizing the regulatory capacities of the institution. Using feedback from the public, TIB reserves the right to suspend access to offending websites without prior judicial permission until either the judicial process reverses the decision or the offensive content is taken off the website. When instituted, the ban makes the offending website completely inaccessible from Turkey and legal action against the ban can only begin after the ban has gone into effect. According to the OpenNet report, the *raison d'etre* for suspending access can be based on something as minor as a formal complaint lodged to the Telecommunications agency, creating a situation in which access to websites might be banned not only for illegal services reasons but also defamation allegations.[54]

ii.) Legal Framework

While a large segment of content which is censored in Turkey is directly done by the TIB upon the feedback it receives from the hotline, the institution also executes judiciary orders to censor content. As of summer 2012, http://engelliweb.com/, a website dedicated to mapping the extent of state censorship, reports that 20,297 websites are banned on commercial networks in Turkey. From these, 17,482 are directly censored by the TIB while 1861 are censored as a result of judicial action.[55] The number of banned websites per year fluctuate with 6923 sites banned in 2011 versus only 1623 in 2010. However when examined on a cumulative scale, the total number of banned websites has been steadily increasing since 2001. Both the direct and judicial censoring activities of the TIB depend on a legal framework which has been gradually emerging out of the legislative assembly of the national government. In order to understand the current state of the legislative framework, we need to turn back to 2001 when the first legal regulations regarding the Internet were introduced by the Turkish state.

As Akdeniz & Altıparmak (2008) point out, prior to 2001 there was no legal framework nor a specific state institution dedicating to regulating the Internet in Turkey. However, this does not mean that the Turkish state had a *laissez-faire* attitude to the Internet. On the contrary, prior to 2001, the state attempted to leverage indirect control through Türk Telekom's IES contracts with commercial ISPs. Furthermore, the state used pre-existing laws designed by the 1980 junta for mass mediums to prosecute offenders. This meant that the highly-publicized judicial cases in which both network moderators and regular users received jail sentences for posting content deemed to be legally prosecutable by the state relied more on the power of analogy rather than a specific legal framework (Akdeniz & Altıparmak 2008:3-4).[56] Under combined pressure from the

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54 https://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/ONI_Turkey_2010.pdf
55 http://engelliweb.com/istatistikler/
56 The same can be said about blocking access to websites. While the state had blocked access to websites prior to the enactment of Law 5651 (which granted the state the legal right to actively pursue censorship), the judicial reasons

international institutions and civil society regarding the lack of an adequate legal framework for the Internet and the haphazard prosecution of Internet users with outdated laws designed to regulate private television and radio, the Turkish government decided to develop a legal bill specific to the Internet. After numerous amendments and drafts regarding the legal framework of the bill, the government enacted Law No. 5661 which was provisionally entitled 'Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by means of Such Publication' on 4 May, 2007. The bill, rather then creating new crimes specific to the Internet, adapts the pre-existing legal framework for mass-media regulation to make it specific for the Internet. According to the OpenNet report compiled on contemporary mass media law and censorship in Turkey, Law 5661 applies the amended Press Law of 2004 for the Internet and allows for the extension of regulatory powers of the Establishment for Radio and Television Enterprises and Broadcasts (RTÜK) over the Internet. Relying on RTÜK, the state can undertake judicial action to block access to sites with the following contents:

- Crimes against Atatürk
- Prostitution
- Providing place and opportunity for gambling
- Sexual abuse of children
- Encouraging people to commit suicide
- Supplying drugs that are dangerous for health
- Facilitation of the abuse of drugs
- Services for gambling and betting

In addition to the regulations imposed by RTÜK, Turkish state can also block access to websites for copyright and trade issues. These illegal services can be categorized as follows:

- Downloading of MP3 and films in violation of copyright laws
- Insults against state organs and private persons
- Crimes related to terrorism
- Violation of trademark regulations
- Unfair trade regulated under the Turkish Commercial Code
- Violation of Articles 24, 25, 26, and 28 of the Constitution (freedoms of religion, expression, thought, and freedom of press)

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behind blocking access were primarily based on mass-media criminal law.

Due to the judicial composition of the laws regulating the Internet, decrees to suspend access to a particular website can be assembled with 48 hours. Law No. 5661 builds on the legal boundaries specified by the amended Press Law of 2004 by granting state institutions sweeping powers for both applying pressure to ISPs in terms of regulating content and for directly censoring websites on a national level without prior judicial approval. For example, article 6.1.b of Law No. 5661 requires that all ISP retain traffic data for a minimum period of six months and a maximum of two years and that any ISP that ceases to commercial services must turn over traffic data to the Telecommunications Authority. Failing do comply with this regulation results in an administrative fine between 10,000 and 50,000 Turkish lira (article 6.1.c). Mass service providers such as Internet cafés can only pursue commercial activity with an official permit and are legally required under article 7.2 to use state-endorsed filtering software for limit access to online content. Finally, the state reserves the right to block access to a website without a judicial decision if the website in question advertises illegal services is hosted outside Turkey or is a website with an IP registry in Turkey that contains sexual abuse of minors or obscenity.

iii.) Internet filters

While direct or judicial censoring of online access is one of the ways through which the TIB regulates computer mediated communications on a national scale, the state also regulates the web through filters. In this context, the most recent development was the decision of the government to implement a mandatory content filtering policy under the rubric of 'secure Internet' on a national scale. While direct or judicial censoring can be seen as a reactive response to offensive online content, filtering software is a pre-emptive way of limiting access to online content. Enacted on the 26th of April 2011 and implemented on the 11th of November 2011, the new filtering policy stipulated that ISPs need to provide free filtered Internet access alternatives to users. The two alternatives offered to the 'standard' unfiltered memberships are opt-in, meaning that it is the responsibility of users to change to from regular to a filtered version of Internet access. The filtered version offered by commercial ISPs comes in two categories: child and family. According to the website of TIB, the institution responsible for monitoring ISP adherence to the filtered access policy, the filter profiles limit the following content:

> "Child profile: This profile is created by a commission which consists of academicians' expert on pedagogy, sociology and psychology. With child profile you can connect to different types of websites like education, homework, banking applications, shopping, music, gaming, fun, news, e-mail, official and public sites, vacation, and private companies.

Family Profile:This profile blocks websites in gaming, drug, prostitution, obscenity, violence, terror, fraud, harmful software categories. In addition to child profile it gives access to forums, social networking sites and individual sites. In family profile users can make individual choices whether to have access separately to social networking sites, chat sites, and online gaming sites or they can block them all."[57]

The opt-in features of the filter profiles can be enabled in four different ways. Firstly, the user can contact the ISP either directly or through a call centre and enable the appropriate profile. Alternatively the user can either access the related ISP's online service centre either via the http://guvenlinet.org.tr/ website or directly and choose a filtering profile. Finally, the user can send an SMS with an appropriate code to the ISP in question and enable a filter. Switching to a filtered profile is not permanent and the filtering service can be disabled free of charge upon request.

4. e) NEEDING ANONYMITY: CONSEQUENCES OF CENSORSHIP & SURVEILLANCE

In retrospect, it is evident that the censorship and surveillance activities conducted by the Turkish state have become increasingly institutionalized over the course of the past decade. As the practices of censorship and surveillance expand, the laws that should serve as legal justification still remain vague. What this suggests is that the desire to monitor the Internet is based on ideological motivations of the AK Party government rather than legally justifiable issues such as the breach of copyright laws or national security. Quite often, the laws cited when giving reasons to suspend access to a website are ambiguous and open to interpretation. The actual decision to suspend access is given by the officials of TIB, who are in turn assigned by the government to monitor the Internet. In other words, officials with the right ideological convictions are assigned to the TIB and use a vague legalistic framework to protect the interests of the government on the Internet. This seems to mirror the censorship practices exercised by the Turkish state over other mass mediums such as print or television. The ideological (and hence non-legalistic) motivations of the TIB can be partially confirmed when one examines the contents of banned websites in Turkey. For the large part, websites devoted to pornography, Kurdish separatism, the Armenian Genocide and anti-Atatürk sentiments are banned in Turkey. Additionally a large number of websites with content which supports or explains the theory of evolution are also banned. For instance, a website registered in Turkey called evrimianlamak.org ("understanding evolution") can not be accessed from the territorial boundaries of Turkey while another website registered in Turkey with the domain name evrimaldatmacasi.com ("the conspiracy of evolution") is accessible. Bearing in mind that the current government in charge is an Islamist party, this raises suspicions regarding the neutrality of

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57 http://guvenlinet.org.tr/gb/menu/14-The_contents_of_profiles.html

censorship procedures on subjects such as evolution. Ali Rıza Keleş, who is an Internet activist and the founder of the Alternatif Bilişim Derneği (Foundation for Alternative Informatics), tells us the following in an interview:

> "While it is impossible to estimate what the Turkish government is planning to do exactly, we can be sure that it currently expanding the techniques and scale of Internet censorship in Turkey. The procedure used by the TIB is haphazard and defies any logic, but when we examine this seeming haphazard procedure, we see that asides from the traditional taboos of Turkish society, there is an intent to limit the Turkish public's exposure to evolutionary theories. Not only is this a concern due to the fact that we have a public with some of the highest rates of belief in creationism in Europe but that the Internet filter used by the state is most prevalent in institutions such as primary schools. This means that there is a collective effort by both the government and the conservative public to produce a god-fearing and religious younger generation. Needless to say, this is an extremely dangerous public policy to pursue, given that there is a tradition of religious fundamentalism present in Turkey."[58]

One can argue that the arbitrariness of surveillance and censorship activities common in developing countries such as Turkey is largely caused by clientalist relationships between the government and state institutions. Often the individual in charge of implementing the regime of surveillance is appointed by the government not on grounds of merit or legalistic expertise but instead of shared ideological vision. Therefore, the actual effects of the surveillance regime are produced by the moral economy of individuals and not institutions. Contrary to the conclusion reached by Goldsmith & Wu (2008:152-3), who argue that "bordered Internet is valuable precisely because it permits people of different value systems to coexist on the same planet", the Turkish national context shows how authority uses censorship as a means of marginalizing the communication needs of various social groups within a territorial system while valorizing others. To put it bluntly, the obvious problem with such a conclusion is that governments who implement censorship in developing countries often don't tend to share the same value systems as the online public. For example, the government used Law 5661 ("Crimes against Atatürk") as a justification to pass court orders that forced Turk Telecom to suspend access to Youtube between 2007 and 2008. A video uploaded by a Greek user that described Atatürk as "a gay and a monkey" was seen as a breach of Law 5661. After access was suspended to Youtube, most users from Turkey used Internet proxies to continue accessing the website in question. The continued usage of Youtube demonstrates that most of the online audience did not care much about the presence of the supposedly offensive and illegal video on the website.

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58 Ali Rıza Keleş interview, 15.6.2012

In conclusion, one can argue that the clientalist relationships enjoyed between the institutions of the state and the government have created a situation wherein censorship and surveillance activities of the state are not based on legalistic but ideological motivations. As a result, this situation has created a climate of insecurity and unpredictability for the Turkish speaking online public. For example, a new legislation passed in February 2014 stipulates that the Turkish Telecommunications Bureau can shut down access to a website without court permit and within four hours a filed complaint report. This means that a website can be pretty much shut down arbitrarily and immediately. The unpredictable nature of the Turkish state's censorship and surveillance activities creates the need for a certain degree of user anonymity on the Internet. This need has pushed Internet users to either opt for spaces that either offer a certain degree of anonymity or precautions that protect their real-life identities from the Turkish state. This need is justifiable in a context wherein where 25 people in Izmir can be arrested for using Twitter to call for protest and participation in the 2013 Gezi riots or where it is rather normal for politicians to press legal charges on the basis of comments encountered on a website.[59] One can find the need for anonymity as the primary motivation for two different, yet inter-related practices characteristic of the online public in Turkey. The first practice is the usage of privacy technologies.

Over the past years, a large segment of the online public has increasingly become familiar with privacy technologies such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) or the Tor Browser, which provides a large degree of anonymity to the user. One can even argue that on certain occasions, the pressure caused by the activities of the state transforms the online public into what has been described as the "hacking multitude" (Cardullo 2015). Privacy technologies are mostly used to navigate around censorship and access banned websites or platforms. They are also used on occasion to hide the I.P address of users that might run the risk of being prosecuted by the state.

Another practice that has appeared over the years is using nicknames to post critical comments on social media or Web 2.0 platforms. The usage of fake names, when combined with the usage of privacy technologies are a popular way for dissident voices to express themselves in a safe and anonymous manner. As platforms such as Facebook try to limit the degree of anonymity afforded to the user, much of the dissident conversations happen in sections of the Turkish cyberspace which afford more anonymity than social media.[60] These privately owned, members-only hosting spaces can either be closed access, members-only forum spaces similar to what has been described as the "shadow networked public sphere" within the context of the Arab speaking world (Etling, Kelly, Faris, Palfrey 2010) or open access but members-only only 'sözlüks', the later being unique to the Turkish context.

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59 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/05/turkish-police-arrests-social-media-protest
60 For more on Facebook and anonymity, see http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/sxsw/8379895/Facebook-wrong-about-anonymity-says-4chan-founder.html

5. POSITIONING SÖZLÜKS AS ACTORS IN TURKISH CYBERSPACE

The ecology of platforms popular in Turkey uniquely reflect both the creative energies of this small yet dynamic online public and the anxieties caused by the unpredictable nature of the state's censorship and surveillance activities. Currently, the key actors of Turkish cyberspace are the typically popular social-networking platforms as well as a number of open-access content hosting platforms have consistently retained their popularity with the Turkish speaking online audience. These hosting platforms belong to a category of Web 2.0 platforms called *sözlüks* that are unique to Turkish cyberspace.

Despite the dazzling market penetration enjoyed by social-networking sites such as Facebook, Foursquare, linkedin and Instagram, *sözluks* have managed consistently to retain their popularity with the Turkish speaking online audience. There are more than 69 different *sözluks* currently active and the largest (and oldest) website, Ekşisözlük.com, has more than 355,000 registered community members and has been active since 1999. Sözlüks not only host online communities but are also key players within the platform ecology of the Turkish cyberspace in terms attracting visitor traffic. In November 2013, Ekşisözlük was ranked as the platform with the 4th highest volumes of visitor traffic after Facebook, Ask.fm and Twitter. In terms of unique visitors, Ekşisözlük had 5 million unique visits in the same month:

SOSYAL AĞLAR (Kasım'13)							
Site İsmi	Site Geneli Aylık Trafik (Impression)	Sitede Geçirilen Süre (ayda)	Gerçek Kullanıcı	Erişim	Ekim '13 Impression	Değişim	
facebook.com	8.516.735.389	10:57:48	23.839.193	86%	7.165.149.771	19%	▲
ask.fm	432.048.117	02:35:51	2.533.629	9%	420.758.920	3%	▲
twitter.com	409.295.299	01:27:19	9.950.313	36%	423.239.166	-3%	▼
eksisozluk.com	231.519.560	00:49:21	5.156.202	19%	231.759.144	0%	▼
tumblr.com	172.420.604	00:59:29	4.442.620	16%	153.337.600	12%	▲
ask.com	101.431.792	00:42:50	4.445.312	16%	83.109.825	22%	▲
uludagsozluk.com	36.348.162	00:07:09	3.573.178	13%	34.278.380	6%	▲
itusozluk.com	35.979.249	00:08:57	1.886.109	7%	38.096.110	-6%	▼
foursquare.com	34.160.429	00:09:48	2.555.238	9%	26.486.203	29%	▲
linkedin.com	30.346.278	00:10:38	2.258.884	8%	23.378.970	30%	▲
blogcu.com	29.883.440	00:07:39	4.250.483	15%	26.877.967	11%	▲
instagram.com	27.232.734	00:09:03	3.667.898	13%	39.255.830	-31%	▼
antoloji.com	22.076.421	00:11:49	1.292.683	5%	20.403.749	8%	▲
wordpress.com	20.448.701	00:05:33	4.443.629	16%	9.905.162	106%	▲
skype.com	11.677.586	00:03:30	2.760.724	10%	10.730.987	9%	▲

Kaynak: IAB Internet Ölçümleme Araştırması Gemius, Kasım 2013   connectedvivaki.com

Table viii: Most popular social-networking platforms in Turkey ranked according to visitor traffic for November 2013. The first column ranks the websites according to their popularity. The second column is the monthly visitor traffic. The third column is the average amount of time each visitor spends on a site. The 4th column lists the number of unique visitors. The last three columns compare the rankings in relation to October 2013. *From connectedvivaki.com*

Other sözlüks such as uludagsözlük.com and itusözlük.com are also attract quite high volumes of visitor traffic and can be considered as some of the most visited social media sites in Turkey. The total number of unique visitors to three of the most popular sözlüks combined amount to more than 10 million and make up roughly 15% of all monthly visitor traffic within Turkish cyberspace. Sharing very similar software architectures and user interface designs, sözlüks rely on an easy to navigate hyper-link design wherein browsing users can either click on a list of emerging topics which get updated daily or access archived content through the in-built search engine.

In terms of content generation models, sözluks resemble Wikipedia in that user generated content is the outcome of a complex collaboration process facilitated by peer production mechanisms. The collective knowledge of the online communities is channelled to build an open-access and open-ended cultural artefact. Much like Wikipedia (see Niederer & van Dijck 2010), content production in sözlüks is highly regulated and complex membership hierachies do exist. The facilitators of sözluks tend to establish forms of governance commonly encountered in peer-

production projects worldwide. This form of leadership has been described elsewhere as "benevolent dictatorship" (Kostakis 2010).

One can argue that perhaps the biggest contrast between sözlüks and peer-production projects similar to Wikipedia is epistemological. While Wikipedia-like sites tend to espouse a Neutral Point of View (NPoV) to production of knowledge, sözlüks are not necessarily concerned with producing content that is necessarily based on facts. Wikipedia's NPOV policy is designed to ensure Wikipedia's content is 'as far as possible without bias' and that the different positions on any topic are represented 'fairly' and 'proportionately'.[61] Together with the No Original Research (NOR) and Verifiability (V) policies, NPOV circumscribes the boundaries of what can be constituted as knowledge on Wikipedia. Wikipedia's NPOV policy is also designed to mediate between the many different perspectives on a given topic and enable consensus to emerge. Accordingly, it has been argued that NPOV both guides the knowledge-making process and it's method of evaluation (Lovink & Tkacz 2011). In contrast, although meaning "dictionary" in Turkish, sözlüks are not dictionaries in the conventional sense as the definitions asigned to terms do not necessarily need to be objective or meaningful. Instead, the contents of these websites are dictionaries that reflect what certain terms or phrases mean for a particular community. As such, one can argue that sözlüks carry a post-structuralist ethos wherein meaning can be freely (and creatively) assigned to the linguistic components such as words, sentences or phrases. A post-structural ethos to the creation of meaning and as a result, knowledge makes sözlüks ideal sites for the expression of self-expression and creativity. In this context, it has been argued that the battle over defining meaning creates a "virtual fight-club" wherein contenting ideologies and discourses can be played out in a therapeutic and anonymous manner (Gürel & Yakın 2007). Such an ethos also makes them ideal spaces for subcultural identities to be established and linguistic bricolages particular to these identities to be developed. Therefore, a large part of the content hosted on sözlüks consists of colourful and collaboratively produced anecdotes, confessions, insider jokes, subversive opinions drawn from empirical observations daily life in Turkey. This type of content, although mostly text-based, has diversified in recent years to include other formats such as video (in the form of flash files) or GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format).

6. THE TURKISH HITCHERHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Sedat Kapanoğlu (known as *Kapanoglu* on Ekşisözlük) is a software programmer who founded Sourtimes.org on the 15th of February 1999. The website was intended to be the entertainment portal for his envisioned business venture, Sedat Software Group (Kapanoglu). Kapanoğlu is an interesting character to note in that as an entrepreneur, he had quite a few failed business ventures

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61 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view

prior to founding Ekşisözlük, including one venture which involved selling software for optimizing elevator schedules in tall buildings. Despite working at Microsoft as a software programmer for a number of years during the mid-2000s, he was not interested in doing anything asides from computer programming and never completed his university degree. Essentially put, the character portrait of Kapanoğlu is of a typical generation Xer, full of personality and intelligent ideas but having a slightly slacker attitude to life. The name of the website - Sour Times – which he founded with his girlfriend and co-editor at the time (*kler*), is a reference to the Portishead song from the 1994 Dummy album. In an interview, Kapanoğlu claims that he developed Ekşisözlük out of 'boredom' with his girlfriend of the time and some friends from *hitnet*, a Bulletin Board System (BBS) based online community which was popular during the mid-1990s in Turkey. Initially he had envisioned Ekşisözlük as a relatively minor product on Sourtimes.org, the entertainment portal he had founded in 1999. According to Kaplanoglu, Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was one inspiration behind his motivation to host user generated content on Ekşisözlük. After reading the book, Kapanoğlu envisioned that the roles of the participants would resemble the non-professional field researchers who made the contributions to the *Hitchhiker's Guide*. The slogan he developed for Ekşisözlük, "kutsal bilgi kaynağınız" (your holy source of information), seems to be a direct reference to Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy's slogan - the "standard repository for all knowledge and wisdom". Drawing from this, one can tentatively argue that Douglas Adams has shaped Sedat Kapanoglu's understanding of contribution and hence his motivation to host user generated content.

The other inspiration for Sedat Kapanoglu was drawn from his experience as a participant in Turkish speaking Bulletin Board System (BBS) communities throughout the mid-1990s. As an amateur software programmer Sedat Kapanoglu extensively relied on the information provided by others on Hitnet, a Fidonet style BBS network popular in Turkey between 1992 and 1996 to become a software developer in Turkey (see Furman 2015b). For him, the exchanges on *Hitnet* were extremely valuable as they helped him mature as a programmer. Growing up Eskişehir, a relatively small town in Anatolia, *Hitnet* functioned as a space for Kapanoglu to meet other coders and participate in the wider coder subculture active in the bigger cities of Turkey. In fact, a few of the coders he met during this period became his life-long business partners. Kapanoglu himself explicitly states in interviews that he wanted to design an application that could capture the wealth of human knowledge in a manner similar to what he had experienced on *Hitnet*.[62]

The design process that would facilitate the formation of a Turkish version of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* would be characterized by trial and error. At first, Kapanoglu experimented with novelties such as a visitor guest-book and a web chat applet to encourage

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62 From https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDjmrn68s1I

synchronous forms of communication in the early versions of his website as sourtimes.org. One of the results of Kapanoglu's coding experiments was an application named Ekşisözlük. Soon, the popularity of Ekşisözlük outpaced all the other applications he had designed for Sour Times Entertainment.[63] Once Kapanoglu began to notice that the number of visitors using the Ekşisözlük application far exceeded the number of visitors using other applications on the website, he decided to to jettison the other content on sourtimes.org and focus on developing Ekşisözlük. A few years after the founding of the sourtimes.org, Kapanoglu would write the following definition under the subject-header 'Ekşisözlük':

> "a masterpiece that can make up for the loneliness caused by time zones. (...)
>
> since going online [link to 15 february 1999] until today [link to 2001], more than one 1000 writers who helped develop this small and simple program, which has managed to form it's own subculture, challenge the very definitions of what is 'true' and demonstrated how knowledge has so many different angles. The seeds of this program were sown years back [link to hitnet notes] and has now become a gigantic knowledge treasure thanks to technology [link to internet]... (...)"[64]

Over time, Ekşisözlük has evolved to become a platform hosting one of the most influential Turkish speaking online communities worldwide and the design of the platform as well as it's peer production mechanisms have become a model emulated by other community hosting sözlük websites.[65] It's community remains to this day, a key actor in the sphere of dissent present within Turkish cyberspace.

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63 It is quite humorous to note that a national lottery number predictor was amongst the less successful applications that Kapanoglu experimented with during this period.

64 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/452

65 Online or virtual communities can be defined as groups of people with shared interests or goals for whom electronic communication is a primary form of interaction (Dennis, Pootheri & Natarajan 1998). This type of computer-mediated communication allows people to find and socialize with others that share similar interests, thereby forming and sustaining virtual communities (Hiltz & Wellman, 1997). Perceived affinity between social actors creates the preconditions necessary for the aggregation of collective identities, communities or neighbourhoods online. Drawing from this, it can be argued that the most concise definition of an online or virtual community is one that embraces the elements discussed above: "groups of people with common interests and practices that communicate regularly and for some duration in an organized way over the Internet through a common location or mechanism." (Ridings et al. 2002, p. 273).

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

"If our objective is to challenge power, then platitudes do not help us understand the dual character of the Internet: it empowers and disempowers. What seems to be a paradox is actually the normal contradiction of capitalist society, precisely because the Internet is not a subject with independent characteristics but an object shaped by the social environment in which it is embedded."

Aouragh & Alexander, *The Egyptian Experience: Sense and Nonsense of the Internet Revolution* (2011)

In order to have a better grasp of how concepts such as peer-production can be applied to describe the mechanisms behind the collaborative production process on Ekşisözlük, and to relate the analysis of these mechanisms to a wider context, one must firstly review the literature written on the subject of peer production. Similarly, when discussing the business model that attempts to monetize user generated content on Ekşisözlük, one must relate this discussion to academic literature on digital labour and informational capitalism. Accordingly, the following chapter is an extensive review that unpacks the theoretical concepts central to this dissertation. The first section introduces peer-production as a theoretical concept and provides an outline of the different models of peer production that have emerged on the Internet. The second part of the chapter addresses the literature and criticisms directed against the economy of informational capitalism. The final section connects peer production with informational capitalism and discusses whether participation in Ekşisözlük should be classified as peer production or as a form of digital labour.

1. DEFINING THE COMMONS AND PEER-PRODUCTION

Peer-production has been defined as an ecology of production that aims to defy and resist the hierarchies and rules of ownership that drive productive models within capitalism (Bauwens & Kostakis 2014; Moore 2011). The chief resource in this mode of production is the commons (see Söderberg & O'Neil 2014). What differentiates the commons from other types of resources is its legal status. Legal theoretician Yochai Benkler provides a definition of the common as "an institutional form of structuring the rights to access, use, and control resources" (2006:60). When something is designated as a commons, it legally determines that no specific person or entity has

exclusive control over how the resources found on a commons will be distributed. Benkler uses the term as an antonym to the concept of property, which designates that a singular entity has the sole and legal authority to decide how a resource will be used. He states that resources governed by a commons system "may be used or disposed of by anyone among some (more or less well-defined) number of persons, under rules that may range from 'anything goes' to quite crisply articulated formal rules that are effectively enforced" (Benkler 2006: 61).

Although commons as a term originates from a medieval legal term that designates land that is collectively owned and governed (Boyle 2003), the term is increasingly being used to describe the collective output and management of cultural knowledge generated through the Internet. Within this context, it has been argued that the growing number of information producers and consumers connected to one another through the Internet has created a unique "knowledge commons" (Hess & Ostrom et. al 2007). While not all forms of production found on the Internet are necessarily based on the knowledge commons or are even peer-based, the knowledge commons has certainly created possibility for the implementation of peer-based production models (see Ghosh 2005; Kostakis 2010).

Generally speaking, there are a number of unique characteristics to commons-based production. Most importantly, as the resources found in commons need to be shared, everyone participating needs to cooperate with one another. Therefore, one can argue that the principle characteristic of commons-based peer production online is collaboration among large groups of Internet users who cooperate effectively to provide or exchange information, knowledge or cultural goods without relying on either market pricing or managerial hierarchies to coordinate their common enterprise. In other words, the Internet has enabled a mode of production wherein individuals produce on a non-proprietary basis and contribute their product to a commons which no one is understood as owning, and that anyone can access or use. Peer production has been described as a "third model of production" (the other two being the market and the firm) that has particular advantages over more conventional models of production (Bauwens 2005).

As the resources found in commons are technically not owned by anyone, the commons system allows individuals to make their own choices about how these resources will be used within the context of their personal projects. Accordingly, it has been argued that peer production models are ideally suited for identifying and harnessing the power of human creativity (Benker 2002; 2006). This is because peer-production allows participants to self-identify for tasks and perform them for motivations other than material compensation.

One of the principle criticisms levelled at commons-based peer production models is that if individuals are left to act independently and according to their own self-interest within the legalistic framework of the commons, this causes the commons to become unsustainable and hence,

neglected. The so-called "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968) is that when individuals are left to their own devices on the commons, they end up creating situations which are contrary to the interests of the group they belong to. While the applicability of this argument to the management of natural resources in the physical world remains debatable (see Ostrom 1990; 2008), it is not necessarily applicable to the management of resources in the digital world.

Over the past decades, the advent of fast computer processors and affordable digital media production devices, when connected to one another through a distributed network, have created a situation wherein digital data (and hence information) can be easily produced and shared. One just needs access to an Internet connection in order to be able to share locally stored digital data. As a result, information does not suffer from the same sort of scarcity suffered by commodities in the physical world. As such, it has been argued that the digital nature of information makes it a non-rival public good (Benker, Shaw & Hill 2008). A good can be considered non-rival insofar as to when it's consumption by one person does not make it any less available for consumption by another. Once such a good is produced, no more social resources need be invested in creating more of it to satisfy the next consumer. Drawing from this, one can argue that the affordances of the Internet have inadvertently created the possibility of exchanging digitalized information commodities at zero cost, setting forth the necessary conditions for the knowledge commons to emerge. This makes the knowledge commons impervious to criticism based on the tragedy of the commons argument.

Another popular criticism that has been levelled at the peer-production model is that the lack of established hierarchies inevitably creates a problem of authority and governance. Case studies on successful peer-production communities demonstrate that "the tragedy in the Wiki-Commons" (George 2007) has been avoided by resorting to hybrid, democratic models of governance wherein "benevolent dictators" "steer" participants towards efficient peer production rather than controlling them directly (Kostakis 2012). In successful examples of peer production, governance is organized as an "onion model" (Nakakoji et al., 2002) wherein a single person tends to be at the heart of the project, effectively acting as an initiator. This form of leadership, which is based upon principles that encourage the maximum autonomy of project participants, communal validation and negotiated coordination, constitute the basis of effective peer-production governance (Kostakis 2010; Kostakis & Drechsler 2013).

The third criticism that has been directed at the peer-production model is in regards to motivation. Critics argue that participants tend to eventually lose their motivation, causing a decline in the quality and quantity of their contributions (see for example, Keen 2007). In regard to this criticism, it has been argued that individuals are motivated to continue participating in peer-production projects in situations wherein they feel that the presence of monetary rewards is

inversely related to the presence of other, social-psychological rewards (Benkler & Nissenbaum 2006). In other words, people continue to contribute free labour to projects wherein they feel that the socio-psychological benefits of having participated in such a project outweighs the material benefits gained from participation. Accordingly, peer-production models have longevity and are successful when the product is for the public good rather than commercial gain (Benkler 2002). Secondly, it has been argued that the motivation to participate in peer-production can be sustained and extended when the contribution is very small. In order for a contribution to be perceived as "small", a project needs to be broken up into modular compartments which can be produced independently of each other. The modularization of a project allows peer production to be incremental and asynchronous and pools the efforts of different people with different capacities to work on the project during different times. These modules need to be granular in order to keep individuals involved in a project. Granularity refers to the size of the modules. Smaller or more fine-grained modules will allow a commons-based peer-production project to capture contributions from a large number of contributors who have relatively low levels of sustained motivation. Finally, Benkler (2002) argues that efficient quality control mechanisms and integration will allow contributors to visualize their contributions vis-a-vis the greater whole of the ongoing project. The issue of quality assurance is also very much connected to keep errors in self-judgement from lowering the quality of contributions. Effective peer-production systems have filtering mechanisms which correct mistaken judgements that agents make about themselves when participating in production. At the same time, ensuring a massive number of contributors safeguards the quality of contributions (Weinberger, 2007). Massive numbers of contributors and the implementation of mechanisms which allow peer-production projects to retain consistently high standards in the quality of contributors.

The notion of a commons-based mode of production has inspired a number of projects that utilize the technological affordances of the Internet in a unique manner. These projects include the distributed computer schemes similar to the SETI@Home and Nasa Clickworkers projects, decentralized peer-to-peer (p2p) networks, peer produced free software or collective commentary/knowledge production project such as Wikipedia or Slashdot. The collaborative peer production processes driving each of these projects are different from one another.

The Free Software Movement is perhaps the commons based peer-production model that has attracted the most attention from academia. The values of the Free Software movement, best embodied in Eric Raymond's *Cathedral and the Bazaar* (1997/2001), believes that software development models based on distributed, collaborative software programming are a stronger and better alternative to the so-called "cathedral" model which emphasizes hierarchy and centralization. Raymond's text, which was a case-study trying to replicate the development model of Linux (a free

operating system built by Linus Thorwalds in 1991) for a smaller scale software project, quickly became a canonical text that demonstrated how the potentials of the Internet as a distributed networking technology could make the free software movement into a powerful alternative to the hierarchical business models employed by software powerhouses such as Microsoft or Sun Microsystems. In this regard, Raymond famously commented that

"Perhaps in the end the open-source culture will triumph not because cooperation is morally right or software "hoarding" is morally wrong […] but simply because the closed-source world cannot win an evolutionary arms race with open-source communities that can put orders of magnitude more skilled time into a problem" (1997/2201:25)

Some examples of successful free software alternatives include the Apache web server, Mozilla Firefox browser, Linux kernel, BIND (the most widely used DNS software) or Sendmail (router of the majority of email). All of these free software alternatives utilize a peer production model of cooperation and use institutionalised ways of sharing such as the Creative Commons or the General Public Licences to expand the knowledge commons (Kostakis, 2012). Building on much of the work done on the network society (see Castells 1996, 2001), some studies of the free distribution of software include ethnographies on Free, Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS) communities (Alleyne 2011), the politics of copyleft and Open Source (Berry 2008) or the potentials of the Free, Libre and Open Source Software revolution (Chopra & Dexter, 2008; DiBona et al., 1999, 2006). While ethics of peer produced, free software can be seen as a counter-cultural response to the politics of IT powerhouses aiming to monopolize the production of software, the peer-to-peer (P2P) networks of the Pirate Movement can be seen as an alternative to the copyright and distribution monopolies enjoyed by the entertainment industry.

The Pirate Movement, which advocates the free sharing of culture, information and intellectual property, can be seen as the counter-cultural response against the laws of copyright and online distribution which had started to be stipulated by media corporations during the mid 1990s (see Lessing 2004). One can argue that the first development which sparked off the Pirate Movement was the establishment and wide-spread availability of peer-to-peer networks on the Internet. Peer to peer networks allow files stored on the private devices of ordinary users to be exchanged through a client program. While digitalization as a technology around the mid-1980s had allowed for the transcription of analogue objects onto digital formats, these objects still depended on a physical entity such as a CD or a DVD to be transplanted from one digital environment into another. Much of the early monopolies of the entertainment industry were based on regulating the distribution of these physical data storage devices. The advent of the Internet

gradually eliminated the need for physical data storage devices as P2P networks were a cheaper and more efficient means for exchanging data. As the demographic scope of Internet users began to expand, the content of the traffic generated by peer-to-peer networks could consist of whatever was digitally stored within local environments, hence creating the potential for an almost unlimited exchange of information through the Internet. It was in this historical conjecture that the Pirate movement began to blossom with the emergence of websites dedicated to facilitating file sharing websites such as the Pirate Bay and the popularisation of peer-to-peer file sharing client programs such as Napster (1999), Audiogalaxy (1998), Kazaa (2001) and Soulseek (2002) during the end of the 1990s. The advent of wide-spread file-sharing and the relative inability of the entertainment industry to intervene precipitated a legal and economic crises within the establishment. Websites facilitating peer to peer file sharing, were intermediaries between users wanting to share files through client programs. These websites became an alternative to the distribution monopoly of the entertainment industry. As a result, file-sharing websites such as the Pirate Bay and the entertainment industry entered into long legal spats wherein the very foundations of copyright and intellectual property laws were contested. Academic studies on free-distribution activism include a case-study on the politicization of the Pirate movement (Burkart 2014; Li 2009), the Pirate Bay (Andersson 2009), peer-to-peer networks (Oram 2000; Oram ed.al, 2001), BitTorrent file-sharing system (Pouwelse 2004), Gnutella peer-to-peer network (Ripeanu, Foster, & Iamnitchi 2002), Digital Piracy (Strangelove 2005) and the history of intellectual property and copyright (Vaidhyanathan 2001).

Another type of project relying on peer-production uses the latent self-organizational capacities afforded by the Internet to harness the power of collective intelligence (see Surowiecki 2005) for purposes such as crowdsourcing (Howe 2006), generating "smart mobs" (Rheingold 2006) or leaderless forms of organization (Brafman, Beckstrom & Rod 2006). Distributed processing schemes such as the SETI@Home assembled computational speeds faster than some of the largest supercomputers currently operating around the world. Such projects rely on using the Internet to access the latent processing capacities of online computers to crowdsource the analysis of immensely large datasets. For example, the NASA Clickworkers experiment crowdsourced a task wherein thousands of Internet users collaborated in five-minute increments to map and classify the craters on Mars; a task that would normally take a team of researchers years to complete. The Ushahidi project involves using crowdsourcing as a technique to create dynamic, publicly accessible interactive maps for emergency situations in the developing world. In comparison to conventional forms of data gathering, Ushahidi has proven to provide faster and more accurate information in emergency situations such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti or the 2012 snow emergency in the Balkans.

The final type of project relying on peer production is unique insofar as it relies on channelling the collective knowledge of participants to build complex, open-ended cultural artefacts such as online encyclopaedias or as in the case of Ekşisözlük, urban dictionaries. Each participant has a unique cultural background and contributes accordingly to the project (Viégas et al., 2007). As the example of Wikipedia shows, the resulting cultural artefact which is produced by anonymous, collaborating 'nobodies' can match the quality of one which is produced solely by individual experts (Giles, 2005; Keen, 2007; Lih, 2009). Although Wikipedia is neither the first collaborative encyclopaedia nor the first to benefit from volunteers, it nonetheless constitutes a unique model for cultural production due to how it uses the Internet to harness the power of contributors in a collaborative manner (Loveland & Reagle 2013).

2. PARTICIPATION AND THE ECONOMY OF INFORMATIONAL CAPITALISM

As noted in earlier chapters, the past decade has witnessed the rapid diversification of Internet users in terms of both demography and geography. During roughly the same time period, another important trend that has occurred is the democratization of media production. Although digitalization is a process that can be traced to the invention of computer in the later half of the 20th century, the increased availability of affordable, and easy to use digital equipment and smart devices in the past decade has largely overturned the monopoly traditionally enjoyed by technical experts over the realm of media production. This trend has both radically democratized the definitions of what one can call digital media and has inadvertently setting off a new, intensive phase to the ongoing process of digitalization. One of most important effects of this cultural transformation has been the collapse of conventional social boundaries distinguishing the producer and consumer from one another (Toffler 1980). As a model, peer production can be thought as harnessing the commons borne out of the collapse of the boundaries in media production/consumption and the establishment of the Internet as a global communications technology. One can argue, however, that peer production is only just one mode of production which harnesses the affordances created by these trends. Capitalism has created its own mode of production that also harnesses the possibilities afforded by these new trends. After the Dot Com Crises of 2000, market forces have been forced to the search for new strategies and forms of capital accumulation and value extraction from the Internet. This process has led to the formation of a new mode of production and a new economy that has been described as the "networked information economy" (Benkler 2006:2-7) and is based on what has been called digital, informatic, MP3 or transnational informational capitalism (Fitzpatrick 2002; Fuchs 2008; Sennett 2006; Schiller 2000). This driving model behind this new economy seeks to transform participation in online spaces into a form of cognitive, communicative labour that produces tangible informational goods

(Fuchs 2008).

