

# "Can You See Us?": From ACT UP to Kaos GL Video Activism in Queer Movement

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## ABSTRACT

This study is intended to explain how video activism is utilized in the queer movement with examples from ACT UP to Kaos GL. AIDS-oriented queer video movement that started in the late 1980s with video cameras is now being used by the queer movement in other ways and in increasing number of channels. Thinking of queer activism in Turkey, the first non-governmental organization that comes to mind is Kaos GL, they employ digital video archiving with their activism through YouTube. LGBTQI+ individuals are either underrepresented or misrepresented by the mainstream media in Turkey, require radical alternative media to strengthen the community, employing activism via the Internet. There is a parallel between the video activism examples of Kaos GL today and the video activities of ACT UP in the 1980s to make their voices heard and to represent the community better. The study aims to investigate this. While doing this, it looks at the archive records and makes a literature review and an interview. The importance of this study is that there are not many studies in this area, the current research tries to fill this gap.

**Keywords:** act up, kaos gl, video activism, aids, queer movement

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# “Bizi Görebiliyor musun?”: ACT UP’tan Kaos GL’ye Queer Harekette Video Aktivizmi

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, ACT UP’tan Kaos GL’ye örneklerle queer hareketinde video aktivizminin nasıl kullanıldığını açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. 1980’li yılların sonlarında video kameralarla başlayan AIDS odaklı queer video hareketi, günümüzde de queer hareketi tarafından başka şekillerde ve artan sayıda kanalda kullanılmaktadır. Türkiye’de queer aktivizmi alanındaki yetkin sivil toplum kuruluşlarından biri olarak Kaos GL, YouTube üzerinden yaptıkları aktivizmle dijital video arşivlemeyi kullanmaktadır. Böylelikle Türkiye’deki ana akım medya tarafından ya yeterince temsil edilmeyen ya da yanlış tanıtılan bireylerin, toplumu güçlendirmek için internet üzerinden aktivizm kullanarak radikal alternatif medyaya ihtiyaç duyulması durumunu açığa çıkarmaktadır. Kaos GL’nin günümüzdeki video aktivizm örnekleri ile ACT UP’ın 1980’lerde seslerini duyurmak ve topluma daha iyi bir temsil sunmak için yaptığı video etkinlikleri arasında bir paralellik bulunmaktadır. Çalışma bunu araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunu yaparken arşiv kayıtlarına bakılması, literatür taraması yapılması ve bir de söyleşiye odaklanması tercih edilmektedir. Böylelikle bu çalışmanın önemi, bu alanda çok fazla araştırma olmaması biçiminde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Mevcut araştırmayla bu eksiklik giderilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** act up, kaos gl, video aktivizmi, aids, queer hareketi

## Introduction

The aim of this research is to look at the differences between ACT UP and Kaos GL regarding video activism in queer movement. The subject is the video activism in queer movement. The study is set to dive deep into this area. The scope of this research is the two very distinct civil rights organizations, their reach in society and their differences in regards of video activism. When the political economy of mass media has changed and mainstream media companies have become properties of media bosses who have capital in other sectors, the relations between the media and the state have turned complicated. Broadcasts in the ruling rhetoric of power that help reconstruct the discourse make it difficult for disadvantaged groups to be in the mainstream media. However, digital media technologies developed over time can be used for rebellion as well as subjugation. It is interesting that disadvantaged groups, especially those who are underrepresented by the media, dominate radical alternative media. Even the fact that the queer community founding Grindr way before Tinder reveals the digital dominance of the community.

Unlike traditional media, it is easy for new media technologies to reach anyone, at any place and at any time, by removing the borders of the world and making it swifter to communicate. This could be in the form of a bond established over a show with queer content, and has the potential to create awareness and solidarity within the community in more serious issues such as sexual harassment and hate crime. Solidarity is chiefly important for the queer movement. It is vital for individuals who feel lonely throughout their lives to meet people like them, to hold on to life and to form a community, to revolt against the religion, capitalism and ruling trends that are mostly anti-queer and family-oriented.

