

Chapter 6

The Story of Resistance: How Do Social Movements Tell Their Stories?

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, it's impossible to think about social movements apart from the media, and it has become an obligation out of necessity to set alternative media channels in terms of social movements. The new media and social media networks have been used actively in the process of setting aforementioned alternative media channels. The use of alternative media as a means of criticism and resistance becomes possible with these media networks when they are used with effective communication strategies and techniques. Transmedia storytelling is the leading one among these effective communication strategies. Based on this assertion, in this study, how transmedia storytelling was used as a political advertising activity by the social movements will be analyzed through the example of Gezi Park protests that took place in Turkey in 2013.

INTRODUCTION

As we consider politics as an art of balancing the demands, it will be easy to see how important the role of political advertising is in the process of expressing these demands. This role has become especially more clear in the social movements that traditional political science ignores. The social movements, unlike traditional party line, create and use alternative communication channels in order to introduce their demands to the public. In this process, it's not possible to attract public's attention only with one-way information campaign about demands. In the topics that attract public attention, the social movements use carnivalesque methods (Bakhtin, 2001) apart from "serious" communication methods in order to find supporters for their case. In this context, especially the variety of means of mass media improves political advertising possibilities and methods. One of these methods is transmedia storytelling.

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The Story of Resistance

Transmedia storytelling is a type of narration by which the narrative is kept on being formed in other spaces (Jenkins, 2003, Jenkins 2007). “In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best-so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through game play.” (Jenkins, 2003). By all means, the development in the internet technology is crucial in forming this type of narration. Internet technology has a platform on which all the other communication channels can be used altogether at the same time, in an integrated way, which is beyond all the other means of mass communication. With the developments in the internet technology (Web 3.0, Web 4.0, etc.), the connections among various media channels have provided the possibility of a narrative that intersects all these channels as a narrative that is the product of the media.

In this study, first of all, the transformation in the practice of the politics as well as the transformation in the social movements will be discussed, and in the following chapter, how the demands have been introduced to the public in terms of political communication and political advertising will be analyzed. In the third chapter, how transmedia storytelling was used by the social movements for finding support for their cases and expressing their demands will be analyzed, especially via graffiti examples made in Gezi Park protests.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF POLITICS: ACTORS AND REPRESENTATION

In the traditional sense, “social movements” concepts have been used to name collectives, that struggle for social change. While Castells defines the social movement as a group of proposals for innovation and a form of partnership, Collas regards social movements as collective actions in the conflict between social constructs. Meyer and Tarrow described social movements on the axis of common purpose, solidarity, power relations and challenge (Caig & Form, 2010, pp. 355-356). Today, social movements function in a wide range from the construction of the individual’s identity to the creation of communal spaces.

David Easton’s system model (1957, 1965) considers politics as the art of supply and demand equilibrium. According to this model, political, ecological, economical and cultural systems are in touch with each other, and these sub-systems have demands from one another. The characteristic that makes political system superior to the other systems is that it is being in the decision maker position. Systems continue to work smoothly as long as they have the supply and demand equilibrium in communication with themselves and with other systems. However, once this equilibrium is broken down, the system won’t work and the change will be inevitable. This change can be the transformation of the whole system as well as more reformist transformations such as the change of the actors or the change of demands. In addition to this, according to the system model, since political system is superior than the other systems as it has the capability of decision making, political actors who must enhance the equilibrium of the system have an important role.

The process of including demands via organizational structures like politic elits or political parties coming into being through elections assumes there is an ideal political functioning that ignores the mobility and temporality of the demands. Accordingly, the demands are expressed only in the election period and once the right of sovereignty is passed on, it can be taken over in the next election but only temporarily. In the period between two elections, the people can only include in the governing process by joining an organizational structure. This leads to the institutionalization of the eminent politicians. This traditional approach rules out the restlessness and complaints that stem from growing and unrealized

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