As Fuchs (2013) points out, informational capitalism constitutes the relations of production that base their operations predominantly on data. The relations of production determine the property relations of labour power, the mode of allocation and distribution of goods, the mode of coercion used for defending property relations and the division of labour. The relations of production determine who owns private property and who has the power to make others produce surplus value that they do not own. This surplus value is appropriated by private property owners (Fuchs 2014a:6). In effect, Fuchs argues that class relationships are organisational forms of the relations of production, in which a dominant class controls the modes of ownership, distribution and coercion necessary for the exploitation of a subordinated class. Information society is the term he uses to describe the forces of production. When speaking of the Information Society, he alludes to discussions on trends discussed earlier in this section. The relations of production and forces of production are in a dialectical relationship with one another as productive forces are not just the means for producing human wealth and use value, but are also means for the exploitation of the labour of the proletariat and for intensifying this exploitation so that more labour is exploited per unit of time. This results in the production of more commodities in the same time period and in the creation of more surplus value and more profit (Fuchs 2012: 424).

For Fuchs, the transnational component of informational capitalism comes from the fact that corporations, social media platforms cross national boundaries and within the context of informational capitalism, flows of capital, power, money, commodities, people, and information are exchanged transnationally at high speed (Fuchs 2012). Data mediates the accumulation of capital, power and defines capacities on a transnational scale. What is unique about informational capitalism is it's mode of production. For Fuchs, the idea of the mode of production stresses a dialectical interconnection of relations of production with the organisational forms of capital, labour and technology. Drawing from this, he considers the informational mode of production as a transcendence of older ones and describes a global surplus value chain that can be thought as connecting the mineral mines of Africa with Chinese electronics hardware manufacturer Foxconn, Silicon Valley and the prosumer (Fuchs 2014a). As such, the informational mode of production is a transcendence of a specific combination of different types and forms of capitalist production and exploitation (Fuchs & Sandoval 2014). All of the labour that goes into producing surplus value in the informational mode of production needs to be framed as "digital labour" (Fuchs 2010, 2014b). Drawing from this, it has been argued that digital labour can be split into two; waged (including agricultural, industrial, information labour) and unwaged (Brown 2014). The later takes place on social media and Web 2.0 platforms and is voluntary in nature. On the other hand, the former describes the waged labour that goes into producing commodities needed for the economy of

informational capitalism to function. Unwaged digital labour taps into the same resources as peer production but aims to appropriate the generated value for profit rather than the enrichment of the commons.

Within the context of unwaged digital labour, the past decade has witnessed the emergence of a key number of Web 2.0 technologies that are designed to extract value from unwaged digital labour and turn participation into an informational goods. Although there is no specific process or feature that can descriptively distinguish Web 1.0 technologies from Web 2.0, it has been argued that most Web 2.0 technologies forcefully make the user a first class objects within their systems, pushing them to actively generate content with interactive features that makes participation easier (Cormode & Krishnamurthy 2008). Within this paradigm, Web 2.0 technologies create platforms which afford the following:

- Users as first class entities in the system, with prominent profile pages, including such features as: age, sex, location, testimonials, or comments about the user by other users.
- The ability to form connections between users, via links to other users who are "friends," membership in "groups" of various kinds, and subscriptions or RSS feeds of "updates" from other users.
- The ability to post content in many forms: photos, videos, blogs, comments and ratings on other users' content, tagging of own or others' content, and some ability to control privacy and sharing.
- Other more technical features, including a public API to allow third–party enhancements and "mash–ups," and embedding of various rich content types (e.g., Flash videos), and communication with other users through internal e–mail or IM systems (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008)

Enabling interactivity is perhaps the primary aim of Web 2.0 technologies as interactivity encourages the generation of informational goods through association. In the past decade, a number of different forms of association have emerged in social media platforms that can be broadly categorized into a number of different classes:

- "Clicks and connections": simple activities which only require a single click to complete, such as rating a movie, voting in a poll or voting for a story (as in Digg), or adding a semantic link, such as adding a friend.
- "Comments": adding a short response, comment or tag to existing content, such as a news story, blog entry, photo, etc.
- "Casual communication": sending a message to another user, either via an e–mail–like system or via

instant messaging. These are typically short, a sentence or two per communication.

• "Communities": interacting in larger groups or communities by joining a group or posting a message to a group.

• "Content Creation": uploading or entering some entirely new content, such as a webcam movie, digital photo, or blog posting. (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008)

Accordingly, one can say that Web 2.0 technologies are techniques that enable simultaneously both interactivity and the ability to survey interactivity. It has been argued that the effect of these techniques is the commodification of participant or the online audience in a manner to what Dallas Smythe first described when speaking of the commodification of eyeballs with the corporate media (see Fuchs 2012). Web 2.0 technologies have been described as belonging to a unique category of surveillance techniques that extract value from the "work of being watched" (Andrejevic 2002; 2009). As such, using Web 2.0 technologies to track and monetize participation constitutes the last step in the value extraction chain of informational capitalism. According to Tim O'Reilly, the founder of O'Reilly Media (and who incidentally coined the 'Web 2.0' in a discussion with John Battelle in October 2004), the rationality of the new economy is based on providing hosting spaces ("platforms") wherein users can generate their own content (O'Reilly 2005). The availability of commercial platforms that ease the processes of self-expression and distribution of user generated content has created what has been called a "culture of convergence" (Deuze 2007, Jenkins 2006). Convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. Accordingly, in the new economic model, the user is recast as a "co-creator" of value for corporate entities (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Tapscott & Williams 2006). Typically, in exchange for hosting free spaces for content, platforms retain the information from participation which can then be sold to third-parties in exchange for attractive marketing revenues (Mandiberg et. al., 2012). Besides uploading content, users also tend to unknowingly provide important information about their demographic profile to site owners (van Djick 2009). As Beer and Burrows (2007) puts it, "(t)he user profile is the 'fundamental commodity of Web 2.0". Tim O'Reilly (2005), openly identifies the efficient extraction of personal data as the most important aspect to running a successful commercial service online:

> "The race is on to own certain classes of core data: location, identity, calendaring of public events, product identifiers and namespaces. (…) the winner will be the company that first reaches critical mass via user aggregation, and turns that aggregated data into a system service."[66]

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66 http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html

As a result, the activities of the user are becoming increasingly regulated, constrained or embedded within corporate processes and practices that strive to "harness" rather than "unleash" participation (Deuze 2008). Ensuring the participation of users in consuming and generating content becomes the primary object of contemporary media management policy and has been described as a disciplinary process (Jarret 2008). Notions such as crowdsourcing (Howe 2008), prosumption (see Beer & Burrows 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010), produsage (Bruns 2008, 2012) or playbour (Scholtz 2012) have become popular industry buzzwords to describe the range of business models that aim to generate value from unwaged labour practices within the context of massively distributed content hosting platforms wherein self-governing volunteers collaboratively both produce and consume media.

Over the past decade, a number of different Web 2.0 platforms have established themselves as key actors within the economy of informational capitalism. These actors can be broadly categorized into a number of different categories. Other than search engines, perhaps the most prominent group of actors are social-networking platforms. Social-networking platforms, with their wide range of interactive features and large user bases have become the most important actors within the rapidly expanding universe of informational capitalism. These social-networking applications typically exploit the need to cultivate 'weak ties' by individuals living in urban societies (see Travers & Milgram 1969, Granovetter 1983).[67] By providing users with access to tools to express themselves and connect with one another on a social network, the popularity of these platforms capitalize on the socially desirable trait of developing loose and ephemeral relations. Although platforms such as Facebook or Twitter have now become an indispensable aspect of our daily lives, social-network platforms are relatively recent phenomena and have a short history. Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that the first website to fit the prescribed definition of a social-network site appeared in 1997. From 1997 onwards, social-networking platforms like Facebook which target the masses have emerged alongside smaller, niche-market variants such as LinkedIn, Academia and Smallworld which target narrow demographic groups or professions.

3. CRITIQUES OF INFORMATIONAL CAPITALIST ECONOMY

One can argue that perhaps the earliest moments of public contention regarding the profit model of informational capitalism have converged around the notion of privacy. The basic argument goes that the economy generated around informational capitalism undermines our private autonomy by extending our professional lives into formerly private arenas (Kreiss et. al., 2011). Just as convergence culture makes it easy for individuals to bring together their private and public selves,

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67 Social relations in modern societies can be split into 'strong' ties which consist of immutable relational properties such as families and 'weak' social ties, who are our acquaintances. In his famous study, Granovetter suggests that individuals who invest in cultivating a large scale of 'weak ties' are potentially more successful in urban environments are they have more access to circulating information. As a result of this, weak ties are socially desirable in contemporary society.

it also turns formerly private pleasures such as playing games into forms of labour and allows work to enter into intimate domains (Terranova 2000; 2004). By shaping the ways in which we express and organize ourselves online, the communicative spaces created by the networked information economy have tapped into an almost unlimited potential to accumulate "Big Data" (boyd & Crawford 2011). This has naturally elicited concerns regards the ethics of Big Data, privacy and the ownership of data produced by participants (see boyd 2012; boyd & Hargittai 2010). As the debate generated around the Snowden revelations of 2013 demonstrates, the main controversy is caused by the collaboration between national spying agencies and companies such as Google or Facebook.[68] Within the context of such a collaboration, it is increasingly difficult to speak of data privacy and the supposed anonymity afforded by the Internet. Furthermore, the tacit collaboration between corporations and government agencies have serious implications in regard to the reliability of corporate social-networking platforms for self-organizing and securely sharing information. As an alternative to the compromised communicative spaces maintained by corporations, a series of non-profit social-networking platforms such as Diaspora (2010) and Lorea (2011) have started to emerge. There has also been mention of constructing organized networks as an alternative to social-networks (Lovink 2013) and of documenting surveillance techniques used by governments to monitor social media (see Fuchs et. al., 2012).

Another debate has started around the controversy regarding the politics of search engines. In a blog article called 'Google and the Pre-mediation of Everything', scholar Richard Grusin discusses how Google's new Instant Search pre-mediates our search decisions by presenting choices that seem compatible with the user profile. This means corporations are not only using our online activity for to profile user activity, but also beginning to shape the horizon of user agency through data profiling.[69] To put it in another way, corporations are not only limiting our access to the information commons by managing what one can search, but also by shaping also our human desire to access information.

The implicit issue underlying the controversy regarding pre-mediation and profiling is the ethical question of allowing corporate entities to monopolize our access to the Internet. The attempts of commercial companies to monopolise access to the web can be traced to the DataPortability Project which was started in 2007. This project encouraged the use of a free, OpenID authentication protocol as a way of being able to access data in multiple contexts through a singular identification. The goals of the DataPortability Project were swiftly emulated by Facebook Connect the following year and as of now, Facebook is emerging as a potential competitor to Google's near monopoly on search engines. High profile blogger Steve Cheney, in a

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68 http://www.ctrl-verlust.net/10-thesen-zum-neuen-spiel/
69 http://premediation.blogspot.com.tr/2010/09/google-and-premediation-of-everything.html

post titled "How Facebook is Killing Your Authenticity", comments upon how Facebook as a profit-oriented company is increasingly monopolizing the ways one can assert identities online:

> "(...) forcing people to comment, and more broadly speaking to log-on with one identity puts a massive stranglehold on our very nature. (...) the writing is on the wall: all of this off-site encroachment of the Facebook graph portends where FB is really going in pushing one identity. (…) Now – just to join the best technology community on the internet (...) – we need to live inside Facebook walls".[70]

While the debate on privacy constitutes an ethical criticism of informational capitalism, a number of social criticisms of the phenomena have been advanced over the past decade. Sociological studies on the impact of the Internet on social relations (see Carr 2011; Lanier 2011; Pariser 2012; Turkle 2013) operate under the critical paradigm that going online is less human, less authentic and more mediated. The "net critique" approach (see Lovink 2012; Lovink & Baumgärtel 2008; Lovink & Schultz 1997; Lovink & Scholz 2005; Lovink & Zehle 2005; Lovink & Rossiter 2009, 2011; Rossiter 2006), argue that the ongoing techno-capitalist transformations are subsuming the Internet into constituting a new political economy of capitalism. Be it in the form of "communicative capitalism" (Dean 2010) or "cognitive capitalism" (Moulier-Boutang 2012), post-Marxist discussions on the informational capitalism can further be split into two streams of commentary which although theoretically different, tend to share the common goal of looking at the subjectivities generated by this new capitalism. The first of these streams, which tends to be influenced by the psychoanalytical works of Lacan and Žižek, examines how the exploitative nature of capitalist relations in the Internet age has mutated to capture and enmesh the subjectivity of the individual into the machinery of cognitive capitalism. According to Jodi Dean (2009: 28), "communicative capitalism is that economic-ideological form wherein reflexivity captures creativity and resistance so as to enrich the few as it placates and diverts the many". This definition suggests that capital as an inherently self-revolutionizing system has begun to tap into unconscious mechanism of individuals in order to create profit. In other words, communicative capitalism as a new re-structuring of capitalist relations in developed societies, is about eliciting reflexivity and capturing it as profit. For Dean, reflexivity is associated with the psycho-analytic concept of the drive, which constitutes our unconscious desire to break out of our ordinary modes of being;

> "'drive is quite literally the very 'drive' to break the all of continuity in which we are embedded, to introduce a radical imbalance into it. My argument is that communicative capitalism is a formation

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70 http://stevecheney.posterous.com/how-facebook-is-killing-your-authenticity

that relies on this imbalance, on the repeated suspension of narratives, patterns, identities, norms, etc" (Dean 2011:31).

The digital technology of cognitive capitalism heightens what Žižek (1997) has called a 'condition of symbolic decline', or what others such as Lyotard, (1984) have called the 'post-modern' condition: a radically relativistic and ontologically insecure condition in which the categories of truth and representation rapidly decay into a flux lacking any certainty or stability. Communicative capitalism as a system of exploitation works to appropriate the distorting and discomforting ontological effects of digital technology as profit. In this context, Jodi Dean (2011), drawing from the work of Žižek on ideology (1997), identifies fantasies as localized coping strategies to subjectively deal with the disorientating effects of communicative capitalism:

> "The particularity of these fantasies of the global is important because this is the global networked communications produce. Our networked interactions produce our specific worlds as the global of global capitalism. They create the expectations and effects of communicative capitalism, expectations and effects that necessarily vary with the setting. Because the global is whatever specific communities or exchanges imagine it to be, anything outside the experience or comprehension of these communities either does not exist or is an inhuman, otherworldly alien threat that must be annihilated" (2011:45).

Thus, in essence fantasy is the way we psychologically pacify and adjust ourselves to distorting subjective experiences caused by the endless information flow of the Internet. Not only do these fantasies set off dangerous fundamentalisms or make societies increasingly intolerant towards each other, they also foreclose the potential to break out of the exploitative relations constituted by cognitive capitalism. This is because fantasy produces a particular sort of agency, one which has been described by Žižek as an *inter-passive* act (Žižek 2008/1997:144). By re-locating the responsibility onto whom we want to blame for the disorienting effects of cognitive capitalism, fantasy engenders an agency which is intolerant, marginalizing but not revolutionary. Žižek writes:

> "The standard notion of the way fantasy works within ideology is that of a fantasy-scenario which obfuscates the true horror of a situation: instead of a full rendering of the antagonisms which traverse our society, we indulge in the notion of society as an organic Whole, kept together by forces of solidarity and co-operation" (2008/1997:5).

To put it in another way, the fantasies engendered by the effects of networked information economy become a basis for the status quo of cognitive capitalism. As such, these intolerant

fantasies are the contents of the ideology of communicative capitalism or the total horizon through which society is experienced. By defining a seamless total horizon, ideological fantasy functions as an obscurantism normalizing social relations. For revolutionary change to begin, one must tackle or 'traverse' the fantasies that sustain the validity of ideology. Multitude, as a revolutionary mass, can only be re-constituted through a public willingness to confront and 'traverse' the fantasies engendered by communicative capitalism. For Jodi Dean, the networked social movements of Occupy or the movement in Brazil, Peru, Southern Europe and Turkey constitute the revolutionary multitude, a new form of representation which will eventually destroy the ideological invincibility of capitalism:

> "Those who construe Occupy as post and anti-representation misread plurality as the negative limit to representation when they should instead recognize plurality as representation's positive condition. (…) It thus offers a new form of political representation. In the place of a relation between the people and those who would take their place, willing in their stead, the practices and actions of Occupy Wall assert division in relation to the fundamental antagonism between rich and power, few and many. This new mode of representation doesn't attempt to reconcile. It doesn't aggregate interest, extract division, and assert a forced false unity in a different place. Rather, it is the repetition of division, the creation of new practices, institutions, and will that remain divisive as they are held open and together via their relation to the fundamental antagonism between rich and poor, few and many, ninety-nine and one percent. Occupy makes this antagonism appear. Asserting division, it represents possibility."[71]

The other stream of commentary that focuses on the relationship between capitalism and the Web 2.0 transformation takes a slightly different approach to theorizing the role of the Internet in capitalist relations. Influenced mainly by the philosophical works of Deleuze and Guattari on capitalism (1972, 1980) and the tradition of post-Operaismo Marxism, this approaches sees the recent technological transformation as the 3rd phase of capitalist restructuring of mass production; the first one being the Fordist revolution and the second being the post-Fordist transition in the 1970s. As it has been famously argued by Castells in his trilogy *the Rise of the Network Society* (1996), *the Power of Identity* (1997), and *the End of Millennium* (1998), this new phase of capitalist re-structuring has caused the ontological diffusion of power to eventually shift from the hierarchical Taylorist model into post-Fordist, flexible accumulation and then finally into information networks or 'informationalism'. This critique of the networked information economy is based upon the very idea of participation. Tiziana Terranova amongst others (see Coté & Pybus 2007; Fuchs 2010) have

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71 http://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-38/jodi-dean-and-jason-jones-occupy-wall-street-and-the-politics-of-representation/

argued that participation or performing the role of a produser should not be seen as something inherently beneficial or benign but rather as a form of free labour:

> "Free labor is the moment where this knowledgeable consumption of culture is translated into productive activities that are pleasurably embraced and at the same time often shamelessly exploited. [...] Knowledge labor is inherently *collective*, it is always the result of a collective and social production of knowledge. Capital's problem is how to extract as much value as possible [...] out of this abundant, and yet slightly intractable, terrain" (2000:37-46).

The free labour of peer-production categorically belongs to what has been conceptualized by Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) as *immaterial labour*:

> "On the one hand, as regards the "informational content" of the commodity, it [immaterial labour] refers directly to the changes taking place in workers' labor processes... where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control (and horizontal and vertical communication). On the other hand, as regards the activity that produces the "cultural content" of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work"—in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion."[72]

As a technical transformation, Web 2.0 plays a very important role in the exploitation of immaterial labour as it creates the potential to derive profit from the very essence of human life. Within this context, Lazzarato (2001, 2004), Berardi (2009) and Virno (2004) of the Italian autonomous movement have all explored how the process of digitalization when combined with capitalism is creating a new form of biopolitical power. Drawing inspiration from the later works of Foucault and his lectures at the Collège de France between 1978-1979, these scholars use the metaphor of the 'social factory' to describe how a particular form of living or life produce capitalist relations:

> "Production is not to be considered a merely economy process, ruled solely by the law of supply and demand; extra-economic factors have their role in that process and they are all the more relevant when the labour cycle is intellectualized. Social culture, divergent imaginations, expectations and disillusions, hatred and loneliness all modify the rhythm and the fluidity of the productive process. Emotional, ideological, and linguistic domains condition social productivity" (Berrardi 2009: 68).

With the exception of Negri, the discussion of forming radical practices to oppose biopower often takes the back seat in the works of post-Operismo thinkers who instead seem to advocate

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72 Lazzarato, from Terranova (2000:40)

resistance practices curiously similar to practices mentioned in the much maligned *Fatal Strategies* (Baudrillard 1983). The notion of estrangement or the commonality of the multitude produced out of being victims of neo-liberal biopower bears a strong resemblance to the ironic and self-destructive embrace of capitalism proposed by Baudrillard. The shared argument is that if capitalism keeps on functioning the way it does, it will eventually run out of options and cannibalize itself, creating new political possibilities for the multitude. Meanwhile, the role of the intellectual in this context is to examine the techniques through which biopower is produced and to discuss how the same techniques can be used to produce positive entanglements within society.

Within the critical post-Operaismo Marxist tradition, Bernard Stiegler (2010) explores how immaterial labour and informational capitalism is creating a new form of proletarianization wherein increasingly autonomous and complex economic systems are causing the general population to become increasingly de-skilled. This dynamic between autonomous systems learning and appropriating non-institutionalized knowledge (or what has been likened to the Marxist concept of the 'general intellect'), and the resulting affective and cognitive loss experienced by individuals is the connection he makes between the ongoing economic crises and how it was unable to be predicted:

> "(…) the elites have themselves been proletarianized, that is, *deprived of knowledge of their own logic and by their own logic* – a logic reduced to a calculation without remainder and leading as well to a market of fools" (2010:47).

The potential identified by Stiegler amongst others is that the rise of networks is essentially a *pharmakon*; meaning that while an excess amount of it is toxic, a lesser amount is potentially curative. What is appropriated to serve the systems of the networked information economy also carries a therapeutic potential that can be utilized to overcome the social problems of our era. Therefore rather then simply assigning a negative association to the rise of network technologies and Web 2.0, Stiegler instead takes up a 'pharmacological critique' by trying to reclaim the ways through which the potentials of digital networks can be used to transform a capitalist system which has become "*systematically short-termist, speculative and drive-based*" (Stiegler 2010: 84-5). One finds a similar echo in the work of Tiziana Terranova and her study of the informational milieu. For her, the rise of network technologies is simply not 'hegemony of the 'immaterial' over the material. On the contrary (…) it is a creative destruction, that is a *productive* movement that releases (rather than simply inhibits) social potentials for transformation" (Terranova 2004:2). Here the space opens up for a sort of activism different from the one discussed by Jodi Dean. Often working in alliance with multitude politics, the recent years have witnessed the emergence of radical practices broadly

associated with what can be called "hacktivism". Seeking to develop a form of 'expressive' politics that go beyond the representations offered by the political system of the nation-state, these practices calls for an alliance between the producers of value in the global economic system against what has been called by McKenzie Wark (2004) as the 'vectoralist class'. In *the Hacker Manifesto*, Wark writes that the rise of the information economy has created a new class of producers – the hackers – who are able to manipulate the powers of abstraction and modelling in the capitalist, 'vectoralist' system. In this context wherein value and surplus depend on the ability to abstract, information increasingly becomes commodified as a new form of property producing class inequality. He writes

> "Information, like land or capital, becomes a form of property monopolised by a class, a class of vectoralists, so named because they control the vectors along which information is abstracted, just as capitalists control the material means with which goods are produced, and pastoralists the land with which food is produced. This information, once the collective property of the productive classes —the working and farming classes considered together—becomes the property of yet another appropriating class" (2004:11).

Within this scenario, hackers as a group of information workers who can realize the potentiality of the virtual, emerge as the class that simultaneously produce value for the vectoralist system by hacking the models of abstraction which measure value in society or destabilize them. The decision for the hacker to produce value or to destabilize the powers of abstraction is an ethical decision, something which Himanen explores in *the Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age* (2001). On the other hand for Wark, the notions of intellectual property, of releasing information from the confining commodification of the vectoralist economy are the principle points around which a 'politics of the hack' should be organized:

> "(i)nformation, when it is truly free, is free not for the purpose of representing the world perfectly, but for expressing its difference from what is, and for expressing the cooperative force that transforms what is into what may be. The sign of a free world is not the liberty to consume information, or to produce it, nor even to implement its potential in private worlds of one's choosing. The sign of a free world is the liberty for the collective transformation of the world through abstractions freely chosen and freely actualised"(2004:59).

Wark's vision of a new form of politics based on protecting the digital information commons from capitalist appropriation has found a resonance in the Pirate Party political movement which now spans over 40 different countries. Principally centred on advocacy of network neutrality and free

information exchange, the movement is beginning to find electoral success in Northern Europe (Beyer 2013). On the other hand, organizations such as the hacker collectives of Autonomous or Jullian Assange's Wikileaks (see Leigh & Harding 2011) have also emerged as alternative organizations that have highly politicized goals but do not seek to dabble in representational politics. These organizations, which Geert Lovink (2012) describes as 'the slayers of soft power', instead opt for highly publicized spectacles to create public awareness or to promote new forms of whistle-blowing on the dealings of Western governments.

4. PEER PRODUCTION OR DIGITAL LABOUR?

Looking at the political economy created out of informational capitalism, some authors have made the conclusion that peer production is another marketing euphamism created to avoid using the term digital labour (see Allmer et al., 2015). These authors argue that instead of using digital labour, pro-capitalist approaches rely on concepts such as peer production, prosumption, produsage, and crowdsourcing to describe participation. They are right in pointing out that these concepts are often used in a obscurantist manner, making it difficult to differentiate between digital practices wherein user cooperation and collaboration is being exploited for private profits and activities that are instead focused at building a real commons-based society (Allmer et al., 2015:154). By using such opaque langauge, pro-capitalist approaches avoid dealing with other less amicable processes that have accompanied the rise and normalization of new information and communication technologies (Allmer et al., 2015:154). Although it is important to acknowledge the fact that some commentators use opaque language to manoeuvre around criticisms regarding surveillance and the exploitative nature of unwaged digital labour, one may ask whether the picture is as black and white as they present it. As this thesis demonstrates, not all commentators using terms such as peer production are avoiding the discussion on digital labour. Instead, these commentators are simply looking at the phenomena from an anthropological vantage point rather than an economic one. Choosing to frame on both as economic activities overlooks or ignores the motivational differences between why people choose to participate social media and peer production. Ethnographic studies suggest that what makes participation in social media attractive for participants is the opportunity to share content, socialize (Ellison et al., 2006; Kendall 2007; Lomborg 2012; Lundby 2008; Quan-Haase & Young 2010), express social belonging (Bakardjieva 2005; Baym 2000; Kendall 2002; Meyen et al., 2010), seek information/entertainment (Bakardjieva 2005; Meyen et al., 2010; Quan-Haase & Young 2010) and cultivate a sense of oneself online (Ellison et al., 2006; Liu 2007). As noted earlier in this chapter, the motivations for participating in peer production are quite different. Ignoring these motivations allows the authors make broad observations about the nature of participation for the sake of overlooking the different motivations

for participating in both activities. Accordingly, making peer production a concept which is interchangeable with digital labour would reduce the descriptive value of both.

Secondly, approaches similar to the one mentioned in the previous chapter tend to pit the debate as a choice between either commons-based communism or capitalism. Such approaches tend to ignore that much of the peer production projects contributing to the formation of the commons tend to have some kind of relationship with capitalism on an institutional or legal level. For instance, the licensing strategies developed by the Free, Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS) movement to regulate how people use their products, demonstrates that the situation is not based on a choice between capitalism and communism.

The GNU General Public License (GNU GPL or GPL) is a widely used free software license and guarantees end users (individuals, organizations, companies) the freedoms to run, study, share (copy), and modify the software. Any licensee who adheres to the terms and conditions is given permission to modify the work, as well as to copy and redistribute the work or any derivative version. The licensee is allowed to charge a fee for this service, or do this free of charge. The GPL additionally states that a distributor may not impose "further restrictions on the rights granted by the GPL". For sales or distribution, the entire source code needs to be made available to end users, including any code changes and additions. Only if certain scripts with GPL liscencing are used in a program (and the program is distributed), then all other source code of the program needs to be made available under the same license terms. This counter-commodification strategy is called copyleft.

Although Free Software relies on copyleft to ensure that any software is built out of software developed under the General Public licence (GNU GPL) still retains its status as free software, weaker copyleft versions of the GNU GPL do exist and are just as popular. Drawing from this, one can argue that the motives of the FLOSS movement are more complex than they immediately seem. The situation becomes even more convoluted when one looks at the ideological views of Richard Stallman, the president of the Free Software society and the programmer behind developing GNU GPL. On numerous occasions he has openly declared himself not to be a communist in any sense (see Mueller 2008).

Another example of how peer production projects have relationships with both capitalism and the commons can be found in the recently proposed Peer Production License (PPL). Designed and proposed by Kleiner (2010), PPL proposes that only other commoners, cooperatives and non-profits can share and re-use the material, but not commercial entities intent on making profit through the commons without explicit reciprocity (see Bauwens & Kostakis 2014). Proponents of this licencing model argue that the GNU licence does not protect the commons from being exploited by informational capitalism (see Kostakis and Bauwens 2014). They argue that the GNU

licence causes value generated out of the cycle of creation and circulation within the commons economy to be exploited for free (Bauwens 2013). In contrast, the PPL enables the possibility of ensuring the autonomy of the commons by making it reliant on the cooperative economy rather than on market forces. In other words, the PPL proposes that the formation of a new economy which takes capital from market forces but invests in the commons. With the PPL, Kostakis and Bauwens (2014) argue that it becomes possible to converge the sphere of immaterial Commons contributions with a sphere of co-operative accumulation. Within this context, surplus value can stay within the sphere of Commons/co-operative production (2014:360). What both examples demonstrate is that there is a more complex and nuanced relationship between the capitalism, peer production and the commons.

5. PEER PRODUCTION AND EKŞİSÖZLÜK

Drawing upon the discussion on peer production and digital labour, one needs to firstly differentiate between the motives for participating on Ekşisözlük from social media platforms. Most importantly, as the qualitative data collected from doing fieldwork on Ekşisözlük demonstrates, people participate to be part of a greater community and because they imagine themselves as doing a service to the public. One community member suggests that the uniqueness of participating on Ekşisözlük comes from "(...) the possibility of encountering a topic [on the dictionary] that can be thought individually, but cannot be shared with anyone else" (from Akca 2010). The values shared by the Ekşisözlük community differentiates the members from social media users. As one shall see in the upcoming chapters, this communal identity allows Ekşisözlük users to rapidly organize themselves for solidarity as well as political action.

Within the context of the sözlük phenomenon, one can argue that Ekşisözlük is the first platform in Turkey to use peer production mechanisms to organize user generated content. The peer production mechanisms established by Ekşisözlük to organize content has become a model which constitutes the "industry standard" for all other existing sözlük spaces. It depends on mechanisms that are for the most part, decentralized and collaborative. This model is typically based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands (Benkler 2006:60).

Although participation in peer production mechanisms to organize content is an important aspect of community life on Ekşisözlük, it is not the only form through which community members participate. Community members also use Ekşisözlük as a platform to socialize, make new friends and enjoy themselves in a vibrant online community. Therefore the rituals and practices of socialization online constitutes another indispensable element of user participation on Ekşisözlük.

Just as much as content hosting platform, Ekşisözlük is also a community website and an online socialization platform. Nonetheless, one can argue that the element which makes Ekşisözlük unique in comparison to social media and other Web 2.0 platforms is the peer production mechanisms which generate and organize content.

As the community (and hence the magnitude of content production) has grown in scale over the years, owner Kapanoğlu has gradually introduced a business model to generate advertising revenue from visitor traffic. While some commentators argue that the introduction of advertising has caused the website to "sell out" (Taşdemir & Çelik 2013) and commodify participation as unwaged digital labour, this dissertation would like to argue that the issue needs to be framed differently. As data from the field demonstrates, the business model of Ekşisözlük does not directly commodify the labour of the community. The partners managing the website do not sell the data aggregated from user behaviour to advertisers. Instead, the business model is based on renting out sections of the user interface for advertising. Community members have by default, the option of using an ad-free version of the platform. Therefore, advertising is directed towards the visitors and not the community. On the other hand, the data marketed to advertisers is aggregated from visitors. Although the revenues generated from advertising do not go to the community, the business model of Ekşisözlük does not also exploit the community. This demonstrates that a business model can exist without necessarily turning participation into digital labour.

The introduction of advertising and the business model developed around it has allowed Ekşisözlük to become a self-sustaining entity. Although the platform is privately owned and the revenues generated by advertising go to the managing partners, ekşisözlük's revenue model allows the project to remain economically independent from the interests of large media conglomerates which have enclosed the public sphere in Turkey. The project's revenue model has also inspired the formation of rival sözlüks which widen the choices for participation in the Turkish networked public sphere. As noted previously, there are more than 69 different sözlüks currently active in the Turkish networked public sphere. Tools such as sözlükspot.com allow users to start their own sözlüks and build peer-production communities. In such an environment, participants discontent with the business model of ekşisözlük are free to migrate onto other sözlük projects without necessarily giving up on the experience of peer production.

CHAPTER IV: OUTLINING A METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY OF EKŞİSÖZLÜK

In the previous chapters, the mechanisms used for collaboration and to organize user generated content on Ekşisözlük were described as peer production. Already, an impressive literature exists on understanding how mechanisms built into platforms help participants navigate the challenges of concerted action in conventional peer production contexts. For example, filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems enable crowds to discern valuable or disruptive contributions (de Alfaro, Kulshreshtha, Pye, & Adler, 2011; Kriplean, Beschastnikh, & McDonald, 2008; Lampe, Johnston, & Resnick, 2007; Lampe & Resnick, 2004). Organizing horizontal participation with stratified access and roles helps peer production communities clarify goals, solve disputes, and encourages quality contribution (Crowston, Wei, Howison, & Wiggins, 2012; Kittur & Kraut, 2008; Luther, Fiesler, & Bruckman, 2013; Reagle, 2007; Weber, 2004; Welser et al., 2011; Zhu, Kraut, & Kittur, 2012). The upholding of communal policies and norms and how they are coded into platforms are also important within the context of peer production (Butler, Joyce, & Pike, 2008; Forte, Larco, & Bruckman, 2009; Geiger & Ribes 2010). Drawing upon the insights presented in these studies, a multi-methodological biographical approach will be used to document the systems guiding participants through peer production, the evolution of stratified organizational roles as well as the enforcement of communal policies and norms on Ekşisözlük. The methodology will use a case-study approach combined with ethnographic fieldwork as well as a socio-technical systems approach.

CASE STUDY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

A case study can be defined as a research strategy that allows the research to find answers to the questions of "how" or "why" in situations where the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 2003). It has been written that evidence for proving a hypothesis in case studies can be provided from six sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (Yin 2003). The following case-study, using an ethnographic method based on direct and participant observation, will explore the evolution of community roles as well as policies and norms on Ekşisözlük. Rather than using ethnographic methods to document how document emergent social practices are generated through the online (see Miller & Slater 2000) or how different

cultures have appropriated Internet-based communication technologies into the their local contexts (see Gershon 2010; Madinou & Miller 2011; Miller 2011), the ethnographic method used in this thesis follows the line of inquiry exemplified by ethnographers such as Taylor (2009), Boellstorff (2008), Pearce and Artemesia (2009) or Nardi and Kow (2010) and chooses to treat Ekşisözlük as a "virtual" social world (see Boellstorff et. al.; 2012).

Ethnographic fieldwork for this study involved both virtual methods such as participant observation and email interviews as well as more traditional qualitative methods such as direct observation and online interviews. To begin fieldwork, the researcher applied to open a user account on Ekşisözlük and received membership after waiting for almost a year. Once a member of the community, the researcher had full access to all the features of the website, was able to socialize within the community and participate in peer-production. As part of the fieldwork which lasted over 12 months, the researcher participated in producing more than 20 user-generated entries under a number of different pages. A number of community members who wrote comments on the same pages or replied to the researcher's comments were befriended. These participants referred the researcher to their friends within the community. As a result, the researcher managed to establish a network of friends within the period of a year. By communicating with these participants, the researcher learned about events happening within the community. Quite often, these contacts would point the researcher to occurrences happening on specific pages. If the issues discussed within these pages were relevant to the scope of the case study, the researcher would directly contact the afflicted parties within the community. Through this technique, the researcher gained access to a total of 10 male and 15 female community members who were interested in sharing their online experiences, thoughts and opinions on community roles as well as policies on Ekşisözlük. On occasion, interview participants would share with the researcher their entries about certain subjects. These entries were also collected as fieldwork data. Two of the participants were former moderators and more than nine participants had reported entries to the moderating staff. The necessary ethics approval was obtained in advance and all respondents agreed to sign a consent form that briefly described the study. All participants were also given a debriefing at the conclusion of the interview.

The questions asked in the interviews were open-ended but broadly structured around four key themes: (1) reasons for joining the community (2) positive and negative community experiences on Ekşisözlük; (3) opinions about filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems as well as the owners and moderating team; (4) motivations for participating and how their experience has evolved over continued years of usage.

Undertaking ethnographic research on Ekşisözlük meant that the researcher, by default, becomes a participant observer. Participant-observation is a special mode of observation in which

you are not merely a passive observer (Yin 2003:87). Instead, the researcher may assume a variety of roles within a case study situation and can participate in the events being studied. The conventional manner of collecting data as a participant observer takes the form of using their own five senses, taking field notes, and ultimately creating a narrative based on what you might have seen, heard, or otherwise sensed. In the case of conducting participant observation in digital environments, the researcher can only take field notes on what can be seen, and to a very limited degree, what can be heard. Having direct access as an insider can give the researcher the chance to obtain information about communal opinions which would not be shared with an outsider. At the same time, being a participant observer also causes the researcher to have a problem with biases (Yin 2003:94). This means that data collecting through ethnographic fieldwork ought to be triangulated with other sources of evidence (Yin 2013). As a result, the researcher will also rely on the open access archive of the community commons.

Although much as changed on Ekşisözlük within the course of the past decade, the guiding concept of the platform has remained a constant. Participants use the hyper-link format of the community commons to contribute publicly accessible user generated content. As contributions regarding a subject build up, they become listed one after another in a chronological manner under a page. These lists of contributions are an excellent archival resource to observe how communal definitions or opinions of organizational roles as well as policies evolve over time. As such, they can be correlated with data generated from ethnographic fieldwork about community roles and the emergence of different community policies. However, there some constraints with solely using personal contributions that have managed to survive until the present on the website. When community members decide to leave Ekşisözlük, they have the right to delete their personal contributions.[73] This means that some of the personal records found on the site have been erased by the contributors. For example, when one examines the page for "Ekşisözlük", the first eight entries on the 2013 version of the site are different from the first eight entries in the 2001 version of the site.[74] This means that some of the earlier entries on the "Ekşisözlük" page has been removed by either their contributors or by the administrators of the platform. Furthermore, the Ekşisözlük administration also has a habit of retroactively deleting entries. As the legal restrictions on what can be expressed online have changed in Turkey over the past decade, this has caused certain kinds of content to become illegal. To resolve the situation, the administration has made a habit of deleting content that might caused legal issues. Thirdly, entries are not necessarily factual accounts or descriptions and might have been posted with malicious intent. As such, one way to determine the factuality of the entries is to compare their contents with official announcements or

73 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/37131626
74 See Appendix 4.1

documents that have been posted onto Ekşisözlük by the website administrators. The contents of these official texts can give the researcher insight into issues such as the moderating rules, ownership over contributed content or even the rights of community members. While useful, these texts can be difficult to locate on the platform. The researcher found out that the best way to locate these records is to find and follows links that have posted by either ssg (owner Sedat Kapanoğlu's community nickname) or by a bot used for official announcements. Another problem with these official texts is that many have either been rewritten on a periodic basis or removed by the adminstrators of the website. The Wayback Machine of the Internet Archive was used in order to be able to gain access to older versions of these texts.