The ideological hegemony of capitalism reveals itself in many different ways. Almost all fields of economic, military, cultural, social, moral, business and non-leisure processes function as a field of power where capitalism establishes the ideological hegemony, reproduces itself, and uses all kinds of tools to increase its power (Rojek, 1995, p. 12).

The dominant discourse of capitalism is the protection of the family, as nuclear family is favorable for consumerism in the capitalist system. This means the exclusion and marginalization of the queer community. On the other hand, notably in the Twenty first century, the fact that queer individuals reached an economically satisfying power (pink money) and started founding families through marriage changed the discourse of capitalism. Nevertheless, considering their relationship with power, it is observed that capitalism keeps pace with the discourse of power and helps to rivet that discourse. For this reason, while the queer movement is supported in liberal administrations, it should be noted that queer people face oppression such as criminal punishments in more authoritarian regimes and the media is a good ecology to hide

these oppressive forces. As a result, it is more advantageous for the ruling class to maintain their continuity in terms of political power without the use of monopoly on the legitimated use of physical force (Gramsci, 1986).

According to Downing (2001) Walter Benjamin's interpretation of the rapid availability of media technologies in 1936 is in place (p. 60). This accessibility caused the borders to disappear and the change to happen more rapidly. A more comprehensive analysis should be carried out to examine how individuals who regard their underrepresentation or misrepresentation on the mainstream media are affected. However, Foucault (2000) deals with the relationship between power and subject as follows (p. 112):

This form of power validates itself directly in everyday life that categorizes the individual, imprints on his own individuality, imposes its own identity on him, and imposes a law of truth that he must accept. This is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. The word subject has two meanings: subject to others through supervision and dependence, connected to one's own identity with conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and subordinates the subject.

Foucault's biopower, which even interferes with the bodies of its subjects, also includes their sexual orientation and identity. These subjects whose identities are removed from their hands are made dependent on someone else and they have difficulties in holding onto their queer identities. Video activism comes into play here as an example of radical alternative media. A stance against the impositions of the mainstream, a counter-hegemonic approach revolutionizes the process of regaining identity. Alternative identities become the defenders of their own civil rights struggles (Aydemir Telli, 2018, p. 8).

## Method

There is a parallel between the video activism examples of Kaos GL today and the video activities of ACT UP in the 1980s to make their voices heard and to represent the community better. The study aims to investigate this. While doing this, it looks at the archive records and makes a literature review and an interview. The importance of this study is that there are not many studies in this area, the current research tries to fill this gap.

## Findings and Discussion

Using the theoretical framework and methods, this research investigates video

activism in queer movement. There are various differences between ACT UP of French origin and Kaos GL of Turkish origin. This study dives deep into that division. I aim to find the differences and find a pathway to make Kaos GL a more active civil rights organization. But first of all, we shall take a look at their histories.

## Video activism and online activism

In recent days, video activism and online activism have become even more important with the Black Lives Matter protests all around the globe. The murder of George Floyd by a police officer caught on camera has created massive amount of interest both online and out on the streets. While this was a breakthrough in video activism, witness videos have long been employed in counter-surveillance.

As Monahan defines it, counter-surveillance is intentional, tactical uses, or disruptions of surveillance technologies to challenge institutional power asymmetries. Marx also suggests that counter-surveillance moves involve turning the tables and surveilling those who are doing the surveillance. For Mann, such tactics constitute a form of sousveillance whereby cameras be mounted on people in low places, rather than upon buildings and establishments in high places (Wilson and Serisier, 2010, p. 165).

