ANALYZING ALTERNATIVE SPORTS MEDIA
IN TURKEY:
A CASE STUDY ON SOCRATES MAGAZINE AND YAZIHANE

A Master's Thesis

by
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Ankara
September 2016

to Sarp, for a brighter future…

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IN TURKEY:
A CASE STUDY ON *SOCRATES MAGAZINE* AND *YAZIHANE*

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

DENİZ CAN TANIK

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For The Degree of
Master of Arts

The Department of Communication and Design
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
September 2016

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.

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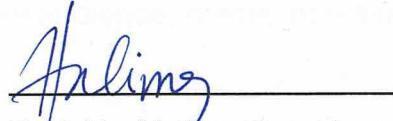
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ABSTRACT

ANALYZING ALTERNATIVE SPORTS MEDIA
IN TURKEY:
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MA, Department of Communication and Design

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Ersan Ocak

September 2016

Especially in the last century, sports extended its scope and began to be followed by wider audience. Enhancements in the fields of communication and broadcasting enabled people to be more engaged and knowledgeable on sports than ever before. As a joint result of the expansion of sports and engagement of the audience, media increased its coverage on sports related content. While producing content regarding sports, the main focus was on the factual information from the competitions, simple statistics and relatively superficial commentary for the mainstream media. However, this approach of mainstream media caused some particular topics and branches to remain uncovered.

Moreover, mainstream media has been working in line with existing dominant structures, seeking for profit, paying more attention to quantity than quality and limiting the scope of the authors with editorial interventions. These conditions paved the way for a pursuit of alternative approach within sports media. Intention was to produce sports related content which aims to fill the gaps left by mainstream media, by taking a stance against the dominant economic structure and creating a more horizontal relationship both among the authors and with the audience.

Within this context, focus of this study will be the alternative sports media in Turkey. Through the overall analysis of the literature, features of the alternative media will be pointed out. By utilizing the core principles of the alternative media, two case studies *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazıhane Blog* will be analyzed. Main aim of the study will be to assess the compliance and extent of the alternative media examples in Turkey with the features underlined in the literature.

Keywords: Alternative, Media, Socrates, Sports, Yazıhane.

ÖZET

SOCRATES DERGİ VE YAZIHANE BLOGU ÜZERİNDEN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ALTERNATİF SPOR BASINI İNCELEMESİ

Tanık, Deniz Can

Yüksek Lisans, İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ersan Ocak

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Spor, özellikle son yüzyılda, kapsamını ve buna bağlı olarak da takip eden kitlesini oldukça genişletti. İletişim ve yayıncılık alanında gerçekleşen gelişmeler üzerine, insanların hem spora olan ilgisi hem de bilgisi daha önce görülmeyen seviyelere erişti. Sporun kapsamını genişletmesi ve insanların ilgisinin artmasının ortak sonucu olarak, medya da spor ile ilgili yayın alanını genişletti. Anaakım medya için, spor ile ilgili içerik üretmek müsabakalarla ilgili teknik bilgiler, istatistikler ve görece yüzeysel yorumlar vermek üzerineydi. Ancak, bu yaklaşım bazı konu, kesim ve dalların medyada yer bulmasına engel oldu.

Ayrıca, anaakım medya, mevcut baskın system içinde çalışıyor, kar amacı güdüyor, nitelik yerine niceliğe önem veriyor ve editor müdahaleleriyle yazarlarını kısıtlıyordu. Bu koşullar, spor medyasına alternatif bir arayışın gelmesine yol açtı. Alternatif spor medyasının amacı, anaakım medya tarafından kapsanmayan içeriklere yönelmek, mevcut baskın rejimlerin karşısında bir pozisyon almak ve hem yazarlar arasında hem de okuyucuyla yatay bir ilişki kurmaktı.

Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki alternatif spor medyasını incelemek olacak. Öncelikle, genel bir literatür taraması ile, alternatif medyanın özellikleri tespit edilecek. Daha sonra, alternative medyanın temel özellikleri göz önünde bulundurularak Türkiye'den seçilen iki örnek; *Socrates Dergi* ve *Yazıhane Blogu* incelenecek. Çalışmanın hedefi Türkiye'deki alternatif spor medyası örneklerinin hangi bağlamlarda ve ne noktaya kadar literatürde belirtilen alternatif medya özellikleriyle uyum gösterdiğini bulmaya çalışmak olacak.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alternatif, Medya, Socrates, Spor, Yazıhane.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

Spending millions of dollars, lobbying in the international area for the events, making policies and allocating resources to achieve success... Convincing a person who first hit a ball with a stick or run as fast as s/he can would probably be impossible with regards to how sports evolved in time. Even though drastic changes in time are not intrinsic to sports; but what happened to a physical activity, particularly in the last two centuries, deserves scholarly attention.

In fact, assessing and analyzing how sports became as the way it is today without looking its relations with other factors, such as politics or economics, would naturally be lacking. Expecting sports as a general phenomenon and branches in particular to remain as they were hundreds of years ago would be absurd, while all other social factors have been going through significant changes. Simply developments in technology and science closely influenced all branches of sports; so that it is almost impossible to recognize some branches

as they were practiced years ago. However, more importantly for the sake of this work, the major change about sports were the perception of sports both by the states and by the people. The reason why this particular point of states and people is underlined, is the fact that their impact on changing the essence of the sports from a simple leisure time physical activity to a *tour de force*.

The enhanced attributed meaning towards sports can easily be observed throughout the Olympics. Approach of the "big powers" of the world to the Olympic Games went far beyond its primary and amateur soul and turned into a soft war between countries. As can be observed in advance of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, discussions between International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and Russian Federation regarding the accusations for Russian Federation to encourage and condone the systematic doping for their athletes, are significantly covered by the media (https://www.theguardian.com/sport/russia-doping-scandal). Although many athletes have been punished individually due the using illegal substance before, accusation towards a country as a whole was considered as one of its kind, and opened floor to political discussions; since the Russian Federation has been one of the most successful countries in the Olympics history. Even this simple example can be shown to identify how sports expanded and became part of and influential on other elements of the society.

Besides from the countries' approach and understanding of sports, another crucial turning point for the essence of sports can be considered as the developments in broadcasting. Until the last century, audience can only be

defined as the people who attend a sports competition in person, which limited

for sports to reach wider audience. Even current stadiums can only

accommodate around 100.000 people, which is significantly low when

compared to the number of viewers of an average league game. Even though

radio broadcast is seen as the precursor for sports to reach wider audience,

introduction and expansion of television broadcasting is the game changer for

the sports watching experience.

Considering its simplicity and ease with the contribution of developing

technology, airing time of sports competitions began to increase rapidly. Such

that channels solely dedicated to sports competitions or programs have been

introduced. Through these enhancements, sports became one of the core

leisure time activity for the people; which widened its role in daily life.

Both factors that are mentioned above paved the way for sports to increase its

popularity. As a natural process, experience of the audience with regards to

following sports evolved from personally being in the sports hall to listening from

radio and to watching the games on TV. As the branches grew and gained

popularity, other communication channels such as the newspapers, began to

allocate space to deliver news about sports. By this means, impacts of a

particular game started to leap from a personal experience to a topic being

discussed on papers.

As both of the industries, media and sports grew in time, extent of the

publishing, naturally, changed. While the broadcasting of sports branches is

expanding, audience began to be able to watch, numerous games even in a day. This increasing engagement with sports brought along the ascending knowledge for the audience. Yet, most of the mainstream media continued to make news those of which do not go beyond the technicalities and simple statistics of competitions. However, especially after the expansion of the internet, reaching out simple information became relatively easier for an overall audience; which decreased the significance of news on the mainstream media. It would be misleading to deny a certain portion of the audience that still seeks for a technical, daily and fact based information with regards to sports and competitions. However, the particular demand for an alternative approach towards sports, which includes distinctive features that have not been covered by mainstream media, should also be noted. Pursuit of news or information that cover sports in a more comprehensive manner with its relation with politics, economics, minorities and other social elements lead up the emergence of alternative sports media. In this regard, considering the general opinion and approach towards sports in Turkey, the existence and extent of the alternative sports media in Turkey will tried to be analyzed.

1.1   Purpose of the Study

Given the growing interest on sports in Turkey, sports media bears significance in any sense from discussing to shaping sports. However, elements of sports media remain deficient when it comes to reporting news or giving information

regarding the comprehensiveness of the information. A quick overview to the daily newspapers' sports pages would indicate that sports journalism in Turkey usually tends to simply report the facts from the event with a superficial commentary included. Therefore, expecting and finding elaborative approach is not possible. This situation, in fact, is also closely related with time constraints.

In the magazines, on the other hand, where time constraints are relatively more flexible, the main focus is usually the football. Although inclusion of deeper analysis on football can be found in some, coverage of alternative sports or elements of sports is close to non-existent.

Given this context, alternative sports media in Turkey began to emerge with the pursuit of producing alternative coverage, approach and understanding. With the relatively easy access to broadcasts and other relevant information regarding almost any branch or sportsperson, possibility of creating an alternative look towards sports increased. As a result alternative sports media slowly began to emerge in Turkey. Although after the introduction of the blogs, which enabled all individuals to share information or experience, trials of alternative coverage took place; most of them gave up through the process or remained silent for long periods. However, there are still some examples which can be considered as alternative sports media elements.

The main purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of alternative media by looking at the discussions in the literature. Through the literature review, it is aimed to present the core features of alternative media. Even

though defining "the alternative" would be highly improbable and utopic since the alternative itself may turn into mainstream in time, the focus will be on the ideals of the alternative media.

Through analyzing the discussions in literature with regards to the features of alternative media, I will try to analyze and understand the stance of alternative sports media elements in Turkey. In order to provide an analysis as comprehensive as possible, a magazine called *Socrates* and a collective blog called *Yazihane* are picked as case studies. Within the scope of this work, articles from both of the sources will be scrutinized through discourse analysis, in order to assess their compliance with the features of alternative media. Yet, solely focusing on the substance would be lacking; therefore, designs, characteristics of authors, linkages with art and relations with the audience of both of the cases will also be analyzed for the sake of providing an extensive understanding.

By these means, through the samples being analyzed, I will reach an overview of the alternative sports media in Turkey; and try to assess the extent of their alternative stance. However, attempting to grasp the whole alternative sports media structure would go beyond the scope of this work; therefore this study will remain as descriptive. Even though this work will not be a comparative analysis with mainstream media; since the alternative by definition involves the mainstream, there indeed will be references to mainstream media.

1.2   Structure of the Study

For the sake of analyzing the alternative sports media in Turkey, I will first elaborate on the alternative media discussions that took place in the literature. This discussion will form the basis while analyzing the case studies in Turkey. The core ideals, principles and features of alternative media will be scrutinized in the second chapter of this work.

In the third chapter context and significance of studying sports texts will be elaborated. Through this means, I will aim to draw the framework of the sports texts within the sports media. This will be followed by the methodology that will be used through analyzing the articles in the cases.

Before proceeding with the core analysis of the cases, *Socrates* and *Yazihane*, rationale behind choosing these examples will also be indicated. Through providing this information, it is aimed to rationalize inclusion of these particular cases and exclusion of others.

In the fourth chapter, focus will be on the articles selected in the case studies. Through discourse analysis, among a selection of texts, elements within the texts will be analyzed to find the relations with the features of alternative media. Extent of information, use of language, selection of particular topics and styles to discuss will be looked into detail. This will be followed by pursuit of looking for other relations with the audience or branches of art. As a holistic view towards the selected case studies in Turkey, I will try to understand and explain that to

what extent do the alternative sports media in Turkey play along with the features of alternative media in the literature.

In the fifth and final chapter, overall analysis of the study will be done as well as the future suggestions.

CHAPTER 2.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

The core objective of this study is to position the alternative sports media in Turkey. Although it has always been hard to define such broad terms, for the sake of this goal, a comprehensive analysis of alternative media discussions in literature must be conducted. Covering different approaches towards the concept of being alternative will contribute in the later stages of this study to identify the cases that will be discussed. Nevertheless, since this field remains intact in Turkey, country specific elements will be analyzed throughout the discussion chapter.

Besides some significant losses in meaning, labeling something as alternative is considered as "oxymoronic" by Downing since "everything is an alternative to something else in the world." (Downing, 2001: ix). On the other hand, rather than conceptualizing 'the alternative' only for once, following its alterations in time is expected to be more rewarding in order to grasp the concept as a whole.

In this sense, Atton and Hamilton underline the fact that the alternative journalism "is not unchanging", but rather is an "ever-changing effort to respond critically dominant conceptions of journalism" (2009: 9). Therefore, almost all efforts made to define what alternative (for our case, alternative media) is lack in a sense considering the concept's flexible and ever-changing structure. Taking into consideration of this fact, throughout this study, I will try to identify the characteristics of alternative media instead of contributing to the previous hopeless trials of defining it. Then, searching the traces of these characteristics in the cases that I chose as comprehensive examples will provide clues about their stance in Turkish media structures.

Although it is quite hard to define what alternative is in a comprehensive manner, many scholars attempted and succeeded to gather around some main paths to characterize this term. Before getting into detail about the discussions on the features of alternative media, a general overview will contribute to draw a framework, and help to visualize the bigger picture better.

Since being an alternative requires different "others" in time, tracing back the first descriptions of alternative is nearly impossible on one hand, and would not be contributing to the essence of this study on the other. Rather, relatively recent attempts give more clues about the term as we understand today. Enzensberger, in this sense, offers an "emancipatory use of media" by drawing three main characteristics, which are "interactivity between audiences and creators; collective production and a concern with everyday life; ordinary needs of people" (Enzensberger, 1976). Taking from Enzensberger's words;

interactivity, collectivity and ordinariness will constitute a base for future trials in this study to identify the alternative media.

In 1977, Royal Commission on the Press proposed a three-sided definition by expanding the features a little bit more, stating that: "an alternative publication deals with the opinions of small minorities; expresses attitudes 'hostile to widely-held beliefs; exposes views or deals with subjects not given regular coverage by publications generally available at newsagents."(as cited in Atton, 2001: 12). This view embeds some other important elements by bringing up a stance towards and about minorities, an oppositional perspective and declares a position to 'regular coverage' which we will face as 'mainstream'. In fact, most of the features that alternative media holds have been derived from its position *vis-à-vis* mainstream media; which compels many scholars to refer to mainstream media in their discussions. In this regard, while proposing the characteristics of alternative media, O'sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery and Fiske underline two major points that "set the alternative media practice apart from the mainstream: a democratic/collectivist process of production and a commitment to innovation or experimentation in form and/or content" (O'sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery & Fiske 1994). At this point, what O'sullivan et al. argue takes the concept of collectivity one step forward and attributes a "democratic" point of view to the production side. Furthermore, introduction of the elements such as "innovation" and "experimentation" plays a significant role for shaping what alternative media is. If we are to consider this perspective, expectations about alternative media should also include an engagement with

technology and active utilization of it. As a contribution to this approach, Atton expects from alternative media "to possess reliance upon modern, evolving technology." (Atton 2002a, as cited in Kenix, 2011: 18). Following this perspective, Atton introduces some further new concepts, those of which will enable us to finalize the general framework. He proposes an alternative media structure that has an influential aesthetic style, radical content, "horizontal communication patterns" and "de-professionalized organizational norms and roles" (Atton, 2002, as cited in Kenix 2011: 18). In contrary to many other scholars, Atton's emphasis on aesthetics develops the argument that being alternative goes beyond within the norms of content and position in the overall journalism market. Through this, he implies that, production of content – and the ways of producing it – remains insufficient to be the only characteristic of being alternative, unless the ways of presentation are not taken into consideration. On the other hand, his approach towards the quality of content shares similarities with the previous works mentioned, yet bears a different label; "radical".

In this context, since the term "radical" is now introduced, in order to prevent future confusions, a clarification must be done. In time, many scholars tried to define, describe or characterize some media "items" those of which exhibit different features from mainstream in one way or another. As we elaborate on each feature throughout this study, distinctions and similarities are going to be put forward. Even though these features have been labeled as minority media, ethnic media, oppositional media, citizens' media or radical media; alternative media in this sense bears most of the features and plays an umbrella role to

cover them all. While covering these features together under one single umbrella by focusing on their similarities, their significant differences will also be identified in this study, if comes up.

Before concluding the general framework of alternative media, the concept of radical media should be described, since it is considered as one of the constituent items. Downing, in this regard, refers to radical media by arguing that, it is "generally small scale and in many different forms, that express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives" (2001: v). Obviously, while defining the term 'radical media', he used to concept 'alternative' and established his definition in a stance against hegemony. Furthermore, Downing often uses the term "radical alternative media" and argues that it "constitute[s] the most active form of active audience and express oppositional strands, overt and covert, within popular cultures" (2001: 3).

Up to now, several approaches towards alternative media were presented within a general context. Yet, this does not go beyond providing an overview. Therefore, in the coming sections, main characteristics of alternative media should be scrutinized specifically with the aim to find a solid basis for further discussions of this study.

2.1 Stance towards Capitalism and Seek for Change

Elaborating on the elements of alternative media will not be possible by excluding its stance towards dominant structures. Hence, in this section, the relationship between alternative media and capitalist dominant structures is going to be analyzed. This is expected to provide some significant clues for identification while analysis of our case studies.