A SOCIO-TECHNICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING PEER PRODUCTION SYTEMS

When looking through research produced on peer production as a subject, one notices that most studies tend to rely on ethnographic data collection methods to explore the collaborative process driving peer production. This is often done at the expense of excluding automated systems, non-human agents and software architectures that are essential to the collaborative process in peer production. The exclusion of non-human agents, systems and software structures can perhaps be explained by the immaterial and hence intangible properties of software. Code is not comprised of matter and cannot be touched, or in the case of a script running in the background of a computer, cannot be even observed by researchers. As a result, code seems to posses properties that render itself partially visible or entirely invisible to researchers unfamiliar software and system architectures existing beyond a software's user interface.

Scholars that do attempt to address the role of software in organizing participation have argued that for an alternative definition of materiality that takes into account the different "compositional texture" of code (see Jackson, 1996; Leonardi, 2007; Manovich 2002; Orlikowski, 2007; Suchman, 2000; Volkoff, et al., 2007). Building on the notion that physical and digital technologies have separate properties, these scholars have developed an entire range of theoretical concepts applicable for framing the relationship between the platform, the user, and the software operating behind the interface of a platform.

Many of the theoretical concepts built upon the notion of digital materiality have been used to develop the socio-technical systems (STS) approach. This approach includes non-human actors such as software into the analysis of social aggregates. Socio-technical systems arise through interactions mediated by technology rather than the natural world (Whitworth 2008). By including non-human actors such as software, the STS approach emphasizes that collectives are complex aggregates which emerge as a product of social collectives or organisations using technologies

that organize them in a particular manner (Fayard & Weeks, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Pentland & Feldman, 2007). As noted elsewhere (Musiani 2012), some of the most notable attempts to study the link between these technologies and social collectives have been made by Susan Leigh Star and her colleagues within the field of Science and Technology Studies (Star & Ruhleder 1996; Neumann & Star 1996; Star 1999; Star & Bowker 2010). Star's article on the "ethnography of infrastructure" effectively conveys the idea that the study of architectural design choices, technical specifications, standards and number sequences play a crucial role in shaping processes of communication and socialization more familiar to social scientists (1999:337). Drawing from this observation, she argues that

"It takes some digging to unearth the dramas inherent in system design creating, to restore narrative to what appears to be dead lists. […] Much of the ethnographic study of information systems implicitly involves the study of infrastructure. Struggles with infrastructure are built into the very fabric of technical work […]. However, it is easy to stay within the traditional purview of field studies: talk, community, identity, and group processes, as now mediated by information technology. […] Study an information system and neglect its standards, wires, and settings, and you miss equally essential aspects of aesthetics, justice, and change (1999:337-339).

An approach that takes into account the influence of infrastructure in shaping the range of human socialization online brings about considerable changes in methods, as the scope of the fieldwork enlarges to include arenas where the shapes of architecture and infrastructure are observed, deconstructed, reconstructed, and decisions are made about codes, standards, bricolages, reconfigurations (Star & Bowker 2010:151-152), effectively combining together "historical and literary analysis, traditional tools like interviews and observations, systems analysis, and usability studies" (Star 1999:382).

Within the context of digital technologies, the infrastructure of an artefact is its underlying software (van Schewick, 2010) whose code is designed according to a "matrix of concepts" (Agre, 2003). As suggested by Langdon Winner (1988), the "matrix of concepts" that goes into the design of technological artefacts are political in they act as guiding principles in the design of systems defining the artefact. As such, these guiding principles and values constitute a particular vision regarding the role of the technological artefact in society and are hence as Nolin (2010) notes, *ideological*. Accordingly, one can argue that the coding practices behind the software infrastructures of technological artefacts themselves are a product of the cultural milieu. This means that cultural norms play a formative role in shaping the coding practices that create software systems. In the works of Matthew Fuller (see 2003, 2005, 2008) code becomes

something more than a programming language; it becomes an "assemblage" - a dynamic composition of multiple and and heterogeneous processes and discourses stuck in a perpetual state of becoming. This state of becoming is conditioned by the demands of material forces, social trends and the cultural parameters which inform coding practices. In *Cutting Code: Software And Sociality,* Mackenzie describes software as "a highly involuted, historically mediaspecific distribution of agency. (…) [software is] a set of permutable distributions of agency between people, machines and contemporary symbolic environments carried as code. Code itself is structured as a distribution of agency" (2006:19). As distributors of collective agency, one needs to understand software as leading a "double life", wherein software is shaped by the ideological visions of coders while simultaneously shaping the subjectivity of its users into a particular "worldview" (Gillespie 2003). It has been argued that this later process generates new forms of social agency, surveillance and control through what has been described as "power through the algorithm" (Beer 2009; Lash 2007).

BIOGRAPHY OF ARTEFACTS

Looking at literature that uses the socio-technical systems approach to technology, one can argue that these studies are not just about applying sociological analysis to coding practices. These studies also look at how social and technical aspects integrate into complex assemblages with generative properties within different organizational settings. Using the STS approach, one can begin documenting the systems guiding participants through the collaborative process of peer production on Ekşisözlük. The filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems all constitute different parts of the peer production mechanism and as such, shape the agency of the user. In combination with stratified organizational hierarchies and communal policies which enable the collaborative process to function, one can argue these systems afford the possibility for concerted action on Ekşisözlük.

When combined with ethnographic fieldwork, the STS approach provides a robust methodological framework to study all aspects of the peer production process on Ekşisözlük. However, one needs to acknowledge that there are some limitations to the mixed methodology developed by the researcher. For example, although ethnographic fieldwork is a strong methodology suitable for capturing the qualitative richness created out of collaboration, ethnographic methods are labour intensive and often limited in terms of duration. Often due to institutional pressures to publish research, the time spent doing ethnographic fieldwork tends to be short. In contrast, as the decade long existence of Ekşisözlük demonstrates, the lifespans of technological artefacts can be considerably long. Accordingly, one can argue that ethnographic data collection methods can be limited in terms of scale. The contrast between the short duration

of ethnographic research and the lifespans of techno-social artefacts means that it can be difficult to draw definite conclusions on Ekşisözlük's peer production mechanism by relying solely on ethnographic observations. Furthermore, studies that use the STS approach typically produce research that can be grouped into a relatively narrow number of categories. These include impact studies whose results are typically presented within a "before and after" improvement narrative, implementation studies that typically demonstrate how the expectations that surround technologies and their actual implementation don't really match, or studies offering advice on how to improve or identify the inadequacies in design. As criticized elsewhere (Williams & Pollock 2010) these studies present a limited analysis. To overcome both ethnographic and STS related limitations, authors suggest a "biographical" data collection method which aims to include the concept of a life-cycle into the study of socio-technical systems. They argue that this methodology will yield a study that is more encompassing in describing the relationship between technological artefacts and society:

> We propose the concept of biography as an instance of a 'variable research geometry' that can be applied to diverse issues and in differing contexts, depending in particular upon what issue(s) are being addressed and which entities are being tracked. The biographical approach focuses upon social (or rather sociotechnical) processes involved in innovation and how these are shaped by their context and history. Many kinds of biography are thus possible. (…) Our concern here is to understand the biography of an artefact which may be conceived narrowly in terms of the development/implementation of a particular innovation, or more broadly of a class of artefacts, or of a technological field and their complex couplings with social institutions, actors and practices." (Williams & Pollock 2010:195)

Drawing from their review of the theoretical and methodological weaknesses of studies on enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, Williams and Pollock propose a Biography of Artefacts (BoA) perspective (Pollock & Williams 2008, 2010) that accounts for both stability and change in socio-technical systems and how these dynamics can be addressed over different time spans. They argue for data collection methods that can encompass

- "short-term dynamics surrounding the selection, implementation and embedding of new technologies encompassing incremental changes and also the continuity of existing social relations.

- the longer-term evolution of work practices and technologies in which we may simultaneously see both:
    i) gradual alignment around generic and specific standards, technical infrastructures and other crystallised social relations; and,

ii) new dynamism and differentiation" (2010:8).

A Biography of Artefacts (BoA) perspective requires detailed multi-sited studies of particular innovation moments which are combined and supplemented with studies of organization on a longitudinal scale that can move away from "snapshot" studies and elucidate the bigger picture regarding the generative aspect of socio-technical systems. The biographic approach favours multiple methods that are able to "knit" together different kinds of historical studies, ethnographic research, qualitative studies of local and broader development and the use of larger-scale research instruments and quantitative data (2008:195-6). These differing kinds of evidence have differing strengths and contributions to mapping the dimensions of an issue. Accordingly, BoA argues for critical eclecticism when combining data collection methodologies to produce 'nested biographies' (2008:207). As Pollock and Williams are keen to point out, this is no small undertaking and propose that a biography of an artefact needs to be undertaken as a team project or perhaps seen as the outcome of a research programme. Bearing in mind the institutional restraints imposed on this study by the university system regarding collaboration with other researchers for a PhD dissertation and the temporal constraints imposed by the duration of a post-graduate program, a number of amendments are proposed to the Biography of Artefacts perspective.

The application of the multi-sited study method proposed by a BoA perspective would be near to impossible to implement as individual researcher for all the sözlüks active within Turkish cyberspace. As noted previously, there are more than 69 sözlüks currently active and having to conduct a detailed BoA study would be a task more suitable for a team of researchers with adequate institutional support and funding. Furthermore, the spirit of such a collaborative undertaking could potentially pose a problem with the requirements of conducting independent research for a PhD dissertation. Nevertheless such an undertaking can be achieved as a continuation of this dissertation in an institutional setting with tenure academics or post-doctoral researchers. As this is the first time a BoA perspective will be used to study the evolution of peer-production projects in Turkey, one can argue that it is perhaps wiser to firstly test the application of this methodology onto a singular site prior attempting a larger and more in-depth study of sözlüks in Turkey.

THE WAYBACK MACHINE AS A BIOGRAPHIC METHOD

BoA demands that data should be continuously collected over a long period, preferably beginning from the "concept" phase of a technology (Johnson et al., 2013). As Ekşisözlük has been active for more a decade and given the temporal limitations for completing a dissertation in the United Kingdom, it would have been impossible for the researcher to have continuously collected data on

Ekşisözlük since its inception in 1999. This however, does not mean that the longitudinal requirements of a BoA approach cannot be applied to the study of Ekşisözlük. In order to be able to integrate longitudinal component necessary for a BoA approach, one needs to add a biographic data collection method to the research methodology.

A potential solution for the longitudinal problem would be to adopt a medium-specific data collection methodology. Medium-specific approaches for collecting data utilize tools that are suitable for studying objects within their native, digital environments. In other words, this approach proposes that one can either develop or use software to study software (Rogers 2013). Rather than importing existing data collection methods online, medium-specific methods can "move beyond the study of online culture alone" (Rogers 2009:5) and help to understand new media as the interplay between human and technological agents (Niederer & van Djick 2010). The application of a medium-specific approach has yielded valuable research tools which have been utilized in a variety of contexts including studies of the web as an 'epistemological machine' (Rogers 2010) or mapping studies of the Arabic and Persian blogospheres (see Etling, Kelly, Faris & Palfrey 2009; Kelly, Barash, Alexanyan, Etling, Faris, Gasser & Palfrey 2012; Kelly & Etling 2008). It has even been proposed that digital tools designed for digital environments can be seen as a viable option to help sociology overcome the epistemological crises which has emerged in the social sciences in the wake of Big Data (boyd & Crawford 2011; Savage & Burrows 2007).

To overcome the problem of duration when studying the evolution of peer production mechanisms on Ekşisözlük, one can resort to using the Wayback Machine. The Wayback Machine (wayback.archive.org) is digital time capsule that allows us to trace the history of a website. It allows the researcher to effectively "time travel" from the contemporaneous present to visit earlier versions of the site in question. The Wayback Machine was developed by the Internet Archive, a project started in 1996 with the aim of collecting and storing all publicly accessible websites, moving images, texts, audio and educational resources found online (Feise 2000). In order to cache the data, the Wayback Machine (WM) relies on software designed to 'crawl' along links between inter-connected websites on the World Wide Web and take a snapshot of every new object encountered. When the crawler encounters a link to a new object, it takes a copy ('cache') of the object and continues onward until it eventually returns to its departure address. These web crawlers are sent out periodically to map out how the topology of the World Wide Web evolves through time. According to the website of the Internet Archive, as of October 2012 the project has collected over 10 petabytes of digitalised cultural material. All of the material collected by the Internet Archive is publicly accessible and the services found on the website are offered at no cost. As a tool, the Wayback Machine offers researchers the possibility to fashion out medium-specific data collection methodologies for recovering biographies of websites such as Ekşisözlük without

having to necessarily opt for a real-time longitudinal study. Using WM, researchers can also view the original version of each site, as well as the dates and content of subsequent updates. To call up archived websites, users type the URL of the desired site into the address box on the WM homepage. The WM then returns the date of original site creation, number and date of site updates, and links to archived sites. The WM also provides information on site updates. An asterisk beside the dates indicates more than 50% changes to the website since the last visit. WM has been validated as a viable research tool (John 2013; Murphy et al., 2007) and has been used by a variety of researchers and for a variety of purposes. It has been used by scholars to investigate archived website content (Hackett & Parmanto 2005; Ryan et al., 2003), accessibility of Internet websites through time (Hackett, Parmanto & Zeng 2004), infer website age (Vaughan & Thelwall 2003) and study website evolution (Chu, Leung, Van Hui, & Cheung 2007).

Although the Internet Archive is an immense archival resource, the researcher needs to understand that there are some limitations to collecting data with the WM. The Internet Archive uses the WM to crawl publicly accessible sites written in simple HTML, but has problems archiving password-protected sites (Veronin 2002). Furthermore, sites can decline inclusion by emailing the Internet Archive or using the Standard for Robot Exclusion (see www.robotstxt.org) to specify files or directories not to crawl. Intellectual property owners concerned about infringements on third party sites can also request removal of such content. These actions cause the WM to stop future indexing and the removal of the site's content from the Internet Archive. Finally, a condition of use of the WM crawler is that the Internet Archive must wait at least six months after surveying and before including site updates in the archive. The waiting period between crawling and archiving can be a problem for researchers interested in relatively new websites that have undergone a lot of change in a short period of time. Luckily enough, none of these limitations was an important factor during the data collection process in this study. Ekşisözlük is currently owned by *Ekşi Teknoloji ve Bilişim A.Ş.*, a company registered in Istanbul. After becoming a commercial enterprise from 2005 onwards, the company has not changed ownership and founder Sedat Kapanoğlu (Kapanoglu) remains as the largest stakeholder. Despite being a members-only site, the contents of Ekşisözlük are open to the public and can hence be archived by the WM. At the time of the study, there were no found robots preventing access to web crawlers. Finally, Ekşisözlük has been online for more than a decade now and changes to the website have occurred at a slow and steady pace. This makes the waiting period between crawling and archiving irrelevant as this study is longitudinal and observes the evolution of Ekşisözlük over a long period of time.

Perhaps a major problem with using the WM for data collection is caused by the nature of platforms using Web 2.0 technologies. As content hosting sites, these platforms have an unstable "compositional texture" and are continually under development. This means that they are always

unfinished (Bruns 2008b). In comparison to physical objects, the modular and granular nature of code makes the modification of such platforms much faster and easier (Kallinikos, Aaltonen and Marton 2010). Their development follows evolutionary paths where several versions of the same site might be available as alpha and beta versions before shifting back into one stable version. Furthermore, Web 2.0 platforms tend to be regularly overwritten as new versions replace what came before; "(u)nlike any other permanent media, a website may destroy its predecessor regularly and procedurally each time it is updated by its producer" (Schneider & Foot 2004:115). Drawing from this, one can argue that using the WM for longitudinal data collection in an uncritical manner can result in the formation of an archive with temporal inaccuracies caused by multiple copies of an artefact recorded on the same day, or simply with technical problems such as broken links and missing images (Ankerson 2012). For these reasons, Brügger (2008) suggests that the researcher needs to treat a archived website as "a new type of historical document" which requires the formation of medium-specific principles, rules and recommendations to spatially delimit the artefact and ensure its instinctive objective value for research. To ensure that the archived website maximally represents the original digital artefact, Brügger proposes that the researcher should chose a copy which bears proximity with other copies and has stable textual elements, type of texts and sub-site genres when compared to other copies (Brügger 2008:170). Furthermore, the archived website should "make sense" within the wider historical context. This copy will represent best the original artefact which, as it has been argued elsewhere, can never be fully recovered by the researcher (Brügger 2009, 2013).

Based on this discussion, the researcher proposes to use the WM in the following way to collect data. The oldest available "snapshot" of Ekşisözlük will be found using the inbuilt search engine of the Internet archive. From there, the researcher will move forward in time every two weeks on the same day or the date closest if there are no available snapshots. This process will continue until the 2013, the year wherein fieldwork for this dissertation was undertaken. If more than one copy exists at the arrival point of each temporal "jump", the researcher will use the guidelines mentioned in this chapter to choose the best representational version of the website. Using a pre-existing membership for Ekşisözlük, the researcher will attempt to log-in at each cached copy encountered and explore the website. Particular attention will be paid to transformations in the features on the user interface. The researcher will attempt to interact with each interactive feature found on different versions of the interface to explore their functionality. These features include socialization functions as well as filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems. Any shifts in the organizational aesthetics of the user interface will be noted as well as changes in the 'About' and 'FAQ' pages. Screenshots will be taken for each snapshot and relevant parts of the website. These snapshots will be stored as an archive on the home computer of the

researcher. The accumulated data will be combined with STS-oriented ethnographic fieldwork to build a case study on peer production mechanism found on Ekşisözlük.

CHAPTER V: A BIOGRAPHY OF EKŞİSÖZLÜK (1999-2013)

"a masterpiece that can make up for the loneliness caused by time zones. (...)[75]

- Kapanoglu, *"Ekşisözlük"*

"(...) in our postmodern world, it [*Ekşisözlük*] gives the culture of the encyclopedia a heavy handed slap and proves to us that subjective information is just as interesting and useful"[76]

-nick cave and the sad seeds, *"Ekşisözlük"*

The following chapter is a case study that uses the biographic methodology as well as ethnographic fieldwork to document the emergence and evolution of peer production mechanisms on Ekşisözlük between 1999 and 2013. Looking back at the past decade, the site has evolved from an experimental application on the home page of a software designer into a platform wherein participants can create and share content, communicate with other community members or access a number of internally linked sister sites. In combination with mechanisms that establish organizational hierarchies and communal policies, one can argue that automated systems afford the possibility for concerted peer production on Ekşisözlük.

When analysing the data collected for the case-study, one can immediately notice that Ekşisözlük undergoes several design transformations from 1999 until today. These transformations tend to occur alongside changes in privileges afforded to the regular user and the introduction of new categories to the hierarchies of different users active within the community. Some of these transformations include the redesign of the visual interface, emergence of filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems, tools to facilitate communication between community members and the sub-etha (a portal linking sister websites to Ekşisözlük). As a result of these transformations, certain kinds of affordances become available for community members in the guise of interactive functions such as chat applets or 'like' buttons. Pre-existing functions get modified to adapt to these structural shifts. For example, the algorithm of the embedded ekşiengine (a purpose built search engine to access content on Ekşisözlük) evolves during the transition to a for profit site to provide a more efficient search service for the growing number of community members. As new systems get introduced, modified or removed from the website, this process

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75 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/452
76 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/16571819

modulates affordances available to individual community as well as the organization of peer production on Ekşisözlük community. As such, one needs to imagine the Ekşisözlük as a biological organism that has evolved through a number of different phases or life-cycles in its 16 years of existence. Looking at the collected data, it can be argued that Ekşisözlük has gone through four different phases (1999-2002, 2002-2005, 2005-13, 2013-) in its life-cycle. Between 1999 and 2002, Ekşisözlük was a program found on the website sourtimes.org, the homepage of software programmer Sedat Kapanoğlu.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY COMMONS (1999-2002)

The first cached version of the sourtimes.org that can be accessed using the WM is a homepage of Kapanoglu, the 'editör' of the website. Dated from the 8th of May 1999, this early format of the Ekşisözlük website resembles a quirky homepage similar to the style of 'I kiss you - Mahir' in that there is limited interactivity offered to the visitor.[77] There is a standard greeting and some links on the website which utilize the newly developed Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (http) to allow visitors to link to the site using the newly emerging World Wide Web. At the same time, we see the presence of HTML code and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) that allows the visitor to view the webpage as a graphic interface with an Internet browser. The contents can be categorised as belonging to a personal homepage. There is no mention of the hyper-link dictionary which was to become the trademark characteristic of Ekşisözlük. Although much of the code on this version of the website has decomposed, making most of the content inaccessible, one can still discern several subject topics which seem to be uploaded by Kapanoglu. The subject entries are opened by the editor (*Kapanoglu* and/or *kler*) and the posts are only created by the editorial team. Visitor interactivity is limited to posting or reading entries on the guest-book. There is also a banner for important announcements at the bottom right hand corner of the webpage.

The next cached web-page one can access dates from the 5th of October 1999.[78] Once again, most of the links for this version of the web-page have decomposed, making it difficult to access visual content. However one can see that the layout of the website has changed to accommodate a larger number of topics. Some of the new content categories from this time mark include information about external websites, links to other homepages and pranks done by the editor. As of October 1999, we see that the topic of a hyper-link dictionary has now emerged as one of the content categories on the homepage. The dictionary is described as "a technology marvel dictionary that updates itself by the second." There is also an announcement and email address on the interface of the homepage for contributing visitors who want to contribute content for the website. A web-chat applet is in place for visitors to chat with each other in real time.

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77 See Appendix 5.1
78 See Appendix 5.2

Despite the presence of these interactive features, one can argue that the site must still be categorised as a personal homepage and not a website hosting user generated content. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the establishment of the hyper-link format that would pave the way to turning the hosting space of Ekşisözlük into a community commons is still a relatively minor aspect of the website. There is no presence of any automated system. Towards the end of 1999, the hyper-link dictionary format seems to be a concept that *Kapanoglu* is trying to develop rather than the basis for an actual content hosting platform. Secondly, although the website now accepts content from visitors, the process of posting is still centralised and static in that content has to be firstly sent to the editors of the website before being posted on the page. Thirdly, there is no membership system to organize the contributing visitors into a community.

Until April 2001, the website seems to be ongoing re-construction. A cached webpage of http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/news.asp from 2000 reports that Ekşisözlük "is still in beta... we are not admitting any new users [...]".[79] Any cached webpages from http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/ between October 1999 and April 2001 show a jumble of broken links on the webpage. Then a cached copy of http://www.sourtimes.org/ from April 2001 shows that the front-end design of the site's interface has changed once again. All the previous content has been removed and instead there are a series of letters posted on the page that one can read as a visitor.[80] These letters are a dialogue between the editors of the website. The main subject discussed in the contents of the posted letters is the new design of the sourtimes.org webpage. There is a lot of discussion about visual elements such as the colours and how the front-end design for the new webpage will be. Another topic one encounters in these letters is in regards to the organization of content on the new website. The editors seem to agree that static content is useless and the webmasters should not be responsible for opening entries for content. One issue raised throughout the conversation is the availability of contributing writers. For example, one letter discusses how the "current economic crises" (referring to the Turkish economic crises of 2001) has reduced to the number of contributing writers to a minimum and calls for the editor to look into enlarging the responsibilities of a contributing writer. The reply given is that in order to do so, the editors would need to redefine the interface so that writers could directly contribute without having to send a text firstly to the editorial board. The final issue worthy to mention is about the need to implement a content management system. There seems to be a strong consensus on the need to devise a system to efficiently organize new content. It seems that so far, the mark-up coding for the new subject entries was done manually. In order to move away from the static content layout, the editorial teams proposes to implement a content management system that can organize the contributions of Ekşisözlük

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79 See Appendix 5.3
80 See Appendix 5.4

writers on the website's client server database.

In the meantime, Ekşisözlük has entered into a new phase of development. In a cached copy of http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/ from April 13th 2001, the webpage greets us with the following announcement from Kapanoglu:

"Ekşisözlük's beta version:

• The name that can be given to this half-assed version of Ekşisözlük. Despite planning to put a lot of new features onto the dictionary, I've understood that they will take a long time to integrate. And I've had really no time to complete them all. As a result no new users will be accepted until this process is finalized. (Kapanoglu, 27.10.2000 17:36)

(...)

• Currently comprized of (bkz: sözlük guvenlik sistemi) [dictionary security system] (bkz: voting) [rating system] (i.e. entry editleme) [editing entries] (i.e. badilist) [buddy list] (i.e. ukte) [condundrum] (i.e. yeni) [news] (i.e. çöp tenekesi) [trash] (camilo, 27.10.2000 20:51)

(...)

• Based on the truth that someone who has no time to post on Ekşisözlük has also no time to moderate it means that all user accounts will temporarily suspended. This situation will help us develop faster and all accounts will be restored after the beta phase of Ekşisözlük is over. This phase can be a useful platform from which to observe how the new moderating mechanisms of Ekşisözlük will be able to prevent the space from degenerating into total anarchy. (Kapanoglu, 14.12.2000 11:44)"[81]

As the note demonstrates, there are a range of new features now available on the website. These include a login system for registered members, a rating system, an interface for users to edit contributed content, a trash for deleted entries and some interpersonal communication tools such as a contact list (badilist) for internal communication. However, most of these features are unstable and cannot be accessed with the WM. Some are eventually overhauled and integrated into the control panel feature that one can access as community members.

A cached copy of Sourtimes.org on the 1st of June 2002 reveals yet another change in the design of the website. The interface has been redesigned and the homepage greets us with letters

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81 See Appendix 5.5

from clairvoyant and Kapanoglu, the two editors of the webpage.[82] The editorial letters apologize for not updating the website for a long time and give a number of reasons for this. Underneath the editorial letters, we see a banner that says 'Sour Times is back with new features after a year of absence and has reopened with a new archive'. Another interesting link that we find on the website is to a page giving the history of the website. It describes Sour Times as an entertainment portal that has operated for over 2 years.[83] Although the earliest cached version of a functional dictionary on http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/ is from September 2003, one can see that the hyper-link dictionary format has already been under development for more than two years. The September 2003 version of the dictionary has a relatively simple graphic interface but we can already begin to see the familiar layout of the community commons which still remains relatively similar today.[84] From this chronological point onwards, we see a separation between the content found on sourtimes.org and Ekşisözlük. Eventually by mid-2004, all of the original homepage content on sourtimes.org is removed and becomes a mirror site for Ekşisözlük. Soon after, the URL for sourtimes.org just becomes a link that re-routes you to http://www.eksisözlük.com.

1. a) GRAPHIC INTERFACE AND LOGO

Between 2001 and 2005 the iconic visual design of the website's graphic interface – 'her zamanki' - which consists of a simple grey background with navy blue fonts becomes the visual interface of the website. The her zamanki ("as always") theme was designed by founders Kapanoglu and clairvoyant in 2001 and with more than 40,000 members using it, still remains as the most popular Ekşisözlük theme in 2013. Customization features regarding the colour of the background, the logo, and the fonts become available to community members from 2001 onwards. As of 2013, there are over 610 different Ekşisözlük themes created by community members. On occasion, the website administration experiments with different themes such as one consisting of an orange background with white fonts or a white background with red fonts, but both of these changes to the graphic interface are temporary. Perhaps the logo of Ekşisözlük is the element of the visual interface that changes the least between 2001 and 2013. The logo, which was introduced in 2001 is made up of teal and gold colours and the font looks like it was drawn by hand. The trademark logo located at the top right corner of the logo is barely legible:

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82 See Appendix 5.6

83 See See Appendix 5.7. Some of the random facts that are listed on the page claim that the name of the site was inspired by the Portishead album and that the first version of the website can be found on members.xoom.com/sour_times. The most important fact given on the page is that Sourtimes as a content page pre-dated Ekşisözlük. Around October 2002 we also see that the domain name Eksisözlük.com has become a mirror website to Sourtimes.org.

84 See See Appendix 5.8.

Illustration 1: Ekşisözlük
logo circa 2001-2002

1. b) DEVELOPING THE CONTROL PANEL ON SOURTIMES.ORG

Until the end of 2001, sourtimes.org does not have an internal communication system for Ekşisözlük writers. Instead, there was a general web-chat applet available on sourtimes.org for visitors and an IRC channel called 'sözlük on a server named 'irc.sourtimes.org'. Both of these services were active between 1999 and 2001. Both the applet and the IRC channel can be seen as a temporary communication technology facilitating communication within the emerging Ekşisözlük online community until the introduction of an internal communication system. Prior to the internal communication system, Kapanoglu firstly experimented with building a *kontrol merkezi* (control centre) button onto the interface of sourtimes.org in 2001. Using this button, registered sourtimes users could log onto the website. Once registered, users had access to a very limited messaging service available called *sourtimeschat* that was eventually completely redesigned in 2003. The first interactive feature added onto the control centre was the badilist, which was introduced towards the end of 2001. The badilist was a simple application accessible through the control centre button on Sourtime.org's interface that allowed community members to compile lists of 'badis' or friends on Ekşisözlük. Once a 'badi' was added, the list would also display the daily entries of this user. Daily entries would be ordered with a timestamp and were only available to access through the badilist for 24 hours. After the badilist, Kapanoglu introduced five more buttons, olay (events), çöp (garbage), ayarlar (settings), ar$iv (archive) and yazar hakkinda (about the writer), all of which became accessible around the same time with the badilist. The events feature was an inbuilt news service for the Ekşisözlük community that would be used by Kapanoglu to broadcast important announcements. The archive button was for saving sent or received messages. When first introduced the capacity of the archive button was only 25 messages; in 2003 this capacity was upgraded to holding a 100. The 'çöp' button was designed like a recycling bin found on Windows operating systems and allowed access to deleted messages. The settings button allowed a logged in user to account their account details, change their password or the visual themes of the interface. The final button introduced onto the control panel in 2001 was the 'yazar hakkinda' (translatable to 'about the writer') function that gave statistical information about the account of a

user to the rest of the community.

1. c) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCHIVAL COMMUNITY COMMONS

The design of community commons on Ekşisözlük is based on around the notion of an interactive hyper-link layout. Registered community members had access to editing the community commons and can either create pages (entries) or contribute content to already existing pages. The layout is designed to have a split-screen graphic interface:
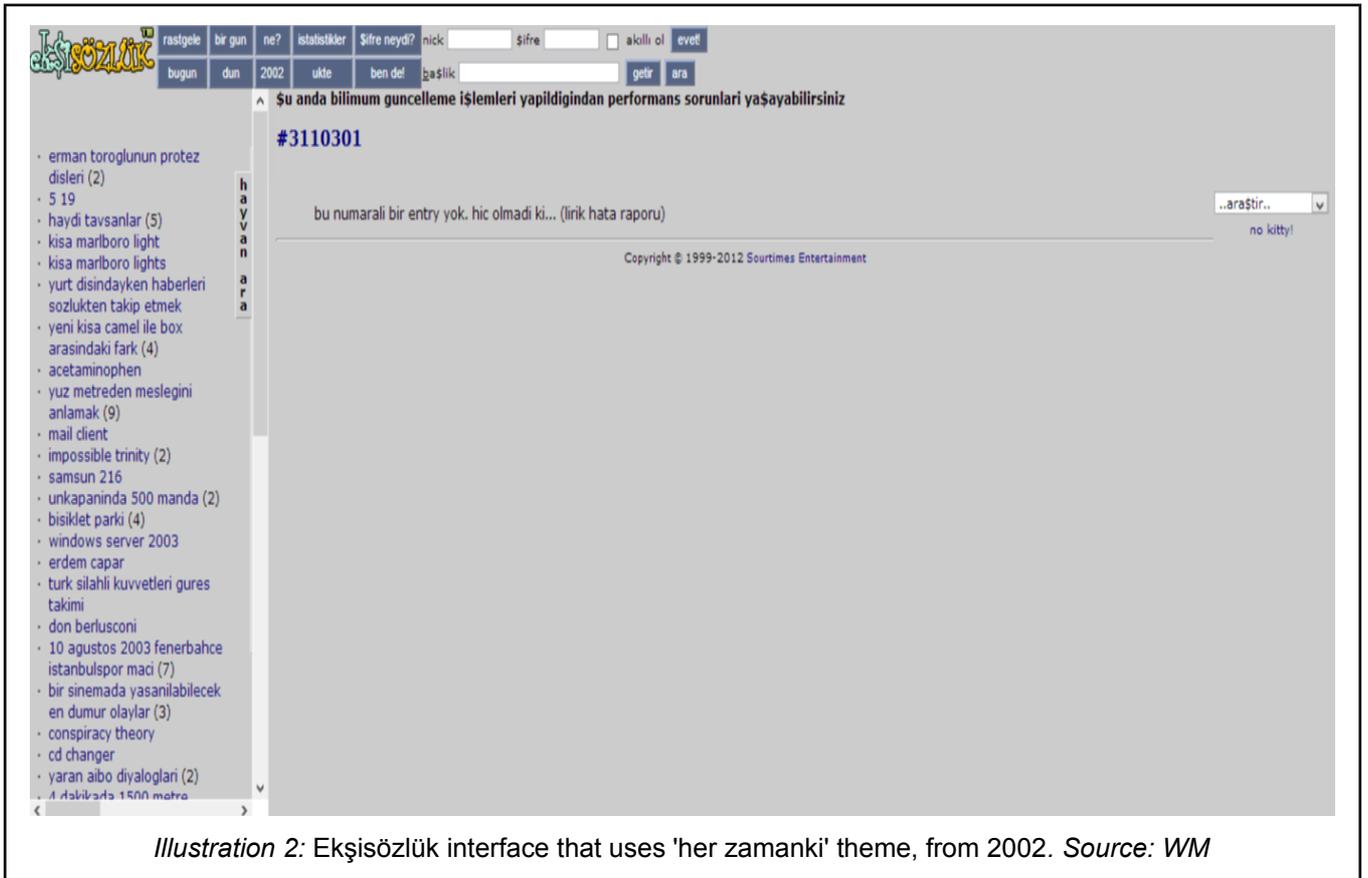
Illustration 2: Ekşisözlük interface that uses 'her zamanki' theme, from 2002. *Source: WM*

On one side of the interface there is a list of subject pages (an 'entry' in Eski sözlük community slang) that updates itself on a daily basis. The header of these pages contain the necessary meta-data tags that allow the content on the website to be organised. Only community members with full privileges are permitted to create subject headers and post content within the subject headers. Clicking on the heading of a page transports the user to the contents of the pages through hyper-link. Therefore when one clicks a subject header - which is essentially a digital envelope - the contents regarding that subject are displayed on the remainder of the visible webpage. Once on a page, the posts left by the community are listed in a chronological manner using timestamps.

One can argue that the easy-to-use and intuitive design of the commons encourages community members to regularly log onto the website and post content. A search engine allows users to access pages that are not on the daily list of popular pages. As such, the search engine addresses the issue of accessing the digital archive that is emerging from user contributions. Ekşiengine was a tool designed by Kapanoglu in 2000 to search through the SQL client server databases on which the digital archive of the website is stored. The search engine makes use of the metadata tags contained in the page headings to organize access. A new page for a subject is created every time the number of contributions to the page reaches a certain number. At the same time, there are sometimes pages with no content posted within. These empty pages are often deleted by the administrators of the website. One can also link entries together using the *bkz.* function in a posted comment. While the hyperlink format and search engine form the fundamental aspects of accessing and organising content on the community commons, there are also a number of features which add contingency to the user experience of the site. For example, there is the 'rastgele' [randomise] feature which selects a page at random or the 'bir gün' [one day] feature which takes a visitor to a random archived day on the website. These contingency features are orientated around giving visitors access to different parts of the archive.

The features of the community commons that allow for content created by community members to be archived on Ekşisözlük have remained the same since 2001. Keeping the layout simple and opening the archive to the general public not only attracts potential members to navigate through posted entries, but also turns Ekşisözlük into a dynamic and unfolding canvas which is continuously shaped by communal activity. As such, the open-ended design of the commons on Ekşisözlük facilitate engagement within the community. Entries are constantly created and archived, with some entries dating from 1999. A system preserving older contribution creates continuity and turns these contributions into a public archive.

1. d) THE SUMMITZ FEATURE

Ever since the establishment of the community commons on Ekşisözlük, there has been a number of external websites developed by community members with links to the platform. The policy of the administration for these websites has been gradually incorporating them into the platform through an internal portal. This policy has remained a constant throughout all four phases in the life-cycle of the project. However, both the platform and the internal websites linked to Ekşisözlük have changed over time. The first of the internal sites could be accessed through the 'Soursummitz Network' portal, which was introduced to the layout of the interface in 2002. These sites included the *ek$i sözlük muzesi*, *sourworkz*, *pazarligi.org*, *smkb*, and *soursummitz*.

Ek$i muzesi (the Ekşisözlük museum) was a project conceived by editor *otisabi* and coded

by user *mengus*. Otisabi defines ek$i muzesi as an entry museum 'with lots of smiles, laughter, quarrels and curses' where "erased or edited but unforgettable entries or events, old Ekşisözlük themes (…) are on display'.[85] Essentially, the website was a place for community members to store captured screen shots of happenings on Ekşisözlük that had been deleted or edited by either the moderating team or the involved parties. These screen shots, after being approved by the museum moderators, would be posted onto the website. Community members from Ekşisözlük could login and write comments beneath the images. In 2003, two new sections, *s.c.r.e.e.n* and *sour:f(x)* were added to the museum. S.c.r.e.e.n was for users who wanted to share images that were not necessarily related to Ekşisözlük but were instead about themselves. Sour:f(x) shared a similar purpose to s.c.r.e.e.n but was developed for sharing flash animations. The museum, despite attempts to redesign it in 2006, was eventually shut down due to the decline in the rate of submitted content from community members, mirroring the global decline in the usage of flash animations.[86] From the remnants of the museum, s.c.r.e.e.n eventually evolved into *ek$ibition* (2006), which still exists today.

Pazarligi.org was a website for organizing an amateur football league between community members while soursummitz was a website dedicated to community events throughout Turkey. Ekşisözlük users could log onto the website to find out about upcoming meet-ups and upload pictures or comments about past events. The smkb or the 'sözlük menkul kiymetler borsasi' (translatable to the sözlük stock-exchange) was a marketplace website for community members to buy or sell items amongst themselves. Soursummitz was a website dedicated to organizing Ekşisözlük's nascent online community to participate in events such as annual or local meet-ups. Finally, sourworkz was a website dedicated to software developed for Ekşisözlük. Community members were able both TO upload or download any sort of document, program or graphics intended to enhance the experience of using Ekşisözlük. Almost all of the applications on sourworks were prepared by community members and were firstly sent to users *sersem* and *mengus.* Both community members were the coders that had designed the website. After being approved by these two users, the applications were available for the rest of the community. In contrast to ek$i muzesi or soursummitz, which were only accessible by writers (contributing community members), sourworkz could be accessed by visitors who had registered themselves with the website as readers (community members not allowed to contribute user generated content).

