READY, SET, REMIX: LAYERS OF RESISTANCE IN TURKEY'S DIGITAL EVERYDAY THROUGH REMIX VIDEOS

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Sabancı University
July 2025

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Date of Approval: July 18, 2025

ABSTRACT

READY, SET, REMIX: LAYERS OF RESISTANCE IN TURKEY'S DIGITAL EVERYDAY THROUGH REMIX VIDEOS

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Cultural Studies, M.A. Thesis, July 2025

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Keywords: everyday politics, remix video, digital media, resistance, nostalgia

This thesis examines political remix videos and remix culture that have emerged within digital space, a virtual and stratified extension of everyday life, by focusing on the context of resistance in Turkey. It analyzes the transformation of the dissident identity and resistance narratives that surfaced during the 2025 Saraçhane protests with the nostalgic affects tied to the 2013 Gezi Park protests and early Republican narratives. By comparing remix videos from the 2010s to 2020s, it temporarily and thematically traces the practice of remixing resistance as a new media form shaped by socio-political dynamics and technological environment. These emotionally resonant audiovisual narratives, which have found a meaningful place on social media platforms, are discussed as digital, everyday, and socially embedded tactics of resistance against invisibility in traditional media and social forgetting. This analysis is based on de Certeau's (1984) theory of strategies and tactics, emphasizing their mnemonic and communicative functions. It argues that media practices based on user participation and multilayered reproduction in digital environments offer a meaningful contribution to, and reflection of, the formation of resistance identities and narratives in contemporary society.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'NİN DİJİTAL GÜNDELİK YAŞAMINDA REMİKS VİDEOLAR ÜZERİNDEN DİRENİŞİN KATMANLARI

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Kültürel Çalışmalar, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Temmuz 2025

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Anahtar Kelimeler: gündelik siyaset, remiks video, dijital medya, direniş, nostalji

Bu tez, toplumsal gündelik varlığın sanal ve katmanlı bir devamlılığı haline gelmiş dijital mekanda gelişen politik remiks videoları ve remiks kültürünü Türkiye'deki direniş içeriği üzerinden incelemektedir. 2013 Gezi Parkı protestoları ve erken dönem Cumhuriyet anlatılarına duyulan nostaljik duygulanım ile 2025 Saraçhane protestolarında ortaya çıkan "direnen" kimliği ve direniş anlatılarının dönüşümü remiks videolar üzerinden zamansal ve içeriksel karşılaştırmalar ile ele alınmaktadır. Sosyal medya platformlarında kendine anlamlı bir yer edinen ve duygulanım yönü güçlü bu görsel-işitsel anlatılar, hatırlatıcı ve iletişimsel işlevleriyle de de Certeau'nun (1984) strateji ve taktik kuramı çerçevesinde unutulma ve geleneksel medyadaki görünürsüzlüğe karşı dijital, gündelik ve sosyal bir direniş taktiği olarak tartışılmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, dijital mecralarda medya üzerinden, kullanıcı-temelli ve çok katmanlı yeniden üretme pratiklerinin toplumdaki direniş kimliği ve anlatılarına bir katkı sunduğu ve anlamlı bir yansıması olduğu savunulmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In one of our meetings to edit and submit my undergraduate thesis for a conference publication, my undergraduate supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Didar Akar asked me about my plans after graduation. When I mentioned I intended to continue my education until I got my doctorate, she told me with a knowing and warm smile on her face that my master's studies would be a good opportunity to see and confirm my aspiration to stay in academia. At that time, I understood what she said, but I did not grasp what she meant. When I faced the hardships of this thesis and got to know the current issues in academic spheres, I sometimes recalled this moment and laughed at myself. I now know what she meant and feel its tensions, but I still can't help but love what I do. I wanted to begin my acknowledgments with this small memory and greatly thank Didar Hocam, as she has always been encouraging in my studies since we started working together. Her support enabled me to get accepted into my graduate program, making this thesis possible in the first place.

Thus, how interesting it is that one of the first questions my now master's supervisor Asst. Prof. Ayşecan Terzioğlu asked was "Oh, you are Didar Hoca's student? She told me about you!". Since her first class, Ayşecan Hoca's courses widened my perspective and eased my transition into graduate life and a different academic discipline, introducing me to everyday life theory which I heavily used in my thesis. Ayşecan Hocam and I became closer as we rode the 45-minute-long shuttle trips together, and she affectionately called me her "shuttle buddy." She was always available, generously offering her time and guidance whenever I needed it, and our conversations were always delightful. I can't thank her enough for her support and being more than a supervisor during my time in Sabancı University. Of course, I would also like to show my gratitude to my thesis jury members, Assoc. Prof. Ateş Altınordu and Asst. Prof. Nazlı Özkan for their enriching and on-point commentaries that aided me in navigating the massive sea of literature. Without their knowledge in their respective fields, this thesis would be far less grounded and satisfying to write.

My Master's journey wasn't a particularly short one. I would like to thank TÜBİTAK BİDEB 2210-A scholarship program for aiding my studies. Although I had a fair share of their teasing through their inquiries on my thesis' status, I also deeply appreciate my family's support on my endless academic ambitions. I

am grateful to my hardworking mother and father for acknowledging my passion for social sciences and arts while believing in me and doing their best to provide me with an opportunity to receive education. I know life has been tough on you, I appreciate all your efforts as humans and my parents. I thank Kerem for being the best little brother even though he now hates being called little – luckily, this is my thesis, and I can write whatever I want. I hope things turn out well for both of us and we have many moments to have fun together. I would also like to thank my dear aunt for her support, love, and friendship. Let's dine out more and yes, I can do your eyeliner whenever you want. Finally, I am forever and ever in debt to my grandparents Nezate and Mehmet for raising me with their heartwarming affection and care, opening their arms whenever I needed and being my oldest and most consistent supporter since day one. I am so fortunate to have you, I love you all and I will do my best in the future to make you proud.

I meow my cats Mia, Leo, and Milo, who ensured my lap was warm, sometimes too warm, and my need to pet, kiss, and squash them lovingly was always met. Mia and Leo unexpectedly came into my life at the start of my graduate studies. Mia is clever and studied a lot with me, so I am optimistic that she will also get her degree shortly. I am not sure about her siblings though.

I met some especially smart and fun-to-be-around people in these three years and enjoyed our time with them. Being a part of my cohort was amazing. Among them, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Erkin, Didem and Soner Cem for their friendship. I am glad for the lively hangouts I shared with you beyond our lectures and deadlines; you made me feel seen and safe. Many thanks to countless people and friends whom I met in my Master's years for the joyful conversations and the solidarity we shared around our academic journeys, love for knowledge, and fun. I wish the best for you guys. The friends who were there long before any of this began – Tayfun, Meltem, Çiğdem, Sedef, Selen, Ecem, Evren and all my friends whose companionship I deeply enjoy, thank you for patiently enduring my absence during my studies. Moreover, I want to thank the friends I met online, the content creators, artists, and writers that made my time on the internet, and the internet itself that encouraged me to be who I am today. It showed me the worlds exceeding my own, taught me English and enabled me to write this thesis.

I am proud of myself for always sticking up and not giving up, even though sometimes life and the state of the world do not seem too promising, and adulthood feels like a scam. Against all odds, I genuinely enjoyed writing this thesis. For giving me hope amid all this, I am always thankful to the queer feminist people for showing me the power of solidarity, joy, and courage to imagine a life otherwise. You are a bliss to be around and this thesis is for you.

There is one person without whom this thesis would not exist. Days with her are never boring and when we laugh together, I find a new joy in everyday. Lastly, I am thankful for my dear Hande. I met her on an October afternoon in a mundane classroom without knowing she would become my biggest supporter and lighthouse during the darkest moments of my nights. Her brilliant mind and our talks expand my perspective on life and her gentle presence lights up my way.

To those who choose compassion
even at the darkest moments of their night
and to the ones who keep hoping for the sun to rise

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AKP *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party) .....

BTK *Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu* (Directorate of Communications and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority) .....

CHP *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Peoples' Republic Party) .....

DEM Party *Halkların Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi* (Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party) .....

DoC *İletişim Başkanlığı* (Directorate of Communications) .....

DTO *Dijital Dönüşüm Ofisi* (Digital Transformation Office) .....

HDP *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* (Peoples' Democratic Party) .....

MHP *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party) .....

TOMA An abbreviation of the Turkish name of riot intervention vehicles named *Toplumsal Olaylara Müdahale Aracı*, literally translating to Social Incidents Intervention Vehicle .....

TÜİK *Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu* (Turkish Statistical Institute) .....

VPN Virtual Private Networks .....

1. INTRODUCTION

A traditional rug laid out to dry on the police barricades on a street in Istanbul, a stray cat, and graffiti reading "arrogance" are in the background (See Figure 1.1). This was the photograph that greeted me when I woke up one day and checked my personal X account a few weeks before submitting this thesis. It was a striking image, with the caption "Barricades have pretty much become a normal part of daily life," in Turkish, and gathered a considerable amount of interest on the platform. Regarded as an "unintentional installation" that is embellished with the "Mediterranean aesthetics" by many, the usage of the barricades, which is a materialization of the restrictive and dictating power of the state, was transformed into a rug dryer by the locals during the barricades' endless presence on the main streets and squares of Turkey. Yesterday, it was a barricade. Today, it is a rug dryer. Tomorrow? Who knows.

This thesis is not about this photograph, nor barricades, rugs, or cats. It is about one of the unconventional ways I argue people in Turkey resist power in their digital everyday through mediation, like the first framing of this photograph and its existence on X, but more so through remediation, like the emotive comments, funny captions, mnemonic references, and photographic edits it got online. It is about the videographic remix culture, and specifically the remix videos on resistance in Turkey, and how (digital) media assists subjects in making sense of resistance, navigating their dissident identities across time, and bypassing certain forms of repression in their daily lives.

Figure 1.1 An old rug lies on top of a police barricade on an Istanbul street — photograph taken by Seda Yılmaz @*sedayilmaz* on X.

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Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2025) defines remix as "a variant of an original recording made by rearranging or adding to the original." The practice originated from the digital sampling practice of African American Hip Hop culture, in which mostly underground musical artists extracted and altered segments from other artists' songs to make their own (De Kosnik 2019). While remix still refers to the manipulated songs or audio in the common language, both in Turkish and English, the practice itself has come to mean "recombining preexisting media content to fabricate a new work" in academic spheres (Gunkel 2022, 1). Video remixes, sometimes called video *mashups*, are one of the most common forms of remixing today, but they are not a novel online practice. People have been implementing them into their content as a form of entertainment since the 2000s by overlapping or altering music and video clips in a specific manner that may be "nonsensical" to outsiders of conventional

internet culture. This perception stems from the means of exaggeration, repetition, and overediting employed by these videos to evoke specific emotions, like internet *memes*[1].

Apart from being entertaining, some of these remixes also exhibit political intentions. As Edwards and Tryon (2009) demonstrate, individual internet users remix different audio-visual elements and assemble certain socio-historical signs to design political narratives. However, such political content and the digital interactions they receive have vastly increased in the last decade due to technological advancements in communication technologies, like smartphones. Unlike the early years of media technologies in which the domestic nature of TV and immovable personal computers inevitably localized our access to digital space (Silverstone 2003), most of our technologies are now mobile. This mobilization incorporated the digital space in our everyday lives across different dimensions and temporalities. From the breaks in our working hours to crowded public transportation, we do not just encounter and engage with political narratives wherever and whenever we have an internet connection, but we also form ephemeral or steady connections with other people and media spaces that shape how we think about political and social relations.

Turkey, with its seventy million internet users (TÜİK 2024), is not an exception to the mediatization of political narratives. Remix videos of political figures and events have been going viral over the years on social media. The majority of these older videos seek to criticize their subject through humor. However, the recent instances of political remixes do not just provide political satires, but they also intend to provoke different affectual states, such as national pride, hope, anger, grief, or nostalgia. As Ahmed (2004) discusses, emotions can be temporal, but they are invoked through our socially and historically learned conceptions of subjects, objects, ideas, and performances. Emotions orient people in social spaces by *sticking* with them across other people, objects, and signs, and gain value over time as affectual states. Thus, being subjected to political narratives through our everyday media consumption can influence what we think of politics, specifically resistance and power, but also how we navigate our affectual relations, bodily or digital reactions, and what we do with them in the long run.

Remix videos, much like the practice's origins in Hip-Hop culture, are often created by amateur video editors and are considered user-generated content (Waysdorf 2021). I was long aware of the existence of remix videos as an active social media user in my free time, watched them, engaged with Turkish and foreign video editors, and followed their accounts. Between 2021 and 2024, I edited my own videos for

1. "A piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission." (Davison 2012, n.p)

pop culture works, shared them on *Twitter* (X's previous name), and got a decent number of positive reactions through likes, reposts, and comments. This granted me an idea of how most of these social media accounts approach remix videos. While I have never taken an official course or workshop on video editing or coding, I grew up as an online child who taught myself basic forms of art and content making through instructional videos and guidelines on the web. Although not all editors engage in the practice as a hobby like me, video editing and content creation start as an amateur hobby for most people.

However, most remix editors are aware of the impact a visually compelling video can create, employing various editing techniques to achieve their intended purpose. The formation of these techniques can vary depending on the media type's interaction with evolving platforms, technological developments, and narrative objectives. Hence, the continuities/discontinuities in remixing practices over time are not meaningless and provide us with an opportunity to explore remix videos as a political and narrational medium that "samples" not only from the present but also the past. In this respect, the temporal mix-and-match observed in remix videos pairs well with another concept that likewise brings the past in a present setting. As a powerful affective state and discursive tool, *nostalgia*, commonly defined as a longing for the past, offers a valuable analytical framework for establishing a focus between resistances and (re)mediation practices. By taking past, present, and future(s) into account, examining the content of remix videos across time can enrich our grasp of how changing social, political, and technological dynamics influence online political narratives on resistance and the production of new media spaces.

Up until now, I introduced the selected medium, remix videos, and how they can be used to make sense of resistance as a social phenomenon. In order to examine how remediation can function as a continuous example of everyday resistance in the digital sphere, I will focus on two recent and nation-wide collective resistance movements in Turkey: the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the 2025 Saraçhane protests. These two events will serve as comparative grounds to explore how remix videos over the past decade reflect the shifting narratives of resistance, and how nostalgia works within the aesthetics and making-dos of resistance. Thus, I shall contextualize the movements of Gezi and Saraçhane before continuing further.

1.1 Backgrounds of Gezi and Saraçhane

The Gezi Park Protests began in late May of 2013 in Taksim, Istanbul following the *Justice and Development Party* (AKP) government's decision to demolish the park with the aim of re-establish the Ottoman era building *Topçu Kışlası* (Artillery Barracks) that existed on the Gezi Park borders between 1806 to 1940 but with the addition of a shopping mall inside, gentrifying the historical area further Inceoglu (2015). The bulldozers entered the park on May 28, yet the demolishment team withdrew temporarily after they met the strong opposition of ecological activists, Gezi Park Association members, and political figures Yörük and Yüksel (2014). Tents were set up in Gezi Park to defend it with an occupying movement, and a culture of resistance emerged in the park, where diverse demographic and ideological groups cultivated communal coexistence practices, embellished with forums, arts, music, dance, and dissidence in a "carnivalesque *yaşam alanı*[2]" against the consumption space intended to be built on the park (Erensü and Karaman 2017, 20-22). Since the beginning of the protests, activists and the police forces clashed, and interventions happened through the usage of water cannons, teargas, and plastic bullets; 8 people died due to police intervention or civil lynching (Bianet 2021). As the protest scene heated up and the government's insistence on the operation continued, what started as an ecologist sit-in to preserve the Gezi Park turned into oppositional resistance against the overall anti-democratic acts of the government, spreading across the country with the slogan "Everywhere is Taksim, resistance is everywhere[3]".

Environmental activists, left-wing groups, marginalized ethnic and religious minorities such as Kurdish and Alawite populaces, feminists and queer activists, Kemalists and nationalists, football fans, artists and actors, and political figures were all prominent members of the Gezi protests, making the movement highly multi-vocal and politically unifying (Yörük and Yüksel 2015). While the park was left untouched at the end of the Gezi protests, the political change and democratic transformation demanded by the protesters remained unfulfilled after the government's dispersal of the dissidents. Furthermore, for the next 12 years, no nationwide grassroot opposition emerged; instead, the focus was mostly on fragmented resistances organized around selected localities, activist aims, and acute problems arising in the country (Arslanalp and Erkmen 2024).

Moving forward to 2025, Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu officially announced his presidential candidacy at the end of February 2025. However, on March 18, 2025,

2. "Life place" in Turkish.
3. *Her Yer Taksim, Her Yer Direniş*

İmamoğlu's undergraduate diploma from 1994 was withdrawn by the school board, insisting that he had "improperly transferred" to Istanbul University from his former university in Northern Cyprus, making him unable to be a presidential candidate[4]. The next day, on March 19, he got detained and got arrested three days later based on charges of corruption and alleged cooperation with the state-acknowledged terrorist group, or PKK[5] (Reuters 2025). Along with him, senior bureaucrats working under the Istanbul Municipality were also detained. Later that day, students from Istanbul University, which has a history of shaping the political atmosphere of 20th-century Turkey with its student movements, protested against İmamoğlu's arrest and the cancellation of his diploma (Bianet 2025a). Despite encountering overwhelming police intervention, Istanbul University students managed to break down the barricades and reach the Beyazıt Square, becoming a pioneer for the movement chain known as the Saraçhane protests, ensuing the detention of İmamoğlu. İmamoğlu's party, which is also Turkey's founding and main oppositional party, *Peoples' Republic Party* (CHP), called on its supporters to gather in front of the Istanbul Municipality building in Saraçhane for the following week.