The growth of capitalism in the last century became visible in almost every sector. Many businesspeople, the capital in a broader sense, realized the importance of media and started to channel fund for a media image. Considering the increasing importance of having a well-established and prestigious image in the public eye, some private media outlets, which were either established or bought by rich businesspeople, started to appear in the market. The main logic behind these new initiatives was the search for power in a new setting. Through their media companies, it became quite easy for the business sector to advertise their products, as well as establishing close relations with politicians, which enabled them to find easier ways to get along with states' bureaucratic mechanisms. Without interfering with the state-media relations any longer, what needs to be emphasized here is the connection of the capitalist economic structure and mainstream media. In its simplest sense, mainstream media can be defined as the media "…in pursuit of commercial, for profit, objectives as the motivation for publication" (Kenix, 2011). In this context, global media ownership structure could give some significant clues about how a small group of media companies own the majority of the communication

channels, those of which produce and disseminate mainstream news. Companies, under the name of "The Big Six" (Comcast, The Walt Disney Company, News Corporation, Time Warner, Viacom and CBS Corporation) holds 90% of the media sector in the United States. The abovementioned not only broadcast in the US but also serve all around the world. Considering the total income of more than 200 billion dollars and their highly institutionalized structures, labeling of these entities as mainstream within capitalist framework would not be misleading. (http://www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6?IR=T). For the case of Turkey, the overall picture shows great resemblance with the United States. Control of the majority of the media outlets are in the hands of a number of businesspeople. When the circulation numbers for the newspapers or top rated national TV channels are analyzed, it can be seen that they are controlled by big media groups such as Dogan Media Group, Calik Holding or Dogus Media Group.

The hegemony that the abovementioned media companies have been creating occupies a huge space in our daily lives. At this point, alternative media positions itself *vis-a-vis* this hegemony; therefore many scholars, and also contributors of alternative media, characterize this situation by interpreting it as a stance against capitalist structures. "An alternative media institution (to the extent possible given its circumstances) does not try to maximize profits and does not primarily sell audience to advertisers for revenues (and so seeks broad and non-elite audience)" (Albert, 1997). Furthermore, the oppositional position of the alternative media against capitalism is not only composed of a practical

stance; rather it often involves a search for change. This is why Atton states his arguments about alternative media claiming that, "[I]t is a range of media projects, interventions and networks that work against, or seek to develop different forms of, the dominant, expected (and broadly accepted) ways of 'doing' media" (Atton, 2004: ix). Atkinson, on the other hand, argues that, any media created outside of the commercial relations that aims to alter current social roles through criticism of dominant structures can be considered as alternative (2006: 252). Similarly, Kenix, attributes the points of criticisms, by claiming that alternative media seeks to challenge "capitalism, consumerism, patriarchy, and the nature of corporations" (2011: 156). As they put forward, the idea of looking for alterations can be regarded as one of the crucial elements of being alternative. In this context, Traber offers a concrete understanding about the notion of change by stating that "the aim is to change towards a more equitable social, cultural and economic whole in which the individual is not reduced to an object (of the media or the political powers) but is able to find fulfillment as a total human being" (1985: 3). What he mentions here, once again, underlines the significance of alternative media, considering the fact that it contributes to the fulfillment of people.

Throughout the following chapters in this research, alternative sports media in Turkey will be discussed in detail. Besides the role that the alternative media has on individuals, Albert expands this discussion, and argues that "an alternative media institution is structured to subvert society's defining hierarchical social relationships, and is structurally profoundly different from and

as independent of other major social institutions, particularly corporations, as it can be" (1997). In the end of his words, he implies the fact that, it would not always be possible to avoid commercial ties. Surely, there might be some occasions that, even though an alternative perspective is adopted, social and market constraints may compel media producers to establish some engagements with existing dominant factors. Nevertheless, trying as hard as possible to open up a ground to express oppositional opinions is crucial, otherwise describing an alternative would not be possible (Albert, 1997). Yet, in its ideal form, independence from dominant structures bears significance.

Moreover, what lies behind alternative media contributors' reason for being is to transform existing mechanisms through criticizing them. The position that they try to keep against commercial ties involves not only private corporations but also state-led media companies; since in many countries, state directly controls some major media outlets. Through these media organs, the incumbent government imposes their policies on public, controls the flow of information or implements censorship methods. Therefore, limiting alternative media's role in competing against private companies, the way they are organized and their commercial ties would be lacking. To grasp and provide a more holistic perspective, where alternative media is located *vis-a-vis* state-led institutions has to be underlined. In this very regard, Atton expands his definition by stating that, "[a]lternative media can be understood as those media produced outside the forces of market economics and state" (2004: 3). Through his analysis, the role of being outside of existing forces, including state, can be attributed to

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being alternative. Thus, alternative media can be best described with its stance towards the existing structures. Simply and profoundly, institutions and structures that stem from capitalism can be considered as one of the main reasons behind its emergence. As mentioned before, mainstream media entities occur under the name of private initiatives, and in many others, state appears to be the empowering force behind them. Yet, both of them encourages mainstream information that either establishes hegemony by disseminating the kind of news in favor of the companies of the business owners who happen to control the media organs or contributes to an existing hegemony by either supporting the preeminent views or avoiding criticisms. In this context, Hamilton distinguishes alternative media from the former stating that, it "must be deprofessionalized, decapitalized and deinstitutionalized" (Atton, 2001: 25). Further, as previously mentioned, a stable mode could not possibly be accepted as a feature; rather an emancipatory movement is intrinsic. More importantly, as Albert argues, "[a]n alternative media institution sees itself as part of a project to establish new ways of organizing media and social activity and it is committed to furthering these as a whole, and not just its own preservation (1997).

Until now, stance against capitalism occupied a central place for describing alternative media. Besides, through criticism, the aim of seeking the notion of change constituted a critical role. Yet, what needs to be analyzed thoroughly is the ways of how alternative media contributes or supports social change. Therefore, in the following chapters, characteristics of alternative media will be discussed in a narrower perspective by focusing on its means of functioning.

2.2   Democratic Participation

By its definition, being alternative should involve the notions that were neglected or ignored by the dominant or the mainstream. In the previous chapter, the discussion was shaped around oppositional positions of the alternative and mainstream. In this chapter the emancipatory attitude of alternative media that involves (democratic) participation will mainly be analyzed.

In most of the cases, mainstream media practices are composed of two sides. On the one side, there are media professionals, employed by relatively big companies, composed of journalists, reporters, editors and many other employees from different levels that take part in the process of producing and reporting the news. This process, no matter what the stage is, does not involve anyone outside this professional environment throughout the production cycle. In mainstream context, this closed community produces and serves news, while the audience on the other hand plays a passive role. Although this eventually leads us to questioning the ways of production of the news, which will be touched upon in the following chapters, the crucial point that is going to be scrutinized here will be the notion of participation that alternative media offers.

In literature, many scholars underline the element of (democratic) participation while characterizing alternative media. Most researchers agree that at the most fundamental core; alternative media facilitate democratic participation and cultural disruption while the mainstream media avoids such social critique (Makagon, 2000). As it is seen from this example, many features of alternative

media are interrelated. Makagon, with these words, emphasizes the concepts of "social critique" and "democratic participation" at the same time, since the structure of alternative media provides a convenient environment to establish connections between people who share similar ideals. Although the introduction of a proper ground for sharing thoughts freely can be attributed to the rapid development of technology, the phenomenon of alternative media takes it one step further. Yet, it should be noted that, enhancements in technology do not have a sole and direct impact; but it has a supportive role. The aim goes beyond solely establishing a free platform. Alternative media encourages people to organize outside the boundaries of the mainstream and supports "wider social participation and creation, production and dissemination than is possible in the mass media" (Atton, 2001: 25). It is mostly the relatively independent environment that alternative media structures provide plays a 'facilitator' role in the process of democratic participation.

As previously mentioned, many features of alternativeness are highly interrelated. In this sense, the concept of (democratic) participation is quite intricate. Even though the production of content will be discussed separately, Clemencia Rodriguez introduces the notion of participation from the means of production side. She, further, offers a new term called 'citizens' media' and argues that it "is a better fit, encompassing a means of production characterized by open access and volunteerism, goals involving social change, and not-for-profit orientation" (as cited in Waltz, 2005: 3). As previously discussed, in time, many scholars described alternative media by looking at its different features

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from different angles and named them accordingly. Rodriguez, at this point, introduces the term of 'citizens' media' yet further characterizes it by shaping it with similar lines. She expands her argument by adding that, "such media products would be both alternative and activist" (as cited in Waltz, 2005: 3). Besides the terminology, she underlines two major and not-previously-mentioned features attributed to alternative media; "open access" and "volunteerism". Possibility of voluntary involvement enables people to be a part of a media product in any phase. Also, the notion of "open access" paves the way for collective action and accumulation of shared knowledge. Through these features, relatively passive subjects of media environment gain the chance of transforming into active participants, both at the production and consumption stages. As Atton mentions; "amateur media producers typically have little or no training or professional qualifications as journalists; they write and report from their position as citizens; as members of communities; as activists; as fans" (as cited in Forde, 2011: 6).

With the help of technological developments, alternative media facilitated the establishment of communication lines between some particular groups. People with similar interests, communities and members of same subculture gathered along, and utilized alternative media to get into interaction with each other. Interaction and participation among different social groups are crucially important and constitute the keystone for 'democratic participant' model, based on Enzensberger's approach (McQuail 1994:132, as cited in Atton 2001: 8)

The tools, organizational structure and economic relations of the alternative media environment bring forward a well-prepared and suitable ground for the society which has been left in a more passive role in the media world. Previously, mainstream media organs used to dictate and control the production and dissemination of information through their professional ties. This situation has been preventing people to get involved in media and communication processes, until the rise of alternative actions. Through the means of alternative media, people, who are willing to take part of these processes, began to get organized with others that share similar thoughts to produce their own news. Moreover, besides organization and production cycles, chances of giving quick responses emerged through feedback and commentary mechanisms of the alternative media. This later on showed effects on the production steps since it enabled the contributors to express their thoughts to each other. While noting that these mechanisms will be discussed in detail in following chapters, it is necessary to emphasize on the aspect of participation being one of the key element of alternative media. Because of the abovementioned components, the possibility that alternative media creates for the enhancement of (democratic) participation should be noted as one of the core characteristics of a media item that consider itself as alternative.

2.3   Inclusion of Socially Excluded and "the Other"

Up to this point, the core elements of the alternative media has been tried to be discussed, without a focus on the content or the characteristics of the people

who are involved in alternative media processes. If we are to draw a focus on the contributors' side of alternative media, we can start our discussion from the estimation that people who do not show similarities with the mainstream lines are the ones who tend to express their ideas in alternative spheres. Therefore, expecting cultures, groups or individuals who locate themselves outside the already existing, traditional common practices to find themselves a place in alternative media structure would not be surprising. Understanding the underlying reasons behind their action will highly contribute to this study. This is why, in this chapter, reciprocal relationships between alternative media and 'alternative groups' will be analyzed.

To begin with the simplest approaches, Atton argues that, alternative media provides a free ground for people who have been "marginalized by the mainstream media" (2002). Stance *vis-a-vis* the mainstream media presents itself here once again, since mainstream outlets usually tend to cover news about the 'majority', by excluding 'minorities'. In fact, the main aim of this structure is to reproduce existing hegemony once again through excluding 'the other' in order to guarantee the persistence of the hegemonic institutions and ideas. Nevertheless, utilization of this alternative platform by minor groups enables the marginalized people to be more organized, perceptible and hence active.

For the ones who are ignored by mainstream structures - let them even be "protest groups, dissidents, 'fringe' political organizations, even fans and hobbyists" (Atton, 2004: 3) - finding a place to represent themselves was quite

crucial, since, most probably, they have been facing representational problems in every sphere of life. Thus, minorities, opposing groups and people who occupy shadowy spaces in mainstream are also the ones who look for alternative media, and create one unless there is (Waltz, 2005: 8). Even this situation itself can be considered as an active participation through alternative media, since these minority groups take one step further than solely criticizing the existing structure by making an effort to establish an alternative voice for themselves. Dowmunt, Coyer and Fountain, in this regard, underline the political side of this notion, stating that, "alternative media is best conceptualized as simply the media produced by the socially, culturally and politically excluded" (Dowmunt, Coyer & Fountain, 2007). This holistic approach would be a better fit to characterize alternative media, since reducing the emergence to a particular minority would be deficient. Deuze, in this sense, attributes particular importance to the appearance of 'ethnic media', yet finds it consistent with the emergence of "community, alternative, oppositional, participatory and collaborative media" (2006).

Although it would be hard to indicate the 'majority' in different societies, some groups can still be considered as minorities or socially excluded ones regardless of the society they live in. In accordance with the cultural values, social norms, historical backgrounds and many other variables, societies are composed of certain groups with different population sizes. LGBTI community or immigrant groups can be good examples to assess the case of minority groups' representation in the alternative media sphere. Usually, these groups have not

been represented in the mainstream media in a politically correct way. This does not necessarily mean that, any of the news corporations do not cover any stories about them. On the contrary, mainstream media makes substantial efforts to cover related news, yet, often fail to narrate correctly. There have been continuous discriminatory discussions and acts against these minority groups in the political, social and economic sphere and to the emphasis on the preservation of the existing structures as one of its core features, mainstream media is unable position itself at a criticizing and activist position. This can be traced in either lack of coverage or misrepresentation. Mainstream outlets tend to ignore minority related issues and leave the related news uncovered, more than they appear as demonstrate these groups in a misrepresented way. Therefore, people, who belong to the minority groups or identify as activists who work for equal rights, feel the need to fill the gap left by the mainstream structures and try to cover stories that were neglected by them (Atton & Hamilton, 2008: 79) in alternative media structures. Through alternative media tools, socially excluded people not only have access to get organized around well-established structures, but also make use of it in the way to represent their identities in a "correct form", as they prefer it to be put forward. To avoid a reductionist approach, it should be underlined that this feature of alternative media must be assessed by looking at the approach of the alternative media organs towards alternative, subjugated or minority groups. Atton, again, draws a framework stating that, "alternative and radical media might then be considered as 'heteroglossic (multiple-voiced) text' (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, cited in

Gauntlett, 1996: 91, and drawing on the dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin) that gives full, heterogenous voice to all those others (2001: 9). Their stance offers a dual understanding of society that draws a distinction line between the mainstream and the others.

Inclusion of socially excluded through tools of alternative media appear as a fundamental feature for the structures that consider themselves as such. In fact, representation of neglected groups is intertwined with other features discussed above. To be more precise, minority groups can often be observed as opposing against the capitalist/hegemonic structure that neglect their existence and rights, and as they "oppose", they already comply with which a feature of being alternative.

2.4   Feedback Mechanism

Until this point, trials about demonstrating the characteristics of alternative media were gathered around its relations with mainstream media or its constituent parts. Those might give some clear depictions to grasp the whole picture, however remain lacking without concentrating on their relations with its own audience. Throughout this study, discussions on producers and consumers of alternative media involved social positions, rather than focusing on the interaction between two sides. In this regard, here, engagement of audience with the product or production process will be analyzed.

From the very early years of printed media, readers were able to share their thoughts on the subject matter in one way or another. Either through face to face conversations, but more frequently by letters, for instance, opinions and commentary were possible to be shared with the producer of that item. Those might be regarded as the first examples of feedback mechanism, but when compared to the current opportunities, whole structure of giving feedbacks changed drastically.

Attributing the alteration of feedback mechanisms to the rise of internet would not be misleading. Even though it is not considered as one of the most significant consequences that internet provided to people, it should be noted that, the relationship between the audience and the producer of media content obviously gained a more active role with the help of commentary boxes on social media. Yet, impacts of active commentary are still being discussed, since content of the comments can avert the significance of the content itself from time to time. Still, considering the scope of this study, emergence of feedback mechanisms has brought the chance to the audience to share their opinions and thoughts on the content with the creators of the content directly.

Differing from its mainstream counterparts, alternative organizations tend to establish equalitarian relationships with audience. As seen in the previous examples, inclusion of as many social elements as possible and creation of horizontal communication patterns both within organization and between organization and viewers play a significant role behind their rationale. Hence, leaving aside the top-down attitude in all phases bears crucial importance to be

considered as alternative. Rodriguez, at this very point, indicates that audience is not the one who usually forces the media channel to present its feedbacks. Rather, it is the alternative media organizations that purposefully invite the audience for feedback, "so that an 'egalitarian relationship' can be formed between them (Rodriguez, 2001: as cited in Kenix, 2011: 23). The logic behind this approach is not only to maintain close relations with the audience, but also to enhance the quality of the product and the process. Being actively engaged with the viewers, giving them a word on the subject matter and responding to their opinions enables the contributors of alternative media to demolish barriers and foster the audience to be actively participating to the processes.

For alternative structures, tools for direct and instant feedback from the audience to the creator, initiated with the development of internet stands at a central point. While it is acknowledged that the pace and availability of feedback vary between products (depending on whether it is printed or online), a concluding remark focuses on the openness to receive feedback from the audience appears as a distinguishing feature for the alternative media.

2.5   Production Process and Quality of Content

Emergence and development of alternative media owes a lot to the rise of necessities. To be more specific, the older, richer and more widespread counterpart to the alternative media, which is the mainstream, have shown great deficiencies that basically pushed people to be engaged with other channels. In

previous chapters, discussions did not specifically focus on the content. But it is a very important aspect that needs our attention, as what makes mainstream to be defined as mainstream is more often the quality of content. Besides the misrepresentation of social groups or lack of feedback mechanisms, people who prefer to be involved in alternative media structures often focus on the value of the news. Therefore, alternative media outlets aim to create well-developed stories while preserving the quality of content. Thus, as an intrinsic feature, distinguishing perspectives of the alternative media channels on their content will be discussed here, in order to present differences between the alternative and mainstream approaches.

Ideal of maintenance and preservation of the existing structures as the way they are compels the mainstream media bodies to avoid harsh criticisms to hegemonic organizations. Another aspect that they (choose to) abstain is to contribute to clash of interests and power struggles between the power-holders or state itself. Hence, developing critical and oppositional content regarding economic, political and social issues would hardly ever be possible. In fact, this leads the news, articles, interviews or in general the content to be superficially neutral in the end. This does not necessarily indicate the lack of information sharing on the covered issue, but it rather shows an intentional choice about not covering the story thoroughly, with a lacking political, social, economic interpretation. A demand on high-quality, in depth and well-structured media products started to occur, once the "alternatives" noticed the absence of it. At this very point, alternative media structures began to focus on the content

matter and improved their work accordingly. Atton, in this regard, indicates that, it is highly unlikely to find in-depth analyses if one is looking at mainstream culture. In order to find solid interpretations on an issue, looking at alternative publications is crucial, he says and adds that they "are at bottom more interested in the free flow of ideas than in profit" (2001: 11,12). This particular feature emphasized by Atton will contribute a lot to this study, since we will analyze the contents of the case studies in a comprehensive way.