The rise of affordable camcorders and recording equipment have affected activism in unprecedented ways. "Who watches the watchers?" is a good question we now know the answer to. Especially for disadvantaged, under-privileged and widely discriminated-against communities it is not just a matter of getting your point across, but also a means to stay alive and get justice for state wrongdoings and institutional racism or discrimination. Since the 1980s, the queer movement have used videos to film their demonstrations and to archive queer history (Cvetkovich, 1998, p. 184). As the writers of history shape the narrative in their interest, for a social movement, memory is indispensable. To be seen is to exist. In the 1980s, the mainstream media did not shed a positive light on the queer community, it was a gaze tainted by AIDS blame. In order to transform this perspective, the community had to think creative and act fast. They manifested a different face to queerness than the one the viewers of traditional media were used to seeing.

In the 1980s and 1990s when video activism was born, the distribution of these videos was a vigorous task. Organizations such as ACT UP started their own televisions (DIVA TV – Damned Interfering Video Activists Television) while others swapped VHS tapes among their community. Contrarily, nowadays new media technologies have turned local struggles into global ones. Movements such as BLM has moved around the world with undisputable speed with the help of the Internet and more namely, social media platforms. Although trends like #BlackoutTuesday on Instagram have

been criticized for silencing the movement, it is imperative to take into consideration that they achieved one thing that online activism is after: getting people to talk and forcing those in power to listen. It is not unlike what ACT UP did in the past.

The worldwide distribution of works of video activism is much more straightforward since the invention of the Internet and the rise of social media. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can be public spaces of solidarity as they may also be the place of online abuse and hate. In addition, it must be kept in mind that capitalist media giants such as Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey are profiting immensely of these movements whichever agenda they champion. Politicians like Trump also use social media platforms to agitate and weaponize the masses. In these cases, community is commodified (Kent, 2012). Albeit, for the sake of video witnessing, these platforms are indispensable to spread information far and wide. It would have been extremely laborious to send a video of police brutality around the world a few decades ago, nevertheless it is now the new form of opposition and rebellion. Whether it be for counter surveillance, climate change awareness, animal rights activism, queer movement or political opposition, video activism has arms to reach anywhere and anytime. This has been even truer in the 2000s with the invention of the smart phone.

In developing countries the mobile phone is, and will remain, the only computing device that the vast majority of the people will ever own. According to an UNCTAD report in 2010, use of mobile phones in the Least Developed Countries went from two mobile subscriptions per 100 people in 2003 to 25 per 100 in 2009. In one striking example the country of Bhutan went from zero mobile subscriptions per 100 people to 50 subscriptions per 100 people in just six years. It is not only in developing countries that mobile phone usage is dramatically increasing. In fully industrialized countries, mobile phone usage is also rising, particularly when compared to the percentage of people using landlines. In the developed world, there are more than 100 mobile subscriptions per 100 people. Worldwide, over the period 2007 to 2009, the number of mobile cellular subscriptions increased by 1.9 billion while the number of fixed telephone lines decreased by 57 million. Mobile phones are also likely to be the primary real-time news source for much of the global population. Ninety per cent of the world's population is now covered by a mobile cellular network, and in China and India more than 90 per cent of villages are now connected through mobile. Although radios are common and televisions increasingly so, mobile phones are bidirectional and can provide not only news and information selected by the user, but location-targeted news and information as well (Winter, 2012, p. 71).

As Winter suggests, the use of mobile phones escalates every second and it changes the way how much information that we have access to. This new era of unstoppable information flow brings us closer to what Douai (2012) calls "hyper activism". Hyper activism is the adamant combination of video activism and online

activism. In the era of social media platforms, hyper activism is the future of radical alternative media. Social media platforms are not the only outlets of online activism. Gaming platforms have become public spaces for resistance as well.

Online activism is not perfect when it comes to inciting action, but the use of the Internet has had a profound impact on increasing social awareness. As the times continue to change and technology becomes easier for people to utilize, video games have been introduced into the world of activism as another way to reinvent these pursuits as a popular, persuasive, and effective medium (Anderson-Barkley and Foglesong, 2018, p. 254).