The protests involved a wide range of civil participation, from right-wing and left-wing political parties to workers' and activist organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and most importantly, students. The protests in Saraçhane, which more than 1 million people attended on the night of March 22, were pursued by demonstrations throughout the country, most notably in Ankara and Izmir (BBC News Türkçe 2025; Medyascope 2025). Although students from state and private universities were one of the main organized groups, many high school students also participated in the protests in support, and the active participation of the young segment was both discussed and affirmed. Like the Gezi Park protests, there was a diverse crowd that included people with different demographic backgrounds and ideological stances, such as Turkic nationalists, republican Kemalists, feminist and queer rights activists, liberals, workers parties, and Kurdish groups. As counter-reactive action towards the İmamoğlu and other bureaucrats' detention increased in online and offline spaces, transportation and internet access were temporarily restricted, and all kinds of demonstrations were banned, first in Istanbul and then in other cities where protests were ongoing. CHP party chairman Özgür Özel called for a boycott of mainstream media outlets and channels that did not broadcast or report on the Saraçhane protests, the detention of protesters and usage of tear gas and cannons in interventions Bianet (2025b). Like in Gezi

4. According to Article 101 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (1982), a presidential candidate must have a higher education degree.

5. *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* or in short PKK is a pro-Kurdish Marxist-Leninist group founded in 1978 and operated mainly as guerilla forces since then.

Park protests, these occurrences got shared on social media platforms by protestors, journalists, and some photojournalists who later got detained as well (Bianet 2025c).

From Gezi to Saraçhane, some form of cultural-political continuity can be observed in collective resistances in Turkey. Nonetheless, the widespread use of digital technologies has given rise to new forms and dynamics in the protest scene. While the Gezi Park is symbolic to be one of the first strong uses of social media, the Saraçhane protests demonstrate how the digital sphere has become a more comprehensive and prevalent part of resistance. Moreover, AKP government still functioned relatively as a single party during the Gezi Park protests, being at its peak years of political, economic, and cultural power. Whereas by 2025, the political environment shows increased polarization, multipolarity and a dominance of nationalist and conservative discourses clashing with the left-wing resistances. Moreover, new forms of nationalisms that get influenced by global right-wing trends grow stronger particularly among the youth that also favors the early Republican national identification and narrations of democracy and freedom (Istanbul Youth Research Center 2025). As these shifting dynamics, ideological tensions, and harsher state interventions molded the Saraçhane protests, the digital media played an even more critical role in both mobilization and enhancing the visibility of the resistance.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Agnes Heller (2015) defines everyday life as a private and public sphere subjected to power relations and consisting of our ordinary and repetitive actions and performances. I take Heller's definition as a starting point for my overall theoretical framework of this thesis. Authoritarian regimes that have the potential to penetrate every aspect of life are neither specific to a country, a government, nor a particular time. However, examining the paths of resistance that respond to control and regulation that develop throughout history within spatial dynamics is valuable in understanding the ways political subjects' position and reposition themselves in increasing turbulence. While power is more than authoritarian and oppressive relations formed between states and people (Foucault 1990; Scott 2016), this thesis focuses on how people resist hegemonic narratives and physical/digital measures formed through state power.

Agreeing with Highfield's (2016) view on everyday politics as an informal yet reflective and derivate lens to look at the political, I do not situate and contextualize politics as an imposition on everyday life that is innately out of its borders, ma-

terialized through formal governmental bodies, state apparatuses, strictly political figures, and parties. On the contrary, everyday life is where and when people express, approve, demand, shape, and challenge the discursive, symbolic, and materialized political realities that exist around them. As the immersion of digital devices and network systems deepens in our daily ways of living and sense-making, digital space establishes new everyday spatio-temporalities for its subjects to engage with and contribute to politics and what is political. This layered engagement is not univocal nor only between (digital) political "objects" and the users. It is also between different subjectivities of users who have "their own personal interests, perspectives and issues of importance" in regards to the political and non-political and alter their online political "talk" and participation (Highfield 2016, 7). With the online encounter of users from various subjectivities, the internet has often been conceptualized as a modern public sphere, displaying inclusive political discussion and participatory engagement. echoing Habermas's (1991) model of a social space where civic rational debate can form public opinion and thus establish and sustain democratic political participation in societies (Papacharissi 2002). However, just like Habermas' idealized rational public space, the internet's democratizing potential has remained a subject of ongoing debate for the last three decades many, including Habermas himself, criticizing the historical exclusion of marginalized groups, such as women and queers (Fraser 1992). In this thesis, I will briefly refer back to the potential participatory abilities and democratizing opportunities remix videos can provide in line with the Habermas' public space.

In popular culture, meaningful and active resistance is often imagined through images of public and collective actions, such as protests or strikes. Defined as *repertoires of contention* by Tilly (1995), the place of these more upfront and organized practices in resistance cultures is historically shaped and well-regarded by the public due to their consistent appearance through time, especially in Western political contexts. However, confining resistance to such overt and confrontational methods downplays everyday life as a particularly fruitful dimension in which creative and individualized forms of resistance emerge among people and may result in more impactful movements. Nonetheless, the nature of everyday resistance makes the concept difficult to define and categorize compared to politically intentional repertoires of convention. Johansson and Vinthagen (2019, 183), inspired by post-structuralist theories and everyday life literature, propose an analytical and theoretical framework for the everyday resistances that are not typically considered resistances but still are "mundane forms of scattered and regular resistance with a potential to undermine power". At the end of their book, they indicate specific characteristics of everyday resistance based on their discussions. In summary, they argue that everyday resis-

tances are non-confrontational or non-recognized ways of consistent resistance, by individuals or subcultural groups who do not usually try to consciously undermine and end power inequalities altogether with their daily opposition but may be politically intended as well. Hence, I view everyday resistance as dynamic practices that always interact with and are born out of the current situations and positionalities of its practitioners. Similar to the changing nature of who resists and what is resisted against, the ways of everyday resisting are dynamic and unstable but arise out of the inabilities/abilities of the social present and the interests and capabilities of each resisting subjects.

In my thesis, I am not after to answer if certain forms of resistance are more effective or not. My aim is to follow the users as they collage and create their own media works to form pathways to make sense of politics and the political, as well as use these to bypass certain power inequalities and strategies. To do so, I am particularly inspired by de Certeau's (1984) concept of *tactics*, which is the non-powerful commons' unorthodox ways to resist the hegemonic ones' means of control, which he calls *strategies*. Although there seems to be a hierarchical inequality between the two due to power relations, de Certeau does not and advises not to underestimate the power of tactics. He explains that tactics are an "answer," or an opposition to the strategies, not weaker versions of them. As the "allies of unpredictability," tactics prefer out-of-box practices compared to strategies that favor expectedness. Throughout the following chapters, I will analyze the possibility of remix videos are such covert tactics against some of the strategies employed by those in power within the everyday.

With the gradual shift from immobile computers to portable high-tech devices, digital space established a routine on its own in relation to our offline world (Ytre-Arne 2023). Like the non-virtual world, digital space has users who demonstrate certain patterns of digital routine, practice, and sociality (Postill and Pink 2012). They structure and define digital space within the constraints and freedoms of platforms, websites, and other digital tools. Yet, cracks can, will, and do happen. Thus, subjects simultaneously find novel ways to cross the digital borders and form new places that suit their interests. Thus, following the Cresswell's (2002) theory of place-making that conceptualizes place as constantly emerging through its inhabitants' practice and practical knowledge, Postill and Pink (2012) argue we must contemplate digital space in a state of persistent *becoming* through the practices of users. In this *becoming*, the notions of time, space, and movement are significant to consider if one is concerned with how users engage with virtual. This results with movement being at the central to both the experience of digital space and the methodological approach of this study, which will be based on ethnographic data

and walking to understand digital mediation dynamics.

1.3 *Walking* the Net: Methodology

Throughout their interactions with the digital space, users navigate across websites, apps, platforms, networks, and devices. Likewise, the researcher behaves the same, following the users around the digital but they also conceive new routes, bringing "collections of things" (Pink 2008, n.p.) from different localities together, and establishing their field through their movement across the net (Hine 2015; Pink 2008; Postill and Pink 2012). Since both movements play a crucial role in this theory of place-making, I am conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically inspired by *walking*. The construction of walking as an epistemological method goes as far as Benjamin (1999) and his discussions on the *flâneur*, as well as de Certeau's (1984) influential article *Walking the City*. While Benjamin's understanding of the flâneur is more of a detached observer and narrator of the urban space and its aesthetics, de Certeau's walking reconfigures and resists the urban space strategically planned to its favor through everyday practices. Apart from being a way to engage with space, walking the city is also a methodological approach to see and observe everyday life and its social relations. According to de Certeau, the panoptic look is how city planners, political figures, and the ones in power voyeuristically approach the city. This detached way of looking has the authority to see and regulate the urban, but it cannot fully grasp and narrate the urban people's everyday experiences and dynamics without walking through it. Hence, walking, to de Certeau, is also an epistemological tactic to explore everyday. Following this framework, the literature on contemporary anthropological methods has constructed walking as "a self-conscious, reflective project of wandering" with "interactions and observations" to gather contextualized data on the subject at hand (Pierce and Lawhon 2015, 5). In the digital every day, if footsteps are the online clicks, the roads are the hyperlinks.

Following this framework, I drifted from the social media studies using big data collected from social media platforms' scraping methods, *Application Programming Interfaces* also known as APIs, and prioritized the use of small data methodologies (Pal and Gonawela 2017). Text-based quantitative methods, which are employed heavily by Twitter/X studies with API, inevitably render out significant contextuality of digital cultures, especially the intricacies of visual practices, thereby causing us to overlook cultural interactions and how people create, share, and utilize different digital objects in wider virtual/non-virtual contexts, at the cost of postulating

data from a bigger sample with the hopes of eliminating researcher bias as much as possible. Second, I judge qualitative digital methods as the most appropriate for my fieldwork, considering I aim to present the practices, discourses, and happenings of digital as the digital subjects experience it, not through numbers and complex networks, but interactions between users and media spaces. Like the methodological framework, these allowed me to be on-site and observe digital movements without disrupting them, preserving the natural flow of interactions while collecting context-rich material reflective of users' ordinary digital practices.

My fieldwork consisted of two phases. In the first phase, which roughly spans a year, I familiarized myself with different kinds of political and non-political remix videos, their aesthetics, and the discourses surrounding their existence, across multiple platforms, both from global and Turkish contexts. I used the available digital tools provided by platforms and devices to save my findings, like X and TikTok's bookmarking function, YouTube's playlists, screenshotting, and video downloading. Moreover, I observed different audiences and editors to understand how they engage with the medium. During this phase, I have spent at least 10-20 minutes every day watching remix videos and informally taking notes as I consider relevant. I navigated within the apps just as a native user uses them, scrolling down and scrolling back, tracing retrospectively as well as cross-sectionally, experiencing the digital boundaries, strategies, affective economies, and networks as they happen (Ahmed 2004).

In the second phase, aiming to analyze how the aesthetics of resistance remixes in Turkey evolved and engaged with the narratives of Gezi and Saraçhane, I collected videos on three specific topics:

- 3 remix videos from YouTube about the Gezi protests during these protests, 2013.
- 4 remix videos from YouTube about the Gezi protests, posted in the 2020s.
- 5 remix videos on Saraçhane protests of March 2025, 4 of them posted on X and one on TikTok.

While studies focusing on one website or app indeed exist (Froio and Ganesh 2019), the multi-sited research is more in alignment with the current routine and structure of the digital, in which the users jump across platforms and invite other users through hyperlinks and hashtags. Remix videos can be present in every corner of the easily accessible parts of the internet, such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Reddit, and Facebook. Still, I mostly limited my scope to X and YouTube due to several reasons.

First, X is a micro-blogging site that prioritizes sharing shorter, easier-to-update

thoughts and reactions, along with visual media, which provides additional metadata for the researcher to analyze. By attaching remix videos to their posts and communications, the X users integrate remix videos into their communicative repertoires.

Second, X's *quoting* (reposting another post with your own comment on top) and *mentioning* (tagging another user using their X name to address or reference them, like "@username") features allow users to retrospectively and laterally trace interactions between users and digital content. With these features of X, I was able to follow along with the political discourses and reactions to remix videos by simply clicking a few times on the previous posts and tagged names. In this regard, X provides a fruitful space for my approach, since my aim with this thesis is not merely to analyze the video contents, but to discuss how people utilize and remediate resistance narrations through actively using remix videos in their digital routines. The communicative and highly networked nature of X provided me with additional metadata to analyze. This was unlike YouTube and TikTok, which have textual components but are more concentrated on the visuality and linear thought-sharing by the users, via comments made under comments.

Third, the history of X as a digital networking site for various political groups, movements, and protests globally is highly studied (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Demirhan 2014; Eslen-Ziya 2013; Tufekci 2017). The political nature of X stems from the platform's algorithm, features, and characteristics that create a space where politically distinct people can encounter and engage with each other's posts. Unless the user changes it to private mode, every X account is available to be viewed and interacted with by the public by default. Meaning anyone can explore your posts, quote, or comment on them, and become a part of the ongoing discourse, thus making the political discussions participatory and shaped by algorithmic visibility rather than close networks. Moreover, there is a high number of X users in Turkey, with more than twenty million, placing Turkey among the top ten countries that use X the most (World Population Review 2025). The widespread usage of X in Turkey offers researchers a large and diverse set of digital data that is both visually and textually rich, in which they can do both retrospective and real-time research. With the mentioned traits, X generates a unique digital space where conflicting political affiliations and the usual public frequently encounter each other. Thus, it has been a popular research site in the last two decades for digital research. While I especially focused on X for 2025 videos due to the urgency and the high information flow during the protests, as well as to analyze the communicative function of remix videos, I also heavily utilized YouTube. As a video-based platform with the biggest user activity, YouTube has acted as an unintentional media archive since

its establishment in 2005. Thus, providing me with older videos from 2013 and the early 2020s. Moreover, some X accounts that predominantly establish their content on remix videos and video editing have other social media accounts to archive their content or get more engagement across platforms. These side accounts were mainly on YouTube and the short-video platform TikTok. I added one remix video from TikTok Due to the scope of my thesis, I haven't done an exhaustive comparative analysis on how remix videos are handled on these three platforms. However, I still consider how different platforms offer different media spaces to their users based on their interfaces, and how this impacts the narratives in remix videos.

I archived relevant data by downloading remix videos and screenshotting contextual elements (captions, comments, likes, etc.) to my computer. After data collection, I visually and discursively analyzed my data to answer the following questions:

- Why have remix videos become a frequent medium for political expression in everyday digital practices? How do remix videos function in the digital space across diverse platforms?
- How do people make use of remix videos to navigate their affectual experiences with resistance in Turkey? What are the reasons for the technical and stylistic changes in remix videos, and how do these changes alter the narratives of resistance from 2013 Gezi to 2025?

1.3.1 Navigating Digital Research in Turbulent Times

To protect user privacy, only content from public accounts is included in the study. However, Boyd and Crawford (2012) argue that the public accessibility of X data should not be satisfactory to indicate that all data taken from social media is inherently ethical and ready to be used for academic research. In this thesis, I only disseminate anonymized, translated to English, and lightly rephrased versions of my data, reflected on their content before deciding on their inclusion in the thesis. I did not cover any content with sensitive or personal information. In online spaces, most users already use pseudonyms or nicknames so their identities are partially concealed by choice, but since these could still be traced through computational data such as IPs, they are vulnerable to identification. In order to overcome this issue, comments on remix videos made by personal accounts will not be directly attributed to safeguard their identity unless they are the video editors[6].

6. This research has received ethical approval by the Sabancı University Research Ethics Council SUREC with the Protocol Number FASS-2025-20. All textual data is anonymized and video creators are credited accordingly.

Due to the presence of countless audio-visual copyrighted and non-copyrighted material in them, the legal debates on the copyrights of remix videos have not resulted in a consensus (Lessig 2008; Waysdorf 2021). These videos will be treated as copyrighted to ensure no problems are encountered in the future. The usage of these videos as an educational analysis without getting consent from the video editors is legitimized by the Turkish Copyright Law and the US Copyright Act's Fair Use laws. The creators are referenced if they are known, and I only included a relevant and limited number of screenshots when needed. However, remix videos circulating online can get partially anonymized along the way when other users download remix videos on their devices and re-post them. This is especially the case if the video does not include a visual indicator of authorship, making it difficult to specify the original editor. In these instances, I did my best to find the original editor and include a reference to them.