Between 2002 and 2004, the only other external website accessible through the summitz button was sourlemonade. Sourlemonade was designed as an application that users could use to

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back-up their entries. Looking at the links offered by the summitz portal, one can argue that most websites emerged as a result of community initiatives. During this period, there were numerous occasions wherein the platform became inaccessible due to either server overload or faulty coding updates. Applications such as sourworkz or sourlemonade were community undertaking aimed at working around these recurrent technical problems. On the other hand, the existence of sites such as ek$i muzesi and and sourlemoande can be explained in regards to the instability of Ekşisözlük as a platform. The initiative to build websites to preserve either deleted or edited content suggests that the system of moderation in this period might have been arbitrary and without a set procedure. The arbitrariness of moderation until the transition to a professional, for-profit website is directly confirmed by Kapanoglu who claimed that prior to the institutionalization of moderation he would erase any reported entry regardless of the content. The uncertainty created by the arbitrary nature of moderation on Ekşisözlük pushed community members to develop alternative sites to store both documentation of happenings and their own entries.

2. INTRODUCTION OF PEER PRODUCTION MECHANISMS (2002-2005)

The transition to a stable internal communication system and a community commons designed for hosting dynamic user generated content that allows registered visitors to post and access entries without the moderator approval occurs towards the end of 2001. After the merger of sourtimes.org with eksisözlük.com, everything except the community commons and user generated content relevant to the online dictionary project disappears from the website. One important transformation in the graphic interface is the introduction of advertising banners from 2004-2005 onwards. When first introduced in 2004, the advert banners take up a very small part of the page and can be disabled through the 'no kitty!' button next to the banners.

Illustration 3: an example of a banner advert from 2004

By mid-2006, there is an important change in the visual layout of the interface. The advert banners are gone and instead the background of the entries section has been turned into an advertising space.
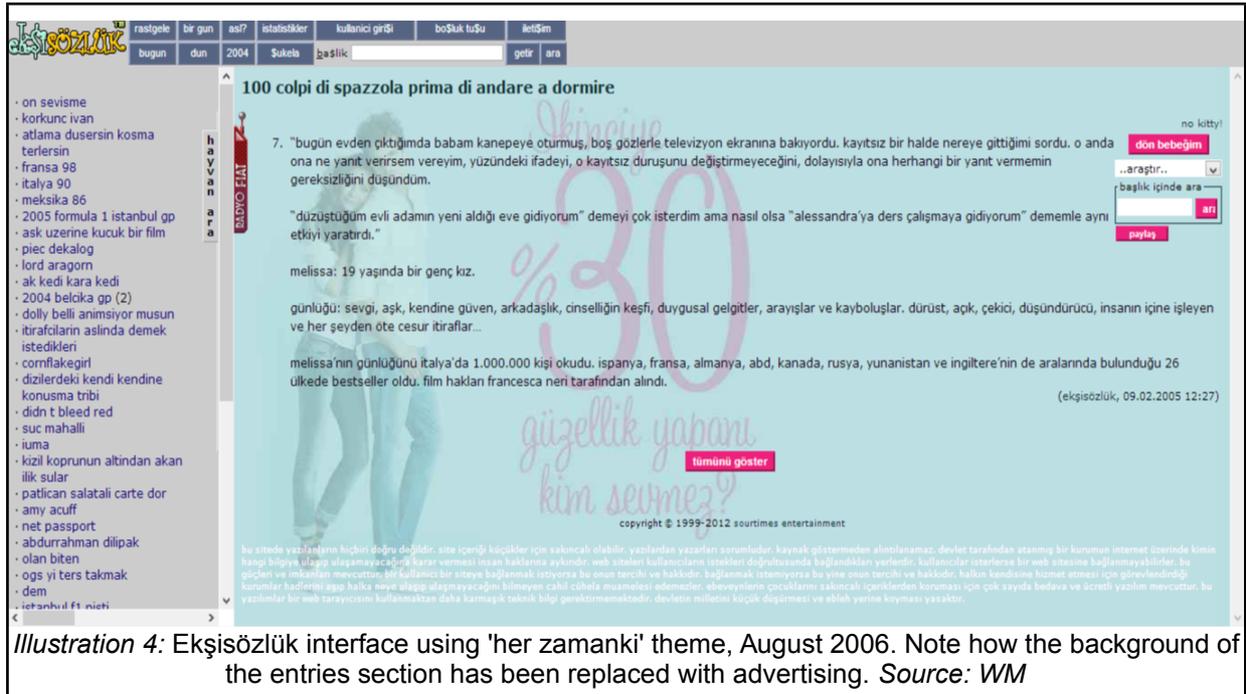
Illustration 4: Ekşisözlük interface using 'her zamanki' theme, August 2006. Note how the background of the entries section has been replaced with advertising. *Source: WM*

The parts of the screen that community members focus their attention for most of the time has been replaced by a dynamic advertising space. However, this change is not yet fully permanent so both visitors and community members can revert back to the non-advertised layout of the website by clicking on the 'her zamanki' ('as always') button on the toolbar.

Despite the introduction of advertising, Ekşisözlük is still an amateur undertaking with a voluntary moderation staff and administration. The organizational hierarchy within the community is still not fully defined and the advertising banners on the website can be disabled by visitors. The membership process for the site is still based on an ad-hoc procedure that depends on the availability of the administration to review each application. As Ekşisözlük begins to become a popular platform with the Turkish speaking online public during this period, this causes a spike in the number of membership applications for participating in the project. Soon applications begin to outpace the rate at which new users are recruited and then integrated. As a result, the website administration puts incoming membership applications on hold and begins an extensive review of the website.

In the beginning of 2004, one can find one temporary feature, 'ben de!' ('me too!' in Turkish), on the toolbar located at the top of the website which then disappears at the end of the same year. When accessed with the WM, the feature brings forth a disclaimer about why the website administration is not allowing new members to join the community. The 2004 disclaimer states the following:

"**about not accepting membership applications:**

Dear young and dynamic applicants for Ekşisözlük membership,

Perhaps you might have not noticed but Ekşisözlük is an amateur undertaking, not a commercial organization with income, waged personnel to which we devote all our time. Just as much as the contributing members, both developers and moderators are volunteers who do both tasks in the free time they have after their regular jobs.

This is the reason why we have chosen over the years to keep application calls for membership closed during particular parts of the year. The main reason behind the closure is that as the number of contributing members grow, this reduces the time we can devote to every member. If we are to reduce the 2 seconds we spare for each member every day, this would turn Ekşisözlük into an unmoderated theatre.

Normally, in similar kinds of situations we have chosen to accept all applicants in one go and then suspend membership accounts of individuals who do not have a place in the community. However in recent times, due to the circulating rumours in the media about Ekşisözlük being a space of insults

['hakaret yuvasi'], a hole of sin ['gunah cukuru'] and a satanic thing ['iblis seyi], have caused the moderators to lose credibility vis-a-vis the community. This is why, despite our initial intention of starting to accept new memberships in May 2003, we have chosen to reject all membership applications until a new moderating system is developed and implemented to control an average of 3000 daily and a total of 2,000,000 entries.

In this period in which membership applications are suspended, we have received a number of emails from applicants which range from 'please take me also' ["beni de alin noooooooluuuurrrrrr!], 'look at my cv in the attachment' ["cv'm ektedir!"], 'I'm the drummer of this music band' ["ben $u muzik grubunun davulcusuyum!"] to 'I'll give you a lot of money' ["size cok para veririm!"]. These emails please us as the website administrators as they demonstrate the popularity of Ekşisözlük. However, we don't expect anything more from our members asides from their written contributions to the website. Since we cannot reply to all of these emails we receive, we hope that this disclaimer is a good substitute for a reply.

(...)

We know that Ekşisözlük is very important and valuable for community and can imagine why there is such a demand for membership. We are trying to find solutions for the applicants who are very enthusiastic about becoming a member. The first of these solutions is the 'Ekşisözlük, let us rain books on Cizre' campaign. We gave out memberships to those who donated more than 50 books to the campaign. We will be doing similar campaigns in the near future.

There are a lot of questions on when the technical problems on our site will be resolved. The resolution of these problems depend on the amount of free time the administrators have and our motivation to develop the site. This is why it is impossible for us to give a definite answer to this question. All we can say is that we want you to be with us as much as you want to be with us. Therefore, you can be sure that you will be informed when our membership calls are open again.

Cordially,

Ahmet Sourtimes

CEO & Founder president"[87]

The disclaimer states that Ekşisözlük, as of 2004, is an amateur undertaking and that the website has no income or permanent staff. The disclaimer also cites a need for the development of a new moderating system. By November 2004, we see that the 'ben de' button on the toolbar has disappeared and that the website is open for recruitment. During 2005, there is an open application for membership that can be accessed by the 'yeni kullanici' ('new user') button on the toolbar.

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87 http://web.archive.org/web/20031203181828/http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/

2. a) SNITCHING, INFORMING AND FILTERING SYSTEMS

Moderating has always been an important aspect of Ekşisözlük ever since sourtimes.org decided to start accepting content from external contributors. Even prior to the implementation of a dynamic content management system, content sent by visitors to the website would be reviewed by the editorial staff. After the transition, one of the roles of the editorial team was to monitor the content posted by community writers. Prior to 2001, every entry posted by contributing community members would be firstly reviewed by the editorial team before being allowed on the website.

There are a number of reasons as to why moderation as a form of filtering has always played an important role within the community. As covered in this dissertation, cyberspace has always been the cause of moral panics in Turkey. These moral panics have been used by the Turkish state as a justification to expand censorship and surveillance practices to target platforms such as Ekşisözlük. The community commons of Ekşisözlük is designed as an archive that is accessible by the online public. Although the contents of the archive makes Ekşisözlük a source of information online and one of the most visited websites in Turkey, it also makes Ekşisözlük vulnerable to legal persecution. In this context, moderation creates a self-regulating mechanism that protects both community members and the owners from potential state persecution. Access to Ekşisözlük has been temporarily suspended on three occasions in 2006, 2007 and 2008. In 2006, complaints about a subject entry on marijuana caused Turkish Telecom to suspend access to the website on orders from the 3rd Istanbul lower criminal court. In 2007, complaints made to the hotline of the Turkish Telecommunications Agency (BTK) about Ekşisözlük entries on Adnan Oktar, an alleged sect leader in Turkey, caused access to the website to be temporarily suspended. Most recently, access to the website was suspended for three hours on the 29th of September 2008 due to complaints made to the hotline of the BTK.

After the introduction of dynamic content hosting which allowed community members to post content without obtaining consent, a relatively crude system of moderation began to emerge. The earliest moderation system relied on the editorial team to read through all the contributions on a daily basis. There were no established policies regarding moderating practices nor were there any guidelines or rules for contributions. As the rate of contributions increased, the practice of reading each submission became impossible to implement. In response to this situation, an autonomous surveillance system was introduced wherein community members would monitor each other's content. Typical to the ironic humour of Kapanoglu, this autonomous, self-moderating system was called *ispiyon* (roughly translatable to snitching) and a community member who reported other members was called a *gammaz* (an informant). Any community member with a specific number of entries (in 2001 any user with over 1000 entries, in 2002 any user with over

2000 entries) automatically qualified to become a *gammaz* in the community.[88] Being an informant granted access to a special module with the following features:

> "(...)
>
> entry gammaz module :
>
> you have 5 options after you receive the 'you need to give an appropriate reason to report this entry':
>
> 'doesn't fit the sözlük format, has errors'
> 'this has already been written somewhere else'
> 'not in Turkish and not a quote or example'
> 'might be legally prosecutable'
> 'let me explain'
>
> (...)"[89]

The gammaz module developed over the years to include new kinds of options to specify why an entry was problematic. By 2010, the module had an extensive list of reporting options:

> "the latest version:
>
> not suitable to the sözlük format:
> not a definition, extension of a definition, example, quote or link
> the quote, despite not being an example, is not Turkish
> the entry which it continues has been deleted
> has a physical reference to the entries contained in the subject header
> related to the status of the subject header within the sözlük
>
> suitable to the format but:
>
> might be legally prosecutable
> incites hatred
> this has already been written somewhere else
> this topic is discussed in another subject header (...)"[90]

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88 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/1452340
89 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/849093
90 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/18456706

Community members that reported a large number of contributions qualified to become part of the *gammaz senior staff.* This group of users were in charge of looking through and filtering fake reports contributed by the informants. If the flagged contribution did need further attention, then the entry would be passed onto the moderation team. According to the situation, a moderator could either directly erase an entry or contact the community member responsible for the entry and ask them to change it. Community members who would repeatedly post questionable content could be punished by moderators by either suspending their writing privileges for a specific period of time or by deleting their community account. Moderators were also in charge of compiling personal histories for members who had repeated violated the codes of conduct within the community. Members with the most amount of removed content belonged to a category called *jiletciler* (wrist-slitters) and were ranked amongst themselves on accessible list found on the 'yazar hakkinda' function.

As the community began to grow exponentially between 2002 and 2005 (there was an intake of 6894 new community members in 2004 versus only 1998 in 2002), the moderation system of Ekşisözlük began to evolve in different directions. The *senior gammaz staff* began to grow in number and the editorial team, which had previously been responsible for moderation, delegated their responsibilities to the newly established moderating team. In early 2002 there were just three members in the moderation team, *clairvoyant*, *low life* and *yok*. Then at the end of July 2002 a fourth moderator, *armonipolisi* joined the team.[91] Community members *low life* and *yok* retired soon afterwards and were replaced by *anjinsan* and *mikado*.[92] In the meantime, by 2003 the number of informants had grown to 700 and comprised about 15% of the total community population.[93]

This moderating team continued until 2004 when *clairvoyant* could not keep up with the number of entries put up by incoming members. Furthermore the period of apprenticeship for new users was not enough for these novices to be acquainted with the community standards in self-expression. This created a situation wherein user-generated content on the platform was suffering from a decline in quality as community moderators were overworked with trying to catch up on flagged content. In 2004, the voluntary moderation team doubled in number to 8 and included users *alperturac*, *cressida*, *flagg* and *guru*. In 2005 after the transition to a for profit website, the team grew once again to include users *duduklutencere, bleuflonce,* then *kaamos* and *kimi raikkonen* in 2006.[94] The moderating team changed once again in 2008 after a large number of moderators retired. Users armonipolisi, kaamos and kimi raikkonen remained and three new

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91 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/1463277
92 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/3783863
93 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/3540774
94 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7459891

members, *kays el mecnun*, *gerrain* and *feeling the blanks* joined the moderation team.[95] The moderating team began to grow again in 2010 and by 2011 the team was composed of users *neutralife*, *kimi raikkonen*, *guybrush threepwood*, *crown*, *kaamos*, *zakdem*, *eski*, *nuage*, *kays el mecnun*, *jokullmagic* and *darkhorse*.[96] By this time, the ratio of moderators to writers in the community had increased to an extent to which many community users began to complain about the quality of moderating activities on Ekşisözlük. On one hand, the huge number of writers made it difficult for moderators to look through all the posted content, often causing moderators to make incorrect judgements on the suitability and standards of a reported entry. For instance in 2010, moderator *guybrush threepwood* was reviewing on average 571 entries per day. Furthermore, the diversity of the flagged entries made it impossible for the moderation team to have professional judgement regarding the standards of each entry. In protest of their working conditions, the moderation team decided to collectively resign on the 1st of September 2012 with the following statement:

> "Ekşisözlük was for us a 'holy knowledge resource'. This is why we loved it the day we met. After this love we wanted to become a part of it [Ekşisözlük] and eventually became writers. The notion that readability and continuity could only be sustained by specific rules and standards pushed us to become the administrators of these rules and standards. This is how we became moderators. We had many people who joined our team as well as many who left, and somehow we managed to make the team last until today.

> These days, the situation in Ekşisözlük reminds us of the famous Chinese proverb, 'may you live in interesting times'. Let it be the 'winds of change' or the trends of our times, something has pushed here [Ekşisözlük] down a path from which it perhaps cannot turn back. Despite this situation, the administration has left us without any support with which we can alter this path. As a result, ekşi sözlük is no longer a place for us to invest any effort. Not only do we no longer get the same pleasure from doing our jobs but we also feel like our task has now become to give a semblance of cleanness to something which is dirty from top to bottom.

> Ekşisözlük is no longer a place for the 12 moderators to invest any personal effort. The website's dynamics don't motivate us to moderate. The flow of content has started to resemble something between a twitter feed/a regular forum/facebook wall and as such, is very difficult to moderate. Perhaps this kind of a content flow is what needs to be done, however as moderators and administrators we do not want to be a part of such a platform. Furthermore moderation, which is a laborious and difficult job with little positive returns, is hobby for which we volunteer for. With the

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95 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/12606262
96 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/24756188

situation as such, there is little which keeps us from giving up our roles as moderators.

We, who by trying to maintain standards ensure that people can enjoy themselves and when needed access the necessary information, are resigning from our moderating positions on Ekşisözlük this minute. We hope for forgiveness from anyhow we have hurt in the past and send our regards to all who have allowed us to become their friends.

We send our endless thanks to all the retired moderators, hacivats, karagözs, kondüktörs, praetors, gammaz and the wonderful writers of Ekşisözlük who have contributed to mantling and developing the sözlük format and rules.
Regards,
kaamos, kays el mecnun, kimi raikkonen, neutralife, crown, zakdem 80, guybrush threepwood, nuage, dark horse, jokullmagic, gyne, cern de cayci olmak vardi

1st September 2012, dublin, tekirdag, istanbul, hatay, baku"[97]

Part of the reason as to why the moderating team decided to resign from Ekşisözlük was caused by the website's transition into a profit generating platform. A large online community with active writers attracted a lot of visitor traffic from social media platforms. More visitor traffic meant that the owners could generate more revenue from the advertising banners placed on Ekşisözlük. At the same time, a rapidly growing online community meant that the administration needed to find some way to meet the costs associated with hosting the community. This created a dilemma where the administration had to opt for either moving towards a self-sustaining business model or an amateur undertaking with a smaller community that would rely on donations to meet rising upkeep costs. User *nickcave and the sad seeds* describes this dilemma with the following words:

"(...) (t)here are two paths, either a website with thousands of community members in which the contributors can express themselves however they wish and with a large revenue from advertising or a website with a community of like-minded people who write entries with high quality standards but without a large revenue from advertising."[98]

Faced with this dilemma, Kapanoglu and the Ekşisözlük administration choose to scale up by making decisions that increased the growth rate of the online community from 2005 onwards.[99]

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97 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/30029153
98 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/30029944
99 Ftuff was a forum website founded by Kapanoglu duing the early 2000s. Until 2005, the popularity of Ftuff rivalled Ekşisözlük. Much like Ekşisözlük, Ftuff was also a closed online community that grew through word of mouth. In 2005, after Ftuff's online community reached a certain size, Kapanoglu chose to do opposite of what he did with Ekşisözlük. Instead of scaling up, he scaled down the forum by keeping membership to the Ftuff online community closed to the

Some of these administrative decisions included the simplification of the process for new members to qualify as writers and permission for community members to have multiple accounts on the website. One of the results caused by the administration's decision to simplify both the registration and the apprenticeship processes was the emergence of a perception amongst older cohorts that the quality and standards of the content posted on Ekşisözlük were declining. This perception was partially justifiable as most of the new community members were not acquainted with the community standards for entries. The rise in entries needing to be moderated put increased the burden on the moderating team who were already under a lot of duress. Despite being perennially under-staffed and unpaid, the moderation team still fulfilled their roles within the community as a free and voluntary service with good intentions. However, the team was simply unequipped to handle the ever growing number of entries needing to be moderated.

2. b) RECRUITMENTING AND GENERATIONAL COHORTS

Prior to the formation of *kondüktors* (conductors) as an organizational role, the moderating team was responsible for the task of reviewing and coordinating the flow of applications. As described in the previous section, asides from co-ordinating the intake of new writers, moderators were also assigned to do a number of time intensive tasks such as checking to see if a reported entry needs to be changed or whether a flagged entry would cause legal trouble for the owners of Ekşisözlük. Being overworked and under-staffed meant that the process of co-ordinating the intake of new writers was often done through periodic membership calls and reviews. The periodicity of these new intakes tended to depend on owner Sedat Kapanoğlu. Since 1999, there has been six calls for mass intakes (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2013) and two campaign-based intakes for visitors interested in becoming members of the Ekşisözlük community.[100]

Campaign-based

The Ekşisözlük community has two generations, the fifth and the seventh, that are mostly composed of writers recruited from donation campaigns. The raison d'etre behind the donation campaigns in 2003 and 2005 was to help schools in the under-developed regions of Turkey. In contrast to the more conventional method of firstly registering oneself as a reader and then waiting for a new round of mass-intakes, campaign-based intakes offered registered readers a fast-track alternative to becoming a community writer. The cohorts generated from the two major donation campaigns are much smaller in comparison to the mass-intake cohorts. As both campaigns involved donating something for a cause, the number of applicants was much less in comparison

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wider public. Despite updating the website and eventually releasing a Ftuff beta, the forum never managed to reach the popularity it enjoyed when it was first opened in the early 2000s.
100 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/32774423

to mass-intakes which did not have pre-defined requirements.

i) Fifth generation: "Let us rain books on Cizre"
The fifth generation of writer intakes is unique due to the recruiting method used by the Kapanoglu and his administrative staff. Rather than issuing a call for applications, the Ekşisözlük administration decided to award memberships to applicants who contributed to the *Cizre'ye kitap yağdıralım* (roughly translatable to 'let us rain books on Cizre') campaign which lasted between 26.04.2003 and 06.06.2003.[101] Any person who donated more than 50 books to the campaign was automatically rewarded with a writer account on Ekşisözlük.[102] Only a small number of individuals managed to meet the quota of 50 books and as a result, the number of community members belonging to the fifth generation of writers is the smallest in comparison to all other generations. Despite the small number of participants, the book campaign was nevertheless a great success. In total, more than 20 thousand books were donated by both applicants and community members. The donations were used to build two libraries (one for students and the other for teachers) in Vatan primary school in south-eastern Turkey. Four personal computers (PCs), one television, one video player, one VCD player and one printer were also donated alongside an Internet connection (a rarity in the south-east of Turkey during the early 2000s) that would be at the disposal of the school. Some of the books were also donated to other schools in the Cizre area and comics donated by community members were distributed to all primary school students as an end of year gift.[103] Drawing from the success of the Cizre book donation campaign, community members organized a similar campaign in 2005 to support another school in the eastern part of Turkey.

ii) Seventh generation: "Let us rain books on Malazgirt"
On the 26th of October, 2005 community member *netameli*, a teacher in a primary school near Malazgirt (a town in the province of Muş, located in the eastern part of Turkey) contacted Sedat Kapanoğlu about beginning another book donation drive. The reasons netameli put forward for needing to start a book donation campaign within the Ekşisözlük community are as follows:

"(...)
We have 620 students from Malazgirt's villages and rural areas who come to study at our boarding school. The students do not have access to any books other than the ones used in the classroom. During their

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101 Cizre is a small town and district in the Şırnak province in south-eastern Turkey. Located on the borders with Syria and Iraq, the district is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas of Turkey. The campaign aimed to send books to Vatan ilköğretim okulu (Vatan Primary School) in Cizre after being contacted by a teacher working in the institution. The teacher complained that the school lacked the funding to provide students with a school library and had received no support from the Turkish ministry of education. With the help of the Cizre mayor and some bus transport companies, the online community collected books from bot Europe and Turkey and managed to ship them to the primary school.
102 http://forum.paticik.com/read.php?5,67592
103 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/2666598

summer break, the students return to their villages and forget how to read. In only my classes, I had four 6th grade students who needed to be sent to the 2nd grade in order to relearn how to read again. The ministry has built a library here but there are no books in this library. And as you can guess, no one here really cares about this situation.

If Cizre managed to receive books during the 'Ekşisözlük cizre'ye kitap yağdıralım' campaign, then I hope my school will also be able to receive some books. If the number of books we receive are more than needed, then these books will be distributed to other schools in the region.

(...)"[104]

Netameli specifies that donors could send encyclopaedias, primary and high-school level reading books, preparatory books for high-school and university entry exams, novels, short stories, poetry, publications, stationary, clothes, toys, chess sets, maps, atlases, billboards, flashcards and educational CDs to the school.[105] An online database was set up by community members to record the names of donors and the material they sent. When donating, a donor would have to match up the ISBN of a title from a range of 20,000 books printed and distributed by 1,790 different publishing houses. Once the registration process was complete, the database would send a notification to Netameli, who in turn would send out a confirmation to donors upon receiving the packages. Registered readers who sent donations and completed the registration form until the 1st of December 2005 were automatically rewarded with an apprenticeship.[106] The cohort of writers generated during the *Malazgirt'e kitap yağdıralım* (translatable to 'let us rain books on Malazgirt') campaign became the seven generation within the community cohorts. The campaign was also met with great enthusiasm within the community and roughly 1000 members donated more than 10,000 books, clothes and stationary items throughout the 5 week duration of the campaign.[107] The success of the campaign inspired Netameli to organize a *Malazgirt'e mektup yağdıralım* (translatable to 'let us rain letters on Malazgirt') campaign wherein more than 30 donors became regular penpals with the students in the primary school. Finally, a school trip to Istanbul was organized wherein 50 students from the primaryschool visited the city between the 12th and 16th of June, 2005. On one of these days, students met with Ekşisözlük community members to visit Dolmabahçe Palace (one of the imperial palaces of the Ottoman dynasty in Istanbul), take a boat trip on the Bosphorous and eat lunch together.

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104 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/8430880
105 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/8434781
106 Any donations received after the 1st of December, 2005 did not make registered users eligible for promotion to çaylak status.
107 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/8674589

Mass intakes

Mass-intakes function as the main method for recruiting new community members. Mass-intakes were conducted on a periodic basis and occurred in 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2013. In comparison with earlier mass-intakes, the 2010 and 2013 intakes were much smaller in terms of scale. The method used in all the mass-intakes was to firstly introduce a function that allowed visitors to register themselves as readers on Ekşisözlük. Prior to a new round of recruiting, him and a team of coders would make the necessary infrastructural innovations needed to host a larger online community During the period when visitors began to register themselves as readers, Sedat Kapanoğlu and the technical staff made the necessary infrastructural changes to accommodate a new cohort of community members. Once the necessary changes were complete, all registered users would be promoted to either apprentices or writers. Prior to the introduction of conductors as a community role, the actual procedure behind organizing a mass-intake was not standardized. This meant that almost every recruiting process was subject to a different procedure. For instance, the time elapsed between the period of reader registration and promotion differed for each intake. In some periods the large number of registered readers waiting to be promoted caused the website administration to directly promote them into becoming writers, effectively bypassing the apprenticeship period. On the other hand, some mass-intakes only lasted for one day while others lasted for longer. Therefore each mass-intake on Ekşisözlük is unique insofar as the procedure used to manage the intake and the problems generated during every intake process.

i) Battle of Helm's Deep: the intake of 2005

The fifth generational cohort was extremely small in comparison to older cohorts due to the lack of a membership call and the book donation requirements of the *Cizre'ye Kitap Yağdıralım* campaign. After the donation drive, recruitment calls remained closed lasted until May 19th 2004. On this date a notice was posted on Ekşisözlük announcing a new recruitment call. This date roughly coincided with the decision made by Sedat Kapanoğlu to scale up the size of Ekşisözlük's online community and turn the platform into a for profit enterprise.

The new membership call generated a massive number of applications and by early 2005, the number of 'çaylaks' waiting to become writers on Ekşisözlük was over 17,000. The sheer number of applicants rendered it impossible to use older methods for recruiting writers wherein moderators would firstly review the entries of an apprentice before promoting them to the writer status. Inspired by the Battle of Helm's Deep, a fictional battle scene from J.R.R Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, the moderation staff decided to accept all 17,000 'çaylaks' on the 11th of February 2005 without any prior review of their entries. Instead of individually reviewing each application, the

moderators were given the right to delete any writer account without prior warning.[108] The new intake of writers were labelled with the *Miğferdibi* (Helm's Deep) tag in their user accounts to help the moderating team identify them. What ensued over the next few months was a bloodbath wherein the moderating team eliminated a large amount of the new writers who were not meeting community standards with their entries. The surviving writers became the sixth generation of Ekşisözlük writers and took on Miğferdibi as a nickname within the community.

2. c) RATING, REFERENCING AND REPUTATION SYSTEMS

The innovation process on Ekşisözlük between 2002 and 2005 is oriented more reifying the peer-production mechanism present on the platform. Prior to 2002, the innovation process was more concerned with establishing a stable hyper-link format for the community commons. As one shall see, buttons such as *$ukella*, *cok kotu* or *oeeh* were introduced as part of a rating system aiming to create social reputations for community members. The referencing system is introduced to make linking with internal and external content easier. On the other hand, the intent behind developing a reputation system is to maintain standards to user generated content. Being able to rate an entry would assign an internal value rating to contributions, effectively empowering community members rather than moderators to decide what sorts of entries are of good or bad quality within the context of Ekşisözlük. Negative and as well as positively rated contributions shape the karma of a writer and as such, act as the basis of reputation within the community.

i) Reference system

Ukte/conundrum

The *Ukte* button was the earliest interactive feature of the referencing system on Ekşisözlük. Ukte (which is roughly translatable to a 'knot' or a 'conundrum' in English) was a feature that was available to registered community members between 2003 and 2006. This button enabled writers to mark a specific entry as an ukte, or a subject which needing the attention of the community. Once a subject was marked as a conundrum, the link the subject's page appeared on a scrolling list generated when a user pressed the *Ukte* button on the toolbar of left side of the interface. Basically put, the purpose of this feature was to enable collaboration over concepts or topics which the contibutor was confused over. If an ukte entry generated a satisfactory response from the community, it would eventually be taken off the ukte list and become a regular entry. Quite often, one sees that the ukte feature is used by community members when looking for information about other people either in Turkey or within the Ekşisözlük community. For example, an entry dedicated to 'alev soylu' (relatively common name in Turkey) has the following written as content:

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108 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/6844994

"1. i. Has a cassette out called 'I don't have a lie.

ii. played in a 1988 film called 'Poison' which was directed by Oğuz Gözen. The producer of the film was Halit Arkan. It can be seen as a 'Arkan film presents' thing.

iii. Came in 3rd place for the entrance examination of the 19th of May university's department of business administration (with 164.085 points as a second preference). Don't know whether graduated or not as I could only follow the person until the 3rd year of undergrad.

iv. practices sumo wrestling in japan

I thank this person who allowed me to work on my research skills

deep note: I made up item iv. The others are true. But I think we are dealing with 3 different alev soylus. (bkz: what are we going to do about it)

or maybe this is a very multi-dimensional person that Turkey should be proud of

(...)

(visvisa, 13.08.2003 22:15)

2. this person comes for cleaning to us on Saturdays. A really multi-dimensional person...

(expatriate clamouring vengeance, 16.08.2003 17:46)"[109]

Until 2005, the list generated by the Ukte button was visible to non-registered visitors. When clicked, visitors could see the list of entries considered to be ukte but could not contribute content to resolve an ukte. The list produced by the ukte function was re-organised a number of times to make the list either alphabetical or chronological. Eventually it was taken off the visitor tool bar to become a function only accessible to community members around 2005.

Bakınız

Bakınız (look at) is most used feature of the referencing system on Ekşisözlük. When a writer is posting comments on a page, they have the option of referencing another page or comment on the platform. To be able to link to a page, the writer takes the link of the page they wish to reference and add it after typing *bkz:* in a comment. When a link is posted after *bkz:*, the link is transformed into hypertext which appears as the title of the referenced page. If a writer wants to link to a specific comment, then they do the same process but put the link of the comment instead. What is displayed as hypertext is the number assigned to the comment and the name of its author. For references to external sites, a writer uses a similar tactic wherein they can use hypertext instead of posting the entire link in a comment. Another way to reference both external and internal pages is

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[109] https://eksisözlük.com/entry/3222574 & https://eksisözlük.com/entry/3232770

to used the "smart" *bkz:* feature. Instead of using hypertext, a link can be referenced through using a *** sign. This form of referencing is often used when a writer wants to make a dual reference in a comment. For instance, a marked up word in a comment can refer to a link while the *** afterwards can refers to another one.

ii) Rating system

$ukela/öeehh/cok kotu

Similar to a 'like' on Facebook, the $ukela button allows community members to assign a positive rating to a comment written within an entry. User *self abandonment* describes the $ukela button with the following words:

> "Much like Facebook's 'like' or Google's '+1', it can be used on all sorts of webpages to say 'X amount of [Eksi] sözlük writers has said şükela to this story, this video or picture. For the Turkish market it could easily compete with Google's '+1' and could in the long run become just as important as Facebook's 'like' (...)"[110]

The accumulated number of $ukela for all the comments on a page functions as a way of rating the subject. From 2005 onwards, using the statistics link on the tool-bar of the interface, both visitors and community members were able to access the pages with the most $ukela. Prior to this year, the $ukela rankings were only accessible by registered community members. On the other hand, the *cok kotu* [very bad] button worked as a 'dislike' button which allowed community members assign negative ratings to comments written within an entry. The rankings created by the dislike button could also be accessed by both visitors and community members through the statistics link on the interface toolbar. This button remained controversial due to the fact that it was usually seen by community members as a way of exerting communal pressure on an individual. For example, user *kahvevodka* defines the cok kotu button as the tool of the average community member:

> "Generally experienced as a slap by members who fall contrary to the thoughts of the sözlük community. (…) Some kind of community pressure [mahalle baskısı], a display of strength by the average man."[111]

The third interactive feature in the rating system is the slightly more ambiguous (and less controversial) 'öeehh' function. This button, which functions as an Ekşisözlük equivalent of a vocal grunt, tends to be used in a variety of contexts. Some community members use it to suggest that

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110 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/26186566
111 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/23304802

the entry is neither good nor bad but still worthy of interest. For example, *Sacrifice*'s definition of the button's function is:

> "[W]riters who want to earn karma points need their entries to be rated. Let us say that the number of entries which need to be rated is 50. When pressed, the oeehh button doesn't give the entry a positive or negative rating but instead increases the number of entries which are rated. That is why we should not think that this button is useless and treat it like an adopted child (...)"[112]

iii) Reputation on Ekşisözlük

Karma

The in-built rating system based on the three buttons of $ukela/öeehh/cok kotu quantifies the ratings produced by community members to create a 'Karma Rating' for each participating community member. This rating can be accessed from the 'yazar hakkinda' [about the writer] link which is symbolised by a question mark under each comment contributed by a writer. The algorithm which calculates the total karma points for every community member is not disclosed to the general public. Instead visitors can access the general karma rank of each community member. According to their karma score, each member gets assigned a title that is displayed as part of the information about a writer. While the karma system has no real impact on the privileges of community members, it can be seen as an indirect and distributed method of regulating user generated content. Entries which are deemed as unpleasant or uninteresting get negative points which effect the karma of a member. The same is also true for positive feedback which raises the karma points of members. The decision to pay attention to the karma ratings is left to the individual discretion of community members. It is also the individual decision of community members to opt for a strategy that generates either positive or negative karma points. The karma system is rather controversial within the community as some members see it as a restrictive element in the design of Ekşisözlük. For example, user *madonnanin yagli zencisi 2* says that:

> "not something that makes the sözlük more diverse but instead more homogeneous.
> Most of the time, raters do not look at how the argument was constructed or whether any examples were given [in the entry]... instead the raters give positive points if they share the opinion of the entry and negative if not therefore karma does not rate your quality [as a writer] but instead demonstrates how close you are to the average opinion within the community (...)"[113]

On the other hand, other users such as *yalnizlik profesoru* see the karma system as a way of

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112 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7752151
113 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/31882563

improving the quality of entries posted on the website:

> "indirectly helps make the sözlük a better place. Although i've never used the rating system myself (this is something I'll criticize another time), it has been use for a few years now."[114]

There is a third group of community members who argue that the karma system pushes contributing to members to focus on topics that generate ratings (both positive and negative) while neglecting less popular/controversial topics:

> "one can observe symptoms of avoiding thematic entries, discussions on politics and football and not including bkz. links in people addicted to the karma system"[115]

It is difficult to judge whether the karma system promotes/inhibits authorship or pushes users to post entries on karma generating topics. Whatever the case, it can be argued that the karma system of Ekşisözlük creates a system of evaluation that is unique to the community.

2. d) SUB-ETHA

After 2004, the 's*ummitz network'* portal on the interface of Ekşisözlük is replaced with the *sub-etha*. After being replaced, the 'summitz network' portal is renamed to simply 'summitz' and take its place in the range of links offered by the sub-etha portal. Inspired by the interstellar telecommunications network used by hitcherhikers to flag down spaceships in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, the sub-etha portal was designed as an internal network of websites that offered different kinds of services to the Ekşisözlük community. Sub-etha is introduced towards the very end of the second phase on Ekşisözlük when the website had started to become popular platform amongst the Turkish speaking online public. After being introduced onto the Ekşisözlük interface, a number of short-lived services began to be offered to community members on sub-etha. These included *Ekşi Atari* (2004-5), *Eksirss* (2004-6), *Micro K* (2004-5) and *Eksinvite* (2005-6). Two services introduced during this period, *Ekşi Anket* and *Ekşisözlük CPU Power*, can still be accessed today. As the name suggests, Ekşi Atari was a gaming service developed by user *teo* and offered community members the experience to play retro atari games such as Tetris or Packman. Despite rumours that the reason behind the Ekşi Atari going offline was that it's popularity was causing a decline in the rate of entries posted on Ekşisözlük, Ekşi Atari was taken offline due to copyright infringements caused by offering unlicensed games. Eksinvite was an application through which community members could either share invitations or win free tickets to

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114 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/31882449
115 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/6673716

events and promotions. Micro K was described by founder *mengus* as a 'minimalist web artefacts exhibition' and offered users to opportunity to experiment with microcoding.[116] Successful microcoding projects would be exhibited on the website for both other community members and the wider online public. Eksirss was a rss-feed website wherein the latest 50 entries would be listed for visiting community members. The rss feed would be eventually incorporated into the interface of Ekşisözlük, rendering the website obsolete.

The two links that are still on sub-etha today are Ekşi Anket and CPU Power. Ekşisözlük CPU Power was an application developed in 2004 for community members to sign up as team members for the World Community Grid Project. By signing onto the Ekşisözlük team on the World Community Grid Project, community members would contribute a small part of the processing power of their computers for ongoing scientific research at the National Institutes of Health. The Ekşisözlük CPU Power team has over 2,000 members and is currently the 19th biggest group active in the project.[117] On the other hand, ekşi anket is an application developed by user *teo* that routes community members to the most recent questionnaire page. This application was designed to ease access to the so-called 'questionnaire' subjects on Ekşisözlük. These pages tend to ask very banal or straightforward questions such as 'which city would you like to live in?' and are very popular with newer, less experienced community members.