Anderson-Barkley and Foglesong suggest that video game communities are becoming more and more active in online activism sphere and that they change the landscape. While we think of Twitter and Instagram as platforms of defiance, we forget to mention video gaming platforms and their imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). Skardzius (2015) points out to this fact by examining the World of Warcraft community (p. 176):

Like in many other contexts outside of gaming, LGBTQ people who play WoW are often confronted with heteronormativity and homophobia that can result in marginalization and act as a barrier to full social participation. As a reaction to this exclusion, an alternative community within World of War craft has come into being. This alternative community can be interpreted as an act of resistance against a mainstream culture that has not only been insensitive to LGBTQ players' requests to be treated justly but has also been outright hostile and violent in their responses to these requests.

The queer community utilizes the gaming platforms as well as the social media platforms in order to make way for solidarity, inclusion, resisting and fighting back adversity. This is indeed quite telling as the gaming community is notorious for its trolls and intolerable forms of abuse between its users. To rise up to cruelty can be regarded as necessary to build a stronger community, both online and in real life. On the other hand, not every online community has positive solidarity in mind. The rise of alt-right and white supremacists has been globally steady in recent years. They hold protests to go outside during Covid-19, they march for their freedom to not wear masks, and they even organize demonstrations to be able to go to a hair salon. These actions are not just offline, they have a resilient online army of supporters. On Twitter, they protect their Presidents, on Instagram they share "All Lives Matter" posts and on YouTube, they talk non-stop about how there is no such thing as racism in the United States. According to Ekman (2014) the right-wing extremist online community in Sweden takes it up a notch on YouTube (p. 95):

Though the clips on the SMR channel highlight confrontation, homo-social aggressiveness, and latent violence, there is also a great deal of material with socially accepted content in their clips. A substantial

amount of the clips portraying outdoor life and socialization in seemingly depoliticized forms are key components to what could be described as a visual sanitation process. The modes of camaraderie and soundness reflect a regenerated neo-fascist culture. Physical exercise appears in apolitical settings but is essentially an extension of the paramilitary culture that has prevailed in the far right milieu throughout the postwar period. The big difference is the more neutral discursive framing in the video material. For example, in the physical exercise clips, explicit political discourses do not come to the fore; instead, the meaning is embedded in the historical context. Innocent forest hikes reflect the preparations for a (potentially) violent, political struggle. The visibility and normalization are elements of an on-going socio-political (collective) identity process within the various groups. The clips enhance certain identity markers, such as physical health, masculine homo-sociality and companionship, and reject other identity markers. The clips reproduce a framework of socio-political morality by detaching possible elements that have signified the practices of far right-wing groups during the past.

As stated above, Swedish right-wing extremist movement uses YouTube for their own agenda in a highly elaborate way. They employ unique online activism tactics to appeal to their target audience and fortify the bonds of their community. Per contra, the aim of this essay is not to dive into the politics of the alt-right, but to examine the video activism of social movements that actually set out to challenge authority, call out outdated practices and make a difference in the world. The best example of this kind of video activism is the legacy of ACT UP whose visual works can be considered as a vivacious dance between the queer movement and video activism. There is also the relationship between new media and political economy:

Why do advertisers subsidize readers? In fact, they only do so in publications whose readership includes enough of the advertiser's customers to make it worth their while. In a multi-sided market, demand for the platform (and relatedly, the price it can charge) is, in large part, determined by how many participants are present on each side of the market. The more readers of the right type, the more attractive the paper is to advertisers. In economic language, when the benefit of a network expands with its size, it is called a network effect. When the benefits of the network size reach non-participants in the network so the size of the readership benefits another group, the advertisers, it is an indirect network effect. In traditional media markets, generally it is only the advertiser side that increases demand due to indirect network effects. Platforms exercise power in this example through setting prices on both sides in the example of Metro, a price of zero to readers which serves to attract and retain enough customers on one side (the reader side) for network effects to kick in and attract the other side (the advertisers) (Van Couvering, 2017 p. 1813-1814).