I previously elaborated that my methodological perspective was influenced by ethnographical approaches to digital space. Even though digital space regularly overlaps with the non-virtual world, I oppose the assumption that these spaces are identical, considering that digital has its own ways of operating that we do not observe in the latter. As Hine (2015) and Caliandro (2018) argue, rather than transmitting traditional qualitative methods to the digital, researchers of the digital should employ native digital methodologies that account for internal features, dynamics, and cultures of this field. Moreover, Abidin and de Seta (2020) propose that these methodologies should account for digital's "messy, ambiguous, and material" nature proposing that adaptive and flexible approaches specific to understand digital's unpredictability, layered meanings of digital data and experiences are needed. These must be attentive to digital-specific issues such as algorithmic bias, moderation policies of platforms, and potential dangers such as trolls[7], lynching, and viruses.

However, one of the most challenging parts of researching political groups on the mainstream internet was not any of these but it was losing access to critical data if I did not store them offline or on third-party platforms. The loss of such political online data has two sides, it can either be executed voluntarily or involuntarily by the original poster. First, it is highly common to consciously and consensually delete one's own digital activities or footprints. This can be due to a lot of personal reasons, but most users prefer either deleting their content/account or making them unavailable to the public as a tactic to avoid further confrontation with other users

7. On online social space, trolls are those who intend to disrupt others by posting problematic, provocative, or misleading content to elicit emotional reactions. Activities of a troll can range from teasing people to dedicated online harassment. Trolling can be done for personal enjoyment of distressing communities (Buckels, Trapnell, and Paulhus 2014) or can be used as a state strategy (Bulut and Yörük 2017; Zannettou et al. 2019).

and the risk of facing legal and political consequences. On X that functions through the interactions of users via quoting and commenting posts, the deletion of posts or accounts results in some important and meaning-giving posts being lost within *threads* of communication.

This process can also be imposed on involuntarily to users. What I am referring to here is the non-consensual, systematic, and institutionalized forms of regulation, Certeauian strategies, imposed by internet service providers, governments, and digital platforms. This issue constantly resurfaced in the field and challenged me to adapt to this changing environment. During my fieldwork period, multiple oppositional X accounts, regardless of their affiliations with right or left-wing ideologies, were suspended or became inaccessible in Turkey. Among these accounts, some built their reputation with political remix videos, showing that visual data are also heavily targeted, which I will further discuss in Chapter 2. These incidents underline that although the digital data are considered "ready" to be analyzed, it's not guaranteed to be available. Its preservation can be messy, and researchers always has the risk of losing meaningful digital contexts. Such examples illustrate that while the internet is always a slippery slope when it comes to digital research, these problems can deepen in politically turbulent times. The nature of the political atmosphere and the digital's own unreliability required me to be reflexive and cautious in my methodology and the dissemination of data. Moreover, it urged me to find new ways to ensure the safety of the research subjects and I while also taking the research quality into account. In this thesis, I had to negotiate and constantly navigate myself in relation to the disadvantages of the political atmosphere, methodological and theoretical issues, and platform changes. Furthermore, my thesis' politically-packed topic forced me to come up with new methodological tactics as I faced new challenges with the present socio-political atmosphere becoming more turbulent. I preserved data and meta-data offline, anonymized the content and user information more, translated comments to make them less traceable, did not include screenshots from X and YouTube, used VPNs to find information, and only used citations when needed to protect my research subjects. Thus, this discussion of offline/online continuum of strategies and the methodological tactics the researcher comes up along the way align with the further discussions of digital tactics and strategies of control. The researcher is not just an observer of those, but actively navigates within the constraints shapen by the context they research in and about.

1.4 Thesis Outline

Before introducing remix videos in detail, I will present the socio-political situation in Turkey between 2020 and 2025 in Chapter 2, focusing on the regulatory digital actions taken by the country's long-standing government and state-led digitalization efforts that facilitates the economic and political continuity of its techno-authoritarian atmosphere. Since de Certeau theorizes the existence of tactics as reactive to strategies, this chapter serves to contextualize digital strategies employed in Turkey so that the following chapters can better display the position of remix videos in the resistance culture.

Although remix videos receive hundreds of thousands of likes and millions of views, it is a phenomenon and medium that can be overlooked by those who are not active in specific social media spaces. To familiarize the reader, I will provide a brief history of resistance remixes and exemplify some audiovisual elements frequently encountered in remix videos in Chapter 3, "The Anatomy of the Political Remix Culture". Since remix videos form their own rhythms through the interplay of music and visual design and connect with the rhythms of the platforms they are on, the rhythmic presence of remix videos will also be discussed in the third chapter. This will be approached by referencing the rhythmanalysis approach of the influential theorist Henri Lefebvre (2013) originally published in 1992, considering the significance of rhythm, routines, and breaks in composing everyday life that is also apparent and meaningful in digital everyday.

In Chapter 4, I will analyze how the visual and musical aesthetics of remixing have evolved in response to technological advancements, usage of internet, and gradually more accessible digital editing tools. This chapter examines how platform interfaces, such as those of X, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram, shape creative potentialities and constraints of media production, while user demands and algorithmic recommendations influence aesthetic choices and blurring the boundaries between amateur and professional video editing and mediation practices. Then, I discuss the three functionalities of remixes, by exemplifying how they occupy the digital space with three functions: mnemonic, affective, and communicative. These functions emphasize remixing as a diachronic, affective, and cooperative practice of meaning-making that not only alters content aesthetically but do so within the dynamics of socio-digital contexts.

Chapter 5, "Counterattacks: Remixes in Turkish Resistance Culture" focuses on the eventful spring of 2025 and the Saraçhane protests. I will discuss the relationship between resistance and nostalgia through the remix videos the dissident groups

shared on social media platforms. The question I ask in this chapter is how people make sense of and utilize the nostalgic narratives as hopeful or resentful connections established around resistance through the remembrance of old or ongoing protests in the medium of remix videos. By taking Gezi nostalgia and Kemalist nostalgia that both conflicted each other or came together from time to time and person to person during the Saraçhane protests, I will analyze the visual and social narratives of resistance in digital time and space, mobilization, and continuities/discontinuities of nostalgic symbols in Turkish political sphere.

In this thesis, I will base my analysis on how remix videos, as a subversive medium, can be used as tactics of narration for resistance. However, to conclude, I will briefly mention how political remixes can also be re-appropriated and turn into *tactics-as-strategies* (Manovich 2009) to nuance my analysis of the remix videos.

2. THE RAGING 2020S: DIGITAL STRATEGIES OF CONTROL IN TURKEY (2020-2025)

Since its foundation in 1923, Turkey has undergone a century that has seldom rested, politically, economically, and socially. As an additional factor, the latest decades have been closely shaped and accompanied by the expansion of digitalization in all dimensions of social life. In this chapter, I will briefly present the digital strategies employed by the government in the 2020s, following the acceptance of the 2020 "Social Media Law" in the Turkish Grand Assembly that increased governmental control of digital space (AA 2020). Since according to de Certeau tactics are answers to the strategies, and "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1990), I will first establish the background of the measures taken against the oppositional voices in Turkey, before explaining what they do to bypass them.

The deepening of anti-democratic practices in Turkey in the last decades is heavily documented (Esen and Gümüşçü 2025). Following the 2013 Gezi Park protests, the domestic opposition and civil disobedience were repeatedly framed as one of the nation's *beka sorunu*, a matter of survival Esen and Gümüşçü (2016). Eliminating acts that "undermine *milli irade*[1]" which gives the government a democratic mandate and right to lead the country has become an urgent and existential issue in the following years of Gezi, and the later governmental periods of the AKP. Deputies obstruct those who attempt to exercise their right to peacefully protest without permission, as set in the Turkish Constitution[2], with deterrent methods such as tear gas, water cannons, handcuffing, detentions, and arrests. Precautions taken against protests and demonstrations are so severe that they alter urban routines, particularly in symbolic locations like Taksim Square in Istanbul, which has an important place in the Turkey's resistance history as the center of the city including the Gezi Park protests. For example on days when protests are likely to happen, access to

1. "Nation's will" in Turkish.

2. "ARTICLE 34 - Everyone has the right to hold unarmed and peaceful meetings and demonstration marches without prior permission" (Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey 1982, art.34)

protest areas is temporarily disabled through barricades, the criminal record checks are conducted in the middle of the road, and various political and non-political events organized by non-governmental bodies are canceled if they or their events are against the state ideology. Women, queer people, workers, Kurdish and other minority identities, oppositional students, and left-wing organizations receive chronic and more coarse interventions from the state forces due to their marginalized positions (Kaos GL News Portal 2025). However, the harsh stance against the opposition, which can be defined as simply being against the government's policies rather than belonging to a particular political party, is not confined to the offline world and continues in the digital and media space.

Online space was not on the radar of the government until its domestic usage among civilians expanded with Web 2.0 and social media platforms (Şahin 2023). After the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the 15 July 2016 coup attempt[3], surveillance through digital means became denser, the state's presence online was felt more, and penalties got stricter (Topak 2017). After the transition to the presidential system in 2018, to comply with the ideals of "a fast, transparent and efficient mode of government" (Digital Transformation Office 2025) that aimed at "enabling new opportunities for public participation in governance", the existing communication technologies and policies were revised, or new ones were introduced. In 2018, the Presidency of the Republic established two governmental institutions related to the regulation of the digital space: the Digital Transformation Office (DTO) to initiate further digitalization projects, and the Directorate of Communications (DoC) to prevent the flow of mis/disinformation. While their starting points and aims are summarized as making digital platforms more accessible and qualified across the country, they can be conceptualized as the institutionalization of the state's will to regulate information technologies and networks and create digital/media spaces where the governmental narratives prevail. In the following years, by treating the digital as a commodity, a tool, and a field, several legal changes increased the government's power over counter-narratives in the public space. Two specific legal amendments were critical in this regard that enabled stricter prosecutions. As I elaborated previously, the "Social Media Law", which permitted further regulations of global social media platforms, came into force in 2020. The law made it mandatory for all social media platforms to have a Turkish representative in Turkey, announcing that platforms would be subjected to high administrative fines if they did not respond to and implement the requests for "removal of content and blocking of access" within 48 hours. Then, the "Disinformation Law" that sentences those who spread al-

3. The 15 July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey was a failed coup attempt carried out by a faction in the military forces that is close to the religious political network, the Gülen movement (Esen and Gümüşçü 2017).

leged mis/disinformation to one to three years of imprisonment was accepted in 2022. The bill was heavily criticized by journalists and social media users due to its vague definition of disinformation and the strong authority given to presidential institutions to take action, sometimes without a court order, to "prevent the spread of disinformation that may harm society" (Michaelson 2022). With these amendments, permission to utilize multiple methods that can limit the right to free speech and access to the internet was given to the Directorate of Communications and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority BTK. These governmental bodies further employed several digital strategies to control the online platforms that the President Erdoğan has described as "dark corridors... where every kind of wickedness exists" (AA 2024).

Throttling, a tactic that is used to slow down internet connection regionally or nationally through bandwidth restrictions, has been repeatedly utilized in times of crisis, such as the bombing attack in Taksim in 2022 (Netblocks 2022) and the armed attack on the Turkish Aerospace Industry headquarters in Ankara in 2024 (Bianet 2024a). Throttling is also an accustomed strategy against major oppositional protests, like the 2025 Saraçhane protests after the arrest of Ekrem İmamoğlu (Bianet 2025d). A measure taken to stop the spread of misinformation also throttles the digital information flow, making it harder for people to get updates and react to news, whether digitally or non-digitally.

More so than throttling, restricting access to platforms themselves is immensely common. Two of the earliest instances in Turkey are the temporary but multiple restrictions on YouTube between 2007 and 2014 (BBC News Türkçe 2014), and on Wikipedia for three years between 2017 and 2020 (BBC News Türkçe 2020). According to *EngelliWeb*[4], which is run by The Freedom of Expression Association[5](İFÖD) and has also been blocked in Turkey (Bianet 2023), almost 1 million websites, including news articles, were withheld in the country by court rule as of 2023 (Medyascope 2024). For example, after the twin earthquakes in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, debates criticizing the management of the crisis on the text-based discussion forum, *Ekşi Sözlük*, resulted in the platform being heavily targeted by right-wing media. This led to *Ekşi Sözlük* being blocked in Turkey on February 22 until the Criminal Court of Peace's order was found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Turkey in 2024 (Bianet 2024b). Other than local websites, international

4. Meaning "BlockedWeb" in Turkish. The project tracks and documents the websites, digital platforms, and new media spaces that are withheld and get inaccessible in Turkey.

5. *İfade Özgürlüğü Derneği*, Freedom of Expression Association and İFÖD in short is founded in 2017. İFÖD aims to promote freedom of expression and the elimination of state censorship in Turkey, focusing on digital and traditional media spheres and offering research and legal support. Their most known project is EngelliWeb.

social media and communication platforms like *Wattpad* and *Discord*, online games such as *Roblox*, news agencies like *Deutsche Welle*, and adult websites like *Grindr* and *OnlyFans* have been subject to permanent or temporary blockage in the country for months, sometimes years according to İFÖD (2025). Digital tools to bypass these restrictions and anonymize users across the internet, like VPNs[6] and Tor[7] services, have increasingly made it harder to gain access without digital literacy or paid services.

Apart from being a surveillance tool, digital data also holds importance within the framework of the government's neoliberal policies, which advocate for the development of a national capital in the global arena. As Şahin (2023) and Coşkun (2020) discusses, actions taken and collaborations formed with NGOs and private sector representatives for this aim are not politically neutral and tend to be with those who are supportive of the government's policies and receive economic and political assistance in turn. The recent decades have created monopolized media and information technology sectors, in which certain conglomerates, known for their close administrative relationships with governmental figures, regulate Turkey's main telecommunication and internet services providers, media agencies, and broadcasting channels (Şahin 2023). This creates a media landscape in line with the govermental outlook, and the mainstream oppositional media narrowed down to a couple of TV channels and newspapers that are close to the CHP, such as *Sözcü TV* and *Halk TV*.

However, the strategies of narration on mainstream media go well beyond these journalistic practices, ranging from typical news broadcasting to the political debate programs that host a collection of carefully selected experts to discuss (and determine) the present agenda hour after hour. Popular cultural productions have been a site of reiteration of the AKP's ideological closeness to the Ottoman past and a desire to construct a *yerli ve milli*[8] culture industry in the country (Çolak 2025). They are also a means of soft power and a manifestation of Turkey's political stance globally (Çevik 2019). Particularly embellished with elements of Neo-Ottoman nostalgia and Sunni Turkic narratives, TV series, documentaries, and movies, such as "Payitaht Abdülhamid" (Akar 2017) and "Kuruluş: Osman" (Günay 2019), and *Tabii*, the digital streaming and production platform supported by the state television against global giants like *Netflix* and *Disney+*, crystallize the AKP's ideological outlook on Turkish mainstream media. With the surged significance of pop culture,

6. The abbreviation of "Virtual Private Networks" that forms encrypted connections between your device and the internet, masking your IP address, hence protecting personal data.

7. The abbreviation of "The Onion Router" that anonymizes digital trace by connecting to multiple encrypted networks to hide your user identity and location.

8. "Local and national." A slogan that is heavily used by AKP to emphasize its late cultural, technological, and political policies.

not as a space where political narratives are imposed upon but also as a strategic apparatus. The alternative spheres formed with the repertoires provided by pop culture serve as an affective map and tactic for the multi-sectional opposition in Turkey. Moreover, as Hintz (2021) states, these alternatives get emphasized more in the present when certain repertoires of contention, like the collective protests, are out of the question or has substantial risk.

Even in the early years of its political journey, the support the AKP received from the mainstream media to consolidate its power is well known (Coşkun 2020; Esen and Gümüşçü 2018; Yeşil 2018). However, there is also a consensus that the level of censorship has rapidly increased during and after the Gezi protests. Freedom House (2024), an NGO releasing annual reports on global digital freedoms, indicates Turkey's internet freedom score as 31 out of 100 and labels the country as "not free" in 2024. Giving scores based on the country's yearly events and policies affecting free speech and internet access, Freedom House's oldest report, 2016, shows that Turkey's score has been consistently decreasing from 40 since then (Freedom House 2016). This highlights that even though internet freedom has been on the poorer side in the last decade, an apparent intensification of control is observable. Local NGOs that deal with media monitoring projects and digital research, such as Hrant Dink Foundation (2025), İFÖD (2024), and MLSA[9] (2025*a*), emphasize the worrying nature of hate speech patterns, techno-authoritarian measures, and anti-democratic, anti-pluralist practices towards journalism, media, and the online space. While this is the case, inherently digital resistance tactics are learned and spread among the public to bypass these repressive actions. Activists and disorganized internet users alike have been using VPNs, which temporarily display one's IP address in another country, or Tor, which anonymizes digital identities, as well as encrypted messaging apps like Telegram, like many of their peers worldwide (Wijermars and Lokot 2022). Since these methods are tactics aimed at overcoming the restrictions and punishment that oppositional narratives face through surveillance and censorship, their presence within resistance culture is more pronounced. However, there are also less obvious, more indirect, and affective forms of resistance based on (re)mediation. Against the strategies of censorship, digital surveillance, and the biased nature of mainstream media landscapes, I argue that the production, consumption, and re-utilization of remix videos are employed by online users as tactics. The spread of visually compelling, multiplied, and user-generated remix videos has the potential to create counter-narratives on digital media, not disman-

9. *Medya ve Hukuk Çalışmaları Derneği*, Media and Law Studies Association, or in short MLSA works to defend freedom of expression and press freedom in Turkey through providing legal support to journalists, expressing advocacy for free speech and preservation of democratic spaces, and conducting research on the topic (2025*b*).

tling power relationships altogether, but as one medium of meaning-making for the subjects. Moreover, as non-copyrighted, short videos consist of numerous clips, they are easier to download to preserve and disseminate across social media platforms, creating compact compilations that are harder to track. This can potentially serve as a digital tactic of remembrance against "the political annihilations of opposition from public space and the attempted extirpation of memories" employed by the government, as Evered (2019, 161) mentions in their article for the erasure of Gezi graffiti.