Looking at the network of linked applications and websites existing prior to the transformation of Ekşisözlük into a commercial platform one can divide them into two categories: experimental applications and community organization websites. Websites such as Ek$i muzesi, sourlemonade or sourworks were community-based initiatives that helped to remedy some unstable aspects of the website and standardize user experience. The process of upgrading the website between 2004 and 2005 eliminated the need for many of these initiatives and most of them were gradually taken offline. On the other hand, links such as soursummitz (becomes Limon in 2006) Pazarligi.org (redesigned in 2006) and the smkb (redesigned and changed to ekşimarket in 2011) which have survived from this early period, are all community organization websites that have undergone extensive changes. Despite these changes, what these websites offer remains the same: spaces for community members to organize events or gatherings in real life. From 2006 onwards, ekşiDuyuru (ekşiAnnouncements) is added to this list of websites on sub-etha that allow community members to organize events offline.

The second category of links offer experimental applications. In comparison to the previous category, these tend to have a shorter life span. The first of these applications was Pikka (2002-2006), an application designed to follow subject pages and writers on Ekşisözlük. After Pikka, a

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116 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/4007522
117 http://www.worldcommunitygrid.org/team/viewTeamInfo.do?teamId=6BNL9BW0P1

number of applications followed, including Yoğurt (2003-6) an adaptation of an addictive typing game developed by Sedat Kapanoğlu for BBS networks, Eksirss (2004-6), Ekşisözlük CPU Power (2004) and Micro K (2004-5).

3. INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESS MODEL (2005-2013)

The business model and ownership of Ekşisözlük undergoes a review during at the end of 2004. After this reorganization, the newly established company, *Ekşişeyler Teknoloji ve Bilişim Sanayi ve Ticaret Ltd.*, begins hosting the platform. Founded towards the end of 2004 with a start-up capital of 20,000 TRY, the partners of the newly formed company are Sedat Kapanoglu (Kapanoglu), Basak Purut (kanzuk), Harun Arabulan and Emre Kerestecioglu. Harun Arabulan is a systems analyst, Emre Kerestecioglu is a specialist in interactive marketing. Sedat Kapanoglu is responsible for coding and development of the platform while Basak Purut is responsible for the legal representation of Ekşisözlük. One of the first effects of Ekşisözlük being hosted by a company is the appearance of advertising banners on different sections of the website. The revenue model that is adopted by the company is based around using Ekşisözlük as an advertising space for interactive Internet marketing. Companies wishing to advertise on the platform would pay the advertising branch of the company to rent out banners for a specific period of time. This revenue model proves to be successful and by the end of 2005, Ekşisözlük makes an agreement with Medyanet, Turkey's biggest Internet marketing agency at the time. As a result of this new partnership, the advertising branch is eventually liquidated in 2006.[118] Owned by media conglomerate Doğan Holding, Medyanet becomes responsible for managing all the advertising spaces on Ekşisözlük.[119] In exchange, the owners of the company get a share from the generated profits. Over the course of the next few years, spaces dedicated to advertising expand on Ekşisözlük. Firstly the background of the interface is opened up to advertising and then pop-ups begin to appear when a user logs on. In 2008, advertising is introduced onto the personal history webpage of community members.[120] In 2010 after a new promotion agreement with Avea (a telecommunications company in Turkey) and Turkish Telecom, a new (and free) feature appears on the Ekşisözlük interface that allows community members to post user generated content from their mobile phone with the Avea SMS service.[121] In the same year, the maximum size of advertising banners used on the site is expanded, thus providing more visibility to adverts.[122] In other words, the canvas of the Ekşisözlük interface becomes increasingly colonized by advertising. The costs

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118 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/10926729
119 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/8407163
120 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/12262937
121 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/18340326
122 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/21042823

(in Turkish lira) and models for advertising on Ekşisözlük in 2011 are as follows[123]:

Site	Page	Type of Advert	Length of Broadcast	Period	Fixed Cost (in Turkish lira)	Costs per Thousand Impressions (CPM)	Size of Banner
Ekşisözlük	The entire site	Theme	Constant	1 day	4500		
		Theme + Entry	Constant	1 day	5000		
		Show Case	Rotating			2.5	300x250 pixels
		Cat Fish		1 day	3000		
		Video	Per click			50	Maximum duration is 15 seconds and must have a skip button
		Video	Seeding			100	
		Surprise of the day	Constant	1 day			
	Dedicated webpage on site	Creating a dedicated webpage	1 year		15000		

The most expensive advertising available relies on converting the entire interface of Ekşisözlük into an advert for regular visitors. If paying for a theme-style advert, one can choose the background as well as the colours and fonts to entirely recreate the interface. In addition, one can add entries describing the advertising campaign as well as advertising videos. The duration of the broadcast depends on the category of the advert as well as the costs. An entry advert creates a dedicated entry for the advertised product and the cost of maintaining this entry is charged per diem. A show case advert is essentially a 300x250 pixel banner advert on the sides of the Ekşisözlük interface. Banner adverts are rotational in duration and are charged on the basis of the number of unique visitors who see the banner. A catfish advert runs at the bottom of the page and expands when a user either clicks or rolls over them. Video adverts are charged per view and are embedded into the interface. A video broadcast can be programmed to either start when clicked or when a visitor navigates onto a pager. The surprise of the day is webpage advertising a promotion to visitors. Finally, a dedicated webpage advert maintains a page dedicated to the advertising campaign. This

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123 From http://www.sozluksistemi.com/blog/eksi-sozluk-reklam-fiyatlari/

page is open to comments from community members.

The most recent novelty to Ekşisözlük's revenue model is the corporate account. A corporate account is a new user category and can be described with the following words:

> "a kind of user that does have the right to post entries on Ekşisözlük and is able to receive complaints or criticisms from community members about the institution they represent. (…) As the administration, we certify that these user accounts represent the institution in question. These accounts can be used as a direct communication channel with a company or institution to troubleshoot problems."[124]

3. a) USER CATEGORIES ON EKŞİSÖZLÜK

After the reorganization of the business model, Ekşisözlük does not accept any new recruits for around half a year. Then, around May 2005 a four-tier system of ziyaretçi (visitor), kayıtlı okur (registered reader), çaylak (apprentice) and yazar (writer) is introduced to separate different types of community members active on the platform. Afterwards the establishment of this new user hierarchy, the platform begins recruiting community members again. In the new organizational hierarchy of users, ziyaretçi (general visitor), is the most basic type; it designates an anonymous, non-registered visitor who can only read the entries and content posted by writers. As such, one can argue that general visitors are not really part of the community. In the following section the remaining categories of users active within the community will be explained in detail.

i) Kayıtlı Okuyucu (registered reader)

In comparison with being an anonymous visitor, registered readers can take on a nickname, flag entries, customize the layout of the website with themes and use the rating system for user generated content. Furthermore, becoming a registered user is the first step to becoming a writer on Ekşisözlük. After a recruitment call for new writers is announced on the platform, registered users are usually promoted to apprentices. If a registered reader decides to become a writer during the recruitment period, then there are some preliminary requirements that they need to complete. If the requirements are not completed on time or no attempt is made, then the user is demoted once again from the apprenticeship status to a registered reader. The promotion of registered readers to the apprenticeship status depends on the varying recruitment policies of the website administration. For example, during the mid-2000s, many registered readers had to wait for more than half a year to become apprentices. On the other hand, with the transition to a standardized and constant recruitment system from 2010 onwards, registered readers automatically have the right to become a çaylak and complete the apprenticeship process. Completing the apprenticeship

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124 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/21570306

process however does not necessarily result in immediate promotion to the writer status. The number of users in the registered reader category varies according to the recruitment policies specified by the website administration. While the number of registered users amounted to almost 10,000 during certain periods in the early-2000s, this number decreased drastically to just 2 in 2007.[125]

ii) Çaylak (apprentice)

When a recruiting call is announced, registered users can become *çaylaks* (apprentices) and begin writing entries for Ekşisözlük. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the procedures used to manage the recruitment process and the periodicity of these calls is not standardized. However, one aspect of the recruitment process that does not change throughout Ekşisözlük's intake history is the requirements needed to successfully complete an apprenticeship. After fulfilling the mandatory requirements to become a fully-fledged writer, apprentices are eventually accorded full membership status as writers.

Once a user is promoted from a registered user to a çaylak, they need to complete 10 entries (comments) to meet the submission standards of the Ekşisözlük moderation. These entries are not visible to either the community or the public. After the completion of 10 entries, the application of each apprentice is put on a waiting list and then individually reviewed by the moderation team. Prior to 2009, a çaylak would not know when the moderation would review their account. However after 2009, the website administrators created a *çaylak onay listesi* (an apprentice waiting list). This list allowed applicants to check their relative position on the waiting list. Once the reviewing process was completed, a çaylak's status could either be promoted to the status of a writer or put on hold until their entries were modified to meet the standards of the platform. In extreme instances, the account of a çaylak was be deleted. This occurred when the moderation found the entries to be either offensive or promoting various kinds of hate speech.

When a community member is a *çaylak*, they have limited access to the full range of interactive features available to writers. For instance, they are unable to use the interpersonal communication tools on the platform to interact with community members. They are also not allowed to fill out 'ukte' forms. After 2010, apprentices were given permission to use the rating system.[126] The limited interactivity offered to apprentices was also used by the website administration as a way of reprimanding community members who had repeatedly violated the quality standards of the platform. Rather than directly deleting the account, the moderation team would firstly demote a community to çaylak status with the following message:

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125 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/11407727
126 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/2382411 & https://eksisözlük.com/entry/8705178

"(...)

You have been demoted to çaylak status to test your knowledge of the rules and submission formation of Ekşisözlük. Right now, nothing bad has happened to either your writer status or your posted entries. Once you have submitted a number of entries suitable for the Ekşisözlük format, you will regain your status of community writer. Until the completion of your apprenticeship, you will not be able to message other users or use the full interactive features of the website. In a place like ekşi sözlük in which there are a large number of users, we expect everyone to adhere to community standards. If your new entries do not adhere to the format and rules of Ekşisözlük, you will lose your status as a writer and all your prior entries will be deleted. Throughout the duration of your apprenticeship, we suggest that you review the entries which have been flagged by the moderation and look at the entry headers on the submission standards of the website. As we are unable to inspect new entries of each user immediately and are trying to be constructive in our approach to moderation, we have chosen to implement this procedure instead."[127]

iii) Yazar (writer)

Yazars (writers) are community members who have full access to all the interactive features on Ekşisözlük. Numerically speaking, they are also the largest group within the community. As a group, writers are differentiated within themselves according to the *nesil* (cohort) they belong to. Writers are the only group within the community who have the right to post user-generated content real-time and without approval from the moderation. They also have access to websites listed on the sub-etha portal and receive invitations to attend yearly community summits. When a writer does not contribute for a long period of time, they become a *kayıp yazar* (missing writer). This status is attributed to community members who have not posted entries on Ekşisözlük for more than several months.[128] Depending on their experience, cohort and personal histories, only certain writers are eligible for organizational roles within the community.

The establishment of a user hierarchy alongside an automated filtering, recommendation and rating system, turns Ekşisözlük into a fully fledged peer-production project. The reorganization of the business model at the end of 2004 also brings with it new conditions of usage for writers. Prior to 2005, there is little mention of usage conditions on the website. After the website is once again open for membership applications in mid-2005, the 'ben de' disclaimer is replaced with the following statement:

"You might experience some performance issues as the website is undergoing a lot of updating right now. Before becoming a registered reader:

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127 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/1216754
128 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/31769126

Becoming a registered reader allows you to access to features such as customized colour themes or voting on entries, however please pay attention to the following and don't skip reading them:

- Individuals younger than 18 are not able to become readers due to legal restrictions.
- We [website administration] are very sensitive about the voting system being misused. Therefore:
- If a writer opens up a registered reader account to vote on their own entries, this might cause the writer to lose their writer status within the community and have all their entries deleted.
- If an individual opens up more than one registered account, this might cause the individual to have all their accounts deleted and their votes invalidated.
- Invalid registration details (we know that there is no one named 'name surname' or 'a') will cause your registered reader account to be erased.
- If the registered reader account is misused for any bad intentions (for example taking over the world), the administration will delete it. In extreme circumstances, the reader will be warned and reproached by the website administration.

Registered reader accounts which are not used for more than 3 months will be deleted for the sake of saving space."[129]

After 2005, the three tiered privilege hierarchy is established for community members and remains in place until today. On the bottom level, community members are registered readers. All writers begin as registered users and are eventually promoted to become writers after the completion of their apprenticeships.

3. b) CONDUCTORS, PRAETORS, LANGUAGE EXPERTS, BOTS AND CODERS

i) Kondüktorler: the intake standardizers

The introduction of conductors as a community role is part of the Ekşisözlük administration's strategy to transition from periodic mass-intakes to standardized and continuous recruitment. Community member *Nuage* describes the scope of responsibilities for a *kondüktor* and the requirements needed to become one with the following words:

"Our new inspection team's scope of activities will be between a moderator and a writer. The role of the so-called writer intake team [conductor team] is to relieve the workload of the moderation by reviewing the entries made by çaylaks. According to the quality of the entries made by a çaylak, a kondüktör will have the authority to either promote the çaylak into a writer or delete the çaylak's account.

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129 http://web.archive.org/web/20031203181828/http://sözlük.sourtimes.org/

(...)

the latest criteria needed to become a kondüktör is:

- ○ to have written at least 10 entries
- ○ to have logged onto Ekşisözlük at least once in the past 90 days
- ○ to have made at least 100 ispiyons (with the exception of gg snitches)
- ○ have a successful ispiyon rate of at least %75 (with the exception of gg snitches)
- ○ not a 'lost' or 'çaylak' community member
- ○ not be part of any other inspection team"[130]

Conductors have access to the modlog, a log designed to record the moderating decisions taken for flagged entries written by apprentices. The modlog can be used to confirm whether an apprentice has submitted content that has been previously assessed by moderators. Conductors also have access to an intake list through the 'çaylaklar' link found on their interface. Although a conductor can check through the entries of a çaylak account, they do not have access to the nickname of the çaylaks. Instead, conductors just see an account number on their list. If the entries met the community standards in terms of format, then the conductor has the right to promote the apprentice into a writer. If the entries do not meet Ekşisözlük standards, then the conductor can suspend the promotion of a çaylak until the necessary revisions are made to the posted entries. In extreme cases such as entries with illegal or offensive content, the conductor can erase the account of the apprentice in question. The Ekşisözlük administration rewards conductors who review a lot of applications with a monthly quota that allows them to directly promote registered users into writers without any prior administrative review or trial entries.[131]

ii) Praetors: Legal consultants

An outcome of the transfer of Ekşisözlük's hosting rights to a company was the introduction of a new user category: the *praetor*. Community members who take on a praetor role within the community are in charge of giving legal advice about user generated content posted on the platform. Praetors are professional legal consultants hired by the company administration but also have the right to participate as writers within the community. Sedat Kapanoğlu defines praetors as

"(...) the category of voluntary users who strike the balance between the freedom of expression and

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130 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/21216232
131 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/24235910

compliance with the Turkish legal framework on Ekşisözlük. They are not moderators and do not do moderating work such as deleting entries, moving content between entry headers, managing apprentices or deleting users. Instead they have access to a special interface that allows them to communicate with moderators about content that might be illegal under Turkish law. Moderators seek advice on the legality of content from praetors. After reviewing the questionable content, the praetors makes a joint decision on what to do with the content.

As the boundaries of legality are often a difficult to draw on the Internet, community members with experience in dealing with legal affairs are often selected to become praetors. The founder of praetor role within the community is *aethewulf*, who is a student of law. He is in charge of coordinating the praetor group and supporting them within the community"[132]

The procedure of legal regulation as officially sanctioned on the platform can be quite complex. According to Sedat Kapanoğlu, any content that might be illegal firstly needs to be reported to a moderator:

"(…) It is not correct to directly contact praetors about the legal status of an entry. The correct procedure would be to firstly report an entry to the moderators of the website and have the entry referred to the praetors. (…) Moderators have an archive of decisions made by praetors in the past and can often make a decision about the legal status of an entry without having to consult them."[133]

If an entry was referred from the moderation team to the *praeterium* (the entire collective of legal consultants in the community), then a praetor has to review the entry and make a decision regarding its legality. After mid-2009, the company granted praetors the right to delete potentially prosecutable entries without obtaining prior consent from the moderators. When establishing the praeterium, the administration had envisioned a two-tiered system wherein moderators would check content reported as being problematic in terms of format while praetors would check entries reported as being problematic legally. What happened in reality was that the praetors, due to their status as professional consultants, started to moderate content according to the interests of the company and not according to the legality of the content or the interests of the community.

In 2012, a number of entries about Webrazzi (a Turkish-language technology blog), were deleted by the moderating team. The reason given for the deletion was that the entries in question were damaging the commercial reputation of Webrazzi. According to clause 55 of the Turkish commercial law, any online content insulting the reputation of registered companies are liable to be sued by the involved party. The legality of the entries withstanding, a huge controversy erupted

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132 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7093602
133 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7093602

within the community when it was discovered that Başak Purut (or *Kanzuk* on Ekşisözlük) the praetor responsible for the erasure of the entries was also the legal representative of Arda Kutsal, the founder of Webrazzi. In other words Kanzuk was under a conflict of interests when reaching the decision to erase the entries. The main issue of contention in the controversy was whether Kanzuk deleted the offensive entries with his personal initiative or after an official complaint from the administration of Webrazzi. The official version of the Webrazzi event, as narrated by Sedat Kapanoğlu was that Webrazzi contacted Kanzuk via email about the entries. However, the website administration refused to release the contents of the email in question to the Ekşisözlük community, leading to doubts about whether this email actually existed. One writer, *bilkentlikizaraniyor*, decided to publicly question the claims made in official narrative. This resulted in a public confrontation on Ekşisözlük between kanzuk and bilkentlikizaraniyor wherein both sides accused one another of fabricating the facts. The spat unfolded on a page that was dedicated to the Webrazzi controversy. Eventually, the administration decided to side with Kanzuk and delete the writer account of bilkentlikizaraniyor. While the expulsion of the writer in question caused the controversy on Webrazzi to eventually reside, it created a crises of confidence between the community and the company partners. After the Webrazzi event, the website administration decided to anonymize the decisions made by the moderation team. This meant that community members could know why an entry was deleted but not who deleted it. While the Webrazzi controversy was caused by a conflict of interest of a managing partner, it also signalled the shifting priorities for the scope of moderation on the platform. In turn, the change in priorities was caused by the legal landscape in Turkey from the mid-2000s onwards.

Prior to the introduction of a revenue model, the Ekşisözlük hosted a small and relatively closed community of writers who were familiar with standards on written posts. At the same time, the relative laxness of the Turkish authorities on pressing legal charges for content found online allowed moderation to work without having to rely on legal consultation. This situation continued until the Turkish government passed on a series of draconian Internet censorship and surveillance laws during the mid-2000s which made prosecution of websites a lot easier. For example, according to new law #4471 and the amended media law #5187, website moderators belong to the same legal category as an editor-in-chief of a magazine or newspaper. With these amendments a moderator became responsible legally for any kind of illegal content hosted on a website and would be prosecuted by Turkish judicial law. [134] From 2007 onwards, to reduce the likelihood of lawsuits, the administration decided to transform the ispiyon options available to users to focus on the kinds of entries which could be prosecutable by Turkish law (entries that would be flagged as 'gg' by users). As part of this transformation, the gammaz senior staff was all disbanded in 2010

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134 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7350515

and gammaz (flagging a comment) was made something that was open to all community members. Secondly, the ispiyon options available to community members were gradually simplified to the following options after the transition to the beta version of the website in 2013:

- "related to the status of the page on the sözlük
- not a definition, example, quote or link related to the other of the entries contained on the page
- might be legally prosecutable".[135]

An effect caused by the simplifying of flagging options was that most of the flagged entries began to be classified as legally prosecutable. As a result, praetors became the group within the Ekşisözlük community that had to review the most number of entries. The shift from general moderating to legal moderating to mirror the new Internet laws inadvertently contributed to the resignation of the moderation team in 2012. One can argue that this transformation marginalized their role within the community.

iii) Karagoz and Hacivat: Turkish language experts

Prior to 2009, one of the main problems of the Ekşisözlük website was the lack of Turkish character support. Community members had to either use substitute characters (for example using '$' instead of 'ş') use abbreviations to avoid linguistic misunderstandings in entries. The existence of loan characters and abbreviations often made the user-generated content difficult to read to the uninitiated. The major problem posed by the 2009 transition to Turkish characters was the existence of over half a million entries that had been posted without character support.[136] These entries had to be manually edited to accommodate Turkish characters and the review of all the pages and entries was a very time-intensive task. Furthermore there were lots of pages needing to be grouped under new character headings after the introduction of Turkish language support. To help with the transition, Sedat Kapanoğlu and the moderating team decided to crowdsource some of the workload to the community members. Inspired by folk Turkish shadow-theatre characters Hacivat and Karagöz, the administration created two groups. These groups were composed of community members with a good knowledge of Turkish grammar and linguistics.

The karagözes of the community were assigned with the task of manually moving entries and checking for spelling errors made during the conversion into Turkish characters. The definition of the karagöz role within the community is as follows:

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135 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/32440243 After the Gezi Protests in May/June 2013, another ispiyon option called 'disinformation with dangerous consequences' was added to this list.
136 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/15808307

"Community members in charge of helping the moderation team move entries and checking for spelling errors. These members are familiar with general grammatical rules and the spelling of private names. What they share in common is their performance in reporting entries needing to be moved and the potential seen in them by the moderation team and the hacivats."[137]

While karagözes were responsible for moving entries and checking for spelling errors created during the process of changing pre-existing content into accommodating Turkish characters, hacivats were in charge of maintaining written standards on the Ekşisözlük archive. Nicknamed the 'language police', the hacivats of the community were assigned with responsibilities such as offering Turkish equivalents to foreign loanwords found in entries or offering advice to the moderating team on the correct usage of grammar:

"(…)

[A]s written previously, the mission of the 'hacivat' in the sözlük is not to answer grammar or linguistic questions asked by community members; nor is it to meddle in what people write. The mission of the hacivats is to only help moderators with any grammatical or linguistic problems they might have.

(…)"[138]

Between 2007 and 2009 both hacivats and karagözes were assigned by the administration to monitor the process of Ekşisözlük transitioning into a platform with Turkish character support. After the completion of the process, the karagöz group was disbanded immediately while the hacivat group survived until 2012, albeit with a steady decline in group members.[139]

iv) Botlar ve Hayvanlar: the animals and robots of Ekşisözlük
Introduced around 2005, one unique category of users is the hayvans (animals), who are the coders of Ekşisözlük. These users have full access to all the interfaces available to community members and are in charge of checking the website for bugs.[140] As of 2013, there are 4 hayvans on the website with founder Sedat Kapanoğlu being one of them. Community rules on posted entries do not apply to these hayvans. These users tend to be comprised of older community members who have been with Ekşisözlük from the early 2000s onwards.

Since 2001, there are also a number of non-human community members who are active on Ekşisözlük. These non-human actors are bots that help community members and the

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137 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/16564835
138 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/10753383
139 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/16824831
140 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/7274001

administration with daily routines. Bots are pieces of software or scripts that are designed to 'make automated edits without the necessity of human decision-making' (Niederer & van Dijck 2010). Bots were introduced to Ekşisözlük in 2001 and since then only two bots (eksisözlük and ekşistats) have been in continual use until today. The eksizoluk bot is used by the website administration to post announcements on the Ekşisözlük interface. Ekşistats was introduced onto Ekşisözlük by user *mc delta t* in 2010 for the purpose of parsing webpages for statistical data gathering. The information gathered by the bot would be available for community members to access through a website on the sub-etha. After the transition to the beta interface, the developer of ekşistats announced that the statistical service was temporarily suspended. The bot needed to be reprogrammed for the beta interface. Since February 2014 onwards, the statistical service offered by ekşistats has been in service again. Sourlemonade was another bot that existed on Ekşisözlük between 2003 and 2007. The function of this other bot was to offer back-up services to users wanting to download all their user-generated content from Ekşisözlük. Sourlemonade was dismantled after an automated back-up module was introduced onto the interface of Ekşisözlük in 2007.

3. c) THE MASS INTAKES OF 2007, 2008, 2010 AND 2013

i) November 4th, 2007: the 'attack of the clones' incident

After the Miğferdibi intake in 2005, Ekşisözlük went through another period of not having any new membership calls. Then a new recruiting round began on November 4th, 2007. The announcement posted on the platform generated a massive buzz and Ekşisözlük received over 30 thousand applications in the days following the announcement.[141] The goal for this new round of applications was similar to the Miğferdibi intake in that it aimed to introduce a large number of new writers to the community. However, the procedure used to manage the process was different in that the website administration granted apprenticeships rather than writer accounts to all the applicants. After completing 10 entries and having them reviewed by the moderation team, the apprentice would be promoted to a writer. Çaylaks with unsuitable entries would have their accounts deleted by the moderators. According to the time elapsed between registration and promotion, newly promoted writers would be placed in either the seventh, eighth or ninth generation. In comparison, the project administration had turned all accounts during the Miğferdibi intake into 6th generation writers overnight and then granted the moderating team the right to eliminate any Miğferdibi writer with unsuitable entries. Furthermore, reasons behind the mass-intake of 2007 was very different to the reasons behind the 2005 intake. The intake in 2005 was designed to deal with the extremely long waiting list that had accumulated as Ekşisözlük was going through an infrastructural transformation

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141 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/11313085

that would allow the platform to host adverts. On the other hand, the intake of 2007 was motivated by the need to bring fresh blood into the community and increase the rate of user-generated content that had been declining due to emergence of Facebook as a competitor to Ekşisözlük. The 2007 intake was a major success in terms of recruiting permanent members to Ekşisözlük. Out of 30,000 applicants, over 14,000 eventually completed their çaylak training and got promoted to being community writers. In fact, the 2007 intake was so successful that the website administration used a similar method to manage the next round of applications in December 2008; albeit with less success.

ii) Patient writers: the intake of 2008

The final mass intake of writers occurred on the 21st of December 2008 which was incidentally the birthday of founder Sedat Kapanoğlu. Announced as a birthday gift from Sedat, a large number of apprentices received their promotion on this day to become writers. These new writers received the title *sabırtaşı* (roughly translatable to patient) and were included into either the ninth or tenth generational cohort. Some of these new promoted çaylaks, despite fulfilling the 10-entry requirement, had been awaiting approval for more than a year. Moderator *kimi raikonnen* describes the procedure used for the 2008 intake with the following words:

> "we decided to automatically approve some çaylaks who were awaiting approval and called them sabırtaşı writers. The reason behind our decision was that the number of çaylaks awaiting approval were growing on a daily basis. At the same time, we had the miğferdibi writer intake [in 2006] which had not been very successful. Furthermore, the number of çaylaks awaiting approval are much more than the number of çaylaks accepted during the miğferdibi intake. This makes it impossible for us to accept all çaylaks in one go. So we decided to automatically qualify a section from roughly 41 thousand applications to open up the waiting list for others, to expedite the promotion process and to ease the management of the new intake for the moderation team. (...) Accordingly, we came up with three criteria which would qualify applications for automatic promotion (I would like to point out that from of the estimated figure of 9300 applications which qualified for automatic promotion, 200 of these newly promoted writers got deleted from Ekşisözlük in the first 10 hours). The aforementioned criteria is as follows:

> 1) As there were çaylaks who had been awaiting promotion for over a year, we decided that newly registered applicants and çaylaks who had not waited for a long time were ineligible for promotion. So we decided that an applicant who will become a sabirtasi writer needed to have awaited promotion for over six months. Therefore in order to become eligible, an applicant needed to have applied prior to the 1st of June, 2008. (...)

2) We also decided to make çaylaks awaiting promotion but who had failed to pass the review process of the moderation ineligible for promotion. The entries of these applicants were previously reviewed and deemed insufficient by the moderation team. (...)

3) Çaylaks can be divided into two broad categories. a) çaylaks who rarely log onto Ekşisözlük or even don't log in at all. b) Enthusiastic çaylaks who log on almost everyday to check if they have become writers. We had to chose from one of these categories to help us narrow down who we will promote from the 41 thousand applicants. As a result, we decided to chose the group who logs onto Ekşisözlük more often than not. Therefore an applicant who is eligible for automatic promotion must have logged onto Ekşisözlük at least once in the past month."[142]

One of the unexpected effects of the 2008 intake was that many of the new writers expressed their discontent with being labelled as sabırtaşı writers. Furthermore, many members of the new cohort complained being bullied by older members and the moderation team. On the other hand, older community members complained about how the owners had turned Ekşisözlük into a forum-like space wherein the focus was not on the quality of user-generated content but instead the personalities posting the written content.[143] Finally, çaylaks who were not promoted complained about the injustice and inefficiency of using a one-off mass intake method to recruit new community members. In other words, the method used in the 2008 intake did not manage to appease any of the parties involved in the process. As a result of the negative feedback generated from the 2008 intake, the administration made a decision to develop a more standardized system to recruit and promote çaylaks into community writers. In the meantime, mass intakes still continued to happen but at a much more limited scale than previously. On the 4th of January 2010, Sedat Kapanoğlu decided to promote roughly 3000 çaylaks who had been registered since 2008 but hadn't managed to achieve promotion during this period. These newly promoted çaylaks were bestowed the rather unpleasant title of *biçare yazar* (hopeless writer). After receiving much criticism about the titles bestowed to these newer generation of writers, Sedat announced that the biçare, sabırtaşı and miğferdibi titles would be removed from the generational cohorts of these writers.[144] Then on the 8th of March, 2013 (International Women's Day), the administration decided to automatically promote 8284 female çaylaks to writers. After these two smaller mass-intakes, the new conductor-based recruitment system was introduced. Designated conductors took over the responsibility of managing the promotions of çaylaks from the moderating team and would have access to a separate interface for this. This new and standardized system to manage the process of intakes began to be implemented from the 20th of December, 2010 onward.

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142 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/14654533
143 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/14648484
144 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/18290587

3. d) REDESIGN OF THE CONTROL CENTRE

In 2007, the control centre gets redesigned and a number of new interactive features get introduced onto the interface. The new features are *yedekler* (backup entries) *gorunum* (layout), *badiler* (buddies), *mallar* (trolls) and *modlog* (moderation log). The yedekler feature is an interface-integrated version of the sourlemonade bot (2003-7) that had been designed as a remote back-up service for entries posted on Ekşisözlük. The layout button is designed specifically to ease access to the large number of Ekşisözlük themes that had been developed by community members. The troll feature was designed as a service to block incoming messages from other community members. Originally the moderation log, when it was first introduced in 2004, was only available for the moderation team. This feature allowed moderators to access to the personal shistory of community members. After 2007, this feature became available for all community members and allowed them to access both their own and the moderation histories of others. When accessed, the moderation log showed entries flagged as needing moderation and the decision taken by the moderators about the entry in question. After the Webrazzi controversy, the modlog was anonymized to prevent the trolling of moderators by community members. As a result, the nicknames of the moderators are currently anonymous on the modlog. After the collective resignation of the moderation team in 2012, the modlog has now been adapted to be used by praetors.

3. e) CENSORSHIP LOGO (2008-9) & REDESIGNED LOGO (2011-)

The original logo of Ekşisözlük has remained pretty much the same since 1999. Only between 2008-9, the classic logo changed slightly to protest the new censorship law passed by the Turkish government. The censored logo has a black strikeout through the centre of the logo and when the cursor is put over it, the slogan 'Internete sansur degil, surat gerek!' ('The Internet needs speed and not censorship') appears:

Illustration 5: Ekşisözlük censorship logo, circa 2009.
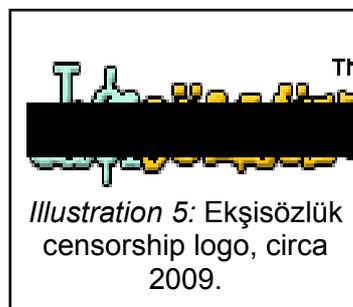
The original logo is redesigned in 2011 and replaced with a cleaner, minimal version. The colours

of the logo are still gold and teal but the font looks like it has been specifically designed for the website. The trademark at the top right corner has been removed:

Illustration 6: New Ekşisözlük logo, circa 2012.

3. f) EXPANSION OF THE SUB-ETHA NETWORK

After the replacement of the summitz portal with sub-etha in 2004, a new genre of websites became accessible through this new feature. One can define the new genre of websites linked to Ekşisözlük as media hosting platforms. The first attempt at establishing a media platform was the unsuccessful *ek$i mag* which was established in 2002 as the online version of *ekşi*, an Ekşisözlük related zine that had started publication in the same year. Despite attempts to redesign the magazine for a digital environment, it remained unpopular with the community before going permanently offline in 2011. Other media platforms proved to be more successful, with *Radyo ekşi* being founded in 2006 and then evolving into an Internet radio station called *Sourberry* in 2007. *Ekşiblogs*, a blogging service for the Ekşisözlük community, was founded in 2007 and is still in service today. A photo sharing media platform, *Ek$ibition*, was founded in 2006 and is a continuation of s.c.r.e.e.n.

In addition to the media hosting platforms, a number of new applications were also introduced around 2010. These included *Hangberry* (2010), an application that uses words found in popular subject headers for a game of hangman, *Eksistats* (2010), a statistics service based on metadata from the website and *Ek$igator* (2010-13), a Pikka-like application that can be added to browsers to follow subject headers on Ekşisözlük.

4. EKŞİSÖZLÜK BETA (2013-)
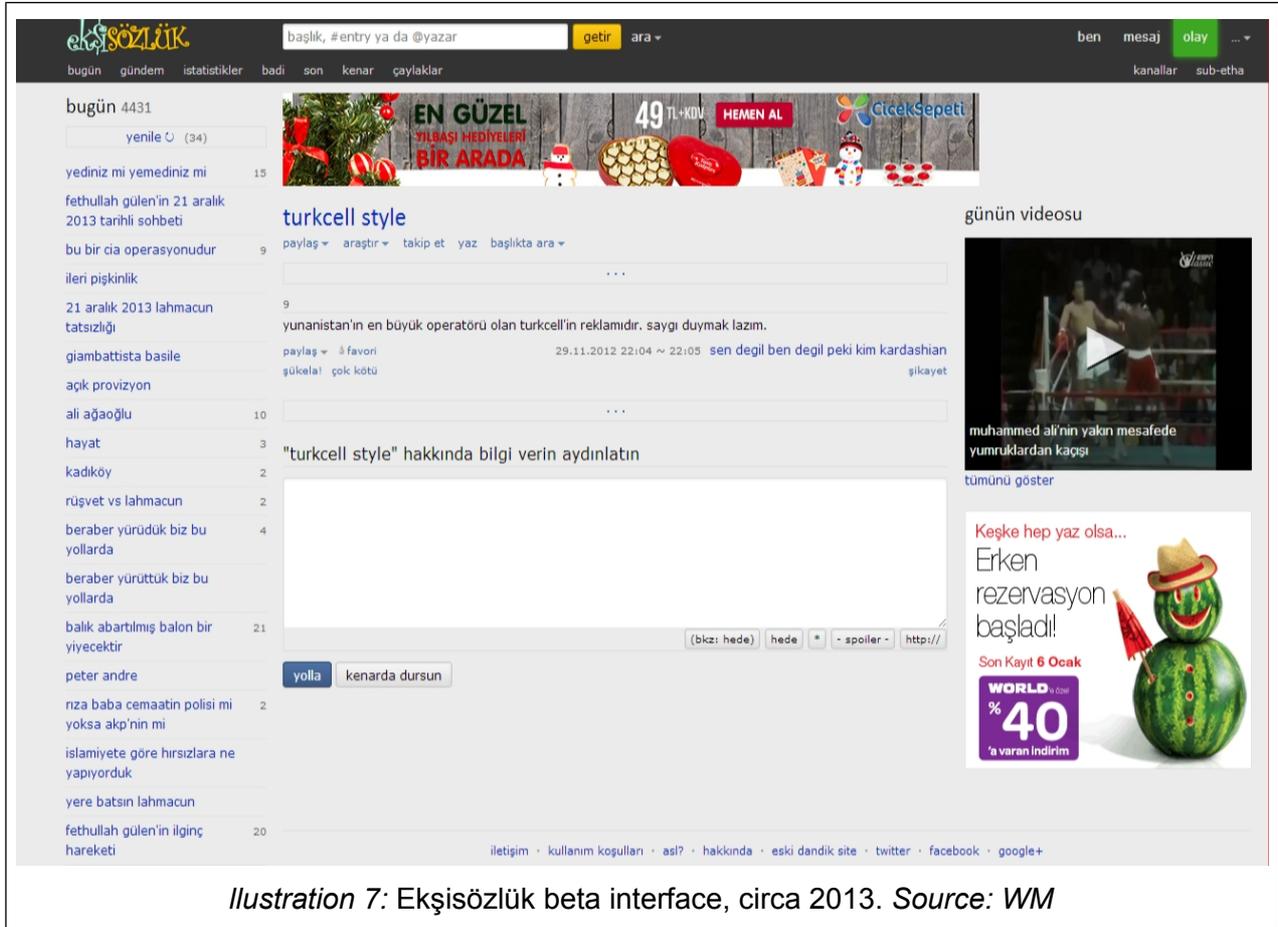
Ilustration 7: Ekşisözlük beta interface, circa 2013. *Source: WM*

In 2013, Ekşisözlük finally transitions into a new format that has been under development since 2010. The new design, which became standard interface for visitors from July 2013 onwards, has made Ekşisözlük move towards becoming a social media platform and can be seen as the start of the fourth stage in the evolution of the website's life cycle. The selection criteria and processes to become a community writer have been relaxed and the professional moderation is no longer available after a collective resignation in September 2012. The conditions of usage change after the transition to Ekşisözlük beta in 2013. When the website changes to the beta format, the conditions of usage from 2005 are replaced with the following:

> "Your visit to the website and your usage of Ekşisözlük content is defined by the following conditions of usage:

> -- 18+ --

Since the contents on Ekşisözlük are not checked prior going live on our website, some of the entries might not be suitable for visitors under the age of 18. We advise you to use commercially available filter software which can help prevent your children from accessing entries which might have a negative impact on their development. For information about children using the Internet safely, visit http://www.guvenliweb.org.tr/annebabakilavuz/

-- Illegal content and complaints --
Ekşisözlük (site) is owned by ekşitechnology & software company and provides hosting services (licence number 2928, 14/03/2013) under the provision of law number 5651. The content produced by registered writers is not subject to any prior screening by the administration and is published directly by the writers. Unless there is a query for us to investigate, the website administration holds no legal responsibility over the investigation or moderation of content. However, Ekşisözlük administration pays attention that the content is suitable with the legal framework in Turkey and will take any query in regards to legality seriously.

An entry usually has contents contributed by different writers. Accordingly, each text within an entry has a complaints ['şikayet'] button which can be used to report each text separately. The administration can also be reached through the contacts link on the site or from 0212 2848439.

Your complaints will not be treated as personal correspondence and if needed your complaint and contact details will be passed onto 3rd party and/or legal entities. Therefore we suggest that you correspond with the administration accordingly.