An alternative approach towards covering a story goes beyond covering it as a whole, with all its details. Depth of the content, in this sense, also includes having a critical stance *vis-a-vis* the existing structures. Also, what is expected from a well-developed work by the alternative media is also related with its ability to establish grounds for a possible change on the social, political or economic norms. Grasping and presenting social issues in a different perspective than the mainstream should be one of the fundamental features of the product's alternativeness. Discourse and style, in this context, should be chosen by the creator of content. Schuman, at this point, puts forward that, "the alternative press – in whatever format is – is our modern pamphleteer" (1982: 3) and shows the satiric feature of it. In addition to this, she also underlines the pioneer role of alternative media through identification of social, political and economic issues. As a case in point by Schuman, it was an alternative publication that covered and labeled rape as a 'sex crime' way before mainstream newspapers and publishers did (1982: 3). This, once again, supports the idea of active involvement of the alternative structures with the

political, social and economic space and having a precursor role. Therefore, being able to lead to way to come up with definitive concepts or being able to challenge and criticize already existing ones requires deep analysis, thorough knowledge, and of course courage.

Naturally, what have an impact on the quality of product are the people who are involved in production processes. Regarding this, Atton argues that, alternative media provides chances for people "from the periphery" to be media actors in the presence of "elite and centralized institutions" (2004: 9). Here, once again, we can observe the inclusion of the actors that have been neglected by mainstream institutions, into the alternative structures' production mechanisms. Even though people "from the periphery" might not be specifically trained on media or considered as professionals, their position and perspective should not be disregarded. Moreover, Traber indicates that, when production of media is left to "ordinary people" (Atton, 2009: 68, as cited in Forde, 2011: 6), type and style of the product will be relevant, more "useful" and "more appropriate to the communities in which such news is produced and distributed" (as cited in Atton, 2001: 16-17). From this perspective, inclusion of news and opinions that have been excluded from the dominant social, political or economic structures presents a holistic standpoint through increased quality of content. Regarding the quality, what matters here is the depth of the content, with an aesthetic concern, rather than the professional background of the creator, both institutional and educational wise. In fact, more detailed and well-covered stories are easy to be expected from the "ordinary" people, who are not

journalists, since they might be engaged with the news on the ground more closely, and be able to catch aspects which were ignored by mainstream structures before.

To sum up the discussion on the features of alternative media, it would be useful to revisit the concepts discussed, so that an overall picture can easily be drawn and understood. As per the arguments in the literature, in its ideal form, an alternative media structure/mechanism should bear or aim to have the following characteristics

i) Fundamentally, dominance of capitalism in every sphere of life cannot be denied. Therefore, being an alternative in its core, necessitates a position against capitalism and its related elements. Further, stance against capitalism would not solely suffice; hence an aim and seek for change are crucial for alternative media.

ii) To break the traditional understanding of media production, inviting and establishing an "open" ground for producers is also significant. This feature covers the possibility of giving ground for "anyone" to produce a media product and encouraging the audience to involve in democratic processes.

iii) Filling the gaps that were intentionally left by the mainstream media; particularly on a contextual basis is also crucial for alternative media. Inclusion of socially excluded elements and ignored branches should be one of the core ideals of alternative media.

iv)   Establishment of a horizontal relationship with the audience, inviting

        them to comment on the product and taking responsive action upon

        the feedback also distinguishes the alternative media.

v)   Aiming to refrain from superficiality and targeting for quality

        commentary and product should be the main guidelines for the

        alternative media.

CHAPTER 3.

CONTEXT OF SPORTS MEDIA

Considering the fact that, an analysis of sports media structures in Turkey will constitute the core of this study, before looking at the element of alternativeness, the framework of the definition of sports media has the be drawn for the sake of providing a comprehensive understanding. Without introducing the crucial components of sports media, as well as its position in journalism and society, analyzing the alternative features of sports media would be lacking. Hence, while refraining from including excessive details about sports section in media outlets, a general overview has to be put forward; so that the focus on the element of being "alternative" would constitute a solid groundwork for this study.

The mediums of sports media have naturally changed in time, showing parallel patterns with the technological developments. These developments, indeed,

affected broadcasting mechanisms as well as journalistic practices. The commentaries could have only been found on radio programs and newspapers before, whereas now the relationship between the audience, journalist and sports altered drastically. As an inevitable result, number of tools and means that connect the sports events to the audience increased which varied the practices of sports media. As much as access to sports events, commentaries and stories got easier through these mechanisms, the whole understanding of sports began to occupy a wider place in societies' cultural sense. So, while analyzing the sports media structures, "media sports cultural complex" has to be taken into consideration as a whole, which provides elements differing from newspapers to magazines, from blogs to websites (Rowe, 2003: 94).

The significance of sports as a part of daily lives of people must be underlined and associated with the dissemination of mass communication devices that basically provided a cheaper, easily accessible and simple ways to spend leisure time and have fun through a very old but not obsolete way of amusement through rivalry. As long as the necessity of going a stadium or a pool to see a football game or swimming race disappeared, the place of sports in daily culture changed forever. Therefore, engaging with sports in free time for people who spend most of their life to work became more widespread, as it got easier, and constituted a crucial part of daily life. Inevitably media outlets could not ignore the fact of inclusion of sports into newspapers and began to spare more grounds for sports sections separately from solely broadcasting.

Although sports contain numerous components different from entertainment, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, newspapers, those which primarily seek more profit began to use it as a tool for to increase sales, with the aim to use the popularity of sports among certain social groups. Devotion of more space to sports as a part of entertainment sector in newspapers was one of the crucial ways to gather the attention of younger people which were seen as relatively harder to attract (Raney & Bryant, 2009: 67). Magazines, on the other hand, made use of this intersection of entertainment and sports which became one of the key elements of the popular culture (Raney & Bryant, 2009: 67).

As a matter of fact, ever increasing involvement of sports in popular culture paved the way for its commercial value to rise. Thus, speaking from a political-economic perspective, newspapers and other journalism outlets began to look for ways to increase coverage of sports events since they were seen as the "selling" items (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 183). Regarding this fact, one of the most significant and powerful media actors, Rupert Murdoch, emphasizes the importance of sports and gives high priority to sports sections. From this perspective, giving an order to the sports section and "providing extensive coverage of sports are crucial in both delivering readers to advertisers and increasing circulation." (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 167). Although this point of view *vis-a-vis* sports still remains commonly adopted, some alternative initiatives against this perspectives are being established in time.

Besides the development of sports as a part of popular culture, the image of sports section in the structure of news arena should also be underlined, which would give the opportunity to understand current approaches towards sports media. In contrary to more current perspectives towards sports journalism, sports department in newspapers used to be seen as "peripheral or even 'frivolous', and was little considered" before (Wenner, 2002: 7). As a consequence of the treat on sports, journalists also received their share from this approach. They used to be seen as "failed journalists" in the newspaper hierarchy because of the understanding of sports as a trivial subject within the big picture of more serious news significance (Boyle, 2006; Rowe 2005; Steen 2008, as cited in Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 165). Yet, even for now, although sports news began to occupy more place in media structures and sports sections are among the most read, news and stories are still far from being seen as serious (Wanta Wayne, as cited in, Raney & Bryant 2009: 111).

Comparison between sections does not only contain an argument on choosing the more serious or dominant actor. Within the sports section in media outlets, the sports branches that are being dealt, the level of attention given to a particular branch or coverage of female players also deserve a specific approach while analyzing what the sports media actually is. Having discussed its role in sales and popular culture, the emphasis must be on the selection of the sports news as well. In fact, the selection processes and tendencies are most likely to reflect the overall strategy of increasing sales numbers, which basically prepares a convenient ground to reproduce existing mainstream social

norms and values. This is why the top seller newspapers and magazines tend to

cover dominant actors since their news value tend to have more common

ground. According to Boyle and Haynes, in the British Daily and Sunday Press,

professional sports, men's sports, urban sports and heavily commercialized

sports have dominance over their less popular and more ignored partners

(2009: 166). In fact, within the last couple of decades, the impact of sports

began to shift from popular culture to a more commercial market and almost

every element intrinsic to sports turned into a marketable product. This

transformation was relatively less visible in the print media whereas

broadcasting, the other prominent actor of sports journalism, was highly

influenced. At the point where the stories regarding the sports events or news

about the players are not seen sufficient enough to make profit, live broadcast

began to receive its share from this market. As Kinkema and Harris argued,

people, who control the sports, are continuously looking for ways to "increase

profits by selling broadcast rights and licensed products, and cultivating

spectator interest" and turned sports into global enterprises (Kinkema & Harris,

1998: 31). Although some components of sports media were influenced by the

latest technological developments and began to go through some serious

transformations, broadcasting still holds on to its power. Even though medium of

broadcasting slightly shifted towards internet after it became more widespread

and accessible, defining the "old media" with television still looks not possible

regarding "the size of its audiences and the value of its rights" (Billings, 2001).

Basically, these transformations, changes and shifts that a popular culture item went through created a backdrop for the current mainstream structures. Hence, a brief overview to the general structure is crucial to further elaborate on the alternative sports media. Before studying sports texts in detail as case studies, a final, yet critically important element must be introduced, which appears as one of the significant reasons behind the emergence and necessity of alternative sports media.

In journalism, especially while dealing with daily events, pace is one of the most crucial elements that a journalist faces. Reporting an event or covering a story would sometimes only make sense if it is done within the fastest time periods. Not a single reporter would like to hear certain news from a colleague, rather than finding out by herself/himself. Thus, together with the accuracy, pace constitutes the core of sports journalism. Previously, political or economic cases were seen as more serious and gathered more attention within the media realm. Nevertheless, the increasing importance of sports both in the eyes of public and media owners paved the way for the competitiveness to be more irruptive. Emergence of several media platforms that solely deal with sports events, those of which are thirsty and hungry about content and stories became the reason of disappearance of traditional boundaries between news and sport (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 175). Now, conveying the information on sports is as important as its counterparts, where the reporters feel the burden of pace on their shoulders. Naturally, before the introduction and dissemination of television and later on internet, readers and audience were not demanding any news or stories

in very short period of time. Demand for excessively quick coverage is a product of latest developments where the audience is not bound by the limits of a daily newspaper. Even though timeliness has always been a pressuring factor on sports media workers of print journalism, current situation does not even allow a second long wait, right after a word comes out from a player's or coach's mouth. Efforts on carrying information from sports actors to audience as quick as possible have been curbing the incentives of a sports journalist to take a step back and look into the subject more deeply (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 176). Therefore, working on detailed stories, digging for comprehensive background information or critical analysis of stories have begun to be seen as waste of time and lost its value which yielded the floor to more quotidian, routine, technical and monotonous news that fail to go beyond the obvious facts regarding the sports event or shallow comments on the results.

Moving away from an approach that aims to scrutinize an event and provide extensive coverage on a subject matter was the core of the transformation that sports media has been going through. In fact, reducing this fact to only sports media sector would probably be misleading considering the lack of importance given to the stories covered in other sectors too. Day by day, newspapers and magazines began to deliver less in number and shallower news for the audience, which were shaped reciprocally between audience and media producers.

Yet, decreasing quality of information sharing and the stories covered started to disturb a relatively minor group, which began to demand more detailed and in-

depth coverage of sports in general. Technicality and shallowness of existing

information flow pushed people to take action on searching for alternative

structures which eventually enabled some new entities to be blossomed. Hence,

the search for construction of alternative structures in sports media sphere

began and its examples in Turkey will be analyzed in the following chapters.

However, after a brief introduction of the features and history of sports media,

the general methods that are used to analyze sports articles must be elaborated

in order to provide a better understanding on the methodology that will be

consulted for the case study.

3.1   Methodology of Studying Sports Media Texts

Although, in the previous chapters, an overview was tried to be introduced on

the broad meaning of sports media, categorizing and defining all sports related

media outputs as a whole would most probably be misleading and far from

being analytical. Therefore, besides the general meaning and perception

provided on sports media, the case studies of this work will be identified by

using the notions in the literature.

Studying sports media texts shows resemblances with any other text analyses

in a sense, yet contains distinctive features of its own. Regarding this fact,

majority of researches on media and sports can be clustered around three

important topics: "production of mediated sports texts, messages or content of

mediated sport texts, and audience interaction with mediated sport texts

(Kinkema & Harris, 1992; Wenner, 1989b as cited in Wenner, 2002: 27).

Throughout this study, main focus will be on the latter two, yet will include some elements from the first feature. Production relations will also be dealt, if not, a total renunciation of production side of a sports text will result in a deficient work in the end. Nevertheless, elaborating on sports texts by focusing social and cultural elements within sports will occupy the core of this analysis. Analyzing the content, scrutinizing the mechanisms that paved the way for a particular topic to be chosen, looking at significant patterns within texts that show similarities in time and examining deliberate inclusion or exclusion of matters that occur in or influence certain spheres of society will constitute the overall perspective of this study while analyzing the case studies in Turkey.

In order to analyze the relations of alternative sports media with all its possible linkages with other elements of society, the approach towards case studies in Turkey will be tried to be kept as comprehensive as possible. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the cases, texts will be analyzed through discourse analysis. Discourse plays an overarching role which includes power relations that forms the social structure. This is expected to enable us to position and understand the stance of the case studies, vis-à-vis the existing power structures. While analyzing the production of discourse within the selected texts, we will be able to explore the rationale behind the selection of topic and utilization of certain terminologies. Thus, the ability and extent of the alternative media cases in Turkey will be questioned in the sense that whether they are able to fulfill the globally discussed alternative media features.

However, focusing solely on the discourse might limit and prevent the holistic understanding of the case studies. Therefore, as a complimentary factor, contextual details will also be sought while analyzing the texts. As Dijk suggests, the overall status of the writer and his/her approach towards a particular subject would be highly influential on the text (2008, 118). Hence, while the case studies are being analyzed, authors' individual positions will also be scrutinized as well as the general attitude and policy of the platform.

Dealing with sports text by this method will highly contribute to the main aim of this work, which is to understand or assess the alternative sports media structures in Turkey and categorize them within the discussions in literature. Yet, excluding audience interaction as well as production relations will harm the holistic perception of this study. Thus, without solely constructing the analysis on audience relations, impacts of sports texts on readers and the two way communication opportunities that latest technological developments provided will be included in the case study, since a horizontal relationship with the audience and within the media entity is considered as one of the key elements of alternative sports media.

As previously mentioned, in the last couple of decades, through the dissemination of broadcasting facilities, sports expanded its place in daily lives and popular culture. Due to its myriad branches, finding an empty spot on the calendar without any significant sports events is now almost impossible. This is why, newly emerging organizations and tournaments are struggling while creating their own space and fan base. This environment, where an ongoing

supply and demand relationship continues, gives rise to emergence of various media products. Besides broadcasting and live commentary on television and radio – and even on internet – many pieces that deals with sports up to certain extents are being published either hard copy or disseminated online.

Newspapers, in this regard, can be considered as pioneers regarding their prevalence and long-standing background. Due to their publishing policy, almost all newspapers spare certain places for sports news, mostly, for the sake of increasing publicity and circulation as previously put forward. Besides, there are also daily newspapers particularly dedicated to sports news, where technical analyses and score sheets of various branches are published. Yet, regardless of their appearances, the common ground for newspaper sports news, which also bears significance for this work, is their technical and dull approach towards sports. Most, if not all, sports papers cannot – and maybe do not want to – go further than giving the simple overviews, scores and pictures from games throughout the season where that news yield their places to transfer speculations off season. However, it might be considered as a matter of choice up to some extent since newspapers are almost always published daily and time constraints do not allow in depth analyses for every event. Therefore, extensive coverage of sports events or news files are hardly found in newspapers, where a relatively shallow analyses, speculations and rumors take place.

Deducing this fact is far from being a breakthrough, since many steps have been and will be taken in order to overcome the monotonous and quotidian approach that daily papers have. In this sense, many initiatives began to seek

new and alternative approaches to sports media where a more in-depth and analytical examination of players, sports events and audiences can find place. Pioneers of this approach were magazines before the introduction of the internet; that, in fact, changed the whole picture drastically. Due to having a different perspective and understanding about sports, magazines deepened the quality of news where time constraints constituted far less pressure on writers. Yet, reducing this movement only to time limitations would be misleading; instead, comprehending sports as a social phenomenon, as a part of daily and popular culture, treating it with appropriate tools and examining its actors within social structures and relations created the huge difference with daily newspapers. Moreover, dealing with sports in relation with other social and cultural elements enabled the audience to grasp the possible underlying reasons or consequences of an event or a personal behavior. For instance, without understanding the political stance of a fan group in Spain, murder of a fan of Deportivo La Coruna in an away game against Atletico Madrid might be considered as a devastating consequence of a fan fight. Nevertheless, examining that incident by taking the political and nationalist tendencies of fan groups into consideration would definitely be more rewarding to understand how fan groups are structured around different political standpoints. It shows the audience how such incidents are not solely results of sports events. (http://acetobalsamico.blogspot.com.tr).

As shortly described, just like any other coverage regardless of being economy or politics news, there are several frames that encircle sports media. In this

regard, Rowe (1992) introduces four typologies of sports journalism. He puts forward that, sports journalism works by producing "hard news, soft news, orthodox rhetoric and reflexive analysis" (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 168). In this regard, he draws the framework for the hard news around the factual data and score sheets of sports events. Soft news, on the other hand, is described as the infotainment part of sports where the biographical data of particular players take place with star gossips on the side. Considering its nature, soft news are basically introduced in order to break the monotonous and relatively static flow of information within sports (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 170).