In the following chapter, I will first offer a short summary on remix videography as a concept and a medium and introduce the theoretical and practical aspects that ascertain it as a cultural phenomenon. Then, I will place the remix videos on the digital everyday and the rhythmic presence of remediation.

3. THE ANATOMY OF THE POLITICAL REMIX CULTURE

3.1 A Brief History of Political Remixes

Previously, I mentioned Merriam-Webster's definition of remix as "a variant of an original recording made by rearranging or adding to the original". The umbrella definition of remix encompasses the diverse media in which remixing can be present as a derivative work, from the visual arts to music and literature. Remixing, as the assemblage, alteration, and manipulation of certain media content with an aim, has various names specific to the medium it features. *Collage* and *montage* are terminologies for remix in the visual arts, while *sampling* is reserved for musical works (Lessig 2008). Although remix suggests remediated musical pieces in popular culture, such as the Hip-Hop and techno genres and DJing, it is specifically associated with all forms of *digital alterations* in academic literature (Jenkins et al. 2009; Lessig 2008). Apart from remix, two names frequently appear to refer to videographic media that juxtapose music, clips, and textual elements together: *mashup* and *edit*. While remix is chosen in this thesis due to its prevalence in media studies as a more comprehensive and theoretical term, the current Turkish internet culture commonly uses *edit* for remediated videos with music, reserves *remix* for sampled and altered songs and rarely employs the term *mashup*. Meanwhile for the English-speaking part of the internet, *mashup* was preferred for any kind of edited video during the 2000s and 2010s, although *edit* dominate the global digital scene now. Underlining the differences between the usage of these names are significant considering it delves us into fragmented nature of the practice, where even though they have roughly the same definition, every artist, medium time-period, and sub-genre of remixing brings a new element to the table. Moreover, this variety is important to be attentive in situating the remixing as a meaningful and influx cultural practice that emerges from the interactions of digital subjects a global scale, establishing aesthetic and functional continuities and discontinuities that reflect people's understanding and making of new mediascapes.

Furthermore, Navas (2014) distinguishes between Remix with a capitalized initial and remix culture as the countless materalizations of Remixing, he argues:

> I focus on Remix as opposed to remix culture, which means that I consider the reasoning that makes the conception of remix culture possible...Remix culture, as a movement, is mainly preoccupied with the free exchange of ideas and their manifestation as specific products...As I evaluated the principles of Remix for this analysis, I came to the conclusion that as a form of discourse Remix affects culture in ways that go beyond the basic understanding of recombining material to create something different. (Navas 2014, 3)

In this thesis, while I acknowledge the multi-layered and comprehensive aspects of Remix, I specifically focus on one crystallization of it, which is the political remix videos. Video remixing is not a novel form of (re)mediation. People who are not content with mainstream and traditional media spaces have been creating and sharing their own work long before the digital age with crafts, zines, and art distributed through alternative and non-mainstream channels (Kafai and Peppler 2011). While these DIY (do-it-yourself) works do have "original" works, collaging, editing, or adding up to existing media pieces frequently occurred as well. This holds true for the moving pictures of the 20th century, remixed to not only entertain but also to mediatize certain political narratives and undermine the unequal power relations presented on and operated within the mainstream media. McIntosh (2012) exemplifies this history with the socialist critics of American movies in the 1920s, and René Viénet's montages of Chinese propaganda films with Kung Fu movies to mock Mao and Stalin in the 1970s. Booth (2010; 2012) similarly analyzes how subcultures such as pop culture fan groups have utilized remix videos to alter, reshape, and craft new stories, canons, and communities since the 1970s to form counter-narratives to the stories provided to them by conventional media. They distributed these through VCRs, zines, and even organized social screenings. With these diverse fan works which spans from fanfiction writings to *fan vidding*, women, queer, and ethnically and racially marginalized subjects remediate the hegemonic structures of patriarchy, cisheteronormativity and racism within the original content and communities with their own positionalities and favored representations (Booth 2010; Navas, Gallagher, and Burrough 2015).

In the history of videographic editing, cutting, painting, and reattaching film strips were the industry standard in cinema before the digital editing methods' first appearance in the 1970s. However, these digital programs required professional training and sophisticated understanding of visual design, unavailable to many economically

and culturally. With the privatization and domestication of computers and internet came the usage of digital mediums as everyday practice. Leaving the meticulous way of manual editing, a real shift in editing was observed after the first home-computer versions of non-linear editing (NLE) software programs, such as *Avid Media* and *Adobe Premiere*, debuted and became popularized in the late 90s-early 00s. Montaging existing audio-visual content became a faster and more accessible creative practice that can be accomplished without technical training and expensive technologies. By the late 2000s, there are various applications and software programs that enable users to modify their videos instantly and on the go on their phones, tablets, and computers. With the number of digital platforms increased exponentially and socio-technological networks formed, our current *platform society* is established (van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal 2018). Now, social media sites facilitate intersected social environments in which users can share, get feedback, influence others to produce content, and even profit from their remediated work. This makes the remix culture itself a social phenomenon and communal practice, where the active and consumer-based *re-encoding* of the meaning, to borrow from Hall's (1980) famous encoding-decoding meaning framework, happens through a collaborative process between different source media, their remixes, and the prosumers (consumer-producer).

Media repertoires, defined as the holistic and meaningful relations across the media a subject has consumed (Hasebrink and Hepp 2017; Ytre-Arne 2023), can be a useful concept in the discussion of remix practices as a highly shared cultural routine. As people, we encounter, engage with, and adopt countless forms of media almost every minute of our lives; not only that, but the increasing mediazation in our current society has constructed cross-media cultures, in which the media themselves engage with each other through our practices (Hasebrink and Hepp 2017). While using a certain media to make sense of our social reality is the most common and maybe the initial reaction, many audiences also create new and "original" media by getting influenced by, or appropriating, the existing examples. In this sense, the media repertoires not only assist us in our sense-making by establishing links between different mediations but also act as "toolboxes" for our further remediation and media productions. Such intertextuality is at the core of digital content culture since it requires someone to be familiar with the history of this literature to apprehend the possibly numerous references from the digital and non-digital world that may exist in a single video. As these inside jokes or codes are altered and combined in different ways again and again, they may become modified beyond recognition in a very short time, assembling new meanings along the way with their creator-audience.

Leo Manovich (2007) claims this new "remix era", following the post-modern epoch,

stimulates a new appreciation for the previous texts. I suggest that supposedly more established texts are also not inviolable from this, the ones that are not born digital or as content or artwork but get appropriated to the digital by the users, such as historical occurrences, contemporary events, and well-known cultural codes. A common genre of political remix videos rearranges historical documents, such as photographs and films, to construct a new narrative according to the creator's aimed political messages, and forming alternative temporalities. Moreover, Booth (2010) argues that intratextuality, defined as the changes within a text and its community, is as fundamental as intertextuality in digital culture. With remixes, digital users amend the perception, original meaning, and practical application of the texts they use and even create brand-new narratives and communities that can stand against the culture industry and wider society in the end. In other words, the remix practice does not only alter the media, but it can also hold the potential to challenge and transform the socio-economic structures and cultural communities that (re)mediation develops within.

The practice of political video editing is one of the most common forms of expression in digital culture now. The previous global literature focused more on the subversive ideations of video editing, as Edwards and Tryon (2009), Askanius (2013), Häkkinen and Leppänen's (2014) studies of mashups as forms of digital activism and political critique demonstrate. Considering YouTube was launched in 2005, Edwards and Tryon's (2009) article on political video mashups during the 2008 U.S. elections show that the digital users has been engaging with user-generated political content, messaging, and visual advocacy more than two decades now. Contrary to video activism which uses videography for activist purposes, they argue that political remix videos do not necessarily propose or identify solutions to the problems they showcase but are rather "a rejection of the politics of the status quo, a desire for change". Moreover, Edwards and Tryon underline the intertextuality of the practice not only due to the usage of diverse media works, but also due to the combination of political and pop cultural elements. Political remix videos genre-bend how the political is talked by "embracing their pop cultural roots", something video activism has not done before (Edwards 2009). Askanius (2013) takes a further analytical step with her comparison of the radical, left-wing video activism practices and political mashups on European YouTube. Video activist videos, according to her, can be sorted under five intention-based categories: mobilizing, witnessing, self-documenting, and archiving. For the last and fifth category, she puts the political mashups and overall remixing practice as a politically activist position which she describes as "a mix of not only new and found material but of genres, actors and different degrees of political intentionality" (Askanius 2013, 10). In other words, all the other video

categories are also a form of remixing with the different textual, visual, and audial elements in them being juxtaposed for an aim. Moreover, the possibility of any person to produce remixes makes it difficult to put the creator of political remixes in a box. This blurs the lines between exceedingly radical video activist and less politically motivated content creator, "subjects who all display different modes of politicality" (Askanius 2013; Corner 2011).

Most prominent studies in literature center specifically on Western remix practices. Digital remixing and the digital space it materializes in originated and are largely governed by/in the West, however, it has expanded globally and interacts with local texts and actors, both influencing and being influenced by the political (re)mediation behaviors and perspectives of non-Western prosumers. Therefore, examining non-Western examples is crucial to understand digital forms of political expression and explore the meaningful local dynamics and political conditions to which these remix videos respond. Ratta and Valeriani's (2012) inquiries of political remixes during the Arab Spring are one of the earlier discussions that focused on the non-Western cases of political mashups in which they argued was an example of participatory citizenship and mobilization between "low-tech" and "high-tech" activists (2012, 70). Likewise, Häkkinen and Leppänen (2014) demonstrate how individuals employ remix videos as a political messaging technique that transgresses the geographical borders through the digital. By comparing the 2011 remix video of Muammar Gaddafi edited to singing a song calling to revolution and a video of Finnish populist political figure Timo Soinin singing the same tunes inspired by the Gaddafi video, they show that while mashups are a global form of expression, their messages and how they convey it are also shaped by local contexts. For instance, unlike the politically charged MENA region where not only the internet freedom but freedom of expression in general are precarious, the Finnish video emerged in a free media environment but still used remixes and satire to spark political debates.

For the Turkish case, the Gezi Park protests provided a fruitful resistance environment for the employment of new media and digital technologies as modes of resistance and political messaging. Video activism (Özdüzen 2020), DIY media culture (Özdüzen 2022), viral images (Arda 2014) and music videos as well mashups (Jenzen et al. 2019) all found themselves a place in the academic literature as resistance practices that facilitated mobilization, civil reporting, and archiving. Similarly, I previously underlined the existence of Turkish political remix videos since early 2010s that heavily relied on humor to criticize the political sphere. A recent surge in public interest has also spread on social media during the 2023 Turkish General Elections on remix videos of political figures, featuring dramatic music and enhanced with striking visual. Unlike the humorous, flawed portrayals common in

the 2010s, these new remix videos depicted candidates as powerful and admirable leaders. Produced by both government and opposition supporters, leading the news website OdaTV (2023) to label the phenomenon "edit wars."

In this section, I outlined how remix culture has evolved from subcultures and alternative media to subversive political narratives shaped by concepts of intertextuality, intratextuality, and media repertoires. I discussed how users draw from both historical and contemporary sources to remediate and re-encode meaning, challenge dominant narratives, and create new communities through remixing. Moreover, by emphasizing the genre-bending, extratextual aspects of remix videos, I provided a deeper understanding of their transformative nature. Next, I will return back to the explore how the material components of remix videos come together to create a rhythmic experience as a part of digital everyday life.

3.2 Rhythmic Presence of Remixes in Digital Everyday

Now, by taking the videos' rhythms, the platforms' overall flow, and the political rhythm of Turkey's context into account, I will discuss how a relation between digital space and remix videos is formed through the rhythm that comes out of the remediation practices of users.

Digital space has its own rhythms. By that, I do not mean something like a musical rhythm but a rhythm that grows out of the everyday practices consisting of the user's routines and breaks in the digital space. Lefebvre (2013), coming from an everyday life perspective, identifies a simple formula for such rhythms. According to him, place, time, and the exacerbation of energy breed rhythm. While the spatial and temporal dimensions are fairly straightforward, what he means by the exacerbation of energy needs to be elaborated. He says "repetition of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences, linear and cyclical processes, birth, growth, peak, decline, end" are all the exacerbations of energy in which there is a release of a physical or emotional investment (2013, 15). Rhythm emerges when these three elements, space, time, and exacerbation of energy, interact dynamically. The rhythm of a person walking home in an empty square at night has a different rhythm from protesters marching to that same square the next morning. Similarly, a user rapidly scrolling through their X timeline to get the news after a natural disaster does not experience the same space, temporality, and affective intensity they felt five minutes ago on the same phone. Rhythm is a critical component of all kinds of remix videos. Not only because they have music over them, but because it establishes rhythm in

itself through its temporal (duration, the background music, beat, etc.), spatial (its visual elements, the platform it is on), and exacerbation of energy (narrational aim and the affective response it invokes), as well as influences and gets influenced by the overall digital space and temporalities. Hence, it is significant to note how these rhythms emerge through the interplay of media, user, and platforms, and how they resonate with the broader temporality of the digital everyday.

As a temporal element, the duration of the video is significant in determining the rhythm of the video and how it will be perceived on a social media platform. Because shorter remix videos need to include more content in a shorter time, they are typically more upbeat than remix videos longer than 2-3 minutes. Several underlying factors establish the duration of the overall video, such as platform regulations and audience preferences. For example, as the most popular video-based social media platform, YouTube has videos ranging from as short as one second to as long as 10 hours. Unlike X, which enables limitless video sharing only to users subscribed to its premium plan, this variation on the platform provides flexibility to its users without charge, encouraging YouTube editors to produce longer remix videos compared to others.

Remix editors and the users who spread these videos on X are not blind to these rhythms in digital space, unconsciously or not. During my ethnography, people have started to upload remix videos or circulate the existing ones more frequently during transformative moments of political disruptions, such as protests, elections, and controversial statements of political figures. These moments of break from the general routine provided an audience with unique preferences. Within the Turkish digital context, where political events and crises regularly generate an overload of online activity, remix videos become an active part of this rhythm. On X, the videos posted during these politically unrest times got significantly more engagement compared to the other videos that belonged to the same editors, revealing a preference to consume short and affectively engaging videos amid information overload. During the first week of Saraçhane protests, the widespread interest and reliance on social media platforms, particularly X, skyrocketed the circulation and engagement rates of remix videos related to the protests.

To examplify, having a consistent editing account at least since 2023 where they posted remix videos showcasing their love for the women's volleyball to a smaller subgroup that followed them, @imhookedbaladin (2025) is also the creator of a highly disseminated and well-liked remix video about Saraçhane protests. While their Saraçhane video got more than 70 thousand likes, 11 thousand repost, and 2.1 million views on X, their pop culture embellished videos mostly received 1 thousand likes the most. Of course, such big disseminations have various factors that affect the

outcome. Hashtags and keywords are known tactics of reaching bigger audiences, but videos can also disseminate through other means. In one instance, the user @vamp4nerds (2025) uploaded a Saraçhane remix on their small account with less than 100 followers but received a small virtual reaction. However, soon vamps4nerds re-uploading the video under a post of the account @dayagiyedim (2025) which have more than 652 thousand followers as of August 2025, complimenting the remix videos created by Turkey's editors. After @dayagiyedim noticed, reposted, and praised the original video belonging to @vamps4nerds, the video got 80 thousand likes and 2 million views on X. Moreover, this user-demand and high engagement rates on political remixes can be employed as a content tactic, with a potential of high engagement. *Headliner* @headlinertr, a digital music blog and content creation team in Turkey, has been active on their diverse social media accounts, posting content that align with social media trends. Having 30 thousand followers on X, most of their posts on music receive at most 7 thousand likes but usually fall between a few hundreds to a couple thousands likes. However, their political remix videos during the Saraçhane protests, received 52 thousand (2025) and 43 thousand likes (2025b) with close to two million views in total.

Abstract features, such as the overall theme, online trends, and the affective, intellectual, and practical objectives of videos, all provide a framework for the remix editors in their editorial decision-making. Beyond that, they also create expectations in viewers on rhythm. However, the technical media components chosen by editors based on these abstract frameworks, such as music, sound effects, visual transitions, and duration, directly determine the rhythm of the video. Editors, amateur or not, seem to be familiar with the general techniques of media alteration to form the appropriate rhythm for their videos. If they have some experience, they choose appropriate material elements, such as visual transitions and audio remixing, to complement the rhythm that is best suited for their narrational or affective purpose.