-- Usage --

The administration claims ownership over the hosting services and content on the site. It is illegal to use Ekşisözlük content or hosting services for commercial purposes without prior written approval from ekşitechnologies.

ekşitechnologies reserves the right to seek legal action in the case of using third party software or devices to access content without registration, to change content or to intervene in the functionality of the website. ekşitechnologies also reserves the right to seek legal action in the case of an attempt to slow down the performance of the site or to load malicious software and damage the integrity of the site.

Ekşisözlük, sour times and ekşibrands are copyrighted and used solely by ekşiTechnologies. Third parties are not allowed to use these brands without prior written consent.

-- Content --

There is no guarantee for the content created by writers on Ekşisözlük is accurate and/or up to date. On the contrary, the writers can produce content which is completely fictional. Asides from the conditions outlined in the 'Illegal content and complaint' section, the administration will not interfere with the content hosted on the website. As the administration, we are not responsible for any kind of material or immaterial loss caused by referential usage of the content hosted on the website.

As the administration, we don't have hold any responsibility for the links hosted on the website. As the content on the site is not pre-screened in any way, the administration does not give a guarantee that the links on the site will not enable malicious activities such as phishing or trojan and viral infections. Nor does the administration guarantee that the websites linked to Ekşisözlük host legal content.

-- Copyrights and quotations --

Ekşisözlük is a collaborative work and all rights (copying, replicating, enhancing and spreading) for both the hosted content and the codes on the website belong to ekşiTechnologies. The content of the legal agreement between the website and Ekşisözlük writers is private.

It is possible to externally quote writers or hosted content through active links for non-commercial purposes. However the quote must be made not to encompass the full entry and not eliminate the need for a visitor to refer to the website to access the original contents.

Without prior written consent, it is forbidden to use site content in any way for to generate revenue for either advertising or commercial purposes.

ekşiTechnologies holds the right to bar any individual or institution from quoting content, even if made accordingly to the specifications above.

-- Privacy --

During the Ekşisözlük browsing session, it is possible that your computer will receive cookies. Cookies are simple scripts which do not gather personal information but instead collect information about the browsing session and enhance your browsing experience. For more information, please consult http://www.allaboutcookies.org/, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http_cookie or http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/çerez

Any information about your computer or your I.P address will be recorded anonymously by ekşi Technologies.

-- Ekşisözlük's rights and responsibilities --
ekşiTechnologies reserves the right to change the conditions of usage without prior notice. We recommend that you regularly check the conditions of usage for any changes.

ekşiTechnologies reserves the right to change any aspect of Ekşisözlük without prior notice.

ekşiTechnologies reserves the right to either temporarily or permanently suspend access of certain persons, institutions, I.P numbers or I.P blocks to Ekşisözlük.

The links listed under the sub-etha header are sites which are accessible through Ekşisözlük. However, Ekşisözlük is not related to these websites and does not hold any administrative or hosting privileges in regards to them.

Despite our best efforts to prevent any kind of security breach from different kinds of malware such as viruses or trojans, there is a possibility of infection due to the possible infrastructural weaknesses. To prevent the risk of infection on your computer, we recommend that you use an anti-virus program. The administration is not responsible for any kind of software or hardware damage caused by hosted content on the website. (...)"[145]

4. a) EKŞİSÖZLÜK BETA INTERFACE

From the end of 2010 onwards, rumours circulate within the community about an entirely different interface design for the Ekşisözlük platform. This new interface, titled 'Ekşisözlük beta', remains under development for over 3 years and becomes the permanent layout for both visitors and community members in March 2013. Mirroring the notion of the 'perpetual beta', a concept strongly associated with Web 2.0 platforms, the design of Ekşisözlük's new interface is open ended and constantly under development. In contrast to the older interface, there are a number of changes to both interactive features and the visual layout. Ekşisözlük beta was firstly offered as an optional interface for community members and visitors. However due to the lack of interest from community members, the website administration decide to make the beta version of the website mandatory on the 10th of March, 2013. Due to the large number of negative responses from community members, the administration quickly reversed this decision and made the beta version optional again.

When accessing the website from the end of March 2013 onwards, visitors and community members are still greeted with the new version of the Ekşisözlük interface; however both visitors and community members preferring the older version can still access the 'antik' site from http://antik.eksisözlük.com/. In terms of visuals, one see that the classic layout of the interface still

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remains, with one dynamic frame on the left and one dynamic frame in the centre. However, the toolbar from the 'antik' version is gone and has been replaced by a number of simpler, non-interactive features. The interactive features are now only available to community members who have logged in. The features available on the new toolbar include 'bugün' (today) which shows the entries of the day on the left frame and 'gündem' (roughly translatable to agenda), which shows recent entries with the most amount of posts. Most importantly, the concept of hashtags have been introduced that allow community members to classify new entries with tags such as sports, relationships, politics, TV, questionnaires or meta. Visitors who want to register use the 'kayıt ol' (register) link on the top right and community members log on from the 'giriş' (log on) link next to it. A novelty is the 'related videos' frame on the right of the page, which gives visitors links to video content. The links at the bottom of the page which provide visitors with information on the 'kullanım koşulları' (conditions of usage), 'iletişim' (communication), 'asl' (frequently asked questions about the website) and 'hakkında' (information about the community and website administration) are also new. There are also links to the 'antik' version of the site and to Ekşisözlük groups on Twitter, Facebook and Google +.

Finally, the standard colours of the interface have changed from blue text on a grey background to a black background with white and brown texts. White is used for page headers and brown for entries. However, one can still access the older version of blue text on a grey background from the 'her zamanki görünümüne dön' (translatable to 'return to how it always looked') link located in the right frame of the website. The advertising banners located in the middle frame have been removed and replaced with a banner on the top of the left frame. This change makes the website much easier to read for both visitors and community members as it removes the intrusive advertising layered underneath entries in the middle frame.

4. b) BAHISÖR: THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE SUB-ETHA

The newest addition to the sub-etha is *Bahisör*, a fantasy betting website that went online in early 2013. After creating an account on the website, a user can look through betting predictions for football games, fill out a betting coupon, chat with other registered visitors and learn the latest scores from leagues around Europe. There is a ranking system which lists the most successful, most trustworthy and the least successful better.

CHAPTER VI: ANALYSIS OF THE EKŞİSÖZLÜK BIOGRAPHY

"On average 3.5 million keystrokes worth of content is added onto Ekşisözlük every day. This makes around 12 copies of Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy per day. (…)" [146]

- Kapanoglu, *"Ekşisözlük"*

As a product, the value of Ekşisözlük comes from the contributions from it's online community. However, as it has been argued throughout this thesis, content on Ekşisözlük is the outcome of a complex collaboration process. In this regard, Fred Turner has observed that just like their physical counterparts, online commons-based peer-production communities, depend on a specific 'structural and ideological scaffolding' for collaboration (Turner 2009). Just as much as human actors, the commons and a number of automated systems based around the commons also play an important role within the context of the collaboration process. The community commons of Ekşisözlük, which is designed as hyper-link urban dictionary with a public archive, is established in 1999 as a result of programmer Sedat Kapanoğlu's experiments with code. Inspired by the experience of participating in BBS communities and the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Kapanoğlu began innovating on the idea of building an open ended digital commons environment that would channel the creative energies of participants into constructing a resource similar to the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.* As such, one can argue that the driving concept behind Ekşisözlük was the formation of a digital commons to host user-generated content. As such, the commons can be analysed from the vantage point of what it afforded as a hosting technology to the community.

AFFORDANCES OF EKŞİSÖZLÜK'S COMMUNITY COMMONS

The concept of the affordance has analytical value as it determines agency available to a user within a socio-technical system (Whitworth & Ahmad 2012). Affordances have been used as a framework to refer to the *action potential* that can be attributed to a technology (Majchrzak & Markus 2013). As a term, affordances was introduced by Gibson in his "The Theory of Affordances' (1977) to describe the range of possibilities an environment offers to an organism embedded within the environment. These properties consist of "*a specific combination of the properties of its*

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substance and its surfaces taken with reference to an animal" (Gibson 1977:69-70). Drawing from this description, Gibson suggests that animals perceive not what an object is, but rather what kinds of uses it affords, calling such perceptions of an object's utility an "affordance". When applied to human psychology, this statement suggests that the physical features of an object occupy a realm separate from people who use the object, but that these physical features are infused with a meaning "relative to the posture and behaviour of the animal being considered" (Gibson 1977 127-128). To put it in another way, affordances are unique to the particular ways in which an actor, or a set of actors, perceive and use the physical properties of an object. As the materiality of an object can provide multiple affordances, it is possible that one object can produce multiple outcomes when used by different actors.

Despite having its origins in cognitive psychology, the concept of affordances has been gradually incorporated into user-oriented product design as a framework to gauge how the design of an object enables or disables particular kinds of user behaviour (Gaver 1991; Norman 1988). In the *Design of Everyday Things* (1988), Norman frames affordances as "designed–in" properties of artefacts. The goal of an affordance is to signal to a user what the technology can do and how that action can be done. In order to do so, designers must make affordances easy for users to perceive. However, Norman argues that "quite often designers end up complicating the usage of technological devices rather than simplifying them" (Norman 1988:31). This situation, he argues, is caused by designers being unable to conceptualize how new or innovative features seem to the users of the product. Users are important to Norman insomuch as they can identify a technology's affordances; however, they play little role in creating affordances. Instead, affordances are created strategically by designers. Failure to pay attention to the user leads to what has been called the "user problem" in design: a situation where the assumptions of the developer regarding the capacities and needs of users is out of touch with the actual capacities and needs of users (Stewart & Williams 2005). Faulty user-oriented design is the cause for the creation of what has been called a "tussle site" (Clark, Sollins, Wroclawski & Braden 2002), wherein the intentions of designers and the cultural conventions of users come in conflict with each other over a certain feature. Successful user-oriented design needs to deploy affordances that physically appropriate the cultural conventions of the user to communicate innovative features effectively. In this context, user-oriented design often resorts to using universal metaphors as a heuristic device that can bridge the gap between 'the thing' and the 'something else" (Johnson 1997).

In contrast to affordances in everyday objects, which rely on a number of different sensory stimulation methodologies to communicate functions to users, affordances in digital environments depend solely on visual stimulation to communicate function. The availability of visual cues and the lack of tactile or sensory stimulation mean that the systems developer is fully dependent on

symbols, colours and location to define the physical properties of an affordance. Due to these causes, cultural conventions play an even more decisive role in determining the experience of a user within a digital environment. Within the context of cultural conventions, Leonardi and Barley (2008) and Leonardi (2011) argue that communal or institutional settings play an important contextual role in fixing the affordances of a technology as it places limits on the kinds of interpretations people can form of the technology and the uses to which it can be put. Conventions are hence argued to be very dependent on the cultural context of the collective.

Recent research on the subject suggests that as a concept, affordances are also useful when exploring how a new technology merges into the mechanisms of an existing socio-technical system (Hutchby 2001; Leonardi 2011; Markus & Silver 2008). For instance, inter-personal communication systems exist on platforms similar to Ekşisözlük and facilitate coordination between community members. As such, these systems are an integral element of the mechanisms that facilitate collaboration between peers. As the community grows over time, the need arises for communication tools that facilitate more effective coordination. Accordingly, the introduction of features such as the control panel, buddy list or sourtimeschat, need to be analysed in terms of what they afford within the context of coordination. Keeping with the non-mutually exclusive categorization scheme put forth by Treem and Leonardi in their review (2012), one can broadly speak of four distinct categories of affordances that are associated with the introduction of new technologies to Ekşisözlük's peer production mechanisms: visibility, persistence, editability, and association.

Visibility

Web 2.0 technologies, by offering a fast and lightweight means for individuals to publish information, provide an easy way for users to make their work habits, the information they possess, and the activities they conduct visible to others (Grudin, 2006). Treem and Leonardi (2012) state that that "if a Web 2.0 technology enables users to easily and effortlessly see information about someone else, then the technology is used to make that person's knowledge visible" (Treem & Leonardi 2012:13). The components of such technologies can be a variety of different functions, all of which come together from the vantage point of the user as an affordance for visibility. Examples of technologies that have enabled visibility on Ekşisözlük are those that allow community members to have more information about one another. Within this context, the *yazar hakkinda* (information about the writer) was the first feature that afforded visibility. This feature gave a user access to information about their most and least popular entries, their total number of posts, the year of their membership and other sorts of statistical information. Essentially, one can say that this feature created a personal history for each writer. The newly introduced backup and modlog buttons

contributed to the formation of personal histories, and the layout button to personalization. At the same time, personal histories were used by both praetors and moderators to assess reported entries of a writer. On top of these features came the *kimdir nedir* feature that allowed community members to search for one another on the platform's search engine. If a match for the search query was found, a link to the personal page of the community member in question appeared as a result of the search query. Clicking this link allowed writers to navigate to the homepage of other community members and gain access to personal histories similar to their own.

By affording visibility, one can argue that these two features facilitated the possibility to reveal behaviour, knowledge, preferences, and social ties of community members. Alongside the reputation system, visibility affordances allow community members to identify potential collaborators as well as potential trolls. As there are high levels of anonymity within the community in terms of using real names (everyone uses a nickname), visibility affordances become the only way of gauging the identity of community members. As such, this visible information becomes essential when collaborating or as meta-knowledge regarding who knows what or where knowledge resides within the community (Child & Shumate, 2007).

Curiously enough, the introduction of personal histories on the redesigned control panel caused a crises within the community. Used by both praetors and moderators to assess flagged entries of a writer, the decisions taken by both groups of moderators would be posted on the modlog. This feature was located in the personal history page of a community member. The information on the modlog was publicly accessible and listed all the moderating decisions taken for the account of a community member. As the previously described Webrazzi event in 2012 demonstrates, the writer accusing the administration of choosing commercial over community interests chose to use the modlog as evidence for his argument. Although one of the intentions behind introducing a modlog was to provide visibility (and hence transparency) to community members on the decisions taken by the moderators, the modlog was used as a blackmailing device by the offending writer. Even though the blackmailing writer was eventually expelled, the event precipitated a crises of confidence within the community. Community members openly began to challenge the decisions taken by the moderating team and praetorium. This crisis became a decisive factor in the collective decision of the moderating team to resign. To remedy the situation and protect the praetors, the decisions recorded on the modlog were eventually anonymized. What had been introduced as a simple visibility affordance caused a minor disaster within the community.

Persistence

In communication technologies such as instant messaging or video-conferencing, the conversation is normally simultaneous and synchronous. Such forms of communication also do not tend to be recorded. On the other hand, formats such as blogging or micro-blogging enable conversations that can persist beyond the time of their initial posts. Communicating through such media formats can have consequences long past the initial point of presentation (Binder, Howes, & Sutcliffe, 2009). Drawing from this, one can say that communication is persistent if it remains accessible in the same form as the original display after the actor has finished contributing (Bregman & Haythornthwaite, 2001; Donath, Karahalios, & Viegas, 1999). This affordance of persistence has also been referred to as "reviewability" (Clark & Brennan, 1991), "recordability" (Hancock, Toma, & Ellison, 2007) or "permanence" (Whittaker 2003).

Technologies affording persistence are vital within the context of Ekşisözlük as they allow user generated content to be accessible by the online public. The community commons, which is based on a system of hyper links, affords the possibility of posting entries that persist over time. Looking at the public archive on Ekşisözlük, one can easily find comments that have persisted on a page for more than 10 years. Comments that have been rated as particularly bad or good are also protected by the archive as being "zamanın ötesinde" or as "başucu eseri". When these comments are taken under the protection of the archive, they cannot be erased by the original contributor.

Whilst the community commons function as a hosting space for comments, another technology facilitating persistence is the internal messaging system designed for community members. Prior to the introduction of an internal messaging system for community members, the platform relied on a dedicated IRC server and channel called on sourtimeschat. The channel would be a place for community members to communicate with one another in a synchronous manner. In order to use sourtimeschat, visitors would have to open two separate browsers when visiting sourtimes.org; one to access the IRC server and the other to submit entries on Ekşisözlük. After the introduction of the internal messaging system communication between community members became asynchronous. As such, people started to communicate with one another through a format similar to email rather than chat messaging. Soon afterwards, a buddy list was added to the control centre that allowed users to create lists of friends on Ekşisözlük. This allowed community members who had befriended one another to communicate within the platform rather than through external communications tool such as IRC. The features added to the control panel after the introduction of the buddy list were buttons that helped optimize internal communications. For example, the 'olay' button allowed a user to keep track of announcements on the site while the trash and archive buttons helped organize the inbox.

Treem and Leonardi have suggested that "communication technologies affording persistence can aid the development of common ground within organizational contexts" (2012: 19). Common ground has been shown to make the transmission of complex ideas successful (Clark & Brennan 1991). Having a record of previous communication can allow presentations of information to be properly contextualized and provide people with the time to better understand conversations (Gergle, Millen, Kraut, & Fussell, 2004; McCarthy, Miles, & Monk 1991). As such, one can argue that persistence affordances within the context of peer production can help to facilitate the collaborative process.

Editability

A communications technology affords editability when users can refashion an act of communication before it becomes public and viewable by others (Walther, 1993). Editability can also refer to the ability of an individual to modify or revise content they have already communicated (Rice, 1987). Editability has been described elsewhere as enabling a sender to compose a rehearsable message with the exact meaning they intend (Dennis, Fuller, and Valacich 2008). It is a function of two aspects of an interaction: communication formed in isolation of others and asynchronicity. It is an actor-oriented affordance in that it allows the communicator a great deal of control over initial display of communication.

After logging into their accounts, writers within the community have full access to features that allow them to edit the content on the community commons. These include posting their own comments, opening new pages to host comments as well as editing content that they had previously contributed. To start a new page, a writer can simply type the subject into the search engine to check if someone has already started a page. If not, then the writer simply enters an entry to start the page.
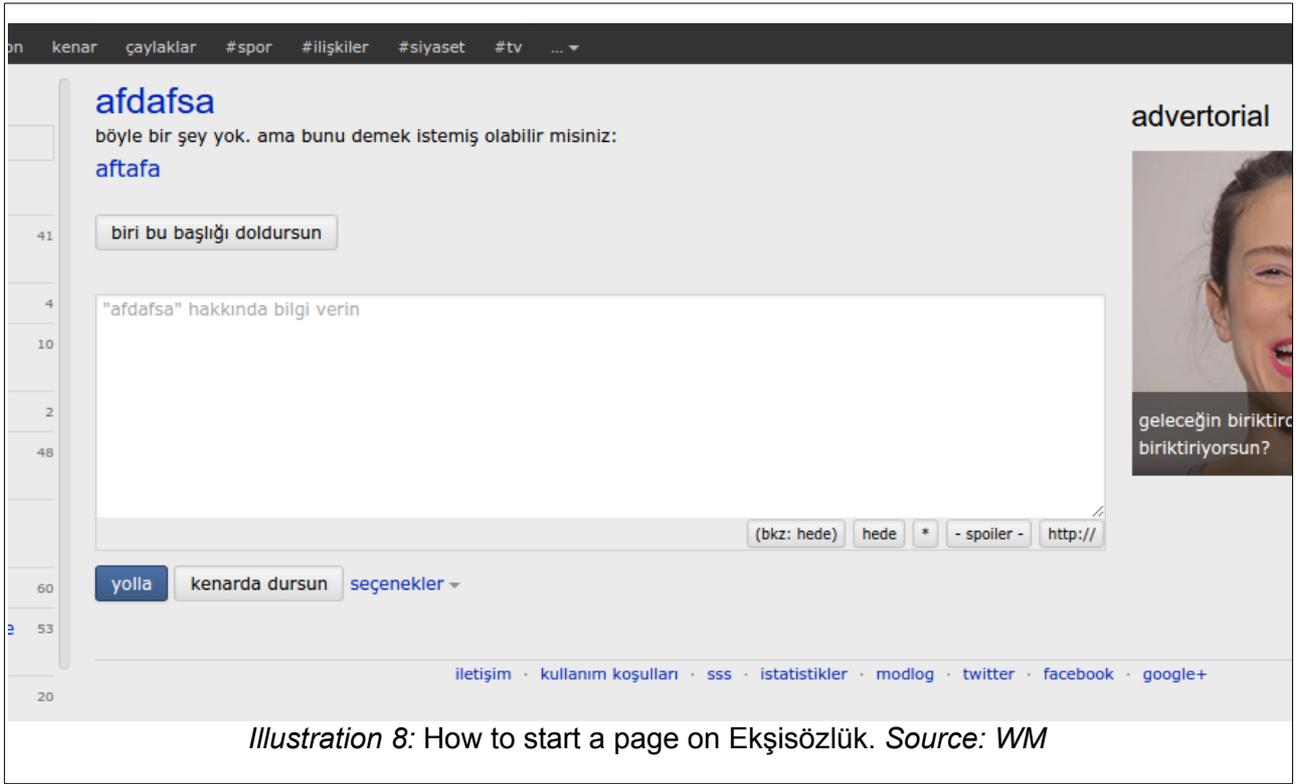
Illustration 8: How to start a page on Ekşisözlük. *Source: WM*

Alternatively, the writer has the option of making the empty page an *ukte* (conundrum). Making the page an 'ukte\ attaches the name of the contributing writer and a note to the page. The writer is notified when someone makes a contribution to an 'ukte' page.

When contributing a comment, the writer enters the text in a box located towards the middle of their screen. The box has contrasting colours with the rest of the interface to signify that it is for entries. They then have the option of either posting the comment immediately or in the immediate future. For the latter option, one can either set a specific time or tell the platform to automatically post the comment within 12 hours.
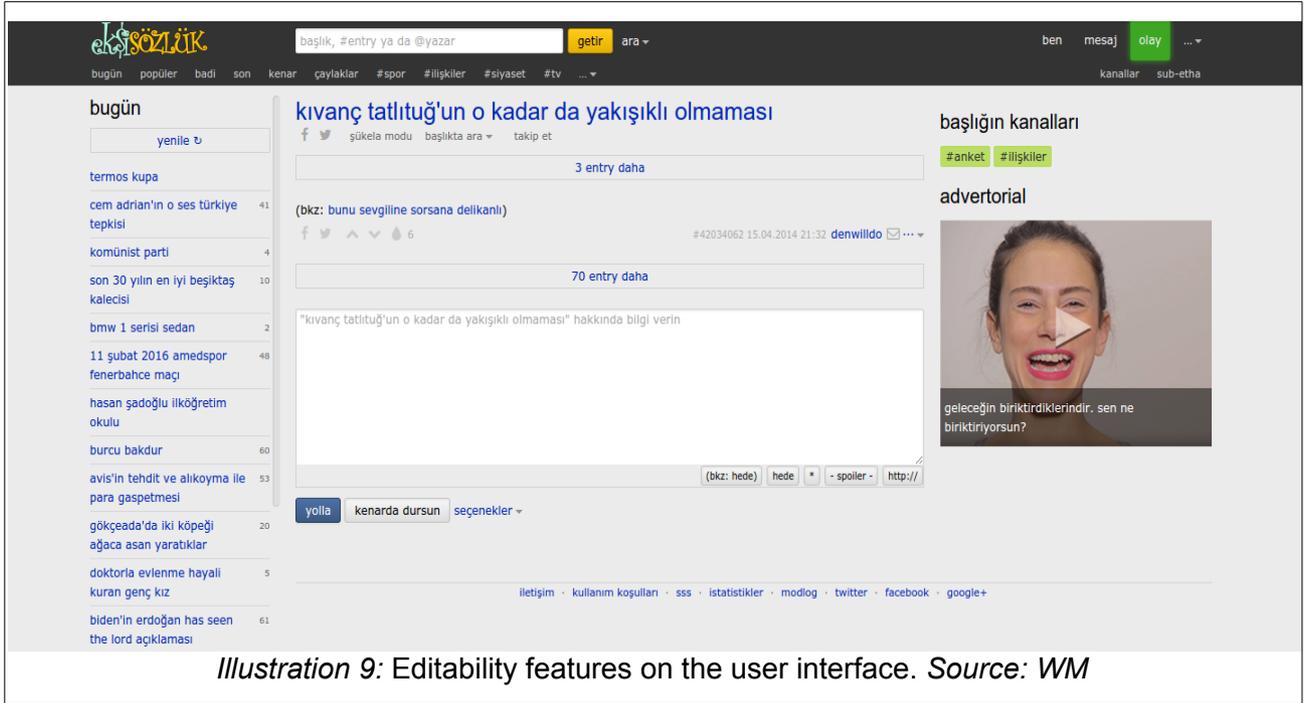
Illustration 9: Editability features on the user interface. *Source: WM*

By offering individuals the time to craft and compose messages, it has been argued that editability allows for more purposeful communication. Dennis et. al, (2008) suggest that low synchronicity in a communication medium is particularly useful when community's goal is to convey information, or share knowledge that was previously unknown. Editability also allows users to make their points more clear, and deliberate over what they know and what they want to convey. Additionally, editability allows community members to take into consideration the context in which their content is likely to be viewed (or later, after it was made, view the actual context in which it was viewed) and tailor their contributions accordingly. Within the context of Turkey wherein a community member might get in legal trouble for a comment, features that afford edibility are extremely valuable.

Association

Associations are established connections between individuals, content or between individuals and content. It has been argued that the notion of association has gone through two phases in the past decade. During first phase, users were only allowed to associate with content within the 'walled garden' of social media environments. More recently, association has become a more complex phenomenon with the development of techniques such as social buttons that allow users to link with content outside the boundaries of the a produsage environment, resulting in what has been described as the 'Like Economy' (Gerlitz & Helmond 2013). As such, one can argue that associations exist in two forms on Web 2.0 platforms. The first type of association - of a person to another individual - is most commonly referred to as a social tie. Perhaps a social tie can best be

described through the act of linking with one's friends on a social networking site (SNS). This type of association indicates a direct relationship between two people. The other form of association is of an individual to a piece of information. The association displayed here is of an individual with a piece of information that they have either created or recognized.

Perhaps the most used associational affordance on Ekşisözlük is the rating system. This system is designed so that writers can associate with comments in three different modalities – positive, negative and neutral. The choice is recognized as a rating and as such, plays an important role in determining the reputation of the contributor. While the rating system facilitates the formation of a relationship between the user and a comment, the buddy list allows writers to associate with one another on the platform.[147] Unlike social networking platforms, there is no "friend request" option on Ekşisözlük. When one befriends someone, they are directly placed onto the buddy list. After being placed on the buddy list, a user can be contacted directly through the internal messaging system. On the other hand, a user can associate with others in a negative way. If marked as a troll, a writer is placed on an ignore list. This means that the offending user cannot communicate any further with the involved actor. The primary affordance that facilitates association between content on Ekşisözlük is *Bakınız*. This feature allows writers to link with either another page or comment on the platform. There are a number of different variations of this feature, but they are all designed around the same concept of allowing users to associate content with content.

The associations of people to other people, people to content, or content to content afforded by Ekşisözlük have potential implications for both users and potential audiences. Studies demonstrate that forming associational relationships on similar platforms can provide users with a form of social capital (Blanchard & Horan, 1998; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001; Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). Similarly, knowing the right people on Ekşisözlük community can help to build reputation both within the community and in daily life.

AUTOMATED SYSTEMS ON EKŞİSÖZLÜK

Ever since the earliest years of the platform, the design of the community commons of Ekşisözlük has been a fundamenta tooll for hosting content generated by participants. However, it remains to be said that the mechanism one can broadly classify as peer production have gradually emerged and become standardized over the course of a decade. In 2001, the experimental phase of Ekşisözlük comes to an abrupt end with the economic crisis in Turkey which destabilizes the internal dynamics of the project. The crises was precipitated by political instability and a huge budget deficit (Ozkan 2005) in the Turkish economy. On the 19th of February, 2001 the stock market crashes and the interest rates offered by banks in Turkey reach 3,000%. The Turkish lira

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147 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/10459534

plummets in value, causing the Central Bank of Turkey to lose more than $5 billion of its currency reserves. More than 15,000 jobs were lost during the first eight months of the crisis and income inequality deepened (Öniş 2009). An unexpected side-effect of the crisis was decline in Internet traffic; and as a result, the number of regular visitors to sourtimes.org dropped. To resolve the situation, Sedat Kapanoğlu and the editors of the website decide to redesign the website around the principles of dynamic content. Rather than simply reading content that had been previously submitted to the editorial staff, the new design of the website would permit participants to simultaneously both read and contribute posts in real time. A dynamic content management system for the sourtimes.org servers is implemented and an inbuilt search engine and is introduced onto the Ekşisözlük interface as a result of the redesigning process. Sudden transformations in Ekşisözlük's hardware and software architectures set the scene for the formation of a community commons and then the emergence of peer production mechanisms to organize content.

The events that cause Ekşisözlük to transition from hosting static content to a dynamic, content hosting platform seems to mirror some of the events behind the emergence of Wikipedia. Wikipedia had been originally started by Jimmy Wales, employee Larry Sanger and a small team of academics as "Nupedia", a "free online encyclopaedia of high quality" (Shirky 2008:109). The design of the editing protocol of Nupedia was based around academic peer review. Unfortunately, Nupedia proved to be unpopular with the online public. Nupedia failed because of the slowness of the peer-review process to prepare an article for publication. The group of academics involved in the project could simply not keep up with the demand to publish peer-reviewed articles. To optimize the process Sanger decided to open the editing process to the general public. In order to do so, Nupedia had to be redesigned as a "wiki" wherein interested participants were free to publish or edit drafted articles. The key to the optimization process was to keep Wikipedia organized while at the same time providing space for some of the 'messiness' that collaborative editing brings along. This was partially achieved by maintaining a strict protocol which was based distributing the permission to edit on a stratified, hierarchical basis (Niederer & van Djick 2010). The success of Wikipedia was based on being able to implement a system of disciplinary control by issuing rewards, such as granting a dedicated user the authority level of administrator and by blocking contributors' rights to those users who deviate from the rules (Burke & Kraut 2008).

Much like what happened during the first years of Wikipedia, Kapanoğlu decided to implement a strict editing protocol after the transition to a dynamic content management system. This meant imposing a new hierarchical structure onto the community that had been hitherto organized accordingly:
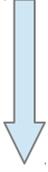
Permission level	Ekşisözlük users
Most permissions	Developer/System administrator (Kapanoglu)
	Editors
	Senior Gammaz Staff
	User
	Visitor
No permissions	Blocked user

Table 1. Schematic overview of user categories on Ekşisözlük between 1999-2002

As part of this transformation, the filtering system was redesigned into a two-tier system that differentiates between registered readers and visitors. To become a registered member, a visitor needs to firstly enlist during a recruitment call. These recruitment calls can either be campaign-based or mass intake-based. Once the visitor is enlisted, they need to complete 10 trial entries that are peer-reviewed by moderators. Once the apprenticeship period is over, participants gain access to the members-only interface and are free to post whatever they want on Ekşisözlük. In the earliest version of this system, older and more experienced participants who have been designated as senior 'gammaz' staff have the right to report problematic content through the 'gammaz' function. Flagged content is reviewed by the editorial staff. The editorial staff is now only responsible for reviewing flagged content; they no longer need to review and filter every contribution. Several modifications are made to the filtering system over time. Prompted by a number of court cases opened by the Turkish state, a new category of moderators (praetors) are introduced into the filtering system in 2005 who check the legality of the content posted by contributors. During the same year, the registered user category is introduced into the membership hierarchy. From 2002 onwards, the user hierarchy evolves into the following:
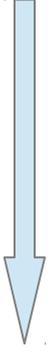
Permission level	Ekşisözlük users
Most permissions	Developer/System administrator (Kapanoglu)
	Hayvanlar (coders)
	Moderators/Praetors
	Bots
	Senior gammaz staff
	Yazar (writer)
	Çaylak
	Registered Reader
	Visitor
No permissions	Blocked user

Table 2. Schematic overview of user categories on Ekşisözlük between 2002-2005

Between 2002 and 2005, rating evolves to resemble to a certain extent the system on Slashdot, a user-submitted and evaluated news story-site which focuses on science and technology-related topics. On Slashdot, each story has a comments section attached to it and users submit comments that are displayed together with the initial submission of a story. Although each user is free to submit a comment on a story, Slashdot uses moderators to rate the relevance and value of every comment. Much like on Ekşisözlük, moderators on Slashdot are chosen on the basis of their experience and their regularity as users. Karma plays an important role on Slashdot for both moderating user-generated content and moderating the moderators. Karma is a value assigned to a user which reflects whether they have posted "good" or "bad" comments (according to ratings from other moderators). A moderator on Slashdot is assigned five "influence" points which affect the karma rating of a comment either negatively or positively. These points linger for several days and during this period the moderator cannot assign ratings to any new commentaries. Afterwards, the moderating system resets itself. The karma system on Slashdot provides a "threshold filter" that allows users to block out comments with negative or positive karma on a news discussion thread. Moderation on Slashdot is complimented with "metamoderation" wherein users from the first 90% of registered accounts on the website are allowed to peer-review the moderators themselves. Each eligible user who opts to perform metamoderation review is provided with ten random moderator ratings of comments and can rate the moderator's rating. This process affects the karma of the moderator and can in certain cases cause the rights of a moderator to be revoked. In effect, metamoderation allows users to moderate the moderators with the karma system.

In contrast to Slashdot, the metamoderating system does not exist on Ekşisözlük. As mentioned earlier, rating features such as *$ukella*, *cok kotu* or *oeeh* were introduced as part of a karma system aiming to create social reputations for community members. Reputation systems are useful insofar as they can help stem abuse in peer to peer environments as well as offer indicators of content quality. As such, a reputation system attempts to aggregate the collective experience of community member in order to allow a visitor or participant to form an opinion about someone with whom they have not previously interacted. Ideally, it has been argued that a reputation system should be informative, robust, and explainable:

- Informative - the reputation of content should be a good indicator of content quality.

- Robust - it should be difficult for malicious users to cause arbitrary content to gain high reputation, without wider support from the community.

- Explainable - it should be possible for users to understand how their (and other users') actions affect content reputation.[148]

Broadly speaking, one can classify reputation systems existing in peer to peer environments as existing on the spectrum between either a user or content-driven reputation system (de Alfaro, Kulshreshtha, Pye, & Adler, 2011). One can place the system on Ekşisözlük towards the content-driven side of the reputation system spectrum. This means that the system relies on automated content analysis to derive the reputation of the users and content. Content-driven systems derive their feedback from an analysis of all interactions, and consequently, they get feedback from all users uniformly.

Looking at the karma system on the platform, one can assume that it was built on top of a content-driven rating system to create community reputations out of rating practices. If a community member consistently posted comments which were negatively rated by their peers, this would begin to show in their karma ratings. If a member had a record of entries that had mixed or positive ratings, this would also be reflected in their karma score. As part of the reputation system, entries with the highest amount of positive and negative reviews would be displayed on a weekly basis. Furthermore, entries rated consistently negatively were put into a worst entry section (zamanının ötesinde entry'leri) on the profile of the writer in question. Likewise, entries consistently rated positively were put into another section (başucu eserleri) on the user profile.

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148 de Alfaro, Kulshreshtha, Pye, & Adler (2011)

Interestingly, karma was an ineffective means for building a social reputation system within the community. For instance, a group of writers began to abuse the rating system by constantly using the *çok kötü (very bad)* button to give negative ratings to entries. Soon, there were rumours within the community of a "çok kötü butonu mafyası" (mafia for the 'very bad' button). It seemed that the mafia's main trolling target were critical entries left by other users:

> "a group of people have caused the rating system to lose any sort of meaning. For personal reasons (or any kind of criticism directed towards their football team, ideology or subculture), these people go and relentlessly attack the entries of the offending user by negatively rating their entries. The statistical sections of the sözlük are purposefully damaged due to the personal motivations of these individuals."[149]

As the Ekşisözlük community grew in numbers, the *çok kötü* mafia diversified. At a certain point, more than 17 different sorts of *çok kötü* mafias were active within the community.[150] As a result, the rating system fell into total disuse. These mafias would conduct so-called "Sibyl attacks" (see Douceur 2002; Cheng & Friedman 2005) by opening up multiple readers accounts and attacking one another with negative ratings. As a result, community began not to pay attention to the ratings given by peers despite the repeated announcements by the administrators to report offenders to the moderation team. This caused the karma reputation system, which was based on rating, to become irrelevant to the community. One way that the owners of the platform attempted to minimize the number of Sybil attacks involved following the strategy of raising the costs for abusive community members trying to open extra accounts (see Levine, Shields & Margolin 2005). As it has been described in the previous chapter, the intake process to become a community member often took a long time and were not standardized in procedure. A community member wanting to open an extra account could wait for an indefinite period of time. Furthermore, if the moderators (or later conductors) discovered that a community member was trying to open up an extra account, the offending party would be punished in a number of different ways. These included the demotion of the writer status to an apprentice account or the deletion of both the extra and original accounts. As such, one can argue that the risks associated with opening up a fake account were quite risky.

On the other hand, despite announcements in community commons trying to restore confidence in the reputation system, the strategy of using Sibyl attacks to discredit and harass the community continued until the end of 2012. Eventually in 2013, Sedat Kapanoğlu posted a public announcement on the platform stating that the negative karma ranking, worst entries section and the worst entries of the week section had been removed due to the extensive amount of trolling on

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149 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/4600605
150 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/12779375

Ekşisözlük.[151]

Perhaps one can partially attribute the failure of reputation on Ekşisözlük to the algorithmic nature of systems that are content-driven. The computational element of these systems prevent ordinary users from understanding, and consequently trusting, the reputation scores they generate. The lack of transparency regarding the algorithm also opens the system up to speculation. To make things even worse, when an algorithm produces a title rather than a score for the reputation of each community member, users typically begin to the appropriateness of the titles. For instance, why is the title 'sardine jam' (hamsi reçeli) assigned to communicate the lowest possible ranking of reputation on Ekşisözlük? Alternatively, why is the title "Turkey's popstar" (Türkiye'nin popstarı) assigned to someone with a very high reputation within the community? The titles as well as the lack of transparency around the scoring algorithm makes it not just very difficult to convince the community members into trusting the system but also to restore trust when it is lost.

Despite bearing similarities both in name and in function to Slashdot, karma on Ekşisözlük has no effect in metamoderating. As there is no threshold filter on Ekşisözlük which could filter out negatively rated entries, gaining negative karma for entries did not really matter much to users. As a result, one can argue that karma rating system did not really create the desire effect in moderating content on Ekşisözlük. The lack of metamoderation as a counterbalance to karma and the fact that entries on Ekşisözlük can be rated by all users in an equal fashion, including apprentices and registered users, made the system vulnerable to the kinds of abuse mentioned earlier. On the other hand, the reputation system did have an impact on whether a writer was eligible to undertake an organizational role within the community. Other than the technical specifications necessary for a writer to be qualified for an organizational role, reputation scores based on chronology also played a role for qualifying community members. Simply put, older community members had a higher chance of being recruited for organizational roles.