The new media has enormous economic and political power that they can use on authority. But these big companies also work with the States because they have



their own interests. If it is in their interest for queer people to have more civil rights, the big media companies will use their power accordingly.

## ACT UP

The AIDS crisis, which posed a great danger in the mid-1980s, cost many lives in the LGBTQI+ community. The most responsible groups for these losses are ignorant officials in power and pharmaceutical companies that did not see enough economic interest in the treatment of this disease. Capitalism acts on the logic of profit and does not act unless a disease reaches the number of patients it deems sufficient. Sufficient number of patients is the number that ensures their profit maximization, but in the real world there are issues more important than economic interest such as human life. ACT UP, which tries to draw attention to this and is important for the voice of the community, is revolutionary for video activism as well as queer movement.

The organization was founded in March 1987 at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in Manhattan, New York, in response to what was seen as the U.S. government's lack of action on the growing number of deaths from HIV infection and AIDS. By 1987 AIDS had killed almost 60,000 people worldwide, and more than 40,000 were HIV-positive in the United States alone. The numbers were considered staggering, and the gay community as the first and, for a time, only demographic noticeably affected was at the centre of the crisis. Under the administration of President Ronald Reagan, funding for AIDS-infected patients, research for a cure, and research for drugs to slow down the disease were slow. Some attributed the delay to the antigay prejudice of many Americans that they also saw reflected in the Reagan administration; thus, many in the gay community felt that it was their responsibility to exert pressure regarding these issues (Banales, 2013).

For this reason, ACT UP has the mission of attracting attention first, then breaking down prejudices. Public interest has the potential to force both state power and pharmaceutical companies to collaborate. Being aware of this, ACT UP aimed to raise awareness among the people through non-violent protests, trainings, and visual demonstrations. This goal is directed not only to those outside the community, but also to those inside the community. In the 1980s, when access to information was limited, many people caught AIDS because they did not have proper information. Individuals who were not aware of prevention methods and early diagnosis were becoming easy targets for this relentless disease. ACT UP tried to overcome this with informational videos and DIVA TV.

Video activism has been actively used in the fight against hegemony. It is not possible to say that there are no obstacles on the way. Anyone who opposes hegemony is somehow censored or at least it is tried. Although video activism, which was on

the rise during the AIDS crisis, was exposed to censorship, it cannot be said that they were extremely fazed by it. Juhasz (2010) expressed this fact in a stimulating and mind-opening way:

While censorship is always harmful, the hurt of censorship in relation to AIDS art is formative, primal. This pain is not rational: it's where we began. I am pulled back to the past, forcefully denied our history and future. I am returned to the closet, unheard, our lives and loves once again unseen, disallowed. We are pulled back to the time when we were forced into action because our friends were sick, in pain, and dying, there was so much we couldn't say and show, so then, of course, we did: how we put condoms on penises and dental dams on vaginas, how we kissed, who we fucked, how we rioted, who we wanted, how we mourned, how our lives were touched by racism, sexism, and homophobia before during and after AIDS, how once we were polite and then we could no longer be.

Struggle is often an action that requires using anger in the right direction. Anger is good for activism. The rulers don't like anger because it is unpredictable and unobtrusive. Whenever a movement gains momentum, its members are accused of being "angry": angry lesbians, angry black people, angry women, etc. Notwithstanding, nobody is accused of being angry during wars as wars are born of hegemony, rebellions destroy it. It would not be wise to dismiss Bourdieu, who says that economic oppressions are the basis of the behavior of mass media (Morresi, 2006, p. 55). If we proceed from his view, it does not seem far-fetched to suggest that the capitalist system (in this case drug companies) supports the spread of AIDS fear in the media. The practice of making news depicting homosexuals as "sinner" and "bad" is very common in the media of the 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, the importance of radical alternative media cannot be ignored here.

To ACT UP, demonstrations are not only "direct actions" but forums for theater and performance. Understanding AIDS as a crisis of representation, ACT UP intervenes in the media both by seeking and getting mainstream media attention and by producing its own alternative media (Cvetkovich, 1998, p. 183).