In this chapter, I elaborated on how the musical and visual characteristics and trends of remix videos arise from the routines and breaks of platforms, as well as shape them. In the next chapter, I will explore how visual and aural elements changed over time affect the narratives in videos from examples of protest remixes to show how these intentional and sometimes unintentional technical choices influence how they are perceived as an affective object and how they convey political messages.

4. AESTHETICS AND UTILITIES OF RESISTANCE REMIXING

4.1 From 2010s to 2020s: Changing Aesthetics of Remixing

In the last chapter, I showed that most academic studies on remix videos focus on the early versions of this user-generated content, such as the early to mid-2010s. With this chapter, I will contribute to this literature by comparing the 2013 Gezi remixes with the 2020s ones to show the aesthetic changes observed in the remixing practice. Since the internet can be unreliable in terms of preserving content, sometimes resulting in inaccessible "lost media", retrospective analysis is not always easy. However, since YouTube was also utilized in the archival projects of the Gezi (See Saka 2014), the platform still hosts countless videos posted in the Summer of 2013, making it ideal to access videos from that time, though indeed not perfect. Through 3 remix videos from 2013 and 3 videos from 2024-2025, all centered on the Gezi Park protests, I will provide the changes in the aesthetic trends in political remix videos and present two factors that may affect how remixes are: the escalated access to sophisticated digital tools and the changing nature of social platforms with high content prosumption.

When compared, one of the first differences that stands out is the fact that visual manipulations became more intense and frequent overtime between 2013 and the 2020s remix videos. In the "Biber Gazı Sık Bakalım[1]" video posted by Taner Yener Colak (2013), one of the most watched videos on the Gezi Park protests on YouTube, with more than 1.6 million clicks, the only alteration done on the source videos is time-lapsing, which results in a "speeding up" effect. One example of this time-lapse shows the bodies of the protestors pushing back the riot control vehicles, called TOMA in Turkey, almost in a comical manner. This clip was shot from the higher floors of a building, and the protestors and the TOMA, looking like "mini figurines" from afar, give the illusion that this is like a game one would like to participate in

1. It can be translated to "Go ahead, spray your tear gas!".

(See Figure 4.1). This complements the background song that challenges the police forces with playful yet daring lyrics, such as "Spray it, go on, spray it, spray your pepper gas, go on, take off your helmet, drop your baton, and let's see who the real tough one is".

Figure 4.1 Screenshot taken from "Biber Gazı Sık Bakalım" posted by Taner Yener Colak (2013), seen at 2.08, displaying protesters on Istiklal Street, Taksim near Gezi Park.

The creator simply juxtaposed multiple clips, taken from other, longer YouTube videos, and connected them by complementing the song beat. However, transition effects, such as fading in or out, or cuts, were not chosen. This synchronization is immensely important in video remixes, going as far as determining their "quality" in the eyes of the remix audience. To match the beat, either the clips are slowed down or sped up, or the transitions between each clip get faster or slower. When the tempo increases or the beat becomes more layered, using the visual elements without any editing, hence in their more unedited forms, or using too many or too less transitions, may cause out-of-sync videos. In the "carsi-gezi parki yürüyüşü" video by @EnderKaplanFilm (2013), *Bella Ciao* is a mid-tempo, courageous song, whereas *Arkadaş* is slower, heartfelt, and slightly melancholic. As a result, contrary to the *Bella Ciao* section, the frequent transitions were less required to match the song *Arkadaş*, and several clips recorded from different angles in one scene were used. Slower tempo songs with simpler beats enable the remix creator to keep individual video clips or scenes longer, which then gives the audience time to engage with that scene's atmosphere more. This kind of video editing, without dramatic

transitions and heavy visual alterations, is much more straightforward and effortless to produce and creates a slower rhythm, unlike the “Everyday I’m Çapuling” video by @realsabry (2013).

"Everyday I’m Çapuling" is an appropriate example of the early versions of new remix videos with the frequently used EDM style song choice and complex editing methods. As Jenzen et al. (2019) also mentioned in their analysis, the fact that the bodies in the footage are altered as dancing to the music creates a desire in the viewer to participate in this "fun" activity and invites mobilization. However, for this to happen, the dance movements in the visual must match the beat at least to a convincing level. In addition, this feeling is enhanced with flashing lights that give the impression of being in a nightclub or a party, and vignette effects that gradually darken the frame from the corners strengthen this feeling. The use of editing techniques such as slowing down, speeding up, zooming in and out at the right time in the clips, the right choice of visual content that complements the beats, and the correct placement of less dynamic intermediary clips added before the beat drop and creating anticipation are of utmost importance.

Hence, time is a matter the creators pay close attention to. However, what I mean by time is not just the timing for the synchronization of audio-visual content. The characteristics of videos are typically linked to platform regulations and audience choices. Before the 2016 update that allowed each user to upload a video of 140 seconds, Twitter only supported 30-second videos. In 2013, only 15-second videos could be uploaded to Instagram, while YouTube had been hosting 10–15-minute videos on its platform since 2009, later supporting up to 24-hour videos. And while Facebook, one of the most used platforms during the Gezi resistance along with Twitter (Tufekci 2017), currently supports 240-minute videos, there is an opposite trend among social media platforms and users who prioritize shorter videos, considering most popular social media sites have a short video viewing interface integrated within their platforms now. While the video upload capacity of all platforms has increased so much over the years, videos shorter than 60 seconds have a strong place in content circulation. Due to being essentially a video sharing platform, YouTube is still one of the most preferred sites for longer (over 70 seconds) remix videos in Turkey, but for remix videos under 60 seconds of all kinds, TikTok and Instagram Reels are more popular than YouTube Shorts and Facebook Reels due to their large producer and consumer base for short video formats. Well-known remix videos circulated during the Gezi period, and recent examples demonstrate the transformation of political remixes in Turkey across platforms over the course of 10 years. Although there are still remix videos that last between 1-5 minutes, they are largely preferred to be shared on YouTube due to the platform’s algorithm and audience

that prioritizes longer videos. For applications based on "infinite scrolling", where the algorithm distributes content to users according to their interests among millions of short videos that they can scroll down almost endlessly, editing styles proceeded to be more visually attractive, dramatic, and concise.

While remix videos, fundamentally as a medium of amateurs due to its history of underground artists and online fan bases, do not necessarily follow the narrative rules and technical guidelines that exist in traditional film and video making, contemporary videos display certain narrational similarities and techniques among each other that have a place in conventional video making. This is one of the ways the remix videos adopt but also bend the common structures of the moving image for their own purpose. One prominent technique is building captivating "tension" and "release", or "anticipation" and "satisfaction" moments that enhance the video quality, stop the user from scrolling down, provoke the desire to rewatch, and thus amplify the digital and affective engagement it may get, such as the "Oğlum çArşı girdi çArşı" video by Dorruk1903 (2024). The technique is uncomplicated yet effective, as well as affective, and countless examples exist across a variety of remix genres. First, the video starts with an "introduction" section, in which we see a clip that is minimally edited, or a voiceover unrelated to the clip is heard. If there is a background song, its volume is usually toned down, and the build-up part of a song before a beat-drop or the pre-chorus is used. The words in the voiceover (for the çArşı video, this being "*OĞLUM ÇARŞI GİRDİ ÇARŞI*[2]") may be displayed visually in this section, which makes it easier to communicate the video's narrational aim or convey its message (see Figure 4.2). This is an efficient method to disseminate political ideas as well as raise emotions such as humor, excitement, surprise, anxiety, and satisfaction. In some cases, the introduction may last for more than half of the video, especially for the remix videos in support of political figures that can start with a part of their speech. Along with the intriguing clip, the background song or the beats usually intensify at this point, initiating an anticipation in the user, thus making them watch the video at least until the anticipation is fulfilled. This method aims to stop the user from scrolling down and catch their attention among millions of other contents, shaping the user's rhythm on social media, particularly on infinite scrolling platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts.

2. "DUDE THE ÇARŞI CAME, THE ÇARŞI!"

Figure 4.2 Screenshots taken from the "Oğlum çArşı girdi çArşı" YouTube video by @Dorruk1903 (2024), seen at 0:04, 0:09, and 0:12. Left: çArşı fan group logo is seen over the burning torches. Right: The famous portrait of Che Guevara is printed on the Beşiktaş football club flag, waving in the air.

Following this introductory section, if the user is still interested in watching the video, the beat drop occurs, or the chorus lyrics begin, and the anticipation is fulfilled with satisfaction. If the remix editor is skilled enough, the section during and after this "peak" moment is when the complex editing really shines through. Compelling effects, such as flashing lights, high contrast images, and stylized transitions, can be chosen to harmonize with the mood. In this part of the "Oğlum çArşı girdi çArşı" video, using the zooming in and zooming out effect for transitions between clips is relatively simple in theory, and practically in an editing software. But it creates a much more dynamic effect compared to the direct cuts in the 2013 remix examples. The dynamism and repetition of zooming in and out capture and excite the watcher in a short time, just like the "Everyday I'm Çapuling" video. Moreover, like the "28 May 2013 | Gezi Parkı olayları | Edit" by @turkicatheist (2023), color grading and vignette effect are apparent throughout the video to set the mood. While bluish, yellowish, and greenish hues are layered on top of all clips in the çArşı video and bind the different clips into a similar color palette, hence constructing a hopeful, visual harmony between them, the "28 May 2013" video has a darker, more rebellious or bold feeling achieved through a variety of techniques: color grading, alteration of exposure and contrast, choosing clips taken in the night time, flickering lights, vignette effect, lowering the resolution and adding a "grainy" effect (See Figure 4.3). How these changing visualizations are related to the newer narratives of the Gezi Park protests will be discussed in a later chapter, yet it must be noted here that although these shorter videos are visually attractive, they compose an intentional narrative of Gezi in the past, from the lenses of the present, with the selection of certain media elements.

Figure 4.3 Screenshots taken from the “28 May 2013 | Gezi Parkı olayları | Edit” video by @turkicatheist (2023), seen respectively at 0:10, 0:13, and 0:16.

Another visual difference observed in the new remix videos is the addition of a "watermark,” an online nickname written on one side of the video that indicates some form of authorship. As an intertextual medium, remixes are inherently bound to the "networks of reference" across other media that they borrow from. Thus, "originality" and "copyrighted authority", which traditionally mark authorship, are debated concepts in the remix culture (Diakopoulos et al. 2007; Rosa, Clifford, and Sinnreich 2021). However, as Diakopoulous et al. discuss based on their interviews with remix video editors, due to being non-commercial, subcultural media, the attribution received through watermarks is regarded as "recognition" and a "signature" of remix editors, illustrating their creative ownership and not an economic or legal one. These watermarks serve as social imprints for their community rather than an indication of economic authority over their videos. Watermarks assist in tracing the creator’s accounts and other videos, making their identity as a remix editor known to their community/audience, so that they can receive feedback on their contribution to their digital community. Although adding watermarks is not a necessity in the current remix culture, it can be argued that it is used more consistently than before by subjects who frequently share their own remixes on their accounts or who establish their internet persona through remix videos. Watermarking is effective in establishing an internet identity as a remix creator, which can increase engagement and recognition, leading to the emergence of well-known and highly followed accounts, especially for those who often produce high-quality videos. As a result, compared to the past, we see the existent of more and more accounts dedicated to producing remix videos, indicating the practice itself grow roots in the Turkey’s digital space as a sub-culture.

From the relatively simple remixes of 2013 to the fast-paced, visually rich formats of recent years, I explored how political remix videos in Turkey have evolved over

Table 4.1 Political remix editing in the early 2010s and 2020s Turkish digital space.

The Early 2010s	The 2020s
Simpler editing, less altered clips	Layered and dramatic editing
Longer duration, 1-3 minutes	Shorter duration, 20-60 seconds
Slower rhythm with less transition	Faster rhythm based on anticipation
Rectangle/landscape (16:9) frame	Square (1:1) or vertical (9:16) frame
Classic interfaces of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter/X	Short video platforms TikTok, YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, etc.
No visual signs of authorship on the video	Watermarks and dedicated remix accounts

the past decade (see Figure 4.1). While these transitions in form are not exhaustive globally, I have observed similar trends in Western online remix practices, ranging from fan videos to political videos. However, due to the scope of the thesis, I was unable to include a throughout discussion and tracing back of the global-local continuum of remix videos over time. This can be a fruitful research topic for the further studies considering Turkey's digital community heavily remediates from Western-dominated global digital culture.

In this chapter, building on changing platform interfaces, widespread usage of sophisticated digital tools, and global trends, I exemplified how technical and aesthetic components of remix videos reflect platform interfaces and audience preferences over time. However, these editing choices and trends not only enhance viewer engagement but also shape and reflect how political events, such as the Gezi Park protests, are remembered and narrated in the users' everyday lives. In the next chapter, I proceed from aesthetics to the functionalities of remixes to explore how users employ these videos in digital space to mediate, mobilize, and transform protest and resistance narratives.

4.2 Functions of Remixes: Mnemonic, Affective, Communicative

As an outcome of my fieldwork on various social media platforms, I categorized the use of remix videos under 3 main functions that can interact and coexist with each other. These are (1) mnemonic, (2) affective, and (3) communicative functions. The mnemonic function of remix videos results from the remediating and intertextual nature of remixes. While mnemonic function can be overt, such as a user attaching a remix video with the caption "Do you remember this?," the way it functions is usually covert. It is enabled when remixed media and narratives, and how they are handled, remind the audience of an event, person/character, idea, cultural element, or narrative. After the previous texts known to the audience are reminded, some

kind of affective engagement arises from this interaction with the media and the user. This could range from grief, joy, nostalgia, anger, or mere disinterest and boredom. Although the definition of affective seems broad for an analytical framework, my intention with it is not that the video creates any emotion, intentionally or not, but rather that it has the potential to invoke emotions that prompt the viewer to take action. According to Ahmed (2004), affect is not just a mental state, but it is embodied in the body through our reactions and actions. The action in question here can be solely digital, through social media engagements like commenting, liking, sharing, and even users editing their own remix videos. Still, it can also be offline, like the desire to mobilize or act in a certain way (which is, of course, related to the content of the video). Since the word action can evoke digital activism, and the critical debates over the value and efficacy of digital activism are outside my scope, I do not identify these instances as affectively *active*. Consequently, I consider affectually *attentive* better captures enactments resulting from affective engagements with remixes, regardless of the action being in the online and/or offline space. For example, someone might watch protest videos for a cause they support and feel a desire to join them. They may either like/share the video or join the protest the next day. On the contrary, they may also feel resentful and react in a hostile manner, leaving hate comments or potentially initiating conflicts. All these outcomes would be affectively attentive reactions induced by a remix video in the online/offline continuum. Despite that, while there is almost always an affective engagement, this does not mean all remix videos cause attentive reactions. People may feel apprehensive or disinterested in taking any action other than scrolling down and not interacting with the video if the content does not move them enough. Hence, the affective function can either result in affectively attentive or affectively dismissive reactions. The distinctions between "active-attentive" and "attentive-dismissive" are important, considering the layered ways users emotional interactions with digital objects.

Communicative, on the other hand, is based on numerous instances in which remix videos are utilized as a means of communication in the digital space. For non-editors, they are not only for passively watching and experiencing but also employed as a visual tool to react to content and respond to ongoing online conversations. This is mostly special to X, since the platform's interface is known for its features and algorithms that encourage its users' engagement with posts by quoting and mentioning (Özbaş-Anbarlı 2021), which enables users to attach remix videos in quoted posts. There is a tight interwoven relationship between language and the social contextualities, feeding into each other. The content of the video chosen is open-ended, and its relevance to the quoted post may be crystal clear or so obscure that it requires

contextual information and pop cultural literacy to be understood by outsiders of the latest internet trends or subcultural codes, like internet memes (Shifman 2014). In addition, remixes create opportunities and open up spaces for discussion on almost all social media platforms, from YouTube to TikTok. This communicative function is apparent across the net since Web 2.0 and the rise of platforms that support and are based on user-to-user interactions. All three functions are frequently observed together, especially mnemonic and affective. There are cases where the communicative function is not fulfilled, such as videos that no one comments on or reuses, but the integrated sociality of the current digital media space sustains the potency of future communications. When it is utilized, the communicative function is where the affective relations formed between the cultural object (remix videos) and subjects (users) are digitally expressed or *materialized* by the users, as the comments/captions/reposts become digital artefacts and spaces themselves. Furthermore, the social encounters between users from different positionalities and generational backgrounds construct spaces of negotiation and affective commonalities on the threads of online communication.