Another aspect of Ekşisözlük which seems to have evolved separately from other peer-production projects such as Wikipedia or Slashdot is in regards to the licensing of user-generated content. As it has been argued elsewhere, licensing has playing a crucial role in the enabling peer-production projects to expand (Benkler 2006). For example, Wikipedia decided to opt for a GNU Free Documentation License when shifting from the Nupedia model to a peer-production model. Other sites have opted for Creative Commons licensing to protect user-generated content from illegal distribution. In comparison, the framework which specifies the rights and degree of ownership over user generated content on Ekşisözlük remains vague during 1999 and 2005. The first mention of licensing rights or a copyright can be found in a cached copy of sözlük.sourtimes.org dating from April 2001. At the bottom of sözlük.sourtimes.org, one can find

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151 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/38272474

the following disclaimer:

"Copyright © 1999-2012 Sourtimes Entertainment

All the rights for the content found on this website belongs to Sourtimes. Anyone who forwards a part of this website to their friends without giving appropriate references is a fatty [dombili], a tao-master [a common accusation used by politicians in Turkey during the early 2000s to accuse others of sexual perversions]. Writers are responsible for the contents of their entries. Therefore if the authorities come to my door one day and asks about me about an entry, I will disclose your email addresses to them."[152]

By 2005, the disclaimer has evolved into the following:

"Copyright © 1999-2012 Sourtimes Entertainment

Nothing written on this website is objective. It might be legally problematic for anyone under 18 to be accessing this website (…). Contributors, when posting content onto Ekşisözlük have forfeited their copyrights over the content to Michael Jackson. Anyhow who takes entries from the website without giving proper references is "pespaye", "hemzemin", "hincal" and an "uluc" [all slang terms used by the Ekşisözlük community to describe lamers or leeches]. Asides from legal obligations, the identities of writers are none disclosable. (…) If the authorities come to my door one day and asks about me about an entry, I will tell them that I'm in the shower and escape through the kitchen window."[153]

To protest the new censorship laws passed by the Turkish government in 2008, the disclaimer is temporarily changed into the following:

"Copyright © 1999-2012 Sourtimes Entertainment

Nothing written on this website is objective. It might be legally problematic for anyone under 18 to be accessing this website (…). Writers are responsible for their own user-generated content. It is forbidden to quote content on Ekşisözlük without using references. It is against universal human rights that an institution founded by the state has the right to decide who has the right to access what sort of information. Websites are places that visitors chose to visit according to their own purposes. It is up to the Internet user to decide if a site should be visited or not. This is their natural right. National institutions that are founded to give service to their citizens do not have the right to determine

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152 Appendix 6.1
153 Appendix 6.2

whether a citizen should or should not access information. There are a lot of free and easy to use programmes for guardians to use when protecting their children from unsuitable content on the Internet. These programmes do not need any sort of technical skill asides from the knowledge needed to use a web-browser. It is forbidden for the state to look down upon it's citizens and take them for fools."[154]

The lack of a proper legal disclaimer about licensing of user-generated content will continue until 2011 wherein the Ekşisözlük finally adapts a Creative Commons licence for all user-generated content on the website:

"– copyrights and referencing --

Being a collaborative project, all rights over the project and the coding on the Ekşisözlük website belongs to Ekşi Technologies. The agreement between participants and Ekşi Technologies over user-generated content remains confidential.

One can use the content on Ekşisözlük for non-commercial uses by referencing the name of the writer with an active link and by abiding to general guidelines specified by Creative Commons licensing. (...)"[155]

Perhaps why the owners of Ekşisözlük have been so reluctant to adopt a Creative Commons licensing regime for user-generated content can be explained within the context of the greater socio-cultural milieu. Bluntly put, there are not too many legal regulations regarding copyright or intellectual property rights in Turkey. In a country wherein the market share of unlicensed software and hardware has reached over 62% of the total market share in software and hardware products (the global average is 42% and the European average is 32%), it would be wishful thinking to imagine that finding an appropriate licence for user generated content would be a major concern for peer-production projects in Turkey.[156]

FROM PROJECT TO PEER PRODUCTION PLATFORM

The shift in strategy towards building a commons based content hosting platform driven by collaboration enabling peer production mechanisms proved to be enormously successful for Ekşisözlük. Between 2002 and 2005, the site saw a massive rise in the number of participating members and in the number of entries submitted. For example after a mass-intake on the 19th of

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154 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/14209002
155 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/24855822
156 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pirated-software-hardware-use-dangerously-high-in-turkey.aspx?
  pageID=238&nID=56539&NewsCatID=344

May 2004, more than 20,000 entries were posted in just nine hours. A day afterwards, this rate climbed to 40,000 entries.[157] Alongside well-organized charity events such as the Cizre'ye kitap yağdıralım (2003) and the Malazgirt'e kitap yağdıralım (2005) book donation campaigns, the Ekşisözlük community became a participant and organizer of political protests such as the "Gelme Bush!" [Don't visit us Bush!] protest in 2004 and the "Israil'i durdurun" [Stop Israel's bombing of Lebanon] protest in 2006 (Gürel & Yakın 2007). These events brought Ekşisözlük to the forefront of media attention and helped the community reach a critical mass in terms of size. As critical mass was achieved, the rate of applications to become an Ekşisözlük member soared, effectively rendering the site unable to cope with the number of applicants.

Starting from the infamous Helm's Deep mass intake in 2005 wherein more than 17,000 new users were accepted as community members, the user demography of the Ekşisözlük community began to change. The majority of community begins to be composed of novice, inexperienced users. This situation resembles a typical peer-production situation examined elsewhere where "after an initial period of having a small core of dedicated contributors, the pioneers are dwarfed by the influx of settlers" (Kittur et al., 2008: 8). As data from this period indicates, the new cohort of writers are much less engaged with the community. This temporarily caused the rate of contributions to fall and for the community to lose critical mass. As such, the marginalization of pioneers by settlers and the resulting loss of communal commitment seem to mirror the fate of other online communities.[158] As mentioned earlier, such a situation can be resovled by either scaling up the size of the community or by scaling down the scope of the platform. Remaining an amateur undertaking with a small "elite" group of contributors would protect the subcultural legitimacy of the community but would make the platform financially vulnerable. By making decisions that increases both the growth rate of the online community and the rate of submissions by participants, the owners chose to take up the former alternative. Attracting more members to the community meant that Ekşisözlük could generate more entries and attract further visitor traffic. More visitors to generate revenue from advertising would turn the platform into a self-sustaining entity.

One of the strategies used by the Ekşisözlük administration to increase the rate of user-generated content was to expand the web-sphere of Ekşisözlük to include sites such as Ek$ibition, Sourberry or ekşiBlog. These sites are intended to host user-generated content produced by community members. The aim of this strategy is to capture user-generated content not suitable for the format of Ekşisözlük. As such, the strategy aimed to build a "walled garden" wherein community members are only allowed to associate with content within enclosure of Ekşisözlük. It

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157 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/4338476
158 See for example, Bruckman and Jensen's "The Mystery of the Death of MediaMOO: Seven Years of Evolution of an Online Community" in *Building virtual communities: learning and change in cyberspace* (2002)

was assumed that this strategy would increase the time spent on Ekşisözlük. Increasing the average time spent on each visit would increase the chance of contributing user-generated content on the main platform.

The other strategy used by the Ekşisözlük administration to increase the rate of user-generated content was to ease the rules of moderation. After the introduction of praetors as a new category of moderators, the focus of moderation begins to shift from the quality and format of an entry to the legality of the content. The large number of novice users that have arrived in the wake of the mass-intakes posed a great problem for the moderation on Ekşisözlük. These novice writers were unfamiliar with the format for posting content on Ekşisözlük. As a result, most were either expelled from the project due to poor quality content or had to be constantly reprimanded. To cope with the situation, the administration decided to ease the rules of moderation. At the same time, the new Internet laws made it much easier to persecute community members. As a result of these dynamics, the focus of moderation begins to shift towards monitoring the legality of user-generated content rather than the format. This allowed novice writers to be more comfortable with expressing themselves and eased the burden of the moderating staff. Furthermore, the ability to report an entry is granted to all community members, effectively rendering the senior 'gammaz' staff obsolete. This transformation transfers the burden of moderation from the moderators to the entire community. This strategy proves to be successful and raises the rates of user generated content submission. It also partially resolves the high-turnover rates caused by moderators expelling novice writers incoming from mass intakes.

The introduction of conductors (kondüktör) in 2012 can be seen as an innovative move to standardize the growth rate of the community. The problem with mass intake strategy that had been in use prior to the introduction of the conducting system was that it caused bottlenecks in the recruitment system. Furthermore, some intakes such as Helm's Deep had high turnover rates for incoming members. Despite accepting a lot of applicants in one go, these novice users would not have a lasting presence on Ekşisözlük. Some would be expelled by the moderating staff while others would simply not contribute user generated content due to the fear of making a mistake and being expelled. This situation made mass intakes a relatively useless strategy. Eventually, mass intakes were abandoned in favour of a rolling recruitment system. The conductor position is introduced to regulate and standardize recruitment.

PRODUSAGE AS A BUSINESS MODEL

The decision to introduce a revenue generating business model from 2004 onward can be attributed to a number of factors. Other than following the global trend of trying to monetize Web 2.0 platforms, perhaps the local dynamics that have contributed the most to the formation of a

business model was the rising costs associated with running the platform. Starting from the mid-2000s, the state launched a number of lawsuits towards the community and the owners of the platform. One of the effects of these lawsuits were the introduction of professional legal consultants into the Ekşisözlük community to monitor for legally problematic content. At the same time, hosting the growing public archive as well as the growing number of community members meant that additional servers as well as other hosting infrastructures needed to be purchased. The dramatic rise in running costs had left Kapanoğlu in a financially vulnerable state. While the introduction of a business model to generate revenue managed to transform Ekşisözlük into a self-sustaining entity, it also alternated the organizational structure of the community in a fundamental manner. From 2005 onwards, the new user hierarchy evolved into the following:
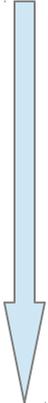
Permission level	Ekşisözlük users
Most permissions	Developer/System administrator (Kapanoglu)
	Hayvanlar (coders)
	Moderators/Praetors
	Bots
	Kondüktör (conductors)
	Yazar (writer)
	Corporate account
	Çaylak
	Registered Reader
	Visitor
No permissions	Blocked user

Table 3. Schematic overview of user categories on Ekşisözlük between 2005-

The spirit of the "new" Ekşisözlük after 2005 is perhaps best captured in the following entry by praetor Kanzuk:

"[Ekşisözlük] is not your father's farm. It is not a space that you own. Nor is it a place that provides a public service. No one here has to behave to you in an egalitarian manner. Becoming a writer on Ekşisözlük is something that happens out of coincidence. Therefore it is not a space that you have to sue when you lose your membership. Becoming a member should not become the goal of your life. It is not a place that has given you a service. Nor is it a place exempt from the laws of the Turkish constitution. However, it is a place where members contribute to it's development and it's importance.

Ekşisözlük is a unique place that one needs to enjoy. It is a space wherein the contents of contributors are read more frequently than some of the most experienced columnists in Turkey. It is a place wherein one can challenge the status quo of those who write in the media and where one can become famous without knowing about it. (...)"[159]

While emphasizing that the platform allows for freedom of speech, the entry of Kanzuk simultaneously emphasizes that the platform is "not a space that you own" or "a place that provides a public service". Instead, it is a platform for hosting user generated content. Ekşisözlük's business model resembles what has been described elsewhere as "produsage" (Bruns 2008b). Business models relying on produsage tend to be based around managing collaborative, user-led content creation by online communities. Participants are not engaged in traditional forms of content production, but are instead involved in collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement. The rationale goes that when provided with a commons, the creative energies of the participants can be harnessed into produsage, wherein as produsers, they are both the producer and consumer of content (fig. 2).

Figure 2: The Produser as hybrid Producer/Consumer.
From Axel Bruns (2008b), *"the Future Is User-Led:
The Path towards Widespread Produsage"*
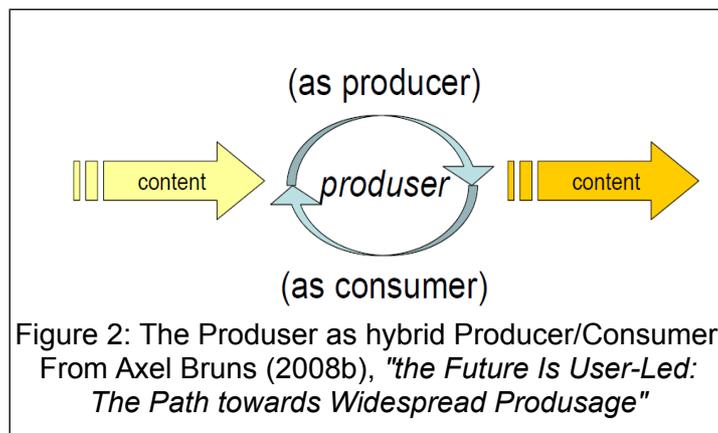
According to this business model, the value accorded to a platform comes not from its contents or from offering a specific service, but instead from having a commons that is under constant construction. Accordingly, Bruns (2008b) identifies four design elements which characterize the success of a produsage business model. He argues that produsage is not an organic business strategy; instead it is introduced onto an already pre-existing content hosting platform. Accordingly, platforms designed so as to foster collaborative engagement online are needed for the implementation of produsage. Secondly, community structures need to be designed to encourage fluidity and heterarchy so as to maximize the creative contribution of participants into the content generation process. Rather than remuneration, engagement with community structures needs to

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159 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/10415977

be rewarded with merit or social reputation. Thirdly, the architecture of the commons itself needs to open-ended and in a "perpetual beta" both in terms of content and format to maximize the creative contributions of produser (Bruns 2008b). Finally, intellectual property rights needs to be sufficiently addressed in produsage environments. When applied, produsage will turn commons-based, peer-production into a "value chain" capable of producing revenue for the entrepreneur. Bruns (2008b) describes a number of ways through which the entrepreneur can generate revenue from produsage environments (fig. 3).

Figure 3: The Produsage Value Chain. From Axel Bruns (2008b), *"the Future Is User-Led: The Path towards Widespread Produsage"*

The produsage model of Ekşisözlük does not directly commodify the labour of the community. The partners managing the website do not sell the data aggregated from user behaviour to advertisers. Instead, the business model is based on renting out sections of the user interface for advertising. Community members have by default, the option of using an ad-free version of the platform. Therefore, advertising is directed towards the visitors and not to the community. On the other hand, the data marketed to advertisers is aggregated from visitors. Although the revenues generated from advertising do not go to the community, the business model of Ekşisözlük does not also exploit the community.

By publicizing itself as a platform wherein members can express themselves in a free and

relatively open manner, produsage on Ekşisözlük relies on maintaining a large, productive peer-production community and periodically attracting large crowds of visitors. One unexpected side-effect caused by the implementation of Ekşisözlük's business model is that the platform begins to become a departure point for some community members to launch their careers. For example, community members such as PuCCa, Pink Freud, stevemcqueen or oky whose entries had become popular on Ekşisözlük, moved onto pursuing careers as novelists. After becoming popular on the platform, these writers began sharing their content on other social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook to reach out to a broader online audience. At this point, the work of these community members attracted the attention of Turkish publishing house Okyanus and their written work was published under the series called "Dizüstü Edebiyatı" (Laptop Literature). So far, PuCCa has published four novels based on content from Ekşisözlük and Pink Freud three. Publishing using their real names stevemcqueen (Onur Gökşen) has currently three and Oky (Okan Vardarova) has one novel currently in circulation.

Ultimately, one can argue that as a business strategy produsage is a collaborative business project; it requires user participation in order to produce value and hence profit. Naturally, being able to constantly maintain this revenue model requires careful management on behalf of the Ekşisözlük administration. Studies of business strategies built around peer-production demonstrate that in successful projects developers have managed to develop highly elaborate arrangements to understand their expanding user base and to manage their relationships with produsers (Postigo 2003). As some of the examples in the previous chapters demonstrate, the Ekşisözlük administration needs to balance a delicate combination of interests to continue their business strategy. On one hand, as in the Webrazzi example, the community can boycott the production of user-generated content to protest decisions they perceive as being unjust or illegitimate. However, perhaps the biggest threat to this kind of business model comes from external competitors such as Facebook or rival websites as both attract valuable traffic and decrease the number of unique visitors to Ekşisözlük.

Founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 as a Harvard-only social-networking service, Facebook quickly expanded its services to include other universities in the U.S.A. Then in 2006, Zuckerberg and the Facebook administration make a decision to extend the services offered by the website to the general public. This meant that anyone around the world who is over 13 years and with a valid email address could open a Facebook account. Much like the rest of the world, Facebook going public was met with great enthusiasm in Turkey. In fact, according to a post by Mike Butcher for the Web 2.0 blog, Turkey is one of the largest and most lucrative markets for the social-networking platform, with Turkish citizens being the third biggest Facebook country

worldwide in terms of registered users (Butcher 2010).[160] One of the effects of Facebook entering the Turkish market was that Ekşisözlük began to lose a significant portion of visitor traffic to its Silicon Valley rival.

As visitor traffic began to dwindle, the community itself began to use Facebook rather than Ekşisözlük for most of their online socialization. As a result, the social-networking platform began to absorb the creative energies of Ekşisözlük community. In the meantime, a number of clone websites emulating the design and style of Ekşisözlük had appeared in Turkish cyberspace. These clones that mimicked the peer-production model of Ekşisözlük but were less stringent about membership procedures. Participants who had either been expelled from Ekşisözlük or were not able to obtain membership due to the irregularities of the mass-intake model began to take on memberships in rival sözlüks. As a result, the communities on rival sözlüks began to grow and generate visitor traffic at the expense of Ekşisözlük.

Marvin Rehber was the first Ekşisözlük clone had appeared around 2001. It was created by 'gnostic', a former community member who had access to the source code of Ekşisözlük. Effectively stealing the source code, this writer left Ekşisözlük to start a clone platform. What emerged as a result of this process was Marvin Rehber. Although the project was ultimately unsuccessful, it opened the doors for sözlük clones to emerge. Another relatively unsuccessful sözlük clone which was founded right after Marvin Rehber was Ultimatr sözlük, whose online community was dedicated only to producing content about the role-playing game Ultimate Online.[161] Both sites had the same design as Ekşisözlük but failed to achieve critical mass. The second generation of sözlük clones were more successful in attaining a critical mass. Due to their ability to attract a dedicated group of volunteers, projects such as private sözlük or zibidi sözlük, which began to appear around 2003-4, managed to be longer lasting than earlier sözlük clones. The second generation of clones offered different moderating regimes to Ekşisözlük and hence were able to capture user-generated content that would normally not be allowed on Ekşisözlük:

> "(…) in comparison to Ekşisözlük wherein the moderating standards are enforced and top-notch, and wherein recruitment is a selective process, this sözlük [private sözlük] allows pretty much everyone to become a member. The reason why there are lots on entries on this sözlük is because the moderating staff does not really do their job. They [the moderating staff] only intervene in exceptional circumstances."[162]

The main problem encountered by the second generation of sözlük clones were their inability to

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160 In the same report, Butcher shows that Turkey has one of the most engaged audiences in the world with the average Turk spending 29.7 hours online every month surfing the Internet.
161 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/2159293
162 Dreamer. Instant Message. 16.02.2010

generate revenue to compensate for costs associated with running a sözlük. As a result, both zibidi and private sözlük ran into financial difficulties. In comparison to Ekşisözlük that had a business model in 2005, both of the clones were never able to create a model that brought them regular advertising revenue. A number of reasons have been given as to why second generation sözlük clones were unable to grow:

> "[private sözlük] had user-generated content which could compete with many rival Internet encyclopaedias and sözlüks. Tens of thousands of entries were created by a dedicated group of participants. However, due to wrong and politicized managerial decisions by the administration which caused large turnovers in contributors and technical problems such as web access and slow entry retrieval prevented private sözlük from becoming popular. As a result, the website was unable to promote itself to the Turkish speaking online audience and generate advertising revenues. Competitions from sözlüks with better technical infrastructures eventually pushed private sözlük into bankruptcy."[163]

By 2006-7, the third generation of sözlük clones had started to pose a significant threat to Ekşisözlük in terms of competition. Sites such as sözlükspot.com have began to offer free tool kits for building community commons similar to Ekşisözlük's. This resulted in the commons design (and business model) of Ekşisözlük to be adapted and used in a variety of different institutional environments including universities and corporations. These projects emulated the business model of Ekşisözlük but pursued different recruitment models. For example, Itü (Istanbul Technical University) or Uludağ sözlük (Uludağ University) were university-based sözlüks that extended membership to students enrolled at a particular university. A student at Istanbul Technical University could use their institutional email to log on and post user-generated content onto Itü sözlük. For marketing revenues, these sözlüks turned to Internet marketing companies seeking to target university audiences. The model used by third-generation clones proved to be successful and soon almost every university had an institutional sözlük.[164] These new sözlüks began to rival the popularity of Ekşisözlük both in terms of visitor traffic and in terms of generating advertising revenues. With Ekşisözlük not making any new recruitment calls since 2005, the demand of the Turkish online public to express themselves began to be satisfied by the clone websites and Facebook. People who could not become Ekşisözlük writers began to write in the commons of clone platforms. The competition from these rival sözlüks and Facebook caused Ekşisözlük to lose both valuable visitor traffic and experience a decline in the rates of entry production. The decline

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163 Kerambol. Instant Message. 24.02.2010
164 The newest generation of peer-production communities hosted within a sözlük format stray completely away from the information resource aspect of these websites. Newer communities such as İnci sözlük resemble more the online collective 4chan (see Knuttila 2010) rather than Ekşisözlük.

rates of entry production had even started rumours that Ekşisözlük was rapidly falling out of fashion with the Turkish speaking online audience. To counter the threat from rapidly encroaching competitors, the Ekşisözlük administration decided to organize a mass-intake in 2007 and ease admission requirements. Therefore intake of 2007 was a strategic move intended to remedy the negative effects caused by the arrival of Facebook into the market for user-generated content and the growing number of sözlük clones. *Anafor* describes the 2007 intake with the following words:

> "(...)
> Lets say 'it needed to be done'. The number of incoming writers is not that important. For today 30 thousand new members is not 'too much' because the number of Internet users has grown 10-fold in the past three years.
>
> The sözlük is being forgotten by this exponentially growing online public. The knowledge of website by Internet users declined as the traffic created by the growing online public increased. And yes, this caused the website to experience a decline in the number of hits.
>
> The sözlük needs to live. I strongly believe in this. And if the website administration believes that the solution is to make 30 thousand people community members than I respect this solution.
> (...)"[165]

Mass-intakes were a successful measure to stimulate visitor traffic and make the platform accessible to a wider online audience. Appealing to a wider demographic audience also meant that the diversity of views on Ekşisözlük became richer, making the community more representative of Turkish speaking online public. It also had a positive impact on the range of views espoused in user-generated content, ultimately contributing to the original idea behind Ekşisözlük as an informational resource similar to the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. At the same time, it also meant that the pioneering members became increasingly marginalized within the exponentially growing community. This resulted in a gradual exodus of older members from the community.

The second strategy pursued by the administration to compete with rival platforms was to increase the duration of visits by community members. It was assumed that increasing the average time spent on the platform would also increase the rate of user generated content on the platform. To further this end, new internal websites were introduced onto the sub-etha portal during this period. Some of these sites included Radyo Ekşi, ekşiBlog and Sourberry. As mentioned earlier, the aim of this strategy was to capture user-generated media not suitable for the format of Ekşisözlük.

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165 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/11375514

The third strategy pursued by the administration to compete with rival platforms was to maintain the high public profile of the community. As a result of the pre-existing culture of activism, annual meet-ups ("zirve" in Ekşisözlük slang) and volunteer programmes intensified after 2005. In 2009, the community raised funds to donate 9000 trees to the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA) and start a small forest. In 2011, Ekşisözlük becomes one of the key organizers of the famous 17th of July 2011 "Don't Touch My Internet" demonstration. In the same year, the community collaborates with AKUT Search and Rescue Association to donate relief to the city of Van after an earthquake.

Although the Ekşisözlük administration seems to have coped well with external threats to its revenue model, it has been less successful with managing internal challenges that have been caused by tensions within the community. For example, although mass-intakes were a successful measure to bring fresh blood into the community, it also meant that the pioneering users who had been crucial for establishing peer production practices became increasingly marginalized within the exponentially growing Ekşisözlük community. This resulted in a gradual exodus of older members from the community. The inability of the owners to cope with the impact of the Webrazzi scandal of 2011, demonstrated the superiority of commercial interests over the communal. Rather than being transparent with the community about how Kanzuk's decision to delete the negative reviews of Webrazzi, Kapanoğlu first attempted to cover the scandal through open denial. After a community member began to openly challenge the narrative put forward by the administration through a series of provocative entries, the administration decided to delete the account and entries of the writer. What followed afterwards was that the expelled writer opened an account on Inci Sözlük (a rival sözlük), and continued levelling accusations at the owners of Ekşisözlük. At this point, the administration was rather helpless as it was impossible for them to do anything about the entries on the rival website. The tacit recognition within the community that the administration would defend commercial interests over communal, led to the resignation of the moderation team. Composed of more experienced, pioneering members that has belonged to the earlier cohorts of the Ekşisözlük community and who had personal ties with Kapanoğlu himself, the moderating team had played the role of bridging communication between community members and the owners prior to the arrival of praetors on Ekşisözlük. These community members had volunteered to become moderators on the basis of community spirit and the desire to participate in the collaborative process. By defending commercial interests in Webrazzi incident, the owners demonstrated their neglect towards the communal spirit of the platform. This demonstration proved to be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back for the moderating staff that had already been heavily over-burdened and under-staffed. After the resignation of the entire moderating team, the role of facilitating communications between Kapanoğlu and the community passed onto the praeterium.

However, as the head of the preaterium is Kanzuk, who is a former partner to Ekşişeyler Teknoloji ve Bilişim Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş and the legal representative of Ekşisözlük in the Turkish justice system, it remains questionable whether praetors can substitute for community role played by the moderating team.

RESISTING THE BETA: CULTURAL CONVENTIONS ON EKŞİSÖZLÜK

After 2013, owners of Ekşisözlük decided to overhaul the outdated interface of the Ekşisözlük.[166] With the transition to the Beta interface, one can argue that the Ekşisözlük is transforming into a digital environment bearing many similarities to a social networking platform. A mobile version of the website, m.eksisözlük.com was also recently unveiled. One of the principle characteristics of the beta interface is that it breaks from the walled garden strategy of Ekşisözlük. Community members are now free and even encouraged to associate with content on other platforms. As part of this new strategy, the platform now allows community members to integrate their Twitter feed into their writer homepage. This feature also gives notifications when a writer's entry is shared on Twitter. As linking Twitter with Ekşisözlük destroys anonymity to a certain degree, a community member must firstly accept a disclaimer before enabling the feature.

The resistance given by the community during the transition to Ekşisözlük beta can be explained through cultural conventions. Learning how to access and use the features on Ekşisözlük can be difficult for newcomers. Furthermore, the "tour" given to newcomers on Ekşisözlük is quite basic and instead relies on their skills as "digital natives" (Prensky 2001). Newcomers learn to generate content that meets Ekşisözlük standards through trail and error and run the risk of being expelled from the platform. In other words, new recruits became community members not through knowledge but through experience. This form of "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger 1991) is a social process wherein knowledge is co-constructed and embedded within a specific social and physical environment. At the same time situated learning plays an important role in the formation of collective identities in online communities; rather than knowing what being a community member is, new recruits experience the practices that make up a community. This makes situated learning an invaluable tool for sustaining the mechanisms like peer-production. Once the process of situated learning becomes an established practice, then it eventually turns into a communal convention. Although the process of turning situated learning into a convention takes a long time, once established, community conventions are hard to change as they have become an integral part of the collective identity. Although the resilience of conventions makes them a positive asset in community building, the resilience of conventions can also make them a negative asset when trying to change or reorganize sites of learning.

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166 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/35464891

One can understand the transition to Ekşisözlük beta as an attempt by developers to reorganize the platform. The new Beta interface abandons the traditional 'antik' (antique) layout of the interface and introduces a new set of features onto the interface tool bar, making the website easier to navigate. Yet, the Ekşisözlük community is hesitant to embrace these changes:

> "my words are to Kapanoglu: no. Just because you introduced a new design doesn't mean that I have to use it. I enjoy my ancient habits. Don't you have anything else left to do? Live and let live: whomever wants can use the new interface."[167]

The older site of Ekşisözlük had been around for so long that learning to use it had become a cultural convention within the online community. Changing the layout and design of the interface meant that cultural conventions built around the process of situated learning were entirely displaced. The learning process was such an important factor in shaping the identities of members that when changed, it created a feeling of loss and destabilization within the community. As a result, members felt naturally inclined towards resisting these new changes. In this situation, the owners of the platform firstly introduce an option for participants to test and get acquainted with the new interface. However due to the lack of interest from community members, Kapanoğlu decided to take initiative as a "benevolent dictator" and transition into Ekşisözlük beta overnight. Due to the large number of negative responses from community members, the administration initially reversed this decision, making the beta version optional again. Then after March 2013, the website permanently transitions into the beta version.

TOWARDS A HEAVYWEIGHT MODEL OF PEER-PRODUCTION

The data collected for this dissertation suggests that from the two different patterns of engagement found within peer production enterprises (see Haythornthwaite 2009), Ekşisözlük seems to belong in a category that has been described as a 'heavyweight' peer production model. Haythornthwaite, in her overview of different peer production projects, suggests that the lightweight model for peer production involves crowdsourcing, with relatively anonymous and independent contributions supporting the goals of a project organizer. On the other hand, the heavyweight model involves an online community, with named contributors gaining status or reputation and participating in decision-making or agenda-setting (Haythornthwaite 2009).

The heavyweight model involves not only contributions to the product, but also attention to the actions and contributions of others, and a commitment to maintaining and sustaining the direction and viability of the community. Haythornthwaite uses 'weight' to reflect the varying degrees of commitment to the enterprise as a whole, "including internal processes as well as

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167 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/31572905

products, the social and emotional experience of the community, and its continued existence" (2009: 2). Within the heavyweight model of peer production, strong ties within the community dominate, as well as long-term commitment to group goals, participation, and a willingness to learn norms and procedures. Learned norms of interaction, conversation and participation are highly important for membership in the whole, and lack of proper etiquette marks the contributor as an outsider or apprentice in the community. As noted earlier, contributors design and operate this kind of virtual enterprise; it is by their contribution that platforms such as Ekşisözlük grow, change and respond to external challenges.

Platforms with a heavyweight peer production model depend on a critical mass of contributors who give significant portions of their time and energy towards defining and maintaining the rules of operation. Critical mass is attained by a core of highly committed and engaged pioneers, and of shared values, practices, and knowledge which are collectively developed and defined over time. Around this pioneer group of users are several layers of progressively less committed users and less widely held attributes (Bruns 2012). Pioneering community members are comprised mainly of what might be described as "professional amateurs" (Leadbeater & Miller 2004). A Professional Amateur (Pro-Am)

> "(…) pursues an activity as an amateur, mainly for the love of it, but sets a professional standard. Pro-Ams are unlikely to earn more than a small portion of their income from their pastime but they pursue it with the dedication and commitment associated with a professional. For Pro-Ams, leisure is not passive consumerism but active and participatory; it involves the deployment of publicly accredited knowledge and skills, often built up over a long career, which has involved sacrifices and frustrations." (2004:20)

Being a Pro-Am involvement requires engagement with others, encouraging contribution from all members, building internal structures and norms collectively and collaboratively. These pioneers ensure that the knowledge of communal practices around peer-production is communicated to newer participants, effectively causing them to become increasingly self-conscious about their communal identities and identify with the collaborative process.

Within the heavyweight model of peer production, communities are enterprises of collaboration. They function by internal negotiation of purpose and form (genre), derivation of rules and procedures, development and maintenance of practices, creation of norms and use of language that emerge through a community's history and life course. The concern can be as much about the character of the community as well as the product. While being an enterprise of collaboration in terms of purpose, the ideology of the Ekşisözlük community itself is influenced by

the free speech ideals put forth by founder Sedat Kapanoğlu. As described earlier, the influence of these ideals has made the community a visible actors in demonstrations against censorship. On the other hand, strong ties within the community have become the basis for actions of solidarity and social activism. For instance, the two book donation campaigns to Cizre and Malazgirt started as calls of solidarity from within the community and evolved into successful social responsibility projects in the physical world. In both cases, the call for solidarity began after a community member started a page with an entry about the situation of the schools in Cizre and Malazgirt. The page attracted many more commentators, causing it to be placed in the trending section of the daily entries column. Upon reading the trending article, Kapanoğlu (known as *ssg* on Ekşisözlük) contacted the original contributor and then decided to make a community call for solidarity on the page. This call spurned the community into action. Afterwards, the page is transformed into a space wherein community members suggest solutions to the situation and the idea of a campaign began to emerge. As the idea generated momentum, the idea of offering memberships to book donors emerged as well. An external website which serves as a space to organize the campaign is linked onto the sub-etha portal. After the deadline for donations is met, the results are shared with the administration and on other community websites on sub-etha portal. To celebrate, a meet-up is organized. Similar mechanisms are used by community members in 2009 and in 2011 to generate and organize social activism. Working together with the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA) community members organize a campaign to plant an Ekşisözlük forest. More than 9000 trees are planted in 36,000 square metre space. In another campaign, Ekşisözlük worked with the Turkish Search and Rescue Association to deliver aid to people affected by the 2011 Van earthquake in the east of Turkey.

Looking at the stance taken by the community against Internet censorship in Turkey and their social responsibility projects, the community's ideological vision seems to resemble what has been described elsewhere as a visionary online commune:

TABLE 2 Taxonomy of community subfields.

	lifestyle service	visionary communal	information source	technical interface
Mission/ purpose	Provide relevant content, services, and goods for niche group	Create a new, thriving community in cyberspace	Provide info and communication between members of pre-existing organization or movement	Provide technological platform for communication and community services
Content/ activities	Articles, forums, chats, personals, shopping, games	Primarily discussion forums, user-generated content	Info updates, discussion forums	Discussion forums, chats, blog, journal, network
Ease of exit				
On/offline	Online only	Mainly online, some offline	Online info facilitates offline	Mainly online, offline may exist or result
Membership	Free	Subscription	Free	Subscription/free

Table ix: Taxonomy of community sub-fields from *Theorizing Web 2.0 (2010)*

Song defines the typology of visionary communal online communities as "unique social entities bound by a 'thick culture' or strongly shared sense of group identity. These communities hope to build a base of committed participants whose whole is greater than its parts. (...) Strong peer cultures are valued" (2010: 261). Song's findings demonstrate that membership requirements for visionary communal communities tend to be more strict in comparison to the other typologies of online communities. One often needs to become a community member before being able to participate in any sort of interaction with other users. Such kinds of visionary communities function with a more generalized reciprocity: contributions are not only exchanged in a one-to-one manner, but are also distributed and received more generally throughout the community.

Collective identities in visionary communities tend to be quite dominant and the social experience of belonging tends to mirror more traditional, pre-modern communities. Social hierarchies are present amongst community members as well as accountability, reputation and an expectation of intensive participation in communal life. These forms of engagement seem to chime

in with the kinds of involvement encountered in the heavyweight model of peer production, as participants are deeply engaged in the internal processes as well as the product. Involvement requires engaging with others, encouraging contribution by all members, and building internal structures and norms collectively and collaboratively. Adhering to agreed norms is important for signalling commitment to the community aside from commitment to its product. The expertise needed to join these communities may be low, particularly in those that accept to be apprentices, but the social overhead is high, which entail learning and adhering to norms, keeping up with community knowledge and practice, and forming strong, persistent social ties with other members.

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction to this dissertation, it was argued that in flawed democracies such as Turkey wherein the state has mechanisms that actively survey and censor the public sphere, sözlüks afford a setting wherein community members have the oppurtunity to anonymously and safely express themselves. The first chapter of this dissertation had been dedicated to narrating the historical dynamics that have contributed to the current situation and analysing the endemic weaknesses of the public sphere in Turkey. After the lifting of the ban on the private ownership of television and radio channels in 1994, national corporations in Turkey scrambled to acquire broadcasting institutions. The loosening of restrictions led to an exponential growth in the number of mass media outlets and eventually to the concentration of these outlets in the hands of a select number of corporate conglomerates. While ownership of mass media outlets are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the privileged few, ownership of broadcasting outlets by non-corporate actors such as political parties, unions, cooperatives, professional associations and foundations remains prohibited. Effectively, this has resulted in the corporate appropriation of the public sphere in Turkey. Few if any media outlets are able to remain independent of corporate interests.

Much of the mass media in Turkey is owned by the corporate oligarchy. This trend, alongside the authoritarian and controlling tendencies of the current government, has created a situation wherein in it is extremely difficult to express anything other than the status quo on mass media networks. It is now widely accepted that the mass media networks characterizing the public sphere in Turkey are used by media magnates as a weapon to safeguard their corporate interests and apply pressure to extract favours or curry support from the government. At the same time, the government sees the corporate interests of mass media oligarchs as the soft underbelly of the public sphere in Turkey, either effectively manipulating media patrons into submission through fines or recruiting them through patronage. On the other hand, the state and media professionals enjoy a tenuous relationship at best. Despite starting accession negotiations for European Union membership in 2004, Turkey has not taken the necessary steps to ensure the freedom of speech or the independence of press. On the contrary, there is evidence that the mass media in Turkey is currently being enclosed by corporate and political interests. What this suggests is mass media in Turkey works for the interests of corporations and the Turkish state, rather than the public good.

In this context, it is increasingly difficult to speak of editorial press freedoms. Despite the decline in the number of journalist and intellectual assassinations, media workers can still either be arrested or fired from their editorial positions due to government pressure. Journalists and intellectuals contrary to the party line of the government run the constant risk of losing their jobs. The owners of media corporations supporting their employees run the risk of being financially ruined by the government. This political situation gives little room to manoeuvre for both intellectual workers and media magnates. In the past year, Freedom House has downgraded press freedoms in Turkey to the lowest possible category - "not free". This downgrade puts Turkey into the same category as Russia, China, Iran and North Korea. It also makes Turkey the only country associated with European Union membership without a free press.

In contrast, where media networks are used by corporate and political actors to safeguard their interests and where censorship is a norm, with the increasing availability of the Internet has afforded the emergence of a sphere of dissent wherein the Turkish-speaking online audience are able to access alternative informational resources and openly express their discontent towards the current regime. Becoming commercially available from 1996 onwards as a result of the TURNET infrastructural project, the number of Internet users has grown exponentially over the past decade. In comparison to less than 250,000 users in 1997, more than 30 million users go online daily today. This makes Turkey the 15th largest country in terms of the number of Internet users, placing it in rank between Iran and Italy. In order to "catch-up" with the developed world in terms of providing Internet access to the Turkish population, successive governments have pursued a policy of outsourcing Internet access to commercial ISPs, effectively leaving the spread of the Internet to free market dynamics. One of the effects of this policy has been the creation of a digital divide based on regional, gender and socio-economic differences. This means that only 45% percent of the Turkish population are regular Internet users. As a result, the demographic profile of the Turkish-speaking online audience is less representative of the Turkish population in comparison to the mass media public. However, at the same time, the online public is highly engaged and active. Turkish Internet users have some of the highest rates of engagement in Europe. Furthermore, the education levels of the online public tend to be high and most Internet users belong to a younger demographic profile. Accordingly, one needs to contextualize the demographic profile of Internet users in Turkey as young, educated, extremely active and well engaged, yet less representative in comparison to the online publics of developed countries. As such, one can tentatively argue that there is a correlation between the demographic profile of Internet users in Turkey and the usage of the Internet to create a sphere of dissent. The cultural preferences of this user demographic has contributed to the formation of an extremely unique ecology of Turkish cyberspace.