The abovementioned two categories should be considered as slightly different from the remaining two, regarding the relatively different nature of the latter. Compared to hard and soft news, both orthodox rhetoric and reflexive analysis include the subjective approach of the author where s/he possesses relatively more authority.

Orthodox rhetoric, in this sense, consists an expertise, which was probably acquired with a professional sports background by the author. Through the "behind the scenes" approach, hard news can find different meanings and interpretations in the hands of a former-player author. Moreover, if the popularity or success of the ex-player is publicly accepted, accusations on lack of knowledge in particular events can easily be eliminated. Yet, dedicating an approach only to the ex-players would definitely be misleading. In fact, what actually differentiates the orthodox rhetoric from hard and soft news is its relatively critical way of analyzing sports related events or people. Although the

orthodox rhetoric approach does not report from an utterly political perspective, it – at least – acknowledges the existence and influence of politics over sports. This feature of orthodox rhetoric approach reveals its intermediary role between hard/soft news and reflexive analysis where a broader and deeper political analysis take place (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 169-171). Since the core of this study will be built on the social interpretations of the sports texts, main components, those of which will be used in analysis, will fundamentally be sports texts written in a reflexive analysis approach. Therefore, materials that will be scrutinized throughout the discussion section were selected accordingly. However, without further elaborating on the case study, reflexive analysis approach should better be clarified in Rowe's terms.

As previously stated, the latest approach of the sports journalism according to Rowe is reflexive analysis where a clear distinction takes place between hard/soft news. Rowe claims that, refraining from simplification while analyzing any of the sport components constitutes the basis of reflexive analysis. Instead, "the reflexive analysis of sport critically questions the phenomenology of sporting practices and discourse reconciling the celebration of sport with the particularized subjective position of the writer." (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 170). Critical stance that the author presents in these texts creates the added value on sports, contrary to the simplified understanding and presentation of sports. Acknowledging sports as a social phenomenon; having a critical position against it; assessing its actors in both economic and political context; making efforts to rescue sports writing from its relatively monotonous and dull nature and shaping

it as a deeper structure distinguish this approach from others. Finding sports texts, those of which bear this understanding in mainstream media structures is highly rare; thus, fundamentally, emergence of alternative media structures stem from this non-existence. One could think that, absence of a phenomenon would not directly lead to creation of a new channel. A demand for such an alternative also played a significant role in the emergence of sports texts written in a reflexive analysis stance. Therefore, it should be underlined that, reflexive analysis is one of the core features of alternative sports media considering its critical approach towards certain elements of the society.

Although the previously mentioned demand accumulated in time and paved the way for the emergence of alternative structures, another one of the facilitating factors is not hard to guess: expansion of the internet. Disengagement from the mainstream structures began relatively early within the sports sphere. Rise of print fanzines date back to 1980s where sports fans began to establish alternative communities to discuss sports in different terms. Since seeking for a clear transition would be irrational, organization of communities with an oppositional stance against traditional/mainstream journalistic structures can be considered as the first steps towards alternative sports media (Boyle & Haynes, 2009: 182). Yet, further enhancement and proliferation of internet highly contributed to the rise of reflexive analysis. Easy accessibility of information and opportunities to present user generated content gave rise to the emergence of writers independent from traditional media institutions. Through these means, every "interested" person can easily access to relevant information regarding

the components of sports and is able to articulate personal interpretations. Needless to say, access to information and to be able to present ideas on internet might still not be sufficient to become a sports writer; as features such as extensive knowledge, experience, ability to narrate and comment on sports in a comprehensive way is still necessary to produce alternative media outlets with the reflexive analysis approach. In this regard, even though advancements in technology cannot be considered as the only underlying reason behind the rise of alternative media structures, its influence should not be underestimated on the way through the redemption of sports media from the traditional monopolies.

Before starting to discuss the case studies, which have selected as preeminent examples of alternative sports media outlets in Turkey, the reasons of the selection of these particular case studies will be elaborated in the next section.

3.2   Rationale behind the Selection of Case Studies

3.2.1   *Socrates* Magazine

Socrates is a monthly magazine which mainly focuses on sports as its content. Although *Socrates* can be considered as a young entity, since their first issue was published in June 2015, the creators of the magazine managed to gain a strong reputation among Turkish sports fans. The reason behind their success was the well-directed analysis of Turkish sports media. *Socrates* firstly defined the gap that the sports audience have been demanding and then successfully

filled this niche area, with an approach which is best described by their motto: "*Thinking sports magazine*". Absence of a sports magazine that goes beyond a narrative of technical, monotonous and quotidian understanding of sports was tried to be filled by *Socrates,* in which the creators seek a new perspective, discourse and design. Therefore, main aim of the magazine was to present an alternative for the audience who demand a sports story covered in a deeper, analytical, interesting and even fun way.

In order to comprehend the alternative sports media structure in Turkey, a closer look to *Socrates Magazine* would highly contribute to this study. Yet, the particular selection of *Socrates* must be rationalized first, to clarify why other similar products were left out and this one was chosen instead.

One of the first reasons that *Socrates Magazine* was chosen as a case for an alternative sports media work, is its in depth approach towards the stories that it covers. In each issue, more than 20 stories are being covered in a comprehensive and interesting manner. Unlike the mainstream outlets in Turkey, *Socrates* deals with sports without excluding other social elements. On the contrary, the authors try to understand and narrate sports under the light of its ties and relations with art, sociology, psychology, politics and many other fields. In this sense, the articles that the authors of *Socrates* produce usually contain interdisciplinary elements, which make the pieces quite unique and distinctive in the sports media field.

Furthermore, *Socrates* embraces sports in a holistic way. Many different kinds of sports and many elements within several branches, such as tennis, volleyball, snooker, ski jumping are being elaborated. Although the domination of football can still be sensed, similar to the mainstream approach in Turkey, coverage of "other" fields is far from being negligible. *Socrates* is one of the only printed materials in Turkey – except sport specific magazines – that pays significant attention amateur sports stories. Apart from this, *Socrates* manages to give closer looks to every actor involved in sports. The common focus on games and players is shifted towards coaches, families, fans and even friends by authors to provide a complete understanding of sports in general.

What makes *Socrates* unique is its masthead besides the topics that it covers. In every issue, they entertain many guest authors from different backgrounds varying from cinema to literature. By doing this, *Socrates* aims to break the common expressions about sports and to provide more interdisciplinary and even trans-disciplinary content for its audience. Reading about Jorge Luis Borges' approach to sports or Hugh Laurie's choice between rowing and theatre was not usual for sports readers before *Socrates*, and this makes them eligible for our analysis.

The last element that ensured *Socrates* to be one step ahead among others to be chosen for the case study is its design. Publishing a magazine in 2015 was a brave and assertive move considering the increasing dominance of electronic sources. Yet, *Socrates* played the design card well by entrusting a universally acclaimed advertising agency. Through their extraordinary approach, a never-

before-seen design of a sports magazine entered to the field and appreciated by greater circles. The new, colorful, active look of the magazine has drawn significant attention from the audience's side, so that the creators were able to position themselves in an alternative place not only by their content but appearance they created.

Nevertheless, besides the abovementioned features that *Socrates Magazine bears, Socrates Magazine* is owned by one of the biggest publishers of Turkey, which is Can Publishing. Although this feature might contradict with its alternative approach due to the close connections with the capitalist structures, their alternative approach towards sports deserves a closer analysis to their work.

In this regard, including *Socrates Magazine* to this study dealing with alternative sports media in Turkey was deemed as appropriate, considering their holistic approach towards sports, inclusion of certain elements which are usually excluded by the mainstream and their seminal understanding of design.

3.2.2   Yazihane

Yazihane is a sports blog formed by several sports lovers in 2012. Although many attempts were made to establish a platform where individuals share their thoughts about sports until recent years, almost all of them failed to continue or they have evolved into something else. After the foundation of *Yazihane* in 2012, some of the former bloggers found this arena more appropriate for their articles and started to write for *Yazihane.* Therefore, contributors of *Yazihane*

increased in number. The idea of collective writing about sports not only

gathered the authors but also readers around a website and played a crucial

role to preserve its success. In this regard, *Yazihane* keeps its uniqueness in

Turkey and constitutes an alternative to mainstream practices for sports media

in various ways, which paved the way for this particular website to be included

in this study.

The core factor that makes *Yazihane* a good candidate for this research is its

stance towards editorial and financial ties. After the introduction of internet,

individual writers gained a new front to tell their stories, but independent sports

media embraced it quite lately. Yet, *Yazihane* seized this opportunity and kept

its organizational structure horizontal, even though there is a *de facto* editor who

maintains the website and arranges articles properly. However, it is not similar

to an editorial approach in mainstream media that edits the articles in order to

give them shape within the overall policies. In fact, what lies behind the success

to sustain the independence is the authors' approach to and understanding of

Yazihane. Financial independence of the blog came along with the aim of

running a no-profit website. Not a single author demands anything financially

besides expressing their thoughts on sports world freely. The author team is

composed of more than 30 people, consisting only a couple of very famous

sports writers working for professional media outlets, who also contribute to the

blog voluntarily.

The structure of *Yazihane*; its ability to provide an editor-free environment,

eagerness of writers about expression of ideas and lack of profit constitutes its

uniqueness and significance, and is the main reason behind its inclusion in this study. Moreover, *Yazihane* adopted some of the new media elements that recently became popular. In 2014, *Yazihane Mutfak* (Kitchen) was initiated. Although they only could produce two articles in this new way, the way they perceive "the developing internet potential" strengthens their alternative stance.

Before proceeding with the analysis, overall reasons behind the selection of these particular examples should be noted. Through the author compositions, stances against capitalism, intention to include the elements excluded by mainstream and seek for quality while producing content paved the way for their selection. From a general point of view, both *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazıhane*, complies with the overall features; yet, close analysis should be done to position them whether within the alternative media or not.

Although *Socrates* can be considered as a relatively new publication, due to its extensive coverage, it would be impossible to analyze each article published. Therefore, the extent of this study limits the articles for *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazıhane Blog* as of November 2015, which coincides with the first eight issues of the *Socrates Magazine.* In the first eight issues, *Socrates Magazine* published 286 articles under 22 generic sections, whereas *Yazıhane* published 1222 articles under 13 generic sections in a three and a half years period. Although the cases that we will analyze throughout the study were selected randomly, overall perspective and publishing policies of the magazine and blog will also be taken into consideration.

	Number of Generic Sections	**Total Number of Articles** *(As of November 2015)*
Socrates Magazine	22	286
Yazıhane Blog	13	1222

Table 1 Total number of articles and sections in Socrates Magazine and Yazihane Blog

CHAPTER 4.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE SPORTS MEDIA IN TURKEY

4.1   Inclusion of Minorities, Socially Excluded and "the Other"

As previously discussed and introduced in the previous chapters, one of the

core elements of alternative media structure is its intention to include actors who

are usually disregarded, excluded and ignored by the mainstream structures.

Describing and defining the general acceptance of a society, indeed, might

show great differences between different cultures. Thus, as always tried in this

study, holistic generalization will be refrained in this sense as well. Yet,

regardless of a country's level of development, certain parts of the society

usually remain "minor" *vis-a-vis* the majority. Since the main focus of this study

will be on Turkey, understanding Turkey's cultural and population structure

would be highly beneficial to situate excluded groups in the overall society. For

this case study covering alternative media in Turkey, women's issues will be the

starting point, not because women can ever be a minority group "population

wise" in a country, yet because of the social positions and gendered roles,

which not only affect our daily lives but also media coverage of certain issues.

Since the main ideal of this work is to analyze the alternative sports media structures, a deeper analysis about the women's position within the society will not be made. Yet, taking gender equality as one of the most serious problems in Turkish society will be consulted, in order to better comprehend women related texts in our case studies.

In order to approach the gender related issues core of the problem should be established. The material that is dealt for this research is a secondary product of an activity. Analyzing the sports related texts, its constituent elements and relations with political and economic structures can only come into existence after a particular sports event. Thus, expecting the sports related media texts being in the same line with sports world should not be surprising. Therefore, issues intrinsic to sports media, naturally stem from the discrepancies in sports world; because the first product is an actual competition, race, game or match that actually takes place in real life and gives way to the secondary products to be produced. Although, all elements within a sports event are not fully reflected in sports media -which is sometimes the case-, absence of particular actors or moves in sports world causes this deficiency in sports media.

Considering the media structures as the only responsible factor for the absence of women covered in the media products would definitely be misleading. At one point, media actors play an intermediary role between the actual event and the audience/reader. Thus, expecting a female dominant picture broadcasted by media structures in a highly male dominant environment would go no further than being a fallacy. Acknowledging the undesirable and unfair facts of the

society would lead us to correctly understand cause and effect relation between the sports events and its secondary products. Therefore, defining and describing the core of the "one-way" tendency in sports media within existing social structures is critical. Up to some extent, considering media's intermediary role, expecting the reflections of the actuality of the sports sphere can be considered as usual. Therefore, it is highly common to see male dominance media coverage, especially in the mainstream structures, rather than focus on neglected and ignored actors.

Nevertheless, despite the neglected actors' limited participation to sports events, significance of their existence within this considerably male dominant environment, which is covered by the alternative media structures, will be mentioned. In one sense, alternative media structures, particularly in the sports sphere, protests women's lack of existence and take actions accordingly. On the other hand, alternative sports media tries its best to cover as many female actors as possible in its stories to support an oppositional stance to gender roles and respectfully show solidarity to empowering movements. Highlighting stories, successes or failures of female sports players should be considered as one of the key elements of alternative sports media structures. As previously discussed, this is highly related with one of the core features of the alternative media, which states that alternative media structures have to aim to produce for the socially, politically and culturally excluded elements. Yet, confining only to produce *for* socially excluded is not sufficient; inclusion of these components, advocating for their fair, rightful and respectful existence and supporting their

struggle against dominant structures are the fundamental principles of alternative sports media.

In fact, reducing the social exclusion only to women would naturally be deficient. Gradation among the non-dominant elements of the society is indeed impossible. Therefore, approaching to each non-dominant component of the society with the same perspective has to be the starting point for alternative structures. Otherwise, as previously discussed, while creating an alternative, another dominant presence might possibly be re-produced by alternative structures themselves. In order to refrain from creating a dominant and exclusionist mechanism up to a certain extent – since an absolute escape would be impossible – embracing as many excluded elements as possible constitutes the cornerstone of alternative structures. In this regard, minorities in any sense (ethnic, religious, etc.), members of LGBTIQ community, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, those of which in reality composes a big part of the society; yet excluded and degraded by hegemonic and dominant structures *should* constitute the main focus of an alternative media structure. Telling their stories, including them into centerfolds and focusing their personal or collective successes or failures should be appreciated since no other actor among media sphere would not even turn their heads towards them. Yet again, although taking a step backwards telling the stories of neglected components of the society might sound appealing in the first sense, it will not help to *change* deep-seated structures intrinsic to the society. In contrary, showing/drawing them as the way they fall into the society would reproduce their unfair and unequal role.

Therefore, under ideal circumstances – which is rarely the case – alternative sports media structures *should* place the core ideal of *change* in the center of their agenda. Such an approach would eliminate the deficiency of solely picturing/telling/describing the minority groups' excluded stance. Otherwise, with an approach that does not embrace the ideal of *change*, unfair and unequal neglection of their role among society would go no further than being normalized and mainstreamed. Although the "aim for change" feature of alternative media will be later discussed more in details, since its "inter-featural" position, inclusion of this feature within the discussion of "socially excluded" part was inevitable.

Having recalled the critical points of one of the features of alternative sports media, searching for the traces of these feature among our examples would lead us more concrete conclusions. After conducting a discussion on how the socially excluded components of society *should* be represented/shown in alternative media structures, examining the texts by using this template would be easy. Through having this template, we will be able to scrutinize up to what extent *Socrates Magazine* was able to fulfill this feature.

4.1.1 "Paperless FC" Against Rest of the World (*Socrates Magazine*, Issue: 5, by Pinar Öğünç)

In her article, Pinar Öğünç, a critical journalist, mainly focuses on the football tournament organized and hosted by Fatih Municipality in Istanbul, where the teams are composed of mostly African immigrants who hope to show their skills and luckily sign with a professional team. The tournament began to be organized by the Fatih Municipality a couple of years ago with the personal

interest of the Mayor himself as a part of the public relations campaign of the municipality that was based on the multi-culturalism. Immigrant communities in Istanbul, those of which are able to form a football team can be a part of this tournament where their aim goes far beyond solely having fun. Although coming together around a sports event forms the social component, which in fact is also significant, the underlying factor that drives people to football fields is the *hope to be discovered*. In her piece, Öğünç conducts several small interviews with the players and fans and shares her observations about the tournament, where she mainly tries to understand immigrants' approach towards their life for the time being and for their future.

Although the article was published in 2015, where the Syrian Crisis has already been protracted up to a certain extent, framework of the piece was drawn around the African immigrants. At this point, understanding the general approach towards migrants, asylum seekers or Syrians (who remain under a different and unique legal framework as Temporary Protection in Turkey) would be fairly impossible, since the notion of immigrant was only deduced to African community in the text. Existence of Syrians being unsaid prevents the article to holistically define and understand the situation of migrants in Turkey.

The reason why the name of the article contains a concept as "*paperless*" is also significant and striking. She mentions that, only a small portion of people among the players and fans has the "chance" to enjoy rights and privileges of being a refugee. The majority still remains as officially undocumented i.e *paperless*. Öğünç enquires this fact, since the municipality is the host of the

event and finds out that although the police force knows their illegal position, they somehow condone that. What remains interesting about both parties of the event is this paradoxical position. Within the framework of the tournament, two components, those of which exist in a "conflicting" way, face each other; illegal migrants and the state. On one side, there are efforts of the "paperless" for being able to obtain a "paper"; and on the other side forces of the state; municipality and police. The reciprocal adaptation to each other goes beyond the visible and understandable tolerance. What encourages and somehow forces the municipality to organize such an event is the "heavy existence" of migrants within their municipal territory. Although the municipality acknowledges the fact that these tournaments will not turn African population into supporting voters, keeping them under control would contribute to the serenity of the neighborhood. Through applying such a method, power of the state is applied in a softer yet controlling way.