Although studies on social media algorithms effect on the creation of intergroup echo chambers arrive vary (Brown et al. 2022; Hosseinmardi et al. 2020; Sun, Ma, and Huo 2022), it is undeniable that the digital spaces established through remix videos enable political and moral contestation points across different positionalities though they agree each other on a broader ideological level. Within the comments, viewers may debate the legitimacy or the how-tos of protest or downright show disagreement and hostility towards the narrative and audience. The hostile kind of these personal encounters can further enforce the "us vs. them" mindset in the users and block a Habermasian rational debate, such as a comment made under the 2023 Gezi remix video by @turkicatheist (2023) warns the potential protesters in a threatening tone, "Go ahead, try it and see how it ends". However, in cases where there is at least a civic degree of willingness to engage, explain, and learn from others, the communicative function of remix videos commences spaces for discursive negotiation. Under a 2024 remix video on the Gezi protests by @krotthens (2024), two commentators exchange a brief dialogue in May 2025 on the moral and legal implications of the recent Saraçhane protests, as well as the broader affective tensions surrounding state violence and civic resistance:

> **User A:** God does not love those who commit violence or injustice on Earth. You can protest, but do it without damaging public property, without attacking the police, and by following the rules.
> **User B:** None of the initial protests involved violence against police or statements that disrespected their duty... These are the youth, the

> students of this country... When the police hold the weapons and the power, how can you write comments as if violence was done to them?

Due to the affective intensity of most remix videos, they also frequently initiate spaces of commonalities where diverse positionalities find a mutual ground on their emotional and ideological connections with the visual narrative embedded in the video. Two relatively older commentators signal their life experience and protesting know-how through their language, while offering emotional support for the younger protestors in the 2025 demonstrations, showing these videos:

> **User C:** You're brave hearts. We're right beside you, we've got your back. I don't know how well you can hear this from here but stay united during the intervention. Don't act on your own. Don't run, it'll cause chaos. Take care of yourselves. We're there with you.
> **User D:** The ones who were kids back then, and even the ones who weren't born, are resisting now. We love you all.

While the internet is often constructed as a space and a tool that enables constant and far-reaching communication between people with no close acquaintanceship, its potential is not limitless. The phrase "I don't know how well you can hear this from here" underlines the user's awareness of the imperfect capacity of circulation in relatively closed digital spaces, such as YouTube comment sections, in reaching out to the bigger target audiences and protesting masses on offline spaces. Moreover, it signals the anxieties of a dissident and the urgency of the situation where the desire to offer guidance and solidarity to those who are unknown but emotionally connected through shared struggles and aims, tries to transcend the limitations of the digital.

Building on the technical and aesthetic aspects of remix, and the three-function framework I introduced, I will now analyze how remix videos and the spaces they initiated enabled digital users to remember, make sense of, and socially engage with collective resistance during the 2025 Saraçhane protests. First, I will explore how, through the practice of remembering perpetuated with remix videos, nostalgia surfaced as a powerful visualization to mobilize and challenge the present coercions in Turkey by assisting to build and perform the dissident identity. Then, I will discuss how remix videos serve as an unconventional form of civilian reporting, providing a voice to alternative narratives in public discourse that counterbalance the silence and biased journalism in mainstream media. Hence, I will address tactical capabilities of remixes that have answered the strategies of control in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, remixes are not without criticism, thus I will review those as well.

5. COUNTERTACTICS: REMEDIATED NOSTALGIA OF THE DISSIDENTS

As a turning point in the recent history of Turkey, the Gezi Park protests left an impact and changed how resistance is epitomized on all sides: the civilians, the protestors, and the government alike (Tufekci 2017). The practices in the protest space and digital space have established themselves in public memory, and while the Gezi protests are already meaningful within their time, it is recalled again in different places and times across new mediums, by new people, reinforcing themselves with inimitable narratives over time. In this chapter, I will focus on how digital subjects utilize the mnemonic function of remix videos to evoke nostalgia, legitimize the means, and eventually try to gather people to join the side of opposition in the protests. This chapter, unlike the previous ones, is based on my ethnographic notes from comment sections on different platforms and textual X posts, as well as from visual analyses of the selected remix videos.

Nostalgia is regularly defined as a longing for the past. Politically, this nostalgic past is usually an imagined or ideal one, reconstructed to fit certain constructions of social realities. Huyssen (1995) argues that groups search for their ideal past or their hope for the future by using nostalgia as a tool to emotionally move masses. The idealized past establishes the present discourses as well as the actions that will be taken to achieve the desired future. Consequently, past, present, and future narratives become intertwined in and through nostalgia. Neo-Ottoman nostalgia, which the AKP government adopted both as a political aim and a strategy and it was contested heavily during the Gezi protests as well (Whitehead and Bozoğlu 2016), has a strong influence on their policies and power to mobilize, especially the conservative, pro-Islamist subjects. Due to being the historical, institutional, and cultural precedent of the Republic of Turkey and the efforts to break the ties with the empire, any longing for the Ottoman past (or the future) is commonly conceptualized as the fundamentally "opposite" of the Republican and/or Kemalist ideals. Acknowledging that the Gezi protests indeed hosted a great number of people with Kemalist visions, their presence in the movement did not dominate

over or overwhelm the future narrations of the protests, thanks to the movement's internal dynamics that favored a multivocal space. However, as Gençoğlu (2016) contemplates, Kemalist viewpoints attempted to be a unifying force and mediator among the distinct ideological groups in Gezi in the later days of the protests. In this sense, we see three prominent nostalgic standpoints that shape the current resistance culture in Turkey. Neo-Ottoman nostalgia works as an illusionary cultural apparatus of the government based on a conservative and powerful narrative of the imperial past to justify pro-Islamist policies (Ergin and Karakaya 2017; Wastnidge 2019). Despite used to being the state ideology, Kemalism and the Kemalist subjects are no longer at the center of power position. Thus, Kemalist nostalgia now reflects a desire to return to the secular, modernist values of the early Republic as a response to the AKP's Neo-Ottoman shift, as well as consolidating its symbolic and institutional power once again. Meanwhile, Gezi nostalgia functions as a recalling of the 2013 protests as a moment of unity, diversity, and democratic resistance that spans across different ethnic and religious minorities, ideological stances, and gender expressions in which most early Republican figures and policies overlooked during its nation-building (Kadıoğlu 1996; Zürcher 2004). While Kemalist nostalgia and Gezi nostalgia are two narrative strands within Turkey's oppositional identity or *muhaliflik*, they differ in inclusivity. Although both share values like democracy, modernity, and secularism, some Kemalist subjects frame their nostalgia around a Sunni Muslim, secular Turkish identity, excluding minorities and queer groups. This nationalist tone is often rejected by those who embrace Gezi nostalgia. However, there are also individuals and groups that identify with both forms of nostalgia, focusing on their *muhalif*, democratic position. During the Saraçhane protests, the young subjects influenced by the increasing nationalist sentiments in Turkey and the Gezi's legacy resisted against the anti-democratic agenda with not one, but two principal narratives that both challenged and intersected each other through the protestors' dissident embodiments, identities, discourses, and remediation practices: Gezi nostalgia and Kemalist nostalgia.

5.1 Gezi Nostalgia

In Turkey, many uprisings and forms of resistance have become part of the collective memory and are still reminiscent in daily life or are waiting to become members of the present again. These events are already meaningful within their spatio-temporal contexts, but over time, they are recalled again in different places and times, reinforcing themselves through new narratives. As Navaro (2013) recounts, the memories

of left-wing resistance during the 1980 military coup, which led to the deaths of two people and countless imprisonments in Armutlu, Antakya, were recalled during the Gezi protests that began in Istanbul, 2013. According to Navaro's interlocutor, people not only preserved the coup's aftermath in their collective memory but through Gezi acting as a reminder of those times, they mobilized with its recalling: "that feeling, the memory of the oppression after 1980 brings the young people onto the streets now (for Gezi)." Although Navaro mentions the existence of later resistances in the region since the coup, her interlocutor most likely associated these two since (1) both events opposed anti-democratic practices apparent all over the country, (2) they left lasting and unhealed marks on the communities with the death of young people, as Abdullah Cömert, Ahmet Atakan, and Ali İsmail Korkmaz who were all from Hatay and lost their lives due to police intervention in the Gezi Park protests. This illustrates how past resistances do not simply remain historical but may lay subtle but consistent as a part of the collective memory until getting emotionally and politically reactivated in new moments of social unrest that act as mnemonic ignitors.

Prior to the arrest of Ekrem İmamoğlu and other municipal bureaucrats, a large and growing opposition to the government and its policies had already existed in Turkey following 2013. Protests, rallies, boycotts, and other fragmented acts of collective dissidence have been going on nonstop in the country, from the largest urban cities to rural areas surrounded by forests. Nonetheless, the reminisces about the Gezi spirit in offline (See Figure 5.1) and online spaces of resistance have never left.

Figure 5.1 Left: A modest graffiti reading "Gezi is 12 years old!", Right: A collaborative graffiti saying "Everywhere is Taksim.. Resistance is Everywhere", both spotted on İstiklal Street, close to the Taksim Square, in July 2025 – Photographs taken by the author.

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Every year, the anniversaries of the Gezi were celebrated and evoked by the viewers in the Gezi-related video's comments sections just like the graffiti in Figure 5.1. As a commentator from 2022 expresses under a 2013 Gezi remix video, after announcing why they re-watched the videos, people reiterate their dedication to the Gezi's legacy:

> **User E:** I find myself coming back to this video every month... There is something about it always moves me in a strange way. Gezi will always have a place in our hearts.

Apart from the anniversaries, two particular events have a high number of people commenting on them: two years ago, when the 2023 Turkish General elections were lost, and in March 2025, when Saraçhane protests started. For the 2013 Gezi videos for example, "Everyday I'm Çapuling !" posted by @realsabry (2013) has 301 comments in total as of July 2025. While nearly 200 of them are from 2012 amid the Gezi protests, users only commented 65 times between 2013 to 2024. By comparison, the comment numbers upsurge with the Saraçhane protests in March 2025, with more than 26 comments made in one month alone. Similarly, the remix video "carsi-gezi parki yürüyüşü" by @EnderKaplanFilm (2013) have a modest 68 comments, however, roughly 39 comments are from 2023 General Elections period and 7 comments were posted in March 2025, leaving only 22 comments available in a 10-year-old period.

After the loss of opposition in 2023 elections, these people tried to comfort and encourage each other as seen by the quotes below taken from an interaction between different users under a 2013 Gezi video. Nevertheless, there were, of course, people who thought the "last chance was lost". The existence of different affective states that are both related and directly unrelated to the Gezi Park narratives displays that the comment sections of Gezi protests have become a meeting point and a performance space for people's interconnected political affects, but they are also spaces of social connection and solidarity as people come there to find hope and guidance towards their future among like-minded people. Moreover following the interaction below, the comments become emotionally saturated social sites where the researcher can follow along the changing narratives of political affects across temporalities, one example being the co-existence of hope (User F and M), hopelessness (User G and L), and the ones in-between (User K) create affectual colleges.

> **User F:** Only 2 months left. Beautiful days, sunny days are coming! Everything is about to become very beautiful! (posted before the

General Elections in 2023)
User G: I no longer have hope that things will get better (before the Elections 2023)
User K: Inshallah, brother (before the Elections)
User L: It didn't happen, brother (post-2023 elections)
User M: It will happen—don't lose hope, friends. I'm here, man, I'm here. You're here too. (During Saraçhane protests, referencing the 2023 oppositional presidency candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's viral video after the first round of elections[1])

The fact that the high number of comments from 2 years ago is significant, considering 2023 was the last time the oppositional parties have lost the general elections after a vastly promising but controversial campaign period. While the CHP increased its votes significantly and became the country's leading party in the municipalities in 2024, the defeat in the presidential elections spiraled a lot of people into a depressive and hopeless mood. A significant number of people seemed to watch and leave their sentiments under Gezi Park remixes during this period, as the comments display.

Due to the combination of visual and aural elements, footage and all kinds of videos stand out as one of the effective and engaging ways to convey the emotion of the moment, compared to other media. The comments under the Gezi Park remix videos, released between 2013 and the 2020s, whose aesthetic changes I discussed in the previous chapter, offer a clue to the mindset of their viewers. I observed that users referred to a longing for solidarity in the Gezi ruhu or the "Gezi spirit". By posing questions to other viewers, "Will there be another Gezi resistance?" they reiterate their hopeful way towards change, but also seem to try assuring others and themselves. On one of the Gezi videos from 2024, two commentators who want to bring back the atmosphere they watch on their screens, as well as a chance to participate in a momentous and politically transformative "action", said:

User N: I want to see that spirit again. Some young people want to be part of it.
User O: I WISHHHHH that spirit would come back.

1. CHP leader and presidential candidate of the Nation Alliance, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, released a brief video on May 14, 2023, following the announcement by the Supreme Election Council that the presidential race would proceed to a second round. Kılıçdaroğlu affirmed his commitment to his candidacy by hitting the table and saying, "I'm here, I'm right here, and so are you. I swear, I'll fight until the end. I'm here!" (Medyascope 2023).

Every resistance gains value in the time and place in which it emerges and is also influenced by the movements that preceded it (Tarrow 1996). However, collective remembering of such past mobilizations is never fixed, and it gets constantly altered by present political necessities, demands, and cultural narratives. I have previously underlined the relationship that remix culture establishes with the preexisting media it references. Remixes appear as a versatile medium that can contain the political potential of remembering and reminding.

> **Anonymous Protester:** We embrace religion without the AKP, Atatürk without the CHP, our nation without the MHP, and the Kurds without the HDP. We are the people. (FAYN 2025, 8:40)

As this quote from one of the anonymous male protestors from Saraçhane exemplifies, unorganized young people in the opposition can be argued to be struggling to find a political affiliation they felt belonged to or whose means they could trust. In this respect, we see that they embraced the Gezi Park protests even more, which they believed best met their criteria of grassroots resistance worthy of pursuing, and aimed to revive their legacy by combining it with their own present experiences and crises. But how Gezi is constructed differently as a narrative by the ones who "claim" it as theirs has transformed in the last decade, both in relation to the socio-political atmosphere and generational gap, but also due to the digital trends.

Remix videos from the 2013 period seem to give courage, hope, and guidance by successfully representing the narrative and onsite practices and structure of feeling (Williams and Orrom 1954) in the Gezi protests, such as unity despite differences, grassroots coexistence, and dedication against all odds. While the 2013 Gezi videos emphasized these with the clips of people collectively doing arts, graffiti, dances, protest signs, and music, the later remixes depicting the Gezi movement focused more on the moments of civil disobedience, clashes between police forces, football, and masculine appeal through mostly male protesting images (See Figures 4.2 and 4.3 in Chapter 3). As van Dijk (2011) contemplates, as a consequence of the digital era, social media platforms serve as "a mediating space" for temporarily, spatially, politically, and culturally different memory perspectives. Remix culture is a part of this memory mediating space, but as the re-mediation of the existing, already digital(ized) and mediatized perspectives. In this sense, remixes emerge through the engagement of countless versions of the temporalities, spaces, references, and perspectives of the editors/audience. Following this, I argue that the reason for the changes in the narrative between 2013 and the 2020s Gezi remixes is related to the aim of their existence, their editors' and target audiences' subjectivities, and the

different strategies they emerged against.

At the time of the Gezi, these videos served as tactical tools in the digital space, posted across platforms and contributed to how protestors and supporters formed their subjectivities and relations with the resistance. The videos were primarily targeted at people already supporting the protests or those who were sympathetic towards their cause and had the potential to be mobilized. Likewise, the video editors were individuals who supported the movement and may have attended the protests in person, rendering these videos a digitalized projection of their activism. They included scheduled times and location information at the beginning or the end of the videos, usually referring to a couple of days in the future (See Figure 5.2). Since the editors, as activists, intended to mobilize people, the visual content of the video aimed to create a narrative of solidarity and joy. The videos in 2013 typically featured a diverse range of protestors, women, men, young, and old. Moreover, music performances, folkloric dances, artistic expressions, and co-living in the protest spaces, such as shared tents and communal areas, were chosen to be heavily displayed by the editors. Protest signs and a multitude of political and social symbols were also prominently apparent and constructed a visual atmosphere in which a viewer would form a desire to be a part of.

Figure 5.2 Screenshot taken from the end of the "Everyday I'm Çapuling" posted by @realsabry on June 4, 2013, seen at 1:25. The text reads, "June 6, 2013 on Thursday, ÇAPULING EVERYWHERE! Time: 22:00, Place: Tomalı Hilmi, Place: Taksim, Place: Gündoğdu, Place: All squares," – *Tomalı Hilmi* being a wordplay of the original name of the street Tunalı Hilmi, Ankara and TOMAs

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However, these 2013 videos, due to the characteristics of the social media platforms, reached unintended audiences, such as those who were against the protest, leaving comments under the videos. Through these interactions of contradictory political opinions, these remix videos constructed a space of negotiation for the Gezi narrations at the time. Against the mainstream media and the government's portrayal of Gezi protestors as "marauders" or "drunkards", the people from the movement felt a need to justify their cause as a democratic right. In times of political unrest and uncertain moments, such as protests, finding a legitimate meaning may not always be enough to deflect counter-narratives. While framing Gezi as a democratic and compassionate protest to gain wider support, they were also aligning with a hegemonically grounded narrative of appropriate dissidents. In the comment section of one of the remix videos from 2013, a viewer and a supporter of the Gezi indicated how the video in question undermined the narrational strategies employed against the protesters as an undesirable crowd via the visual elements highlighting the artistic and colorful nature of the protests, and the joint singing of the crowd in the background:

> **User P:** Thank you, friends, for showing people with this video that standing up for your rights is not illegal and not something to be feared... we're looking forward to more... (comment posted in 2013)

Rather than simply conveying a sympathetic and welcoming resistance atmosphere with remediation, these remix videos generated a mediated space where competing narratives could confront each other, where support for the movement could be visually and affectively reinforced, and people were invited to organize and join the streets. On the contrary, we do not observe such intentions to mobilize for the Gezi videos uploaded recently, in the 2020s, since the demonstrations were already over a decade ago. The primary audience for them is people who already support the protests, are familiar with Gezi's background, and/or want to remember the specific historical event. Although resistance narratives in the remix videos released during the Gezi period were an example of digital activism, the videos from the 2020s are a practice of remediating footage of Gezi, memories, and narratives from the eyes of the present, pursued to reinforce an oppositional identity. Therefore, these videos reflect the editor and audiences' affective states about how they tackle the political atmosphere and their desire to take action in the 2020s, without any intention of being sympathetic to any group.