Although the emergence of such an ecology is extremely important within the context of cyberactivism, networked social movements and for the expression of dissent, it has also caused the Internet to be perceived as an existential threat by the Turkish state. Successive governments in Turkey since the late 1990s have both instigated and used the general mistrust and fear of the masses towards the Internet to justify the construction of an ever-expanding surveillance regime to monitor and censor the activities of Turkish citizens. In other words, the traditionally antagonistic relationship between the state and the public sphere continues online. While the practices of censorship and surveillance expand, the legal framework that should serve as the justification for the monitoring of online content remains vague. The clientalist relationships enjoyed between the institutions of the state and the government have created a situation wherein censorship and surveillance activities of the state are not based on legalistic but ideological motivations. As a result, this situation has created a climate of insecurity and unpredictability in Turkish cyberspace. The unpredictable nature of the Turkish state's censorship and surveillance activities has created the need for a certain degree of user anonymity online as well as tools to navigate around censorship. Drawing from this one can argue that the ecology of social media and Web 2.0 platforms popular with the Turkish-speaking online public has evolved to uniquely reflect both the creative energies of a small yet dynamic online audience and the anxieties caused by the unpredictable nature of the Turkish state's censorship and surveillance activities. Privately owned, members-only hosting spaces which afford participants the right to express themselves in a safe and anonymous manner have become a popular choice over the past decade for exercising the right to free speech. These hosting spaces belong to a category of platforms called *sözlüks* which are unique to Turkish speakers. Although sözlük means "dictionary" in Turkish, these websites are not dictionaries in the conventional sense as contents written under an entry don't necessary have to be objective or meaningful. Similar to urban dictionaries in the Anglophone world, sözlüks are platforms that rely on participants to generate knowledge. The online communities hosted by sözlüks are diverse; they range from online communities for universities to online communities for the religiously devout. However what differentiates them from urban dictionaries is their reliance of a commons and the peer production mechanism they use to organize user generated content. As such, it has been argued that these platforms have a model of content production and organization which is unique to the Internet.

As discussed earlier in the literature review, peer-production has been one model of non-industrial information production that harnesses the potential of knowledge commons. While not all forms of production found on the Internet are necessarily based on the knowledge commons or are even peer-based, the knowledge commons has certainly created possibility for the implementation of peer-based production models. Generally speaking, there are a number of unique

characteristics to commons-based production. Most importantly, as the resources found in commons need to be shared, everyone participating needs to cooperate with one another. Therefore, one can argue that the principle characteristic of commons-based peer production online is collaboration among large groups of Internet users who cooperate effectively to provide or exchange information, knowledge or cultural goods without relying on either market pricing or managerial hierarchies to coordinate their common enterprise. In other words, the Internet has enabled a mode of production wherein individuals produce on a non-proprietary basis and contribute their product to a commons which no one is understood as owning, and that anyone can access or use.

As the resources found in commons are technically not owned by anyone, the commons system allows individuals to make their own choices about how these resources will be used within the context of their personal projects. Accordingly, it has been argued that peer production models are ideally suited for identifying and harnessing the power of human creativity. This is because peer-production allows participants to self-identify for tasks and perform them for motivations other than material compensation.

Some authors have critically argued that peer production is another marketing euphemism created to avoid using the term digital labour. These authors argue that instead of using digital labour, pro-capitalist approaches rely on concepts such as peer production, prosumption, produsage, and crowdsourcing to describe participation. Although it is important to acknowledge the fact that some commentators use opaque language to manoeuvre around criticisms regarding surveillance and the exploitative nature of unwaged digital labour, one may ask whether the picture is as black and white as they present it. Drawing upon the discussion on peer production and digital labour, one needs to firstly differentiate between the motives for participating on Ekşisözlük from social media platforms. Most importantly, as the qualitative data collected from doing fieldwork on Ekşisözlük demonstrates, people participate to be part of a greater community and because they imagine themselves as doing a service to the public. The motivations shared by the Ekşisözlük community differentiates the members from social media users.

Within the context of the sözlük phenomenon, one can argue that Ekşisözlük is the first platform in Turkey to use peer production mechanisms to organize user generated content. It depends on mechanisms that are for the most part, decentralized and collaborative. Drawing upon insights from research on peer productions mechanisms, a multi-methodological biographical approach was be used to document the systems guiding participants through peer production, the evolution of stratified organizational roles as well as the enforcement of communal policies and norms on Ekşisözlük. The methodology used a case-study approach combined with ethnographic fieldwork as well as a socio-technical systems approach. The ethnographic method used in this

thesis chose to treat Ekşisözlük as a "virtual" social world and used both virtual methods such as participant observation and email interviews as well as more traditional qualitative methods such as direct observation and online interviews to collect data. To begin fieldwork, the researcher applied to open a user account on Ekşisözlük and received membership after waiting for almost a year.

To overcome the bias problem, the data collected from ethnographic fieldwork was triangulated with other sources of evidence drawn from the open access archive of the community commons. However, there are some constraints with solely using personal contributions that have managed to survive until present on the website. When community members decide to leave Ekşisözlük, they have the right to delete their personal contributions. This means that some of the personal records found on the site have been erased by the contributors. Furthermore, the Ekşisözlük administration also has a habit of retroactively deleting entries. As the legal restrictions on what can be expressed online have changed in Turkey over the past decade, certain kinds of content have become illegal. To resolve the situation, the administration has made a habit of deleting content that might cause legal issues. Also, entries are not necessarily factual accounts or descriptions and might have been posted with malicious intent. As such, one way to determine the factuality of the entries is to compare their contents with official announcements or documents that have been posted onto Ekşisözlük by the website administrators. The contents of these official texts can give the researcher insight into issues such as the moderating rules, ownership over contributed content or even the rights of community members. While useful, these official texts may either been rewritten on a periodic basis or removed by the administrators of the website. The Wayback Machine of the Internet Archive was used in order to be able to gain access to older versions of these announcements.

When looking through research produced on peer production as a subject, one notices that most studies tend to rely on ethnographic data collection methods to explore the collaborative process driving peer production. This is often done at the expense of excluding automated systems, non-human agents and software architectures that are essential to the collaborative process in peer production. Using the STS approach, one can begin documenting the systems guiding participants through the collaborative process of peer production on Ekşisözlük. The filtering, recommendation, and reputation systems all constitute different parts of the peer production mechanism and as such, shape the agency of the user. In combination with stratified organizational hierarchies and communal policies which enable the collaborative process to function, one can argue that these systems afford the possibility for concerted action on Ekşisözlük.

When combined with ethnographic fieldwork, the STS approach provides a robust methodological framework to study all aspects of the peer production process on Ekşisözlük. However, one needs to acknowledge that there are some limitations to the mixed methodology developed by the researcher. For example, although ethnographic fieldwork is a strong methodology suitable for capturing the qualitative richness created out of collaboration, ethnographic methods are labour intensive and often limited in terms of duration. Often due to institutional pressures to publish research, the time spent doing ethnographic fieldwork tends to be short. In contrast, as the decade long existence of Ekşisözlük demonstrates, the lifespans of technological artefacts can be considerably long. Accordingly, one can argue that ethnographic data collection methods can be limited in terms of scale. The contrast between the short duration of ethnographic research and the lifespan of techno-social artefacts means that it can be difficult to draw definite conclusions on Ekşisözlük's peer production mechanism by relying solely on ethnographic observations.

The solution proposed the problem of longitude was to adopt a medium-specific data collection methodology. Medium-specific approaches for collecting data utilize tools that are suitable for studying objects within their native, digital environments. The Wayback Machine (wayback.archive.org) is digital time capsule that allows to trace the history of a website. It allows the researcher to effectively "time travel" from the contemporaneous present to visit earlier versions of the site in question. The researcher used the WM to locate the oldest available "snapshot" of Ekşisözlük. From there, the researcher will moved forward in time every two weeks on the same day or the date closest if there are no available snapshots. This process continued until the 2013, the year wherein fieldwork for this dissertation was undertaken. If more than one copy existed at the arrival point of each temporal "jump", the researcher chose to use the best representational version of the website. Using a pre-existing membership for Ekşisözlük, the researcher attempted to log-in at each cached copy encountered and explore the website. The accumulated data was combined with STS-oriented ethnographic fieldwork to build a case study on peer production mechanism found on Ekşisözlük. The accumulated data on Ekşisözlük can be summarized with the following table:

				The evolution of Ekşisözlük			
Year	**Community commons**	**Systems**	**Visual**	**External sites, first categorized under Summitz (2002-6) & then Sub-Etha (2004 -)**	**User categories**	**Organisational positions**	**Intakes**
1999							
2000	ekşiengine						
2001		Moderation, Badi List (2001-7), Kontrol Merkezi (2001-7), sourtimeschat (2001-) Recommendation system	Logo, graphic interface, themes	Soursummitz (2002-6), Sourworks (2002-6), Ekşisözlük Birinci Pazar Ligi, Pikka (2002-6), Ek$i Mag (2002-5)	Çaylak	Gammaz / Gammaz Senior Staff (2001-2010) Moderaton (2002-12)	Mass-inta
2002	Dynamic Content Management System						
2003		Ukte (2003-6), $ukela, öeeh, çok kötü, karma	Ad banners appear	Smkb (2003-6), Sourlemonade (2003-7), Yoğurt (2003-6) ekşiAnket, ekşiAtari (2004-5), Eksirss (2004-6), Mikro K (2004-5)			Cizre
2004							

2005	Conditions of use appear	Community Membership system		Eksinvite (2005-6), Ekşisözlük CPU Power (2005-)	Ziyaretçi / kayıtlı okur / yazar	Bots / Hayvanlar / Praetors	Malazgirt / H Deep
2006				Ek$ibition, ekşiDuyuru, ekşiMuze (2006-7), Limon, Radyo ekşi(2006-7)			
2007		Kontrol Merkezi (2007-)	Censorship logo (2008-9) New logo	ekşiBlog, Sourberry		Hacivat / Karagöz (2007-9)	Attack of Clo
2008							Patient Wri
2009							
2010				Hangberry, Eksistats, Ek$igator (2010-13), Ek$i Mag (2010-11) Eksimarket		Kondüktör	Hopeless W
2011							
2012							
2013			Antik/Beta interfaces	Bahisör			Woman's D

The analysis of the collected data suggests that peer production mechanisms appear on Ekşisözlük after its transition into a dynamic content management system in 2002. The shift in strategy towards an members-only peer-production model with an open access commons archive proved to be enormously successful for Ekşisözlük. Between 2002 and 2005, the site sees a massive rise in the number of participating members and in the number of entries submitted. As a result of mass-intakes, the majority of Ekşisözlük participants begin to be composed of novice, inexperienced users. This situation resembles what has been described as the "settler" phenomenon. To resolve the settler problem, Sedat Kapanoğlu decides to establish a company to manage the platform, implement a revenue generating business model and shift the focus of moderation towards checking for the legality of contributed content.

From 2004 onwards, Ekşisözlük begins to be hosted by a commercial company. One of the first consequences of Ekşisözlük being hosted by a commercial entity is the appearance of advertising banners on the website. From 2004 onwards, the canvas of the Ekşisözlük interface becomes increasingly colonized by advertising. Publicizing itself as a platform as a space for the freedom of speech on the Internet, Ekşisözlük relies on maintaining a large, productive community. The contributions of the community periodically attract large crowds of visitors onto the site and generate advertising revenue. Ekşisözlük's business model resembles what has been described elsewhere as produsage. Business models relying on produsage tend to be based around managing collaborative, user-led content creation by online communities. Participants are not engaged in traditional forms of content production, but are instead involved in collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement. As a business model, produsage will turn commons-based, peer-production into a value chain capable of producing revenue for the entrepreneur. The produsage model of Ekşisözlük does not directly commodify the labour of the community. The partners managing the website do not sell the data aggregated from user behaviour to advertisers. Instead, the business model is based on renting out sections of the user interface for advertising. Community members have by default, the option of using an ad-free version of the platform. Therefore, advertising is directed towards the visitors and not to the community. On the other hand, the data marketed to advertisers is aggregated from visitors. Although the revenues generated from advertising do not go to the community, the business model of Ekşisözlük does not also exploit the community.

What is important to note is that the licensing of user-generated content on Ekşisözlük seems to have evolved at a separate pace in comparison to other platforms that have peer-production mechanism. The lack of a proper legal disclaimer about licensing of user-generated content continues until 2011 wherein the Ekşisözlük finally adapts a Creative Commons licence for all user-generated content on the website. It is explained that the cause behind why a peer-

production project such as Ekşisözlük has been so reluctant to adopt a licensing regime for user-generated content is due to the lack of a proper legalistic framework in Turkey regarding authorship rights.

The collected data suggests that the mechanisms on Ekşisözlük belong to the category that has been described as a 'heavyweight' peer production model. This model involves an online community, with named contributors gaining status or reputation and participating in decision-making or agenda-setting. It involves community members not contributing to the product, but also to the actions and contributions of others. There is a high level of commitment in such models and strong ties dominate within the community. This model depends on a critical mass of contributors there is a long-term commitment to group goals, participation, and a willingness to learn norms and procedures. Finally, learned norms of interaction, conversation and participation are highly important for membership in the whole, and lack of proper etiquette marks the contributor as an outsider or apprentice in the community.

EPILOGUE

As it has been emphasized throughout this dissertation, the current situation of the public sphere in Turkey has caused many to turn to the Internet. In light of the ongoing enclosure public sphere, wherein dissenting journalists receive lengthy jail sentences for publishing news that go against government or corporate interests and where state-appointed commissars can nationalize private satellite television channels or newspapers overnight, people actively turn to the Internet in an attempt to both access alternative (non-state or corporate) broadcasting outlets and to express their dissent against against the policies of the current regime in Turkey. This has turned the Internet into an agora for the freedom of speech, for the organization of political or social dissent and the expression of alternative and marginalized identities. Over the past decade, an extremely unique and culturally-specific Turkish cyberspace has emerged as a result of these social dynamics.

Sözlüks, a genre of content hosting platforms that can broadly be described as urban dictionaries, are unique insofar as they rely on collaborative mechanisms to produce and organize content that can be classified as dissent. Affording the oppurtunity to express oneself to the Turkish-speaking online audience in an anonymous manner, Sözlüks have become safe havens for free speech online. *User generated dissent* explored communal, commons and automated aspects to the peer production mechanisms driving Ekşisözlük, the oldest urban dictionary in Turkish cyberspace.

Private ownership, when combined with a system of legal moderating, has been a successful strategy so far in being able to protect the identities of Ekşisözlük community members from the grasp of the Turkish state. Blocking access to Ekşisözlük has been strategy that the state has used to indirectly attempted to clamp down on sites such as Ekşisözlük. By suspending access to Ekşisözlük and social media during moments of crises, the state has hoped to stop the flow of information online. Nevertheless, restricting access has been a relatively unsuccessful strategy as Internet users in Turkey has learned how to take measures such as changing their DNS numbers to route around the imposed censorship regime (see Cardullo 2015). As a result, the state has recently began to change it's strongman tactics and target the companies that own spaces such as

Ekşisözlük. It has realized that much like in mass media, the Achilles Heel of such platforms are their owners, most of whom manage registered companies in Turkey.

The owners of every sözlük are by Turkish law legally responsible for the contents produced by the communities they host. Furthermore, with the introduction of Law 5651, sözlük owners such as Kapanoglu are legally obliged to always hold the IP numbers used community members in the previous six month. This makes sözlük owners the only individuals that have full access to the real identities of community members. As a result, this legal obligation makes them vulnerable to external pressure, be it in the form of legal intimidation or in the form of financial penalization. This vulnerability is increasingly exploited by the state and state affiliated actors to pressure sözlük owners into revealing the real identities of participants in online communities.

This strategy was used against Ekşisözlük for the first time in 2011, when Istanbul state prosecutor Ismail Onaran requested that the owners reveal the identities of community members that were under investigation for insulting Islam and the Prophet Muhammed. Under threat of having charges brought to themselves for hosting criminal activity, Kapanoğlu and his partners were forced into disclosing the identities of 35 community members to the prosecutor.[168] Kanzuk, the legal representative, argued that the partners were legally obliged to reveal the identities for a subpoena taking place and most importantly, not reveal the investigation to the community.[169] The day after the announcement on Ekşisözlük, community members organized a "zero entries" online demonstration to protest the decision of the administration.[170] On one hand, the community was pressuring the partners by not posting on the website, hence reducing the number of visitors and the advertising revenues generated through banners on the website. On the other, the state was pressuring the partners with legal intimidation tactics to reveal the identities of the offenders. The owners and administration of Ekşisözlük ran the risk of being imprisoned. At the end, the state proved to be the stronger side to the struggle and the owners capitulated to their demands. This proved to the first event wherein a sözlük owner was forced to reveal the real identities and IP numbers of their community members. The genie was out of the bottle and soon the state struck again. This time in 2013, prosecutors levelled another investigation charge at community member who used Ekşisözlük to publicize his criticism about the decision that appointed Yusuf Devran as the head of Marmara University's Radio, TV and Cinema department. Mikhail Boz was an honours student and a senior in the aforementioned department. Yusuf Devran had only become a professor one month prior to his appointment. A few months later, the same professor became the

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http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25225280/
169 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/24153363
170 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/24155609

dean of the communication faculty at the same university. Mikhail Boz wrote another criticism on Ekşisözlük. What ensued next was that the professor reported the entries on Ekşisözlük to a state prosecutor who launched an investigation. Pressuring the Ekşisözlük with the claim that the owners are obstructing justice, the persecutor managed to reveal the identity of Mikhail Boz and asked him to make a statement to the police. In his statement, Mikhail told the police that all he wanted was use his right for the freedom of speech and promote dialogue on making the university appointments more transparent and democratic. Soon afterwards, the student was called to the office of the dean and suspended for half a year from school.[171]

What these recent events show is that the anonymity and safety afforded by sözlüks is currently under threat. The new legislation, passed a week prior to writing this epilogue, gives the Turkish Telecommunications Bureau the right to suspend access to websites without any prior announcement. Any content deemed to be illegal by the Bureau will result in access being immediately suspended to the website without a prior warning to remove the content in question. Finally, the Bureau now has the right to demand information regarding the IP addresses from hosting services without judicial permission and reserves the right to keep this information indefinitely. Finally, owners of hosting services will have to keep the records regarding the IP addresses of users for at least 1 year.[172] Eventually, as each administration succumbs to the relentless pressures from third parties, sözlüks will lose their reputations as safe havens for the freedom of speech in Turkey. A scenario describing the sun setting on the golden age of sözlüks might be a relatively sombre note to conclude this dissertation. Despite this pessimistic forecast, the demand for anonymity within Turkish cyberspaces persists and will only grow in light of the new legislations passed by the Turkish government. This means that the time is perhaps ripe to create alternative media projects that will be able to preserve the anonymity needed for the expression of dissent and will contribute to the democratization process in Turkey.

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171 http://bianet.org/bianet/genclik/135862-eksi-sozluke-yazdi-okuldan-uzaklastirildi#.Tyk6DJVjVis.twitter
172 https://eksisözlük.com/entry/40229066

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exponential, 2010. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

gelen gecer mdmx, 2011. 22 haziran 2011 sıfır entry eylemi. Ekşi Sözlük.

huzursuz, 2004. ekşi sözlük moderatörleri. Ekşi Sözlük.

incarnate, 2005. karma puanı. Ekşi Sözlük.

kaamos, 2012. ekşi sözlük moderasyonu. Ekşi Sözlük.

kahvevodka, 2011. çok kötü. Ekşi Sözlük.

kanzuk, 2014. 5651 sayılı internet yasası güncellemesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

kanzuk, 2011. ekşi sözlük'ün savcılığa yazar bilgilerini vermesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

kanzuk, 2006. ekşi sözlük. Ekşi Sözlük.

kerambol, 2011. private sözlük.

kimi raikkonen, 2008. sabırtaşı yazar. Ekşi Sözlük.

knapsack, 2008. 21 aralık 2008 sözlük yazarı akını. Ekşi Sözlük.

leni 09, 2013. entry gammaz modülü. Ekşi Sözlük.

a lifetime of type ii errors, 2005. ekşi sözlük moderatörleri. Ekşi Sözlük.

madis, 2911. ekşi sözlük kullanım koşulları. Ekşi Sözlük.

madonnanin yagli zencisi 2, 2013. karma puanı. Ekşi Sözlük.

magnus, 2007. ekşi şeyler. Ekşi Sözlük.

matarama su ko, 2009. karagöz. Ekşi Sözlük.

melissaki, 2005. moderatör. Ekşi Sözlük.

mengus, 2004. micro.k*. Ekşi Sözlük.

mutemet, 2005. çaylak. Ekşi Sözlük.

myskeen, 2004. çok kötü butonu mafyası. Ekşi Sözlük.

netameli, 2005a. ekşi sözlük malazgirte kitap yağdıralım kampanyası. Ekşi Sözlük.

netameli, 2005b. ekşi sözlük malazgirte kitap yağdıralım kampanyası. Ekşi Sözlük.

nevermınd, 2001. entry gammaz modülü*. Ekşi Sözlük.

nick cave and the sad seeds, 2012. 1 eylül 2012 moderasyonun sözlükten ayrılması. Ekşi Sözlük.

nuage, 2010. kondüktör. Ekşi Sözlük.

n v13c, 2008. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ombudsman, 2009. anaposta. Eksi Sozluk.

otisabi, 2001. sözlük müzesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

oymanq, 2013. kayıp yazarlar. Ekşi Sözlük.

ozdek, 2003. ekşi sözlük gammaz senior staff. Ekşi Sözlük.

redstreak, 2008. çok kötü butonu mafyası. Ekşi Sözlük.

robin, 2007. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

sacrifice, 2005. öeehh. Ekşi Sözlük.

self abandonment, 2011. şükela. Ekşi Sözlük.

self abandonment, 2010. fatih altaylı. Ekşi Sözlük.

sourtimes, ahmet, 2003. ben de. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2013a. toplu yazar alımı. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2013b. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2013c. zamanının ötesinde entry'leri. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2012. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2011a. ekşi sözlük kurumsal iletişim hesabı. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2011b. Ekşi sözlük. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2011c. kondüktör. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2010a. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2010b. sözlük tarihçesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2009. başlıklarda türkçe karakter kullanılabilmesi. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2005a. praetor. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 2005b. miğferdibi çaylak alımları*. Ekşi Sözlük.

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ssg, 2002. ekşi sözlük gammaz senior staff. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 1999a. Ekşi Sözlük. Ekşi Sözlük.

ssg, 1999b. hitnet. Eksi Sozluk.

sturdy armor of jackal, 2003. çaylak. Ekşi Sözlük.

sup x, 2005. medyanet. Ekşi Sözlük.

tenarr, 2013. ekşi sözlük beta'ya direniş ekibi. Ekşi Sözlük.

treachery, 2003. ekşi sözlük cizre'ye kitap yağdıralım kampanyası*. Ekşi Sözlük.

usermare, 2009. hacivat. Ekşi Sözlük.

utkin graznikov, 2011. ekşi sözlük moderatörleri. Ekşi Sözlük.

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zibidi, 2000a. zibidi. Eksi Sozluk.

zibidi, 2000b. zibidi. Eksi Sozluk.

n.d.

APPENDIX

CHAPTER II

2.1 Worldwide Networks Growth.

Date	# of Countries				
	INTERNET	BITNET	UCP	FIDONET	OSI
09/91	31	47	79	49	
12/91	33	46	78	53	
02/92	38	46	92	63	
04/92	40	47	90	66	25
08/92	49	46	89	67	26
01/93	50	50	101	72	31
04/93	56	51	107	79	31
08/93	59	51	117	84	31
02/94	62	51	125	88	31
07/94	75	52	129	89	31
11/94	81	51	133	95	–
02/95	86	48	141	98	–
06/95	96	47	144	99	–
06/96	134	–	146	108	–
07/97	171	–	147	108	--

The number of countries adopting the Internet grow rapidly, outpacing other networking technologies. Courtesy of *http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/*

CHAPTER IV

4.1 Content changes in different versions of Ekşisözlük
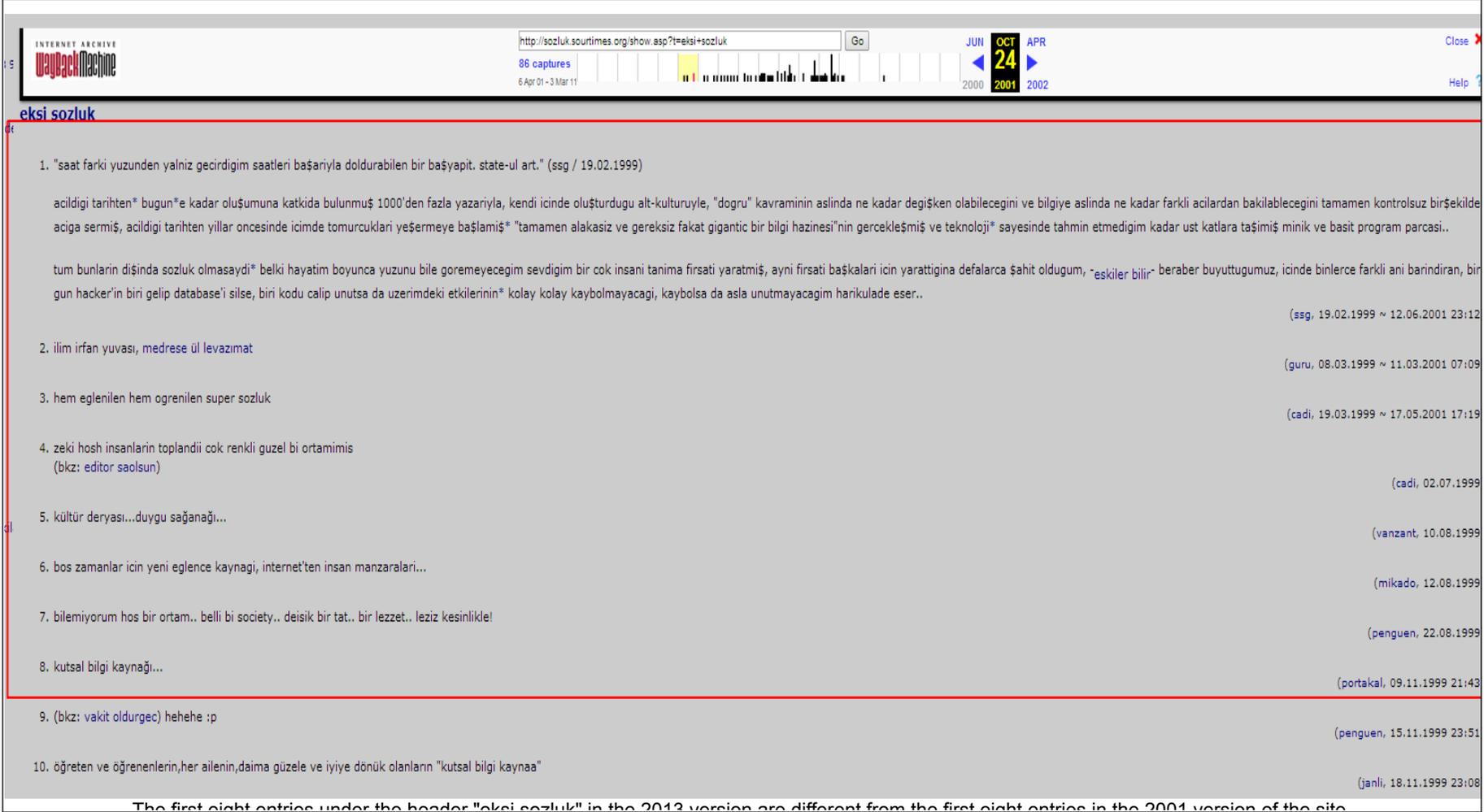
eksi sozluk

1. "saat farki yuzunden yalniz gecirdigim saatleri ba$ariyla doldurabilen bir ba$yapit. state-ul art." (ssg / 19.02.1999)

acildigi tarihten* bugun*e kadar olu$umuna katkida bulunmu$ 1000'den fazla yazariyla, kendi icinde olu$turdugu alt-kulturuyle, "dogru" kavraminin aslinda ne kadar degi$ken olabilecegini ve bilgiye aslinda ne kadar farkli acilardan bakilablecegini tamamen kontrolsuz bir$ekilde aciga sermi$, acildigi tarihten yillar oncesinde icimde tomurcuklari ye$ermeye ba$lami* "tamamen alakasiz ve gereksiz fakat gigantic bir bilgi hazinesi"nin gerceklemi ve teknoloji* sayesinde tahmin etmedigim kadar ust katlara taimi minik ve basit program parcasi..

tum bunlarin di$inda sozluk olmasaydi* belki hayatim boyunca yuzunu bile goremeyecegim sevdigim bir cok insani tanima firsati yaratmi$, ayni firsati ba$kalari icin yarattigina defalarca $ahit oldugum, -eskiler bilir- beraber buyuttugumuz, icinde binlerce farkli ani barindiran, bir gun hacker'in biri gelip database'i silse, biri kodu calip unutsa da uzerimdeki etkilerinin* kolay kolay kaybolmayacagi, kaybolsa da asla unutmayacagim harikulade eser..

(ssg, 19.02.1999 ~ 12.06.2001 23:12

2. ilim irfan yuvası, medrese ül levazımat

(guru, 08.03.1999 ~ 11.03.2001 07:09

3. hem eglenilen hem ogrenilen super sozluk

(cadi, 19.03.1999 ~ 17.05.2001 17:19

4. zeki hosh insanlarin toplandii cok renkli guzel bi ortamimis
   (bkz: editor saolsun)

(cadi, 02.07.1999

5. kültür deryası...duygu sağanağı...

(vanzant, 10.08.1999

6. bos zamanlar icin yeni eglence kaynagi, internet'ten insan manzaralari...

(mikado, 12.08.1999

7. bilemiyorum hos bir ortam.. belli bi society.. deisik bir tat.. bir lezzet.. leziz kesinlikle!

(penguen, 22.08.1999

8. kutsal bilgi kaynağı...

(portakal, 09.11.1999 21:43

9. (bkz: vakit oldurgec) hehehe :p

(penguen, 15.11.1999 23:51

10. öğreten ve öğrenenlerin,her ailenin,daima güzele ve iyiye dönük olanların "kutsal bilgi kaynaa"

(janli, 18.11.1999 23:08

The first eight entries under the header "eksi sozluk" in the 2013 version are different from the first eight entries in the 2001 version of the site.

The first eight entries under the header "eksi sozluk" in the 2013 version are different from the first eight entries in the 2001 version of the site.

CHAPTER V

5.1 sourtimes.org, May 8th 1999

5.2 sourtimes.org, October 5th 1999

INTERNET ARCHIVE
WaybackMachine BETA

http://www.sourtimes.org/ — Go

194 captures
8 May 99 - 19 Jul 11

MAY | OCT 5 1999 | AUG
1998 | 1999 | 2000

Close ✖
Help ?

Edi Sourtimes	Girtlaktan Edinimler	Nereye Kadar	Negatif Kemirgenler
BIJI	Yemek yerken takilinilan haller, puf noktalari, yemek tarifleri, reportajlar, pek cok tuhaf $ey..	En fazla yazi ihtiva eden kari$ik ko$e.. Annenizi delirtmekten, uyumamanin yollarina kadar hepsi burda.. bekliyo..	Olumsuzlugu hayat felsefesi edinenler icin yazilar.. neden niye nefret edilir, nasil i$kence cektirilir surundurulur..
BIJI			

Ek$i Sozluk	Bird of Passage	Most Wanted
Saniye ba$i kendiliginden update olan teknoloji harikasi sozluk. Siz de ekleyin bilginizi gosterin eglenin takilin..	Muzik starlariyla roportajlar, grup tarihceleri, hic rastlaya-mayacaginiz gizli bilgiler fotograflar.. Rock dunyasinin babalari..	Edi Tor Sourtimes tarafindan pek sevilen ki$iler hakkinda ufak bilgiler, gizli sirlar.. Gizli sir ne demekse..

BIJI

BIJI

Tör Sourtimes	Siber Alaka	3. Tekir $ahislar	Baglanti Noktasi
Meaowww?	Kendimizi de digerlerini de maymun ettigimizin ispati loglar.. Ce$itli zaman dilimlerinin rezil belgeleri..	Bizim degil sizin yazilariniz.. Isteyenin istedigini yazip yollayip koydurtma $ansi..	Gezmekten incelemekten zevk aldigimiz cogu site hakkinda bilgiler adresleri..

Gestbuk'a yazacam Gestbuk'u okuyacam   5137 gun 8 saat 24 dakika 60 saniye 117949

Bu site tamamen kesinlikle ve istisnasiz Internet Explorer 4.x (veya 5.x tabi ki -edi) (edi means MrKnowItAll -tor) ilen $eyettirildiginde adam gibi gorunucektir. Netscape'le bakanlarin "bu ne lan?" deme hakki yoktur.
Copyright © 1998, 1999 ve gelecek muhtemel yillar Edi Tör Sourtimes Entertainment Ltd $ti A.$. Tum haklari saklidir izinsiz kopyalanamaz abuk kadin dergilerinde alinti yapilamaz. Tum haklari saklidir. Bunu demi$tik. Neyse.

5.3 http://sozluk.sourtimes.org/news.asp, December 10th, 2000.

ek$i engine 1.1 - development news

kotu haber: hala beta'yiz.. yeni kullanici eklemiyoruz.. herkesi cilgin gibi ucuruyoruz

iyi haber: cok kisa sure sonra beta'dan cikip herkese acik hale gelecegiz. o zaman uslu populist insanlar olacagiz.

Copyright (c) 2048-4096 SourTimes Entertainment

"Bad news: we are still in beta. Not accepting any new users (...)

5.4 sourtimes.org, March 21st 2001

5.5 http://sozluk.sourtimes.org/show.asp?t=beta+hali, April 13th 2001

sozlugun beta hali

Co

1. sozlugun cok $ey yapilmasi planlanmi$ fakat nefes almaya bile vaktim yokken hepsini tamamlamanin cok yava$ olacagini gorunce bu yarim yamalak acilmi$ haline verilen isim.. dolayisiyla final haline kadar yeni kullanici kabul edilmeyecegi yava$ yava$ duzelecegi hali..
(ssg, 27.10.2000 17:36)

2. $ahsi kanaatim interaktiflik acisindan cok iyi, ama kullanim ve gorunu$ acisindan kotu. bol bol javascript'lerle ittirilmi$ bu beta hali browser'lari epey yormakta. ancak (her ne kadar "reset" olayi hala olmasa da) umidim beta halinin uzun surmemesi. ecnebilerin dedigi gibi (bkz: keep up the good work)
(standalone, 27.10.2000 17:47)

3. şimdilik, (bkz: sozluk guvenlik sistemi) (bkz: voting) (bkz: entry editleme) (bkz: badilist) (bkz: ukte) (bkz: yeni) (bkz: çöp tenekesi)
(camilo, 27.10.2000 20:51)

4. "javascript'lerle ittirilmi$" olmasi tamamen seceneksiz olmamdan olan beta durum vaziyet.. (bkz: development asamasinda ko durumu)
(ssg, 29.10.2000 18:53)

5. "... esk'nin (ek$i sozluk kurulu) bugunku toplantisinda sobehal'in bir ay daha uzatilmasina karar verildi. simdi hava durumu..."
(robin, 29.10.2000 19:03)

6. sozlugu yazmaya vakit bulamayan birinin onu denetlemeye de vakit bulamayacagi gercegi temel alinarak kullanicilar cinsiyet irk akrabalik derecesi gozetilmeden ucurulmaktadir. beta safhasinda i$lerin daha kolay gitmesi icin yapilmi$ bu onergeden sonra sozluk geri geldiginde ucmu$ olan herkes aninda geri getirilecektir.. bu safha sozlugun yeni denetim mekanizmasinin anar$iye nasil bir ba$ariyla kar$i koyacagini gozlemek icin de iyi bir platform olu$turmaktadir..
(ssg, 14.12.2000 11:44)

7. gözümü açtım bunu gördüm. bence gayet fonksiyonel ama yine de userların özlük hakları ile ilgili pek çok eksiklik var. (bkz: sozlukle ilgili isteklerimiz)
(italyanmaz, 14.12.2000 11:48)

8. (bkz: anarsizm) arkasından yenisini kuracağın bir düzeni yıkma arzusuna dayandığı için sözlüğü şu anda anarşist bulabiliriz.
yeni düzen gelene kadar yaşasın beta düzen.(ve beta düzülen)
(arzach, 14.12.2000 11:50)

9. sozlugun dinamik olarak değişimi esnasında girip çıktığı birçok halden biri,diğer haller için (bkz: sozlugun e hali)(bkz: sozlugun yalin hali)(bkz: sozlugun de hali)(bkz: sozlugun den hali)(bkz: igrenc espri)(bkz: kendini yarmak)
(zebellah, 12.03.2001 00:41)

Beta condition of Eksi Sozluk"

User generated dissent: a biographic case study of peer production mechanisms on Eksisozluk.com

5.6 sourtimes.org, May 27th 2002

5.7 http://www.sourtimes.org/soretimes/index.htm, June 1st 2002

INTERNET ARCHIVE
WayBackMachine BETA

http://www.sourtimes.org/soretimes/index.htm   Go   MAY **JUN** AUG   Close ✕

38 captures   ◄ **1** ►   Help ?
1 Jun 02 - 17 Jul 10   2001 **2002** 2003

ANASAYFA | E-MAIL | EKSI SOZLUK | NEREDEYIM?

SOUR TIMES
ENTERTAINMENT

ÇATI KATI
GEÇISLER
PARA BASANLAR
REÇETE
SOUR TIMES

SoreTimes

SourTimes bir icerik sitesi olarak yayinina ba$ladi. Mizah zorunluluk olmadiysa da nedense her zaman yakinsadigimiz bir nokta olageldi. Bundandir ki 2 yil boyunca pek cok komik ya da sacma yazi urettik. Hepsi icinde harcanmi$ vakit ve hobe anilar barindirdigindan yeni siteyle beraber onlari atmaya kiyamadik payla$maya devam edelim istedik.

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- SourTimes'in sourtimes.org olma sebebi, sourtimes.com'u domain transferde zorluk cikaran bir firmadan satin alip haliyle istedigimiz yere ta$iyamami$ olmamizdi. Sonra domain'i ustumuze aldiysak da sourtimes.org olarak kaldi, sourtimes.com expire etti ba$ka biri aldi.

- Bir zamanlar sourtimes'ta ek$i sozluk yoktu.

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BIR CLAIRVOYANT VE SSG MAMULUDUR. ALINTI VEYA CALINTI HALINDE ISIM TAVSIYESI HAKKINI KENDINDE SAKLAR.

"Some of the random facts about Sourtimes"

5.8 sozluk.sourtimes.org, September 26th 2003

CHAPTER VI

6.1 Copyright disclaimer, 2001

6.2 Copyright disclaimer, 2005

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