At this point, it should be underlined that, the critical point that Öğünç puts forward tells the story behind Turkey's refugee/immigrant/asylum seeker policies. From her inference, deficiency of a comprehensive, inclusive and consistent regulation on immigration law can easily be detected. Although Turkey has been encountering migration movements for many decades, there has never been a clear, well-structured and human rights based regulation before the Syria Crisis. (These features are still in question despite many new laws and regulations concerning the Syrian "visitors" have been passed). By emphasizing this fact, Öğünç shifts her focus solely from sports and points out a

highly critical point about African immigrants' social situation, where she clearly touches one of the core features of an alternative sports text as pointed out in the Royal Commission on Press, stating that "alternative publication deals with the opinions of small minorities" (as cited in Atton, 2001: 12)."

Speaking of the Turkish Police's attributes towards African immigrants, it would be impossible not to mention Festus Okey, a Nigerian killed by police in a police station in 2007 under custody. His death caused uprisings among African community and paved the way -once again- to question police's excessive use of force against people; not only against immigrants but also citizens. Öğünç recalls Okey's participation to this tournament years ago and implicitly enquires players' and fans' political stances. Answers that she got surprised her, since majority of African immigrants stated their support towards Erdogan, former Prime Minister and current President of Turkey, whereas she expected to see a relatively oppositional stance from one of the most disadvantaged parts of the society. *Paperlesses* echoed the immigrants' tendency to be on the same side with the "powerful"; without, actually, realizing the fact that, the power that they admire is the one that created the tyrant that has murdered their friends and will probably murder – either directly or indirectly – many others. This admiration might also be a reflection of Erdogan's amateur career as a football player; which he often emphasizes and creates his image as a person with a disadvantaged past and achieving success in time.

Stance of the African community towards the power, i.e the state, is once again can be observed through their approach to existing hegemony. This can be

interpreted as the acknowledgement of hopelessness, efforts to hold on to the existing "powerful" and wish to find a place to exist within the social structure.

In between the lines, oppositional and critical stance that Öğünç tries to preserve can be traced. Yet, she does not go beyond from a mere criticism; rather her position remains relatively descriptive regarding African community's position. Although she tries to question their perception of incumbent government, she refrains from including or mentioning the migration policies of the government, which, in fact, are quite significant for the immigrant community. Therefore, even though the final picture of the existing situation that African community has been experiencing can be seen, underlying facts that paved the way for this situation to emerge is not totally covered. Nevertheless, Öğünç manages to refrain from oversimplification, and makes an effort to go beyond the simplicity of football. While telling the story of a unique football tournament, she simply does not focus on and narrate them as the socially excluded players; but also tries to clarify their understanding of politics. This approach also goes hand in hand with the feature of "deeper analysis" that alternative media structures should make an effort to bare. Yet, although Öğünç tries to avoid simplifying the situation and see the picture broader than football and tournament itself; her seek for change remains smoother.

One of the other crucial conditions that African immigrants confront which Öğünç pointed out is their living conditions. Through the tournaments and trainings, players state that they find the chance to reach proper and clean showers. This statement, in fact, bears a more serious meaning than it sounds;

living conditions of migrant communities in Turkey. Besides the illegal position of migrants, poverty strikes as one of the most crucial elements of daily life. By including such a statement, Öğünç makes a reference to the poor living conditions and presents the facilities of sports as a temporary solution. Moreover, the emphasis on temporary conditions that the immigrants struggle with, empowers the hopelessness, because no permanent solution can be seen in sight. Again, through the particular stance of immigrants in football, striking evidences regarding their daily lives are being unfolded by Öğünç. Scrutinizing and questioning the "unseen" parts of the sports provides more detailed and in depth information than telling the story of a single match. By so, the reason of a missed shot can better be understood; instead of a lazy pass there might have been a horrible night. Öğünç, in this sense, tries to go one step further and elaborates more than the technicality of sports, where again, she merges the coverage of socially excluded people with an in depth analysis.

Lastly, but probably most strikingly, the idea of "hope" occupies the biggest place in immigrants' lives. Besides the social interaction and hygiene facilities, what drives them to come to football pitch again and again is a bit of hope to be discovered by professionals. However, one of the interviewees clearly identifies the hopelessness by stating that, "I know some people who have been coming here for 5 years. If you see and understand the system as such, you cannot continue hoping" . Even though they are trying to hold onto that last piece of hope to be discovered and become richer, the author underlines, again, a person of a minority group rarely finds a chance to sign with a professional

team. Therefore, their rivalry remains symbolic when two groups play against each other; because the real struggle that they conduct is actually against the whole world, she concludes.

Here, through an accurate analogy, she hauls the social exclusion problem into a different level. She draws the attention to globalism of the issue instead of attributing a particular accusation to Turkey. Considering her holistic approach towards immigration, accurate analysis of external components and efforts to refrain shallow cause-effect relationships distinguishes her article from its mainstream counterparts. She, on the other hand, could have easily stuck solely on football and tournament and missed bigger picture. Although the motivation and seek for change remains relatively implicit, the whole idea of focusing on a particularly excluded group highly contributes the text's alternative approach.

In fact, her article does not totally cover football, quality of the game or result of the tournament. Although she briefly mentions the winner of the tournament, the technicality of football remains less important. Instead migrants and their lives in relation with football plays a bigger role, which proves the overarching role of sports. Instances of poverty, bits of hope and conflicting yet getting along with the state constitute the backbone of the article. As so in the lives of the African community, sports remain inclusive in Öğünç's article while she is dealing with the inner stories the content offers inside. Yet, she does not simply make a story out of it; instead, she intends to unfold power relations among parties and tries to indicate the actualities of daily life. In fact, her repetition of hope through

football does not solely cover migrant community in Turkey; it is also a big wish for the whole disadvantaged of the society.

Öğünç's understanding and approach towards football as an instrument to describe the social and economic realities in Turkey strengthen her alternative stance. Stepping two steps beyond the visible, and seeking for the unseen, unthought and unsaid, distinguish this article from mainstream counterparts and accurately position it in a magazine with a motto of "thinking sports magazine".

4.1.2 Breaking the Surface (*Socrates Magazine*, Issue: 6, by Buğra Balaban)

Male dominance in sports is acknowledged as the ugly truth by many and neglection of women particularly in sports arena began to be largely discussed. Although it is hard to find the evidences of further enhancements regarding the participation of women in sports, through the pressure applied by the wider public participation and representation of women is gradually increasing. Yet, among these discussions, representation and embrace of LGBTIQ community remains marginal.

In the midst of these discussions, alternative media structures try to elude from stumbling as their mainstream counterparts usually – and intentionally – do. Shedding the light on the stories of players, who are members of LGBTIQ community, is an arena that was left blank by mainstream structures, where the alternative sports media felt the need to fill in. As stated by Waltz, alternative media is the place of people "who occupy shadowy spaces in mainstream"

(2005: 8). Even though LGBTIQ discussions, both in public and in academia, reached its peak, since the hate crimes are still horribly ongoing, lack of or misrepresentation of LGBTIQ members maintain its significance. Reaching out the public, telling the actualities, creating consistent discussions regarding LGBTIQ community and advocating for equal rights still remains as the role of the alternative media structures, in absence of the mainstream outlets' coverage.

In this regard, *Socrates* performs significantly distinctively where many stories and interviews have been covered regarding the members of the LGBTIQ community. One of the most dramatic pieces which will be analyzed in this study is written by Buğra Balaban; where he shortly tells the striking story of an American diver, Greg Louganis. Louganis is a homosexual diver, who was adopted at the age of 1 by a Greek originated American couple. In the early years of his life, he struggled a lot with domestic violence. Later, he was diagnosed as dyslexic and reached a desperate point where the diagnosis devastated him and pushed him to commit suicide. After his luckily unsuccessful attempt, he tended towards diving through his mother's encouragement where he found success.

After many harsh years at home, he finally managed to win an Olympic Silver in Montreal 1976, which forced him to practice harder to win the gold in the upcoming. Yet, if the difficulties he faced ever stopped following him at that point, we probably would not remember him. Summer Olympics in 1980 organized by Soviet Union was boycotted by United States, where he lost the

chance at that time to win the most desired gold medals. He had to wait until 1988 Seul Olypmics to actually prove his success to all sports arena. Yet again, 6 months before the games, he was diagnosed with HIV+. After many years, he admitted that HIV+ was considered as death sentence in an interview, as Balaban states.

Even though the devastating diagnosis, he participated to the competition to get his desired and well-deserved gold medals. However, during a jump in the qualifications, he hit his head to the springboard and fell to pool bleeding. Although his ambition to reach the finals and get the gold medal was incredibly high, what he first thought was this: what if the HIV virus plagued the water, which could cause other divers to contract the disease. Without knowing the virulent influence of chlorine, with four stitches on his head, he managed to qualify to finals and got the gold medals. Nevertheless, whenever he explained his disease later on, he could not escape from being heavily criticized and excluded. After 20 years spent outside of the sports arena, in 2010, he was hired as a mentor to divers of US where he finally found the chance to share his experiences during his career.

As shortly summarized, Balaban points out several facts regarding the lives and struggles of members of LGBTIQ community within sports sphere. Before giving the details of what Balaban dealt with about this socially excluded section of the society in this text, it must be underlined that, lack of representation of LGBTIQ members in sports should not be solely attributed to the heteronormative structure of the sports media. As previously discussed, media products should

be seen as secondary items of actual sports events where LGBTIQ community's participation is represented as being low. Therefore, since the sportspersons' social identities are not known by the public, the sports media's coverage on the issue also relatedly remain limited. As Atton noted, alternative media is a ground for the ones marginalized by mainstream media (2002), so Balaban tries to give deserved space to LGBTIQ members of sports sphere in Turkey.

Balaban, in his article, makes great effort to enable readers to comprehend the "behind the scenes" facts of Louganis's life. Through elaborating on the harsh truths of his life, Balaban compels audience to think outside of the box and enables readers to put themselves into his shoes. To establish a sense of commonness between the reader and the diver through empathy, Balaban underlines several crucial facts including domestic violence and exclusion. Instead of showing Louganis as marginal by emphasizing on his sexual orientation, Balaban focuses on his characteristics which can also be shared by a wider audience. Through elaborating on these features, Balaban situates Louganis's failures and successes beyond his sexual orientation.

Furthermore, Balaban recognizes and acknowledges another fact, denial. Thus, he implicitly tries to break the deep-rooted approach within every sphere of the society towards LGBTIQ community which denies their existence, let alone their success. Through solely demonstrating his life, without skipping the struggles that he went through, Balaban silently proves the fact that, success of a sports person goes far beyond than the social group he/she belongs to. What remains unsaid in Balaban's article, yet can be experienced in daily life, is the denial of

the components of the society which face the dominance of majority. Through Louganis's story, struggles of LGBTIQ community both in the world and in Turkey can be revisited and rethought. Especially with regards to the power relations among male dominant norms of the society and rising LGBTIQ movement around the world, gains and losses are encouraged to be reconsidered. Although he refrains from an explicit style, he wisely implies a vital fact: LGBTIQ community exists and is not far from being successful in any sports field with male dominance. Since the overlook towards this community is inherent to mainstream media, as a core principle, alternative media should make an effort to include their stories. As pointed out by Royal Commission on the Press, alternative publications are the ones which allocate space for the ones not given regular coverage by mainstream. (as cited in Atton, 2001: 12). Yet, a simple inclusion would not suffice; attempt to transform existing perceptions and trials to disrupt the obsolete notions should constitute the basis of an article. In this regard, although Balaban's inclusion of and approach towards Louganis praiseworthy, clear and explicit evidences of inviting the readers to *change* their thinking patterns remains relatively unseen.

One of the most striking points of Louganis's life and Balaban's article is the move of diving team of United States. Balaban states that, United States invited Louganis to become the "mentor" for the new divers of the national team in 2010, twelve year after his championship. With regards to the relations of sports, society and state, this move tells more than just a mentorship. Although it was left unsaid by Balaban, the core reason behind this particular move

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should be well-thought. On one side, it might mean a face-off with the past and apology; it might mean as the success of the LGBTIQ community to be recognized and embraced; or it might be a pragmatic act to win more gold medals in the upcoming events. No matter which option reflects the truth, the text presents deeper stories than a simple coverage of a diving event. Changing power relations within the society earned with the efforts of LGBTIQ community paved the way for questioning the strategy behind achieving success. Current circumstances might necessitate ignoring or acknowledging the sexual orientation of a sportsperson for the sake of medals.

The other substantial point that Balaban narrates regarding Louganis's life is his struggle with HIV+. Balaban presents the transformation that public perception against the disease went through in time. However, it should be noted that, exclusion due to certain diseases remains as the bleeding wound especially for marginalized parts of society. Balaban's remarks on Louganis's disease – and even his ignorance regarding that – further support the idea of creating an empathetic relationship between him and the audience. By this means, Balaban contributes to the development of an accurate understanding towards HIV+ community, which can also be considered as an excluded part. His approach clearly indicates that, ambition, passion and hard work play a much more important role than gender expression or carrying a serious medical condition for a sportsperson's career. Through representing a figure as such, he paves the way for and encourages the people, who shares similar features with Louganis. By doing so, as a part of the alternative sports media, his ideal aim to

facilitate the social disruption can be embraced by wider public; so that

marginalization of athletes with different social backgrounds might decrease in

time. In this sense, Balaban actually fulfills the duty of not solely representing a

socially excluded actor, but provoking the audience to *transform* existing,

dominant and mainstream structures. Besides, Balaban's efforts also comply

with the ideals of alternative media stated by Atton and Hamilton which

underlines the criticality of continuous efforts to respond and criticize dominant

conceptions (2009: 9).

Nevertheless, with regards to the gains in LGBTIQ recognition, Balaban does

not mention the success of LGBTIQ movement in the past year with their

political struggle. Open LGBTIQ members who came out publicly might have

also been discussed in the text. Yet again, although being a text with a content

mainly about sports, Balaban successfully includes many other concepts than

factual information, empowered by the idea of sports being inclusive, as oppose

to its mainstream counterparts.

Understanding and approach towards LGBTIQ community, power struggles and

LGBTIQ participation in national teams in relation with seek for success

constitutes the core of the article. Balaban's elaboration on Louganis's relations

with his family, coaches and disease gives the article its alternative stance while

eluding simply focusing on his success and failures.

4.1.3   A Shoe Tetralogy (*Yazihane*den.com, April 2015, by Emre Yürüktümen)

Pointing out the linkages between sports and politics is not a usual habit of most of the sports writers. However, creating analogies among the elements of sports, personal experiences of authors and political events can also be rewarding to provide a deeper analysis regarding the subject matter. Besides the deeper analysis, such a different perspective may help the reader to approach known facts from a new approach. Through this alternative sparkle, ordinary and mainstream way of thinking behavior of the reader is aimed to be changed.

In this regard, Emre Yürüktümen constructs his article on a personal history and concludes his piece with a well-linked political event through this method. Yürüktümen starts his article by mentioning two pair of shoes that mattered to him throughout his youth years. The first pair that he mentions is the famous model of Adidas, Stan Smith, which he inherited from his father. The second significant pair from his young years is the pair which had the same style of the shoes that famous NBA Star Dikembe Mutombo wears.

Up to this point, Yürüktümen cannot go further than telling his personal, and relatively less exciting memories for the audience. Nevertheless, the way he chose completing the tetralogy is more striking and deserves more attention. After introducing two pairs that he used, Yürüktümen moves to the story of Ronnie O'sullivan. O'sullivan is a well-known snooker player, who has been acknowledged as one of the greatest players of snooker history. Yürüktümen

refs to O'sullivan by echoing what he did in 2015 World Championship. After using the same pair for ten years, O'sullivan lost that pair and had to use a new one during the Championship. However, pinch caused by the new shoes made O'sullivan to take them off during a game, continue barefoot for a while, taking a pair from one of the spectators firstly and then taking another pair from the Championship director.

After creating or reminding the image of O'sullivan's shoes, and stating that these shoes will never be forgotten by snooker fans, Yürüktümen successfully establishes the link with a different topic by referring to another pair of shoes that will stay in the memory of many people. The pair that he refers is Hrant Dink's. After his assassination, a striking photo was published in many newspapers that showed a hole under the shoe and confounded millions of people. Through the analogy and linkage that he established between different memorable shoes images, he continues his article in a way that elaborates features beyond sports. This elaboration beyond sports is a reflection of "free flow of ideas" that enables Yürüktümen to create an unexpected linkage between shoes of people that do not have an ordinary linkage (Atton, 2001: 11-12)

Yürüktümen, then, recalls the day Dink was murdered and the commemoration march that he attended. Through reminding those moments, he touches a sensitive point for Turkish politics; the Armenian Genocide. On this matter, he states that, while the ones that killed him was praised by the police instead of being arrested and the whole social media is brimmed with racist and chauvinist

comments, discussing the actuality of an event does not make any sense. Because, he adds, nationalism, racism and chauvinism still continues to claim lives.

Through this approach, in a sports related article, he links a current political event to his piece, and extends the context of sports towards a more political point. Moreover, he simply does not focus on the politics of the majority, rather, Yürüktümen tries to include the positions of "others" to give a "heteroglossic (multiple-voiced)" meaning to his piece; which is stated as one of the principles of alternative media (Atton, 2001: 9). Evoking such a traumatic event for the audience in a sports article might be relevant to the increasing tension in sports arena. Through the cheers of the tribunes and press statements of team managers, increasing racism and chauvinism can be observable; which, in fact, pave the way for rising polarization. This should be interpreted as the reflection of the current context within Turkey and, once again proves the fact that sports go beyond the simple structure and bears deeper meanings.