As suggested by the comment sections, the viewers of 2020s videos are usually young males who like to consume and are interested in political remixes as a digital

practice. Since the target audience is an online sub-group, rather than the broader public, the videos visually diverge from the 2013 remixes that attempted to legitimize the protests to the wider society of Turkey. They consist of cyberpunk and retro aesthetics, use popular and global techno or EDM songs, and predominantly display moments of civil disobedience and self-defense in clips, which would be considered unfavorable to constantly encounter in a 2013 video. Due to their short duration, they are rhythmically faster and more sophisticatedly edited to match the aesthetics of younger generations and catch their attention, as elaborated on in the previous chapter. Moreover, with the spread of radical movements among young men online and an increase in masculinist politics (Mudde 2019), it is not surprising to see these videos almost always star young, able-bodied men resisting for the imagined and appealing dissident image. Rather than aiming to visually legitimize Gezi and persuade the masses to join them, the newer remixes articulate a desire to remember and remediate the protesting practice and the dissident identity through their own generational aesthetic, affective codes, and political desires.

Following this change of generation and intention, alongside this intentional audience of later videos, there is once again an unintentional audience, other than those who dislike the Gezi movement. Younger users who were probably born close to the period of Gezi are not aware of the protests and inquire about them through commenting but are often left unnoticed and or do not receive much explanation other than mockery, as seen from the comments below in a 2020s video, titled "2013 Gezi | Molchat Doma – Sudno" by @Berkolik (2022). Some remix editors may try to fill this gap and include an educational narrative of Gezi, such as the caption under the "Gezi Parkı Edit – krotthens" video by @krotthens (2024), in an attempt to provide brief but politically rich context, but these are rare.

> **User R:** What exactly are the Gezi protests?
> **User S:** Why did the 2013 Gezi protests start, can you explain?
> **User T:** What's Gezi about, bro?
> **User U:** Damn, there are kids in the comments who don't even know what Gezi is :D

The existence of these interactions emphasizes the shift of Gezi from a well-known, contemporary political agenda and an ongoing movement to a nostalgic point in the past that requires active practices and representations of remembering and reminding to remain in the collective memory. However, how present-day remixes do so is vastly different from how Gezi's socio-political realities unfolded in their time. I argue that the framework Jameson (1991) provides for nostalgia is helpful here to

make sense of the difference between the alternative narratives emerged due to the changing temporalities.

In short, Jameson defines nostalgia as a longing for the present rather than the past. By doing that, nostalgia functions as an affective and narrational mode used by subjects under postmodern late capitalism to repair their ruptures with historicity. These ruptures grew as history has become a commodity by being represented visually and technically in overly stylized forms in the media and reduced to mere references and genres for remediation. Similarly, Baudrillard (1994) argues that the postmodern epoch with the invention of films and TV replaced reality with *simulations*, where visual signs refer to what is thought to be reality, striving it away from its own spatio-temporality. Baudrillard further suggests the contemporary world has now exceeded that era, and now operates within *simulacra*, the representations of representations, rather than the representations of the reality. On these two frameworks, what we see over the nostalgic screen is not what happened, but the representations of the representation of Gezi and what the subjects construct as their desire in a nostalgic viewpoint. I suggest that the more dramatic and bold representations of Gezi in 2020s have not arisen out of their editors' ignorance towards historical realities and the structure of feeling in 2013. On the contrary, these represent their present fantasies for taking action and are answer to the ever-increasing political unrest. In other words, these edited narrational videos tell a lot about the present and recent history (2020s) compared to the Gezi Park itself. However, they are still about and reference Gezi, therefore they simultaneously construct alternative Gezi Park narrations and temporalities that have no actual relation to either the present or the past but are still a part of the Gezi legacy.

Contrary to Jameson and Baudrillard who critique representations in postmodern culture as simulations devoid of depth or historical grounding, Booth (2012) further claims that any content creation following cultural consumption, including remixes, is a form of active engagement with narratives of the representations. This assists with reconnecting with the fragmented temporalities within the postmodern era, a form of reclaiming one's agency from postmodernism and its lack of historical awareness. According to Booth, remix culture allows users to actively engage with time by constructing alternative temporalities through the remediation of older and newer texts together to reinterpret the past and present in meaningful ways. For example, while the 2013 videos were used as a tactic to undermine hegemonic narrational strategies and the politics of visibility, the remixes from the 2020s are a part of the post-Gezi "never forget" efforts, since remembering Gezi and finding hope and guidance through it is something the current protestors do against and despite the current atmosphere that tries to make it forgotten and marginalized. In the 2013

"Biber Gazı Sık Bakalım" video, the background chatter and human voices, the relatively slow transitions, and the expressions of the people in the selected videos, emphasizing the joy, happiness, and pride they feel in their togetherness, create a bond between those who were not present at the time and those who were. If a person has not seen any footage before or is unaware of it due to their young age, remixes can represent the events excitingly, as if they were there again. This can result in embodied affects, as Ahmed (2004) argues, such as the memory of an aching heart. Two commentators express their melancholy and excitement through mentioning bodily language, showing the offline-online continuum does not only contain ideas but also emotions and invoke corporeal reactions:

> **User V:** I was little back then, and every time I passed by that police barricade, my heart would ache.
> **User W:** I'm rubbing my hands, I'm grinding, it's itching—badly craving, so baaad.

The Gezi nostalgia never left, but a collective and more overt form of it unveiled in the first days of the Saraçhane protests in March 2025. The trend to call the new protests Gezi 2.0 (see Figure 5.3) was first started in digital space, especially X, through the circulation of the 2020s Gezi Park remixes on 19 March 2025, the first day of the demonstrations. More and more X users began to raise awareness about the situation by re-posting remix videos and attaching a caption that invites people to mobilize. One such post reads, "If not now, when?"

In the first week of the protests, the common affective memory of Gezi acted as a unifying symbol for the groups with diverse demographic and political affiliations. For students, leftists, women's and queer rights movements, as well as for Kemalists, 2025 displayed a mnemonic return to Gezi. Protest signs with Gezi references and identifications, such as *Çapulcu*[2], slogans, and graffiti, become much more present again in the repertoires of the protesters.

Overall, the remembrance of Gezi assisted these groups to unify under a common memory but also created continuity in their dissident identities and how they navigate their political anxieties. In this way, not just remembering but remediating a

2. Meaning the "marauders" or "looters" in Turkish, Çapulcu was a word reclaimed by the protesters after President Erdogan used it to refer the dissident groups at the Gezi demonstrations in a degrading manner, eventually increasing the global popularity online and granting the Gezi protests achieve international recognition. While the Çapulcu identity does not have the cultural significance it had 10 years ago, its presence both as a discursive and symbolic mode of political marginalization and an oppositional identity have been an ongoing phenomenon in the Turkish political arena.

past resistance narrative has become a tactic in their toolkit to orient in the current atmosphere. However, as the days passed, a shift happened in how the Saraçhane protests have been identified by the public. With the increased and overpowering presence of the young males with nationalist affiliations in the protest space, Saraçhane narratives changed from Gezi 2.0 to a nostalgic mobilization for the Kemalist ideals.

Figure 5.3 A university student holding a sign reading "There are places to Gezi, scores to settle. Gezi 2.0 Loading.." on 20 March 2025, the second day of the protests, in Istanbul University – Image posted on Instagram by Özgür Üniversite Hareketi @ozguruniversitehareketi, a university collective.

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Note: *Gezi* is the nominal state of the verb *gezmek* in Turkey, meaning "to travel" or "have a trip", thus the protester makes a wordplay on the double meaning of *Gezi* Park and *gezmek*

5.2 Kemalist Nostalgia

Due to their historical position and marginalization by/within mainstream politics, the workers and socialist collectives, students, feminist and queer movements, en-

vironmentalists, and Kurdish activists were the ones who opted to protest on the streets the most before (Yörük and Yüksel 2015) and since the Gezi Park. However, until Saraçhane protests, there had not been a major grassroots political movement that included civilians from diverse demographics and ideologies that spanned multiple days. As a result of the ideological views of the government as well as the intersectional left-wing's distinguished stance in oppositional activism, the Kemalist groups have found themselves ignored and cushioned (but not marginalized), more and more each year, and the wish to witness resistances founded on early Republican ideals gained momentum among them. According to a study published by the Istanbul Youth Research Center (2025, 77), the "conservative and polarizing discourse aimed at suppressing street movements" and dismantling repertoires of contention such as the right to organize and protest has found significant support within some young people who embrace a new form of nationalism rooted in Kemalism. While they rigorously defend the freedom of speech, secularism, and constitutional rights, the report includes new nationalist young subjects, both men and women, who express their dislike towards queer and Kurdish left-wing protesters by labeling them as having covert "terroristic" aims and even agree with the repressive stance on these groups (2025, 74-77).

Contrary to their reluctant and conflicting stance on street protests, the Saraçhane case displayed the presence of these youth in resistance scenes. While the founding party, CHP, led the ongoing protests, there was a mass group of people from diverse positionalities supporting the demonstrations, which announced to number as many as one million on some evenings (Medyascope 2025). CHP's stance here as fusing the highly fragmented crowd is significant considering the Kemalist groups attempt to be the unifying and negotiating position within the Gezi Park protests as well (Gençoğlu Onbaşi 2016). However, the first lines of the demonstrations were attended by young, traditionally masculine men, who sometimes walked around the area in groups while chanting nationalistic slogans with misogynistic phrases, causing turmoil among the feminist, queer, and left-wing protesters. In a personal discussion with a friend from the queer-feminist activist spheres in Turkey, they indicated that they attended the protests following "the joint statement of collective feminist groups" but reported they felt uncomfortable in Saraçhane due to the overwhelming majority of the male nationalists. To feel safe, they "tried to find purple flags," which signify the existence of feminist activist groups on the Saraçhane square.

> It felt like there was a separate rally going on over there — police intervened the students on one side, something else was happening somewhere

else, and at the same time, *Andımız*[3] was being recited.

As discussed before, the Gezi Park protests were a much more open space to the marginalized groups, particularly queers and feminist activists (Gambetti 2013; Zengin 2013). Unlike the marginalized groups who explicitly communicated their discomfort towards the overpowering existence of Kemalist nationalists in Saraçhane, we observe a nostalgic juxtaposition of Kemalist imagery with Gezi Park symbols in some remix videos.

On the video of @wannahavesomefun (2025) on TikTok who received more than 210 thousand likes, the Kemalist narrative of Turkish nation "defying the world" to found the Republic of Turkey has been positively compared with the Saraçhane protests, implying the significance of the protests as saving the country via the *muhalif* Turkish identity and forming a generational and familial continuity within the Turkish resisting practice (See Figure 5.4). This relates to Elçi's (2022) argument that nostalgia tends to idealize an unproblematic past and reinforce an us versus them mindset that fuels populist narratives of morally and politically virtuous people against the corrupt ones. Over these visuals, the *Kızılcıklar Oldu Mu?*[4], a Turkish folk song sung by the Boğaziçi University choir that got famous during the Gezi protests, were chosen as the background song. By remixing all these elements together, the editor signifies an identification with both nostalgic stances, as well as connecting them together in a time when the ideals and means of resisting in both sides had ongoing conflicts with each other on the online and offline protest scenes.

As a side note, the left screenshot on Figure 5.4 shows an authentic photography depicting the founding figures and military officers of Turkish Republic. However, the newspaper image, with a headline saying "A handful of Turks challeged the world" while incorrectly spelling the word "challenge", circulates online as an original copy of the New York Times' headline from January 1923, while the digital archives of NYT do not include such an article with that visual on the given screenshot. While I was somehow familiar with the narrative of "a handful of Turks" winning the Independence War, I could not find any reliable source to support the authenticity of this image after an hour of meticulous internet researching. As the headline become amateurishly edited the more I look and my interest on the origins of the image remains, this case visualizes how historical documents are not immune to be

3. *Andımız*, translated as "Our Oath" or "Student Oath," was a daily pledge recited by primary school students in Turkey until 2013. With lines including "I am a Turk, honest, and hardworking," and "My existence shall be dedicated to the Turkish existence," the oath reflects early Republican ideals of nationalism, unity, and civic responsibility and is regarded as an oppositional stance among Atatürkist spheres as it was taken from the school curriculum.

4. "Have the cornelian cherries ripened?"

remixed and even potentially spreading misinformation in extreme cases, while also creating alternative temporalities that did not exist.

Figure 5.4 Screenshots taken from @wannahavesomefun on TikTok, seen respectively at 0:02 and 0:04. Left: “A handful of Turks defied the whole world,” Right: “The descendants of that handful of Turks have grown up.”

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Continuing with the Kemalist remix videos, screenshots selected from @imhooked-baladin’s (2025, see Figure 5.5) video include a view of the Atatürk statue in Konya during the Saraçhane protests (0:06); a protest sign that reads “Long live the Republic,” topped with a smiling portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (0:10); and a restored, silent black-and-white clip of Atatürk delivering the 10th Anniversary Speech marking the foundation of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1933 (0:20). Among the resistance images where protesters try to preserve their place amid the police intervention, these instant yet striking visuals functions as mnemonic and affectively engaging elements, like Hintz’s (2021, 38) *affective heuristics* in which she describes as “symbols that are immediately recognizable, politically salient, and emotionally evocative among a particular social group.” With Kemalist images quickly but repeatedly shown among the hardships of the protest scene, the remix video achieves multiple outcomes (1) moves the audience who feel an adequate emotional and political connection to the early Republican past, (2) demonstrates the bothersome present conditions, and (3) subtly offer an idealized solution to the issue at hand

which is the Kemalist resisting that serves as a unifying, democratic, and familiar political chance compared to the present.

Figure 5.5 Screenshots taken from @imhookedbaladin's remix video with Kemalist imagery, seen at 0:06, 0:10 and 0:20.

Following these two example, I argue that remix videos embellished with Kemalist and national state symbols emanate as a "reaction" or "symbolic resistance," not only to the neo-Ottoman nostalgia but also to the overall socio-political atmosphere surrounding Turkey, both in the political sphere and protest culture. Kemalist conventional media, even though its number seems to be shrinking compared to the past, creates a media landscape where secular groups in the country can fantasize about a past and a future that ends "well" through the reification of nostalgia. By rejecting the flawed and undesirable reality since the present conditions restrain the subject from being, living, and participating the politics as a citizen withtin their ideological outlook, remix videos also became spaces to escape for the audience. As Özyürek (2006) states, the consumption of state ideology in Turkey as a political reaction dates back to the 1990s when the Kemalist citizens personally felt the need to protect the ideals of the Republic for the first time after the rise of conservative Islamists in public space. Citizens started purchasing photographs of Atatürk and putting them in their personal spaces voluntarily as an indication of their political stance against Islamists, whom they considered a threat to the Republican ideals. Currently, state ideology is no longer dominantly Kemalist, and even subjugates the Kemalist, hence I argue that the consumption and production of such imagery has become regarded as an oppositional act rather than support for the state ideology by Kemalists. The prosumption of Kemalist imagery also sustains the oppositional *muhalif* identity of Kemalism, although this position has the potential to re-assess its power in the future. Moreover, it must be noted that the *muhalif* identity encompasses various and conflicting sub-identities in Turkey such as marginalized subjectivities of ethnic and religious minorities, queer people, and left-wing groups

who all fell short quantity and power-wise within the umbrella identity *muhaliflik*. As a result, the overshadowing position of Kemalism still continues in the complex and layered dynamics of oppositionality.

Returning to the Kemalist nostalgia, while Özyürek talks about the privatization and spatialization of such Kemalist nostalgic performances against the Islamist agenda since the 1990s, the nature of symbolic resistance we observe in Kemalist imagery in media has moved from spatial to temporal over time. As people who voluntarily spend their free time watching and producing these visuals, remixes being one of the most common forms online. These digital acts of remembrance and idealized attachment can be analyzed through Berlant's (2020) concept of *cruel optimism*, in which subjects remain affectively attached to symbols and fantasies of nostalgia, such as a future ideal where a reality in which the early Republican narratives materialize once again. These idealizations no longer offer viable futures considering the conditions that enabled the early Republican ideals are already in the past. Yet, these subjects continue to structure their dissident desires and modes of political engagement in the present through such nostalgic attachments since it aids them in preserving their identities.