ACT up used the protests as a form of cultural activism, utilizing the newly acquired attention to deconstruct the meanings that were given to queer community by mass media. In social movements, there is always a battle in the cultural space.

A struggle over culture and cultural space is, indeed, virtually a defining feature of democratic societies, which almost inevitably involve a complex negotiation between public authority and the dissemination of facts, ideas, and representations in public. Ever since the commercialization of leisure in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century, elite groups have increasingly expressed concerns about the effects of "cheap amusements" on the maintenance of public authority and have accordingly developed mechanisms for regulating culture (Grievson,

2004, p. 13).

ACT UP fought long and hard for their place in the culture. Furthermore, it was crucial for the movement to use alternative media since mainstream media as the "consent manufacturer" of the Powers that be had limited space for the queer community. The media exploited this finite space in the form of underrepresentation and misrepresentation as they had also been doing for the Black Community for decades. Examples of video activism in the queer movement are vital to the heart of the community. Juhasz (1995) put this into words like this (p. 95):

Another nearly definitive convention of alternative AIDS media is that expertise is transferred away from those who have wielded power so criminally for the duration of the epidemic to those who have suffered or fought against the powers-that-be. Alternative tapes give authority about AIDS to people who possess lived experience of the crisis... Spectators comment upon how empowering it feels to see so many bright, articulate, intense women taking power over the crises of AIDS.

As viewers saw these clever and brave young people, queer movement and AIDS activism began to draw attention. Those outside of the community came together sincerely with these lives that they had not touched before, and those in the community were able to establish closer ties among themselves. As Downing says when it comes to radical alternative media, we shouldn't think only globally. Sometimes the local may have even more meaning. Although the ACT UP movement started in New York, it managed to spread all over the world. They gathered the public attention with the videos presenting themselves and recording the actions and garnered the support of the public. In order to see how important this is, it is necessary to take into account the thousands of lives they saved and how they pushed drug companies to find a treatment through their activism.

Another issue that is as important as video recording is digital archiving. Social movements, which cannot store their recordings, face the possibility of being defeated in a fight. This is a step that requires care, money and perseverance. Studying image upload and leak as an example of political disobedience made autonomous, open source archiving practices visible, reflecting the daily life practices of the commons. Documentation is an intervention, an action, archiving is part of a collective project (Appadurai, 2003, p. 14-25 and Aydemir Telli, 2018, p. 9). Documentation and archiving must go hand in hand in video activism. Otherwise, it becomes possible to speak of a memory-free movement. The memory has a great place in the queer movement. The voice of individuals who know that they are not alone is always stronger. While ACT UP exhibited these works in another time and in a another corner of the world, to look at Turkey to investigate the state of the relationship between the queer movement and video activism will be useful to shed light on the previously-discussed relations between media and hegemony.

## Kaos GL

In order to understand why this non-governmental organization was founded, it is useful to look at their web page: "Kaos GL was founded in Ankara in July 1994 in order to liberate Turkish queer individuals by fighting against the discrimination they suffer. The organization has adopted the motto that the liberation of homosexuals will liberate heterosexuals as well" (Kaos GL, \_\_\_\_). Kaos GL no longer deals with only Turkish citizens, they help queer refugees and asylum seekers in their search for equal rights and fair treatment. In this process, many employees and volunteers, from media experts to doctors, from social workers to lawyers, are actively working in Kaos GL. In later years, they have especially become hands-on with queer refugees from Syria who are seeking asylum in European countries.