In addition to abovementioned understanding, Dink's assassination might have been noted as the moment that the "intolerance" of the state became apparent; although numerous assassinations took place before Dink. Linkage between Dink's assassination, state's "official" stance – and possible condonation – and intolerance can be similarly seen in sports events, more visibly in football. Events such as shooting of Fenerbahce team bus after a game against Trabzonspor, punishments after racist chants and swearing on the field by players towards black colleagues show the path that goes in line with fascist

understanding. Therefore, by pointing out the reflections of these tendencies in sports, Yürüktümen establishes a ground for his audience to rethink and possibly correlate the attitudes of masses towards minority groups. Through framing the subject around daily life, Yürüktümen manages to approach alternative media features, which indicates the importance of issues of daily life and "ordinary needs of people" (Enzensberger, 1976).

Moreover, the core point that Yürüktümen builds his symbolism and analogy on deserves more attention. Particularly in football and basketball shoes bear significance both in terms of performance and meaning. On the one side, one of the most prestigious awards of football is named "Golden Shoe" and on the other side custom design shoes are produced in the name of basketball players and sold for extraordinary prices, which clearly shows the value attributed. However, on the other side of the coin, image of a pair of shoes worn by a murdered man represents different meanings attributed to a gear. This, again, actually reflects the bitter facts of the society; pair of shoes being sold and bought at a price of minimum wage in Turkey, which symbolize vanity, and pair of shoes that are being used all the way to the end to serve just to walk. Through this analogy, Yürüktümen invites to the stage not only the players, but also the gears and offers an alternative ground to discuss the sports components from a different point.

In the conclusion part, he criticizes the mainstream media by stating that, "We are facing many cheeky attitudes... Such that, if a mainstream media actor 'accidentally' reads this article, I suspect that s/he would write an article named

'Vileness from a Well-Known Snooker Player: So Called Armenian Genocide' (*Ünlü Bilardocudan Ermeni Soykırımı Şaklabanlığı*)". The reason why he refers to mainstream media with such a criticism is based on the observation on mainstream media's perpetual intention to reproduce the dominant discourse. In this sense, the critical distinction between alternative and mainstream can be seen as the stance towards dominant structures. Thus, Yürüktümen implicitly states that, mainstream counterparts tend to reproduce the existing policy of incumbent government on the Armenian Genocide. As an alternative approach, he instead analyzes the situation with the daily attitudes of the dominant political groups by referring to their social media activities and expressions. Through this perspective, Yürüktümen both contributes to a deeper analysis feature and hauls sports writing to another level that contains daily life and politics, which distinguishes his approach from mainstream media and converges to alternative media.

4.1.4   Crashing Through the Waves (Socrates Magazine, Issue: 1, by Banu Yelkovan)

When compared to other marginalized groups of the society, representation of women in sports arena, both in event side and in media side can be considered as high; yet still, unfairly low. Moreover, women have never enjoyed the soft cushions of given rights; instead, accumulation of gains through struggle enabled sports world to turn its head towards women. Therefore, although when success is assessed by the numbers and statistics, comparative advantage can

be seen in male's hands; struggles behind the female players' successes enriches their achievements and attributes more special meanings.

Banu Yelkovan, in her article, mainly focuses on the struggle of existence that female players have been going through. As a female sports fan and journalist, she associates her experiences with athletes and shares her experiences, inferences and analysis regarding the inequality against women in sports and sports media arenas.

She prefaces her article with a story of hers, where in university years her father prevents her going abroad for business, just because she is a woman. She, then enquires her father asking that "Would it be the same if I would be a *Mehmet*? (a common Turkish male name)" and gets an expected answer from her father: "Yes, you could have gone if you would be a Mehmet". This was the moment when she realized that "being a woman has nothing to do with sex; rather, it is an imposed set of values and rules."

When she was asked to prepare an article on female sports players, she preserved her critical stance and questioned the reasons behind this particular request. She could have also written on Muhammed Ali or Maradona, whereas she was asked to focus on female athletes. Even so, she did not want to give this article up to another author, since she felt that she could better present her empathy with female athletes regarding the struggles in her own life. Yet, even her first reaction to express her stance to "widely held beliefs", which in this case is reflected as the idea of women should write about women, underpins

her alternative approach with regards to the definition of Royal Commission on the Press on alternative media (as cited in Atton, 2001: 12).

When it comes to the notion of struggle, description and way of existence of struggle around the world differs a lot. To sharpen this distinction and underline the difficulties, Yelkovan shortly narrates the story of Gonca Gavami. Gavami is an Iranian woman who was imprisoned for several months due to her attempt to watch a volleyball game in Iran. This is the clear example of the truth, that even an attempt to be an external part of a sports event can turn into a real struggle for a woman. By including her story, Yelkovan would like to provoke the feelings of the reader, and to push to re-think the meaning of a struggle. At this point, Yelkovan does not include a discussion with regards to the context of Turkey; yet, considering the negative developments on women rights, Turkey began to show resemblances with Iran. As a step forward, participation of women in sports in Turkey both as player and as audience should also be elaborated. Yet, on this subject matter, close followers can remember the decision of Turkish Football Federation (TFF) for the teams that are penalized with playing with no spectators. Starting from 2011-2012 season, TFF *penalized* the teams and the fans, those of which violated regulations, by allowing only women and children to a certain number of matches. Although this decision of TFF was considered as accurate by certain spheres, it also fueled discussions on women's existence in stadiums. "Accepting" women in stadiums only when the men are not around, or as a "punishment" to a penalized team clearly describes the approach towards women and their involvement in sports by the highest administrative

body of football. The logic, in this sense, shows great resemblance with the case of Gavami in Iran.

Yelkovan, by including the position of women fans in sports, enables readers to reconsider the stance of women within society as a whole. Through inclusion of such an element, Yelkovan shows contrast with the mainstream coverage and provokes to think other dimensions of sports. Although, in this sense, sports is not directly the focus of this piece, with the element of woman fandom, she paves the way to rethink the approach of states towards women and women's position within the society.

Besides the social pressure on women regarding taking part of sports event, biological factors constitute another obstacle. Many female athletes could not manage to turn back to fields after giving birth due to physical constraints which compelled them to choose between their careers and private lives, where none of the male athletes can even relate with that subject matter. However, in this sense, Yelkovan gives an accurate example of Kim Clijsters. Clijsters is a female Grand Slam winner tennis player, who announced retirement in 2007 gave birth to her daughter in 2008 and returned to tennis courts in 2009. After returning to tennis courts, she managed to win 3 more Grand Slam titles by destroying the in-equality of opportunities. On her pregnance, Yelkovan draws the attention to this uniquely painful process and claims that men would never be able to bear or imagine such pain. Therefore, such stories deserve more appraisal, Yelkovan states. Yet, although Yelkovan includes the pregnancy story of Clijsters, she does not reproduce the attributed role of "being a mother" as the

most significant success of a woman's life. Instead, it is shown that the possibility of choices after giving a birth can reach up to sports. In this regard, Yelkovan sarcastically questions the duration of maternity leave if men would be giving birth; which in fact brings the issue on a different level. Through analyzing Yelkovan's statements on Clijsters, the approach of the society and the state, in this sense, can be identified as patronizing; which encircles women into a singular role, preferably a more domestic than professional.

Further, Yelkovan points out a crucial condition regarding the daily discourse, which in fact unfolds how the inequality and the perception of women in society is deeply rooted in language. Although it would be impossible to make an extensive linguistic analysis among numerous languages, it would not be misleading to state that, the phrase "like a girl" bears a pejorative meaning whereas the phrase "like a man" is usually associated with a compliment. Approaching these phrases like trivial matters and keeping them in daily use would do nothing but produce existing hegemonic and imposed gender roles. Impacts of such language use go further than daily conversations and turn into real inequalities in work life. Even though the context of the "like a girl – like a man" phrases covers beyond sports arena, by the emphasis of Yelkovan, readers are encouraged to think twice before using these phrases. Through this provocative method, Yelkovan aims to start the process of transformation of existing and mainstream thinking patterns, where her counterparts in mainstream media outlets keep captioning gender biased headlines. As both

using the language and promoting a gender neutral discourse, Yelkovan contributes to the prominent features of being an alternative.

Up to a certain point, our discussion was mainly constructed on the idea that actual sport events would eventually shape the secondary products. Yet, even though this approach is usually valid, when the debate is on the creation of an image and public opinion, roles might reverse. Needless to state the fact that, image of an athlete does not solely depend on her preferences; rather, a public opinion is drawn through the contribution of sports journalists. Considering the male dominant sports media structure, historiography of sports is in males' hands. Therefore, an encounter with successes of female athletes necessitates more than just a usual achievement. Image, and much more significant than image, beauty, plays an extremely critical role to be publicly appreciated, Yelkovan puts forward. Because an ordinary triumph of a female athlete would not worth to mention in sports pages unless she exhibits an extraordinary beauty to – again – male dominated audience. Yet, it should not be considered as simply demand driven; instead, as previously mentioned, the male dominance within the production side of media paves the way for "beautiful" athletes to shine out. Moreover, this feature is not solely a part of sports media; coverage of "beautiful" women in any subject remains relatively higher than other. On a similar subject, although Yelkovan tries to remain her stance as critical towards the male dominated language, she mentions the nickname of a famous volleyball player, Neslihan Darnel, as "iron lady" without indicating any criticism. She, in a way, contributed to the attributed "lady" role of women with

an empowered "iron" adjective. Similar to the discursive discussion on "playing like a girl", associating women with such roles contributes to the false assumptions regarding women in society.

In her article, Yelkovan, tries to give a broad perspective not only regarding the position of women within sports but also perception of a female image. Male dominance among both sides of the sports world does not facilitate representation of female components. Besides biological constraints, socially imposed gender roles becloud many athletes during their career. Yet, more strikingly, even though female players somehow manage to attain success, in order for their success to be shown/drawn on sports pages or channels in a well-deserved way, the male dominated sports sections should consent to give place on paper. And unfortunately, consent of male driven sports branches does not solely depend on the success, but physical appearance, Yelkovan underlines. Through explicitly emphasizing these facts and by showing the added struggle that women has been going through, Yelkovan aims to break the common habit of mainstream outlets, which usually tend to *produce for* and *be produced by* the majority/dominant. As a female character herself, she still remains minor among her colleagues. Nevertheless, she was not *given* the opportunity to write about sports, or women in sports; she in fact *obtained* that deserved spot through her ambition and hard work. Therefore, not only her article and its content, but also her mere existence within sports circles show characteristics of being alternative. Moreover, leaving such a significant and sensitive subject on women participation in sports to a female writer enabled the

article to be more empathetic. Through the association of her own feelings and experiences with the stories of female athletes, substance of the article were more strongly and sincerely established. By this means, Yelkovan succeeded to distinguish her article from being a technical, statistical and quotidian and managed to provide a deeper analysis to her readers. In this regard, both regarding the subject that she focused and the way she approached highly accords with the principles of alternative sports media.

Even though existence and appearance of women in sports is the focus, sole representation of women in sports might also be associated with attributing them "softer" topics of daily life. As previously mentioned, although sports has close relations with every parts of the society, in its essence, the idea of show for the audience remains same. Therefore, representation of women in sports and in sports media should not be simply limited to its own extent; rather it should initiate further steps within the society. Otherwise, it might be used and considered as a tool to relieve tension that prevents women to be represented in relatively "serious" spheres of daily life.

To sum up, by analyzing the notion of struggle and pregnancy, Yelkovan's impulse to reconsider the struggles of women in Turkey; by mentioning the male dominated language, her implicit effort to encourage reconsidering daily language and by touching upon the notion of "beauty", her trial to unfold the male gaze in media production brings the article to an alternative stage. Through criticizing the male domination within the scope of sports media, her

instrumental approach towards sports and actual intention of pointing out the approach to women forms her alternative stance.

4.2   Quality of Content and Deeper Analysis

Production process of the content, authors/producers of the substance and approaches while dealing with content constitutes the backbone of distinction between the alternative media and its mainstream counterparts. Aiming to give detailed analysis, background information and more broadly a deeper content do not solely depend on the intention. Time constraints, pressure from the sponsors and expectations of the readers on daily news limit the media that work on a daily basis. Therefore, they usually tend not to go further than technical details, relatively shallow analysis of a game and some quotidian reports.

With regards to the quality of content, mainstream media fairly deal with news during the season, even though they usually do not provide high quality and in-depth content. Nevertheless, especially when the football season ends, majority of mainstream media outlets fill their pages with no information but speculation. It could be comprehensible up to some extent due to the lack of actual events; yet, effort to cover previous stories or upcoming event in a more detailed manner is hardly visible.

Another crucial factor that influences the quality of content is the search for profit. Approach towards the numbers of circulation actually shapes up to what extent the content is produced. If the motive for profit outweighs the goal of providing high quality product, endeavors focus on to find a better-selling content rather than good-quality substance. In fact, demand side of this relationship should not be ignored; since it is the main actor that requests such a content. At this point, creating the content based on audience's preferences should not be surprising to expect from mainstream companies with main aims of profit.

Moreover, alternative structures are expected to act in a way that pulls the reader a step forward; rather than speculating about non-existent conditions. Instead of complying with demand, steering the requests towards a more sophisticated context would enrich both sides.

Within the existing mainstream sports media, stepping out of the lines might not be easy. Yet, necessity for high quality content remains same, where one of the only actors that aims providing in depth and a different understanding of quality content is the alternative sports media. Providing or at least aiming to produce well-structured content is another indicator element of acting as an alternative, where the articles will be analyzed through this lens in the following section.

4.2.1   Construction of Europe (*Socrates Magazine*, Issue: 6, by Özgehan Şenyuva)

The extensity of the influence of football has been recurrently repeated various times under numerous contexts. Since football is associated with many other sectors which paves the way for diverse stories, attention of the media was fronted towards these side elements. These elements began to include private stories of players or coaches, those of which can be considered as the magazine of sports. By this means, readers began to be able to reach diverging content than before.

Nevertheless, approach towards the side elements of football, particularly in mainstream media structures, could not go further than dealing with the magazine side. In order to heat up the entertainment part of the game, trials to go beyond football reached only up to the personal lives of the players. In such a context, finding articles that deals with implications of a huge social phenomenon on politics, people, identity and state is still hard. Although mentioning the relations between abovementioned notions in a scientific manner usually falls into an academic category, there are still ways to merge easily digestible content with well-established analytical framework. By doing so, instead of pumping up the sports sections of newspapers by soap, readers can be provoked by the deeply rooted and high quality content to comprehend the impacts of football on many other elements of daily life. At this point, alternative media tries to fill this gap that does not attract the attention of mainstream media.

Through this approach, Özgehan Şenyuva, who is a professor at the International Relations department of Middle East Technical University, presents his article on the influence of UEFA Champions League on the construction of European identity in *Socrates Magazine*. When compared to the other pieces in the magazine, Şenyuva's article falls into a category that can be regarded as closer to academia. However, when closely analyzed, his inferences on the relationship between European identity and Champions League can easily be digested and comprehended by followers. This feature of his article, gives chance to its readers to find in depth – yet interesting perspective on a common content. Through this method, instead of "magazinish" elements, deeper and more political impacts of football can be put forward, those of which could not find a chance to be presented in mainstream media.

In his article, Şenyuva questions a frequently discussed notion, European identity. At first glance, subject of the article might sound as it has no relations with football; but, Şenyuva underlines the critical relationship between Champions League and construction process of European identity. By doing so, he takes the European football out from its relatively known context and examines its implications with a different approach. Şenyuva's perspective lays the emphasis on the role of football in Europeans' daily lives, where the lack of interaction among people and lack of public space were pointed out by many scholars. Instead of imposed and impellent external trials, football indigenously managed to become a social phenomenon that contributes to the construction process of European identity. The common ground that Champions League

provides to viewers and also to players, enabled people to meet and discuss under similar principles. Although it might seem like an easy guess, presenting the clear relation between football and people's social lives necessitates an alternative perspective which Şenyuva provides.

Furthermore, Şenyuva points out resemblance between Hollywood and Champions League with regards to their feature of being global products. After the end of Cold War, with the high contribution of developments in communication, European football turned into a widely consumed product. Moreover, after the facilitation processes within transfer market, the increasing number of global players taking place in Europe enabled both teams and leagues to turn into huge brands. This rise in the quality –and perhaps marketing- of football brought the ratings together with and made European football one of its kind, which enabled people to feel more connected and belonged to Europe, Şenyuva adds. As it can be observed, without his analytical approach and historical background, associating the sense of belonging to European identity with the quality of football would be quite challenging. Through a deeper analysis and distinctive perspective, Şenyuva reaches his goal to present an alternative – and also well based – understanding for his readers. As one can easily compare, even though the base material is the same Champions League, he intentionally chose not to cover players' private lives but identity construction process of Europeans. What he achieved there can be considered as an inherent feature of alternative sports media. Through breaking

the repeatedly produced content by mainstream media and providing a different point of view, Şenyuva brings in an alternative approach.

Standardization and traditions also play a crucial role for Champions League to be adopted by large masses, Şenyuva draws attention. Through its march, flag, starting time of the games and even the placement of advertisements, Champions League creates the ritualistic atmosphere that people all around the world wait for. Although some of the standardization rules might be perceived as coercive, people give their consent and comply with this kind of synchronization. Through accurately identifying these points, Şenyuva underlines the influence of the common rituals that stem from football on people's sense of identity and belonging. By listing these standardized rules and regulations, he aims to enable his readers to question the reasons behind establishing these standardizations. As one can guess, expecting such a different approach towards Champions League from a mainstream structure would probably result in failure. However, with his deep and analytical perspective Şenyuva presents an alternative look.