As previously discussed, resistance remixes in digital space serve to insert protest into people's everyday routines, expanding the temporal and spatial boundaries of when and where resistance can be encountered especially in a time and place mainstream media strategically looks away. These remixes function as reminders and reactivations of dissent, circulating across platforms and disseminating political agenda and memories. However, they face criticism particularly from left-wing users on X for reducing protests and resisting itself to aesthetic and affective commodities consumed online. Like Debord's (2012) notion of the *spectacle*, such critiques argue that remix videos risk transforming genuine resistance into mere representations, distanced from material political engagement, and as social media trends and spectacles exaggerated with popular culture elements. Remix videos of such frequently create spaces of negotiation within the digital space where the "real" dissident *muhalif* identity and how-tos are fiercely debated, especially between Kemalists and left-wing users who base their arguments on different resistance cultures, where the left-wing users coming from a more overt and radical street protesting tradition (See Figure 5.6 and below quote). Under a remix video on X depicting protesters dancing around in the protests with the English pop song *Stir Me Up* by Turkish singer Hadise edited on top, which got criticized by other X users as "undermining the resistance" by not taking the protests seriously, a user quoted the video with the below caption:

> **User Y:** Your edits just make it all even more ridiculous. You turned resistance spaces into a nationalist playground and pulled off one of the most unserious, zero-impact protest ever. You keep comparing it to Gezi, and then call real protesters "terrorists".

By quoting the same remix video, another X user comments on the topic and ties the critics of certain modes and moods of resistance to political identities of the particular protesters:

> **User X:** Only those who are hostile to Atatürk didn't find these highly organized and vocal young people political enough.

To remember Edwards's (2009) argument, political remix videos embrace popular culture as its beginning, which video activism usually refrains from. However, like political media that utilizes parodies and satire, political remix videos generally do not aim to provide a rational argument but their message is mostly "a desire for change that doesn't identify the solutions per se but emphasizes the problems needing remedy" (Edwards and Tryon 2009, n.p). The pop culture elements in these videos aid the medium to circulate, get engaged with and get understood more easily, while also yielding it easier to attend to populist rhetorics. Among the remix videos I analyzed most of them included pop culture references that either spoke to a dissident identity or evoked affective excitement.

Figure 5.6 A protest sign spotted on Saraçhane protests reading “VPN Recommendation: STREETs”, inviting people to protest rather than searching ways to bypass the digital restrictions, posted on Instagram by Özgür Üniversite Hareketi (@ozguruniversitehareketi).

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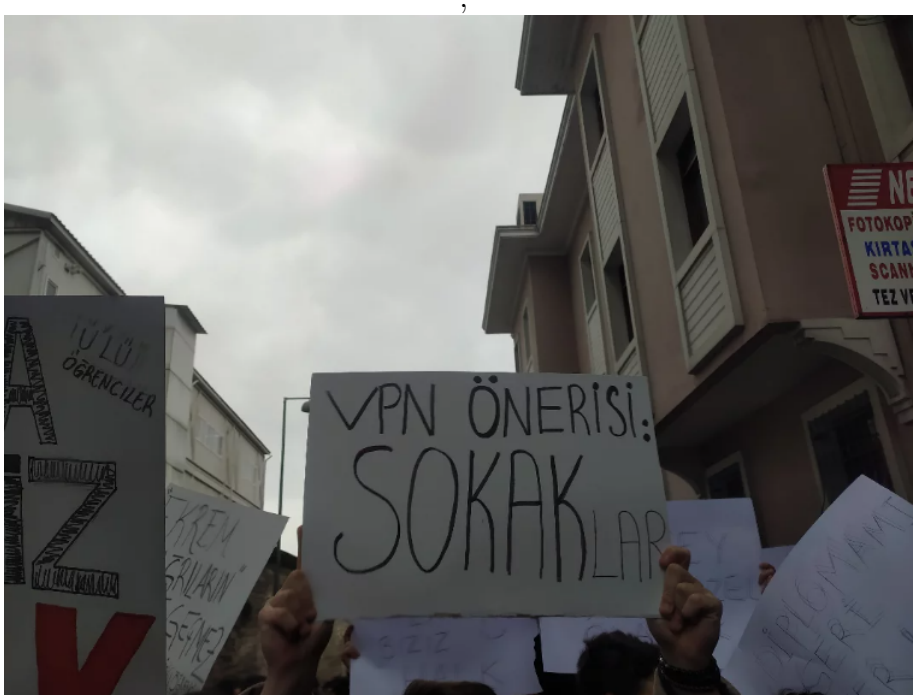

Headliner (2025) used the Turkish rock band Duman’s rebellious rock song *Eyvallah*, written during the Gezi protests with the lyrics “Biberine, gazına, copuna, sopasına, tekmelerin hasına, eyvallah, eyvallah[5],” over the Saraçhane visuals, forming a continuity between the fearless dissident identity from Gezi to Saraçhane, which got 52 thousand likes on X. Postmodern (2025) mashed up the Saraçhane protests with a quote from the movie *the Hunger Games* (Ross 2012) in which the main character Katniss Everdeen gives a speech while leading a resistance, the remix video receiving more than 493 thousand likes and 67 thousand likes on Instagram and X respectively. Similarly, @imhookedbaladin’s (2025) remix video referencing the popular video game *Detroit: Become Human* (Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC 2018), in which the sentient androids rebel against humans to gain equal rights in the future, with the line “Remember, this is not just a story, this is our future,” from the game’s opening credit (See Figure 5.7). By remediating the past (“Remember,” and “Don’t be afraid, it’s us, the people,” shown on the sign), present (“This is not just a story,” and the dissident image from Saraçhane having the Turkish flag with Atatürk as a cape, looking as if they are a superhero), and future (“This is our future,” and a black background implying an open-ended future, before the

5. "To your pepper spray, your gas, your batons, your sticks, even your fiercest kicks, bring it on," can be a rough translation of the lyrics.

protest images re-emerge) with the discursive and visual symbols of political and pop cultural elements, the video provides an intertextual making sense of contemporary resistance. In other words, the popular culture representations not only aid the audience to understand and connect to the narrative more, but also provide a toolkit for the remix editor to produce a political message that reaches out to bigger audiences.

Figure 5.7 Screenshots taken from @imhookedbaladin's remix video referencing from the game *Detroit: Become Human* (2018), with the line "Remember, this is not just a story, this is our future" from the game's opening credit, seen at 00:01, 00:03, and 00:05. Left: A protestor holding a sign, "Don't be afraid, it's us, the people."

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Bearing these points in mind and acknowledging the critics of remix videos, I argue that their layered and transformative nature as well as their potentialities as narrational tactics grant us a productive phenomenon to research on. On the second night of the Saraçhane protests, when the videos of police interventions started appearing on social media platforms, many remembered the ones who lost their lives during the Gezi protests, from Berkin Elvan to Ali İsmail Korkmaz[6]. One X user commented on a non-remixed video where university students are protesting:

> **User Z:** They watched what happened to Ali (İsmail Korkmaz). They grew up seeing things no one should ever have to. And still, they pushed past the fear. That's courage, all respect.

Remix videos of such moments of intervention soon began going viral, receiving hundreds of thousands of "likes." Since the mainstream media largely lacked coverage on protests apart from a few channel such as *Sözcü TV*, remix videos acted as a tactic to disseminate the happenings in short, impactful ways through melancholic

6. Two young and civil martyrs of Gezi Park who became nationwide symbols of the protests against harsh police interventions.

or hot-tempered contemporary music, which also increased engagements with the videos. As mini compilations of different clips, these videos become an evident sign of these occurrences both for the present and the future, documenting them for the others. Moreover, by stimulating affectual states in people who already support the cause, they intended to mobilize people into taking action by showing the difficulty of the situation, as well as shifting the opinions of those who support their aim but not their means, and challenge those alleging that they clashed with the forces by choice. However, most importantly, the high circulation of these videos in the first few months after March 2025 enabled the protests to keep existing in the digital space where the news were overflowing. Although they also get edited, the raw clips get multiplied in each remix video through being re-used again and again, thus enabling the content to spread across different social media users' accounts. During this process, they become harder to keep up and block as they grow to exist and diffuse within the rhythms of each user's timeline, making them witness and potentially attentively engage with the struggles during their everyday lives, on school, work, transportation, and their leisure times. Through the repeated and persistent presence of remix videos online, the temporality, spatiality, and visuality of resistance narratives, and resistance itself, become woven into everyday routines, shaping how individuals interpret the past with the present struggles while imagining possible futures.

6. CONCLUSION

As discussed by Acar et al. (2024), in resistance studies that are based on Western contexts, the efficacy-based narrative framed around achieving group goals and increasing political participation often proves insufficient to fully explain the happenings in settings where power dynamics may exceed democratic boundaries. While securing gains in particular and seemingly unrelated resisting scenes are important, a single collective action is not often adequate to create an impact that addresses all demands of the group in repressive contexts. In such cases, more covert everyday resistances and prosuming desired political narratives can strengthen and sustain feelings of mobilization, belonging, and solidarity, especially among individuals who approach organized movements and parties with skepticism.

In this thesis, I suggested remix videos as one materialization of such desire to mediate resistance and experience some form of political participation in a time when the street-level repertoires of contention (Tilly 1995) have high risk or familiar political participation modes are limited or no longer available. For the majority of Turkey's unorganized *muhalif* population that do not regard protesting as a viable option, everyday participation to politics has been decreased to several modes, such as everyday social interactions, voting in elections, attending to commemorations or national holidays, and with the digital shift, expressing political opinions and engaging with political content online. Due to its spatio-temporal availability compared to the others and the immense political activity happening online, social media offers a constant and accessible space for individuals to feel politically present despite their lack of "physical" participation. However, Acar et al. (2024, 130) argue that the absence of a nationwide, physical, and collective action after the Gezi protests, particularly in the years following the 2016 coup attempt and the state of emergency decrees that saturated the injustices in the country, stems more from the changing nature of control strategies, and not from a lack of belief in efficacy of action among people. Rather than taking a pessimistic approach towards this change, they propose that as the control strategies penetrated various aspects of everyday life, this have prompted people to develop “further, varied” forms of resistance — similar to

de Certeau's (1984) framework of tactics being answers to strategies.

In this context, the aim of this thesis has been to discuss resistance remix videos circulating on Turkish social media as a tactical medium that shapes oppositional *muhalif* identity among young digital subjects. An easily digestable, fast to create and circulate video form, remix videos has gained significance as a new face of remembering and reminding by and for subjects that live within a tensioned environment. In July 2025, three months after Saraçhane protests, an X users quotes one of Headliner's (2025b) remix videos from March that juxtaposes the tear gassed moments of the protest and says, "I did not forget these." The post received 30 thousand likes and by appearing on the screens of more than half a million people, this alone recalled the difficulties of those evenings and spread a covert message, "*You* should not forget it too." As activist tools or tactics, these videos mainly function against the invisibility and dememorization strategies, mainly operating through conventional media belonging to conglomerates. Even though, these strategies predate 2013, they have also expanded significantly within the digital sphere in recent years as the government deepened such political and economic mechanisms to further consolidate its political and cultural power.

However, I also share some of the critiques regarding the ways in which these remix videos intersect with nostalgic narratives built around populist discourses, which I discussed in terms of their mnemonic and affective functions, what Hintz (2021) defines as *affective heuristics*. I base my criticism towards the current political remix culture in Turkey to three reasons that show how the strong points of this medium can also become disadvantages:

- The strong affective dimension of these videos potentially increasing the feelings of polerization and deepening the populist us versus them rhetoric in some subjects,
- Their utilization of recognizable and captivating elements of popular culture undermining their subversive political aims,
- Their fast circulation limited within social media platforms, which can leave little room for critical interpretation or rational debate around their existence and content.

These three issues tend to pull the digital subjects away from forming meaningful, contextual engagements with dissident narratives and socialities revolved around remixing practice, and instead push it toward a more consumption-oriented dynamic. As Edwards and Tryon (2009) suggest and I have demonstrated throughout the thesis, while such content may not aim to present rationality, they form more

emotional connections with the intend to evoke action, point out issues, and circulate the happenings, and thus reinforce political identities that build around these aspects. As an intertextual medium that borrows from the narratives of the past, present, and future, they foster conditions conducive to the rise of nostalgic sentiments. Furthermore, they open up meaningful social spaces that can transcend the present and move across different spatio-temporalities as each user re-interacts with the video. Like how I explored throughout this thesis, the communicative function of remix videos provides opportunities to the researcher and activist alike for the reflection on the cultural and political moods of resisting, as well as how people relate to dissidency in their everyday routines. Moreover, users download and repost these videos on various platforms and accounts, such as @realsabry (2013) who indicated to repost the "Everyday I'm Çapuling" video on their YouTube account, hence preserving and making it still accessible to public. By enabling the quick dissemination and anonymized multiplication of videos from resistance scene, remix videos can potentially move across users and bypass the partial control mechanisms online such as censorship and account withholding.

Remixing is inherently a political practice, as it has various subversive aspects due to its historical and technical context, and bends the political, economic, genre-specific conventions of cultural production that heavily rely on profit (Jenkins 2006; Navas, Gallagher, and Burrough 2015) or activist aims Askanius (2013). Thus, the polarized perspectives on remix videos, especially the negative ones that downplays the medium as "nonsense," also hinder the exploration of the potential of the practice, much like remixing that prioritize social media viralness or consumption. Remix videos' transformation into a visual communication apparatus in which they establish possibilities for political dialogue and expression among users further highlights its value as a social phenomenon worthy of future research. To conclude, I will review some of these future routes in Turkey's remix studies that this thesis could not largely contributed due to its scope and methodological limitations.

First of all, as Jenkins (2009) underline, the *participation gap*, which is defined as the unequal opportunities to access new media technologies, and the realities of digital literacy in Turkey regarding remix practices should be explored more to question the practiceplace of. While remix videos are open to be produced and consumed by anyone regardless of their demographics, and the technological advancements enabled producing these videos more effortless, this culture still requires some form of techno-practical knowledge, interest, and digital literacy. The marginalization of digital space, where access, visibility, and representation are often shaped by structural inequalities, obstructing us from drawing near to the Habermasian public space in the digital where conflicting voices are not silenced due to participation

gap but instead amplified. Prioritizing a self-reflective approach based on an emphasis on digital mobility and the methodology of *walking*, unobtrusive observation and visual-discursive analysis were preferred in this thesis. These approaches enabled me to follow the digital mediascape as it unfolds in everyday rhythms and spontaneous interactions shaped by users' political and aesthetic expressions. As a downside, relying solely on these methods limited my data to what is publicly displayed and performed on the platforms. This meant the public data did not always offer adequate information on the intricacies of how users personally and covertly engage with the remix medium in their unique ways and positionalities. In the future studies, conducting online and offline interviews with users who produce and/or consume political remix videos can enable us exploring how they relate the current political, economic, and cultural dynamics and personal experiences with the remix practice itself; and how they approach remixing, platforms, (digital) activism and online restrictions. Moreover, interviews can offer insights on the emerging subculture of political remix editing on Turkey's online spaces in which remix editors are potentially interacting, supporting, conflicting, and learning from each other.

Second, Turkey's remix culture can be studied with focusing on other temporal, spatial, and material approaches. Similar to this thesis, future research could involve more detailed and comprehensive comparisons between , and . Generational analyses of remix editors and audiences can be conducted to understand how they make sense of the practice evolve over time. Spatially, studies could trace the global-local continuum as they influence and shape each other and expand our knowledge of remix videos in which not only aesthetic trends but also ideas and political messages travel through remediation. A material approach can also be considered to explore the economic, technological, and infrastructural factors that feed into the diverse decoding of remix videos, from digital labor and content-creation to socioeconomic inequalities determining digital literacy, inclusion, and marginalization. I did a modest analysis on the platform interfaces and how they alter the aesthetics and narrative tendencies of remixes, but an elaborate study comparing different platform interfaces, devices, and the dynamics of how people use them can yield much more intricate results. Consequently such multifaceted studies would deepen our understanding of remix videos as a political expression and tactic across diverse media landscapes and positionalities.

Lastly, remixing, which I assessed as a tactic, practice, culture, and tool throughout this thesis, is not immune to being appropriated by the hegemonic through employing its style and aesthetics. In his article discussing remixes as tactics, Manovich (2009) explains how the remix culture has been adopted by Web 2.0 companies to extend economic benefit through supposed DIY and customization options offered to

their consumers, calling this appropriation of tactics *tactic-as-a-strategy*. While he discusses how neoliberal capitalism has appropriated remixing as a strategy, he does not remark on how remixing can likewise be seized for political gains. On the internet, there are countless examples of remix videos focusing on content that do not aim to undermine social inequalities but employ the affective and captivating power of remix practice to spread oppressive, anti-democratic, or violent ideas and ideologies. For instance, the presence of ultra-nationalist remix video accounts in Turkey and the global digital scene reveals a continuum of such practices where populist narratives are amplified with remix videos. These accounts merit further analysis and inclusion in the broader discourse on the future of digital political expression since these extremist remix videos circulate within social media platforms that provide engagement-based income generation, such as X and YouTube. Even though the practice itself originates from the democratization of media production, these utilizations of remix videos can further illustrate how remix videos are still a medium and tool that can be appropriated as strategies, and thus tactics-as-strategies, an example of Manovich's criticism against de Certeau's this-or-that theorization of tactics and strategies.

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