Video activism in Turkey is still in the early stages, there are those who argue that it gained momentum after Gezi Parkı movement (Aydemir Telli, 2018, p. 10), but even a video activism in infancy in the hands of a strong movement can develop rapidly, notably in the age of hyper activism. Organizations such as WITNESS are working seriously against violations of rights, however, this much is obvious that we do not encounter strong examples of video activism in Turkey. Studies in this field cover examples such as KaraHaber, Seyr-i Sokak, İnadına Haber, BalıkBilir, which do not usually gather around a certain movement. Nevertheless, video activism intertwined with social movements is more likely to challenge the status quo. Depeli (2016) takes a closer look at the beginnings of video activism in Turkey (p. 124):

Video activism in Turkey started at the beginning of the 2000s, considerably later than in the West. Scholarly discussions and arguments related to video activism in the West had yet to penetrate into Turkey at that time, and video activism in Turkey can be said to have developed independently of the influence of Western countries, being based on its own resources and subject to its own peculiarities. In this regard, Karahaber, Turkey's first video activist group, had to develop its own experience and theoretical perspective. Being unable to benefit from the literature above, it drew upon the works of someone from a much earlier point in history, Dziga Vertov, who was a well-known Soviet film director and theoretician in the 1920s.

As Depeli states, video activist groups such as KaraHaber had to construct their own theoretical frameworks. In Turkey, Soviet Union's socialism is a widely used ideology for oppositional groups and social movements as it is in contrast to conservative ideologies that these movements are in conflict with. In a conservative country such as Turkey, the mainstream media channels use almost none of their resources for creating queer content. Films, shows or even news targeted for a queer community are scarce. This is alarmingly in line with the conservative agenda that encourages getting married and procreating young. LGBTQI+ people sitting at home and watching

television are being made aware of their erasure from society. This is the landscape and struggle that radical alternative media is up against. Turkey's leading queer activist group Kaos GL has recently released witnessing and self-made activism videos on their YouTube platform. These videos, called Renkli Ekran (Colorful Screen) interviews, can create a turning point in terms of digital archiving if the contribution continues. During an e-mail correspondence with an activist from the Kaos GL (KG) organization at 2018, the following dialogue took place:

- Me : My research is about the reflection of the social movement initiated by ACT UP with the videos they made on AIDS. It also starts from a universal perspective as I intend to bring up the example of Turkey. Especially in terms of Kaos GL, what was video activism yesterday, what is it today, I wanted to interview you to find out.
- KG : Kaos GL has started to focus on video works recently, so it is not easy to talk about a past in this sense in the name of Kaos GL. In this historical process, the work of platforms such as Seyr-i Sokak on video activism becomes more prominent.
- Me : I get it. So, what kind of initiatives do you have in this field recently?
- KG : We did oral history studies, the videos were added recently, we do not have works outside of that yet.
- Me : Yes, I watched your videos a bit. What was your purpose when making these videos? What effect did you want to make on the audience?
- KG : The Oral History study is a process that includes first of all listening to the history of LGBTI+ movement and archiving it with the information collected from the subjects. To collect, analyze and publish the memory of the LGBT movement in Turkey. These videos are just one of the outputs of this purpose. Difficult conditions in Turkey (prohibitions, violence, discrimination), LGBT and queer existence of surviving, reflecting the struggle for freedom and equality within the process from yesterday to today.
- Me : Well, do you have any goals such as the existing community getting to know each other better and strengthening their relations?
- KG : The transfer of memory and archiving, sharing and discussing LGBTI + movement history is of course a strengthening factor in relationships and movement. Just as this movement is important for self-knowledge, it is valuable to record and create a collective memory.

According to the conclusions drawn from the meeting, Kaos GL is at an early stage in terms of video activism in Turkey, notwithstanding they grasp the importance of video activism and want to improve on it. LGBTQI+ people in Turkey are in need of the power of video activism in terms of defense of civil rights. In conservative countries, queerness is one of the subjects that is usually blatantly ignored or covered up.

This causes queer individuals to feel disadvantaged and have a decline in terms of mental and physical health. For this to change, it is essential for community members to come together and share their stories, even on a local basis. In the network society where social media is on the rise, the easiest way to connect is to use social media platforms effectively.