The final but definitely not the least important point that Şenyuva underlines in his article is the notion of nationalism. Through the Bosman Rule (a transfer regulation which ensured players to benefit from the freedom of movement among teams), borders of European leagues were almost totally removed, which paved the way for non-European football players to get on board in the high quality leagues of Europe, Şenyuva adds. As a result, team formations moved away from homogeneity and abandoned their national character. Since

then, seeing more than 5 British players in a team in a game in Premier League became unusual. Although the added value of the non-European players in European football is undeniable and obvious, another impact that they made within society was on the notion of nationalism. Yet again, although the close connection between nationalistic tendencies and football fandom has always been a hot topic in academic field, bringing out such a topic in a deeply analyzed style, to a more accessible platform in a way that an average reader can easily digest, should be acknowledged.

In addition to Şenyuva's discussion in his article, two significant aspects can be further elaborated, those of which were left untouched. First, Şenyuva's introduction of notion of nationalism and European identity enables readers to (re)consider the increasing movement of racism among Europe. A quick overview on the daily events and recent elections in many European countries, it can be observed that racist and radical discourse began to gain support from wider public, which is reflected as increase in the vote rates of right-wing parties. Through introducing and establishing a different perspective, Şenyuva offers his readers to obtain another look towards a rising phenomenon. Therefore, his attempt to bring the discussion of a mainstream topic – football – to another level with the aim of contributing to draw bigger picture makes his stance closer to alternative.

Without an approach that cares the factual and causal relations between these notions, such critical inferences would not be reached by the audience. Moreover, Şenyuva puts into practice of Rowe's argument by refraining from

simplification and critically questioning the sports in a holistic way (2009: 170).

Thus, perspectives of Şenyuva and *Socrates Magazine* can be comprehended

as alternative, since the reader can observe the different understanding of

quality of content and different approaches towards existing structures.

4.2.2 Şenol, Make a Fist and Serve I-II (*Yazihane*den.com, October 2014, by Emre Yazıcıol)

Up to this point, neglected components of sports sphere were discussed more

on a "personal" basis, which in fact includes the players, audience and particular

groups either involved in or excluded from sports environment. Yet, one of the

distinguishing features of alternative sports media is its intention to cover

branches that are treated unfairly by mainstream media. Although the flagship

branch of sports may show difference among countries, it would not be

misleading to assert that some branches' clear dominance over others. In this

regard, in his article, Emre Yazıcıol elaborates on the diminishing success of

global volleyball organizations and gives solid recommendations to save

volleyball from being marginalized in future. Although volleyball cannot be

considered as one of the most neglected sports, overall interest on volleyball is

significantly low when compared to giant branches, such as football and

basketball; so that, dealing with volleyball related issues remain as alternative in

this sense.

Yazıcıol starts his article by mentioning the prolonged duration of the global

volleyball tournaments organized by International Volleyball Federation (FIVB).

He states that, in the last couple of years, the number of tournaments on

national teams' level increased as well as the duration of each tournament. Since national leagues usually start around late September and ends around mid-May, only remaining window for international tournaments is the summer period. At this point, Yazıcıol notes that a close follower of volleyball can find the chance to watch games for the whole year; yet he questions and scrutinizes the implications of this new trend in detail.

Yazıcıol describes the new strategy of the FIVB as a tendency to secure the Asian market which shows increasing interest on volleyball vis a-vis the decreasing attention around Europe. He asserts that, by prolonging the duration of tournaments and organizing the events mostly in the far-east countries, FIVB is trying to appease the Asian market and bring-in financial resources. This tendency should not be overlooked and should be analyzed together with global economic structures. In fact, it would be impossible to elaborate on the global parameters of economy, having a quick look to other sports with regards to newly developing markets is beneficial.

In the last decade, we have started to see many athletes, particularly in football and also in volleyball, began to shift their directions towards Middle-East, Asia and United States, where, in fact, both of the branches have relatively less quality leagues. Yet, especially for the players who are at the later stages of their careers, these markets offered extraordinary transfer fees which made them impossible to reject. However, since these leagues and audience do not have the culture, background and base for that particular branch, these "team" sports turned into "one-person" shows which highly contradicts with the essence

of these branches. Considering Europe's economic regression and gradual withdrawal from investing in sports, players' tendency to continue their career in favor of money instead of quality might make sense. Therefore, it should be noted that, decisions and trends in administration of big branches show close resemblances with the global economics. Yet, more significantly, these profit oriented decisions of both administrations and players seriously harm both the essence and quality of sports and audience's habits. Because, without grounding the culture of sports from the beginning, dropping the "stars" from the top solely with financial power will more likely to end up with overcharged ticket prices which will prevent fans to fill up the stadiums. Besides, not only the overpriced tickets, but also the diminishing quality and long formats, which are enforced for higher advertisement revenues, exclude the core element of sports, the audience. Overall, these facts – in relation with each other – will more likely to influence the essence of these branches, particularly volleyball.

By grasping the picture as a whole, Yazıcıol tries to provide a better understanding for the reasons behind decreasing interest on recent volleyball activities around the world. Through refraining from the technicalities and focusing on the overarching elements in relation with sports, he aims to underline the linkages between sports and economy. Without simply mentioning the transfer fees and rumors, he keeps his alternative stance and tries to provide a more comprehensive perspective to his readers.

Yazıcıol also touches upon the influences of these movements on players. He mentions that, players are one of the most badly-influenced component of such

an approach; since most of the elite players are being compelled to play throughout the whole regular season and continue with the national team during lengthy summer tournaments. This never ending game routine both causes serious injuries and drop in quality of the play. Due to both of these consequences, expecting a decreasing interest from the audience side would not be confounding. Therefore, Yazıcıol criticizes the FIVB administration because of its single-sided approach towards international volleyball and suggests several methods to revitalize volleyball in other continents.

Yazıcıol approaches the issue of diminishing interest towards volleyball in a way that aims to prevent alternative sports being marginalized in the eyes of the public. Thus, he offers to take necessary actions to redound the deserved popularity. At this point, before proceeding with his suggestions, it should be underlined that, the intention behind Yazıcıol's approach should not be considered as an attempt to turn an alternative branch into a mainstream one. Rather, his main ideal is to prevent volleyball to be demolished by greater branches for the sake of their popularity.

In the light of abovementioned details, Yazıcıol notes that the current context compels any sports branch to be closely linked with other show-business elements. At this point, he gives the example of Superbowl, which is the final game of the US National Football League. Although the "American" Football is not quite popular except US, merger of the final game with concerts and shows paved the way for the game to be followed by millions all around the world. However, the aim of reaching wider audience is not wholly innocent; this single

game is heavily commercialized and creates its own economy around it. In this regard, Yazıcıol states the necessity of embedding the show factor within sports may lead up to give the necessary momentum for sports that are losing its popularity, without totally adopting the commercialized values. He further mentions that, attracting the audience both to sports halls and in front of TV heavily depends on the quality and accessibility of the content. Therefore, he suggest to arrange the dates appropriately for fans and distributing and collecting the rights of broadcasting of elite leagues, which will enable fans to watch high quality games through television. He concludes his remarks by pointing out that keeping the interest of the audience is the key to rescue volleyball from being marginalized.

When Yazıcıol's article is closely analyzed, his approach displays an unusual point of view towards deficiencies of current volleyball structure. While mentioning the prolonged duration of recent tournaments, Yazıcıol points out the implications that can badly influence players. He draws attention to the possibility of injuries and enables readers to think in another perspective. Through this understanding, he aims to reveal an unthought impact of an event instead of providing simple figures and scores from the tournament, where he distinguishes his article from mainstream media and converges to alternative forms.

Moreover, scrutiny behind looking for the reasons of low-quality and long volleyball events reveals the economic reason. By capturing the idea of FIVB as appeasing the demanding Asian market, Yazıcıol presents the actual reason

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behind the decreasing quality of event. Although he does not get into a detailed economic analysis, his intention of giving the background information complies with the feature of alternative media that promotes to provide deeper analysis.

Finally, motivation of Yazıcıol regarding the suggestions to cure and enhance volleyball from being marginalized is valuable in an alternative sense. As previously mentioned, attempting to change existing mechanisms is a core feature of alternative media, where Yazıcıol offers simple solutions for the urgent action. Although his suggestions might not be taken into consideration by decision makers, stating his ideas clearly and enabling readers to think through these suggestions is already an attempt for a change. Therefore, his approach can be considered as alternative as he both tries to preserve an alternative sport branch to be marginalized and to seek for change in the existing structure.

4.3 Relations with Literature, Cinema and Music in *Socrates* and *Yazihane*

Although claiming about a clear differentiation between mainstream and alternative sports media would be vain, existence of common indicators that distinguishes alternative structures is undeniable. Within sports sphere, drawing a broader picture than solely focusing on technicalities of sports should be aimed by alternative sports media. Because what the audience usually face is simplified, monotonous, mundane and single-pieced understanding of sports. However, its relations with all other social and cultural elements exist up to

certain extent and needs to be covered. By this means, sports' integrative feature can be understood. Alternative sports media, in this sense, needs and aims to fill this gap.

To achieve such an objective, stance of sports among other popular cultural items should be well understood and acknowledged. Although many branches of sports turned into enormous industries that created a gigantic economic volume, when assessed with a basic approach, sports remain simple when compared to arts; yet influential on daily life. Therefore, scrutinizing the relationship of sports with elements such as literature, cinema or music is rewarding with regards to providing clues for bigger picture. Although these elements bear the feature of being branches of art as opposed to sports, they occupy significant place in daily life and might have close relations with sports. Yet, bringing the discussion to ontology of art and looking for the answers regarding the question of who is the art for would not be beneficial for the sake of this work. Rather, the main focus of the comparison between sports, cinema, music and literature will be based on their footprints in popular culture and daily lives of people.

With regards to the ties between sports and other popular culture elements, both *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazıhane* manage to succeed to harmonize/associate them. Through the sections/chapters that they allocate to touch upon the abovementioned elements, without shifting the main focus from sports, they aim to cover related areas.

In every issue of *Socrates Magazine*, a particular chapter is allocated under the names of Movie Set (*Çekim Alanı*), One-Touch Pass (*Tek Pas*) and Bibliopole (*Sa'haf*) to narrate various stories that touches multiple areas. Under the "Movie Set", stories of actors, actresses and directors that relates with sports are narrated, whereas memories of musicians which involves sports are included under "One-Touch Pass". On the other hand, as the name implies, "Bibliopole" covers the books that are somehow related with sports field.

This feature is also reflected on *Yazihane* where topics related music are covered under Altogether 7 Notes (*Topu Topu 7 Nota*), subjects regarding literature are discussed under Publications (*Neşriyat*) and articles about e-games are pointed out under Joystick is Broken (*Kol Bozuk*).

Through such an approach, while maintaining the ties with other fields, *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazihane* add another layer to its multi-dimensional approach towards sports. Understanding, assessing and presenting sports without simplifying and instrumentalizing in relation with branches of art is one of the ideals of alternative sports media. As a part of aiming to create more comprehensive content, they set the objective to find and present sports related elements within branches such as literature, cinema and music. These extra layers enable both the magazine and website to be reached by wider audience as an addition to contribution to its sophistication. The reason behind this intentional sophistication is to break the tradition that mainstream media apply, which is to simplify and technicize sports. As a more sophisticated and multi-dimensional product through the relations with other cultural elements, *Socrates*

Magazine and Yazıhane serve the purpose of complying the one of the features of alternative media that states to comprehend and analyze sports in wider contexts.

4.4 Relationship with Audience in *Socrates* and *Yazihane*

Reaching the audience bears almost the same features like the ones in between sports events and sports media products. The constituting motive behind producing media is interacting with the audience. Without a meaningfully established linkage between the producer of the content and receiver, making sports related media products would make no sense. Although the relationship between the producer and audience can be based on solely economic expectations, relationship patterns might show difference among different structures. Therefore, establishing the connection between two parties simply as producer and consumer would be misleading up to a certain extent.

Reducing this interaction simply to profit seeking strategies is most likely to be a part of mainstream media as previously discussed. In this sense, alternative media aim to situate itself further than these simple and vertical relationships with the audience. Instead, their main objective should be creating horizontal communication patterns that allow the audience to be rescued from a simplified and restricted position. As Rodriguez suggested, alternative media seeks for "egalitarian relationship" with the audience; therefore tries to establish horizontal communication patterns (2001). By doing so, alternative media enables their

audience to be part of the production process indirectly, if not more. Through using the benefits of technology, alternative media can easily hear the comments, feedback and contribution of its audience, which complies with Enzensberger's suggestion on alternative media emphasizing the importance of interactivity between two parties (1976).

Yet, at this point, it should be underlined that, practical utilization of these tools should be clearly distinguished from the ones that are located solely for *just doing*. Placing a comment box should not be assessed as same unless the necessary actions are not being taken by the producers of the media content. Taking into consideration of reasonable, rational and doable contributions from the audience forms the core logic that lies behind utilizing this feature of being an alternative structure.

Taking into consideration of this approach, having a close look to the existence of *Socrates Magazine* in virtual platforms would be rewarding to assess their understanding of this feature of alternative media. As expected, *Socrates Magazine* does not miss the opportunity to utilize the common facilities of social media. Besides their existence in commonly used social media tools, frequency and quality of their content shared in these platforms can be considered as satisfactory. They use platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, both to interact with the audience and to promote their magazine. When analyzed, without over-posting, through the official accounts of *Socrates Magazine*, one or two posts are shared on a daily basis.

On the other hand, although *Yazihane* is also existent in the commonly used

social media platforms, frequency of their posts is relatively limited compared to

Socrates Magazine. With a post per week on both social media platforms,

assessing *Yazihane* as active would be wrong. But, since the posts on the

Yazihane's website is as not regular as *Socrates Magazine*, relative

passiveness of them can be understood.

Nevertheless, tools that enable readers to interact with the producers do not

exist on *Socrates*' official website. Even though a usual "contact" tab can be

seen on the header menu, a magazine that situate itself in a more alternative

stance would be expected to give place a relatively more user friendly feedback

tool for both each article and general commentary. Although the communication

channels with the audience is open through other social media tools, an

alternative structure should encourage its audience to contribute through its

official channels.

Enabling the readers to comment on the official webpage is a feature that

Yazihane utilizes as opposed to *Socrates*. By providing a commentary box

under each article, *Yazihane* aims to create the direct relationship with the

readers, where the interactivity is assured. Through including such a feature,

Yazihane encourages its readers to give feedback; where a criticial feature of

alternative media, stated by Rodriguez, is fulfilled (2001).

Yet, another distinctive tool that *Socrates* utilizes which is very rare for other

media outlet is Spotify. Spotify is an online music player, which gained

significant popularity in the recent years, that enables listeners to legally reach

millions of tracks for a quite small amount. Through Spotify, each user is able to

create and share its own playlists. *Socrates Magazine*, in this sense, is one step

ahead of its counterparts by being one of the first media actors that uses

Spotify. The Magazine shares a playlist on Spotify, which goes along with the

main subject of the issue, that a reader can listen while reading that particular

issue. Through this method, *Socrates Magazine* enables its readers to feel the

atmosphere of the issue in every sense whereas also linking the relationship of

music with sports.

This innovative approach adds another layer to the relation of the magazine with

its audience, where another feature of being alternative is fulfilled by the

Magazine. Although the communication lines with the audience can not be

considered as fully clear, utilization of tools that enables readers to reach the

Magazine and innovative approaches that enhances the bondage between

audience and writer distinguish *Socrates Magazine* from its mainstream

counterparts and approximate it to an alternative structure.

4.5   Editorial Freedom & Collective Writing in *Yazihane*

Through the production process of a traditional media product, existence of a

control mechanism has always been at stake. After the introduction of possibility

of producing and expressing thoughts on particular topics through internet,

raison d'etre behind an editorial control began to be questioned. Although

mainstream media continued to keep the editorial control over the authors, chance of reaching the audience without any interference paved the way for questioning this everlasting editorial position. After the introduction and expansion of websites, which enable authors to share almost anything in a user-friendly way, the idea of controlling the content was left solely to authors' own discretions. Although illicit content can be traced upon complaints, having the general control over the content rescued authors' usual tendency of applying self-censorship as well. However, expansion of internet based media production, mainstream structures kept their editorial control over the content only by changing the application, since the same measurements with tabloid press would not be applicable to web based applications. Therefore, this feature also became a distinguishing factor for alternative media.

In this regard, *Yazihane* manages to elude from editorial ties by establishing a collective understanding over the control of the content. Through the understanding of collectivity, *Yazihane* manages to comply with what Enzensberger offered for a feature of alternative media where he underlines the importance of "collective production" (1976). When the website is analyzed, traces of an editorial existence cannot be seen. Through the collective approach towards sports media, authors developed a perspective where they have the authority, common sense and discretion over their pieces in line with the general aim of the website. This attitude abolishes the necessity of having a control over the content which enables *Yazihane* to get closer with alternative media features, as O'sullivan et al. underlines the "collectivist production" as a

distinctive feature of alternative media (1994: 205). In fact, a total non-existence of an editor is not applicable for *Yazihane*; because there are designated people who manage the practicalities of the website. However, this type of editorial role needs to be distinguished from an editor that holds the authority to control or change the content.

As a supplementary feature of editorial freedom for the case of *Yazihane*, formation of authors also deserves attention for the sake of this work. Although the possibility of writing personal ideas on sports is a relatively new development, Turkey has already turned into a blog cemetery in this sense. For numerous reasons, from financial to interest-losing, many blogs on sports have either died or remained as silent for a long time. The idea of sharing personal assessments or experiences regarding sports sounded intriguing for many; yet only a few – even only one – managed to hold an individual sports blog. In this sense, *Yazihane* again plays a unique role by entertaining around thirty authors from different backgrounds. Although frequency of writing an article or quality may vary among different writers, *Yazihane* keeps its "umbrella" role over many amateur and a couple of professional sports writers. This "togetherness" of amateurs and professionals also shows the significance of *Yazihane* within the alternative media realm. Considering the fact that, in the majority of the cases blogging or online individual writing on sports in any platform would not be sufficient for livelihood in Turkey. Therefore, the activity of writing an article for *Yazıhane needs* to bear other meanings. For an amateur, the aim is relatively simple; a person, who is often a fan, wants his/her voice to be heard by the

ones who share the same feelings. Without going further into details, general framework can be drawn as such. Nevertheless, for a person who earns his/her life from sports media production, the reasons behind being a part of a collective blog might be slightly more complicated. Professionals, who basically earn their lives from mainstream media, somehow flee to areas where they feel more independent and find the job more self-satisfactory. The idea of being free from editorial control enables authors to produce deeper, high-quality and self-satisfactory media products.

As one of the writers in *Yazıhane*, Kubilay Kahveci underlined the possibility of dealing with a variety of sports branches instead of mainstream ones, removal of language constraints, opportunity of utilizing a variety of different methods and means as such motivate professionals to be part of these kind of formations (personal communication, 2016). Furthermore, one of the main attractions for professionals to be involved in *Yazihane* is the profile of the audience, where they can interact with people who seek alternative perspectives instead of mainstream approaches. Here, in this sense, the ground that *Yazihane* provides fulfills the needs of both parties involved; amateur and professional authors can find the platform where they can enjoy editorial freedom – which enables them to focus on alternative topics- and readers can find an independent and alternative platform that bears clear contrast with mainstream media.

4.6 Design Elements in Socrates Magazine

In *Socrates Magazine* another element that shows resemblance with alternative media features is their understanding of design. By working with professional illustrators and companies, the overall printed view that they provide to thereaders is striking.
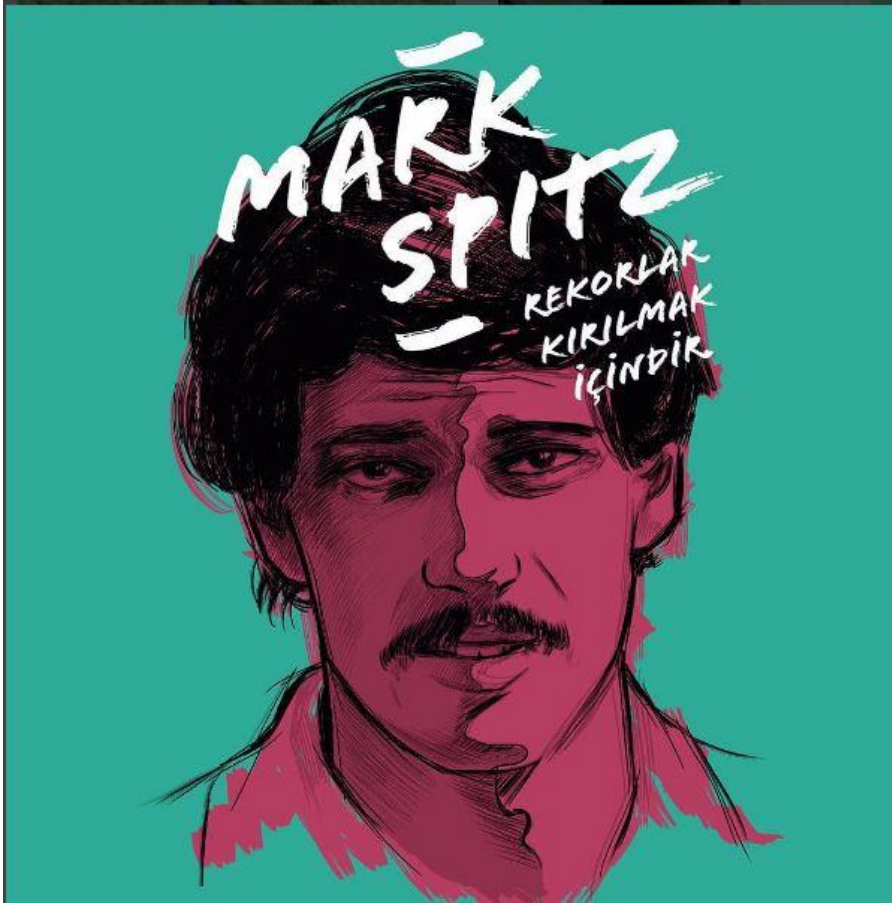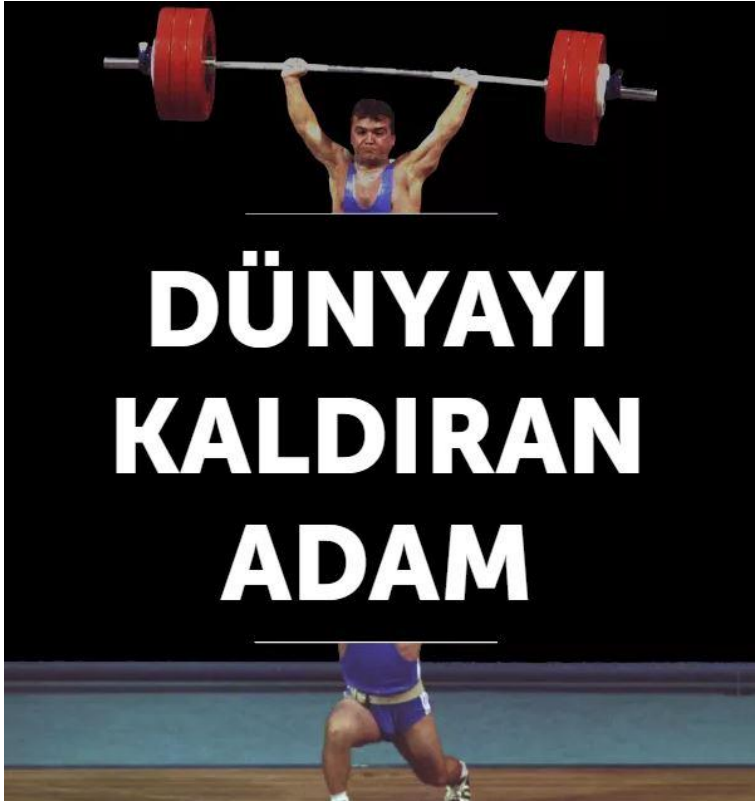

Figure 1 Illustration of Mark Spitz in Socrates Magazine, Issue 4

Graphics, illustrations and visuals in general that they include go far beyond

being a complementary product to the narrative part of the magazine and

become solely significant.

Figure 2 Man who lifts the world, Socrates Magazine, Issue 1

Through the influential visualizations, attraction and curiosity of the readers are

kept awake. By putting an emphasis on breaking the traditional patterns of

design, *Socrates* offered a innovative and alternative reading experience

through design. This enabled *Socrates* to go beyond the text and create a great
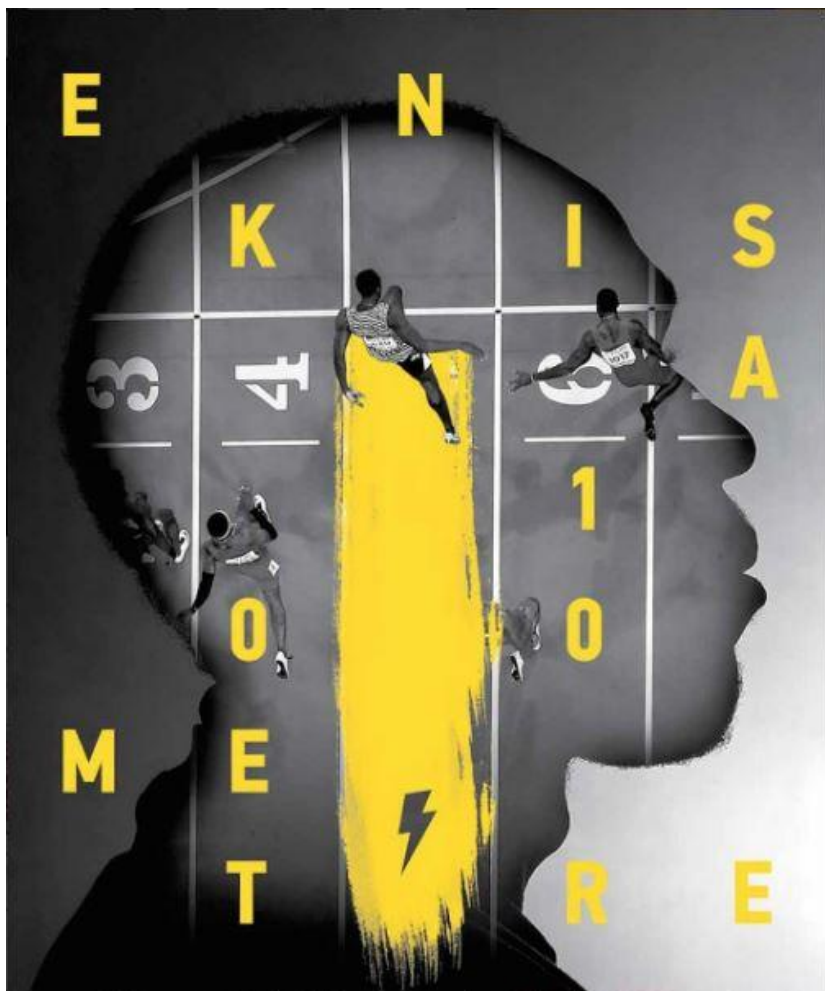
impact through visuals.

Figure 3 Shortest 100 meters, Socrates Magazine, Issue 17

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSION

From being a physical training and free time activity in our daily lives, to being a professional field, sports significantly expanded its importance in the last century, with its growing social and economic power. Its influence on daily life cannot be denied, with the growing number of competition events, its budgetary power, the actors it includes and unique events.

While the territory is growing, effect of sports became influential on the both parties i.e the players and the audience. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of athletes in time, with the expansion of various communication channels, sports audience grew exponentially. With the rising engagement, interest and knowledge, demand for media products on sports also increased. In order to respond to this demand, daily newspapers first allocated the back pages of the paper for sports news. Then, newspapers particularly dedicated to sports, started to be published. Yet, the information that

these papers have provided could not go beyond presentation of basic technicalities, simple statistics and superficial commentary.

As the pace of searching and finding factual information increased and became easier, demand by the audience for relatively different information began to show up. An alternative approach started being sought vis a vis the mainstream flow of information. Therefore, with the aim of providing an alternative stance towards sports, alternative sports media elements began to occur.

There are some core features of alternative media, as put forward by various scholars. The importance on the production processes of stories/news, relations with the audience, approach towards technology and innovation and coverage of communities or individuals excluded by the mainstream came to the forefront as the principles of the alternative media. Yet, it should be noted that, giving a final and holistic definition of alternative would be paradoxical in a sense, since any alternative might be a mainstream in time.

As the core ideal of this work is to understand the alternative media structure in Turkey, two case studies were selected, which were found as appropriate examples. As a relatively traditional mode, a magazine named *Socrates* was selected as the first case study; and as a relatively current model a collective blog named *Yazıhane* was selected as the second case. By constructing the basis of discussion to the alternative media literature, texts both in *Socrates* and *Yazıhane* were scrutinized by using discourse analysis. Moreover, their relation with the audience, as well as the arts and designs tools that they prefer were

elaborated to assess the extent of their compliance with alternative media features.

In this sense, *Socrates Magazine* was found to have a structure that is in line with the previously mentioned alternative media features. It was observed during the case study that *Socrates* Magazine has put forward a significant effort to cover topics that are left uncovered by the mainstream media. These topics can be exemplified as socially and politically excluded social groups (LGBTIQ, disadvantaged groups, immigrants etc.) and also relatively less popular sports branches which do not attract many audience interest. Since it was repeatedly covered by many scholars, alternative media has a purpose to fill the gaps left by the mainstream media. In this regard, although *Socrates Magazine* also includes mainstream elements, the allocated space for the alternative branches and socially excluded elements is relatively high, which makes *Socrates* to converge alternative media.

Moreover, within the texts, relations with the politics and economics are usually well established by the authors. This enables readers to grasp a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. Pointing out the relations of sports with these elements brings in a deeper understanding of sports and enables the reader to make political, social and economic connections. Therefore, articles written with this aim gain a more alternative understanding compared to the superficial and simple commentary that takes place in mainstream media. As one of the core features of alternative media, articles

should have a deeper analysis; where the intention is visible in this sense in *Socrates Magazine.*

With regards to the approach towards new technologies, innovation and relations with the audience, *Socrates Magazine* can again be distinguished from its mainstream counterparts. Their intention to keep the official social media accounts up to date for the magazine draws the attention as a significant element to maintain close relations with the audience. Moreover, utilization of newly introduced tools, such as *Spotify*, an online music player, also proves that the creators of the magazine aim to give an alternative perspective to the experience of reading a magazine. Although their website cannot be described as the most innovative webpage, their efforts to utilize the social media and pursuing active interactions with the audience make their stance closer to the alternative media features. Furthermore, as previously demonstrated briefly, the creative, brave and modern design features of *Socrates Magazine* also adds on its alternative stance, as an element that has not been observed in mainstream media outlets in years in Turkey.

Nevertheless, besides the abovementioned elements that show proximity to alternative media features, it should be noted that *Socrates Magazine* is produced and distributed by one of the biggest publishers in Turkey. Therefore, assessing the magazine's alternative stance, independently of capitalist aims and profit concerns. Although having and pursuing a stance against dominant structures lies in the core of alternative media, capitalist efforts to reach wider audience and utilizing methods that relies on the existing structure might be

understandable up to a certain extent. Otherwise, expecting to reach a wider audience, producing high quality design structures and managing the financial expenses of the entity would not be possible.

Another feature of *Socrates Magazine,* which does not comply with alternative media structure is that it does not apply a horizontal structure among the writers. As introduced by some scholars, alternative media elements aim to break the hierarchy within writers. Therefore, having an editor in a hierarchically higher level on other authors would harm this approach. Moreover, existence of an editor will definitely have an influence on the independence of the writer since the total editorial freedom cannot be executed. However, considering the relatively traditional mode that *Socrates* is using, existence of an editor is also understandable up to a certain extent, in order to maintain the continuity of the magazine. Nevertheless, it still is considered as a feature of the nagazine that creates discrepancy with its general conformity with alternative media principles.

As the second case study of this work, *Yazıhane* as a collective blog possesses significant features of the alternative media. Firstly, the approach that authors utilize while choosing and dealing with the subjects show similarities with *Socrates Magazine*. As a complementary to their collective approach, *Yazıhane* also tries to cover topics left untouched by the mainstream media. Similar with *Socrates Magazine*, even though *Yazıhane* also gives place to mainstream elements within sports sphere, general tendency is to cover alternative areas. Through this approach, it can be noted that *Yazıhane* also complies with this feature of alternative sports media.

As opposed to *Socrates Magazine*, *Yazıhane* successfully manage to establish a horizontal structure among the authors. Although there is an editor, his role remains limited and restricted to the maintenance of the webpage. Therefore, he does not have any influence with regards to the content of the articles. Yet, the authors are expected to comply with the general tendencies while dealing with elements of sports. As a stance against a vertical communication line within the blog, *Yazıhane*'s collectivist approach can be considered as significantly close to alternative media features.

Moreover, although the main subject of the blog remains as sports, its relation with arts is not ignored by the authors. It is possible to find articles that deals with music and films who include sports elements; which emphasizes the part that sports have in our daily lives and relatedly, the place it occupies in arts. Through establishing and showing the relation of sports with other elements of daily life, *Yazıhane* successfully manages to present the broader scope of the sports.

One of the most significant features that draws a distinctive line between mainstream media and *Yazıhane* is its approach towards seek of profit. Their resistant approach towards advertising, contributes their independence with regards to the content they have been producing. Through such a stance, a structure that is "deprofessionalized, decapitalized and deinstitutionalized" (Atton, 2001: 25) had been tried to be established, which was put forward as a feature of alternative media. Although limitations of economic gains through advertisement mechanisms cause authors of this collective blog to look for other

grounds to earn their lives, *Yazıhane* remains as a platform for them to present their self without any constraints. This also explains the presence of professional sports writers in *Yazıhane* where they feel more comfortable, independent and free in terms of context and content. Therefore, as a platform that opens up these opportunities, *Yazıhane* provides an alternative ground *vis a vis* mainstream media.

Nevertheless, although *Yazıhane* being a platform that occupies a place online, with all tools, possibilities and structures, assessing them as innovative with regards to design and style of representation would be deficient. As opposed to using the enhanced and newly developed tools, *Yazıhane* kept using a relatively old format for their webpage. Moreover, interaction with the audience remains relatively low even though the social media accounts of *Yazıhane* are up and running.

Furthermore, as a contextual interpretation, it should be noted that, *Yazıhane* allocates significant space to mainstream sports. Although the coverage of alternative sports that do not receive enough attention can be seen in *Yazıhane,* dominance is still on the mainstream sports. Compared to alternative branches, articles on football and basketball have a significant supremacy. This approach is another factor that harms the alternative atmosphere of this collective blog; where they could not distinguish themselves from the mainstream counterparts.

As briefly summarized above, throughout this work, alternative media examples in Turkey were tried to be analyzed with the help of the previous studies in the

literature. It should be noted that, trials to form an alternative media can be interpreted as successful up to a certain extent. The efforts that both *Socrates Magazine* and *Yazıhane* make with the aim to provide an alternative approach towards sports and presenting sports as a comprehensive element as it was shown before by the mainstream should be underlined. Although, in both of the cases, certain points have been found as lacking when analyzed through the lens of alternative media features, a distinction from the mainstream media outlets of both of the cases has been clearly put forward in this study.

As a future study following the same path of this one, analyzing the context of Turkey with regards to media relations and dominance of the mainstream and elaborating more on the modalities of being alternative might be discussed.

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