Turkey used social media platforms innovatively and widely amidst the Gezi Parkı movement when the traditional media preferred to stay silent about the protests. Albeit, citizen journalism and hyper activism reached its peak during this social movement. The markings of Gezi is still visible in the fabric of Turkish society. This goes on to show how crucial it is to use radical alternative media in social movements. If Kaos GL uses social media and new media technologies more actively, it is inevitable to reach a larger audience. In particular, an important role falls on the radical alternative media in traditionalist countries like Turkey, for the reason that if the radical does not speak, the mainstream will remain silent forever. Silence is equivalent to death in terms of social movements.

## Conclusion

AIDS is one of the issues that have not been on the agenda since the 90s and has lost its activeness in terms of video activism. Juhasz (2020) states this fact:

At the onset of the AIDS crisis and its linked movements for social justice, video activists understood that we were participating in (and building) the first truly postmodern media movement. We used newly available sets of technologies to self-document and share our lives, ideas and movements, to make our own educational and cultural materials, to speak to and against the "mainstream" media and culture, and to work to alter material reality through carefully enacted and theorized acts of representation. We explicitly made "AIDS activist video": media made in conversation with movements, actions and people actively contributing to change. There were other forms of AIDS media: mainstream documentaries, network journalism, tawdry bio-pics, educational industrials and a few well-intentioned, yet sentimental movies that we activist/scholars angrily and compulsively read against their grains. Then in the decades that followed, there was profoundly less coverage of the crisis by activists or otherwise, and we entered what AIDS activist and theorist, Theodore Kerr calls the "Second Silence".

These words of academic Juhasz, an active member of the activist group, shed light on many issues. The most important of these are the importance of video activism, witness accounts, making a noise and archive creation for queer movement. It is clear that there are steps to be taken by Turkey in this regard. Digital archiving, video witnessing, civil rights advocacy videos are really vital for the queer movement. The

only kind of news that the viewers watch about LGBTQI+ individuals in the mainstream media in Turkey are the ones where they are violently killed. The message this gives to the society is that being queer is bad and the members of this community are constantly condemned to death. This perception, which has the potential to trigger hate crimes and creates the impression that harming queer people is an unpunished action for those outside the community. It also causes individuals who have not yet come out of the closet to hide in their metaphorical closets in fear forever. To change this perception, radical alternative media seems to be the only way out.

Gramsci's theory of power, which prefers manufacturing consent instead of resorting to the state monopoly of force, is manifested here. The violent content about LGBTQI+ community in the mainstream establishes, supports and re-establishes the dominant discourse in Turkey. There are currently no Turkish television shows involving queer individuals. Even when they are represented, they become victims of misrepresentation and it is an indication that the mission of the mainstream media is fulfilled. The most important task of the public broadcasting channel BBC in the UK is to represent disadvantaged groups well. It is observed that queer characters are displayed in a positive light in many BBC series. However, it is difficult to find a country as conservative as the United Kingdom. Here too, capitalism comes into play. As mentioned earlier in this study, queer people now make serious contributions to the economy. The sacred of the capitalist system is money. For this reason, LGBTQI+ individuals are secured.

We are in an era where accessibility is available all over the world in terms of video activism. We are a few clicks away from one another, it is conceivable to reach individuals and bring them back to life just by sharing a personal story. To understand how important this is, it is enough to look at the suicide rates among queer individuals. This study foresees that the future of video activism lies in the new media technologies. The future holds a great promise for advancement in the era of civil rights. The aim of this work was to shed a light on the differences of ACT UP and Kaos GL. It manages more than that. It depicts a new era of activism. Every individual all-around the globe has the entire world on their fingertips right now and that is going to change the world. Although it is a project that always takes time and courage to change things radically, if radical alternative media does not talk about the important issues, silence has the potential to dominate the world and this is an inexorable danger. As American judge Jackson (as cited in Eastland, 2000) expressed in an important case on censorship in art (p. 60):

But freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much.  
That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is  
the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order.

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