International Workshop on Alternative Ways of Participation

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Workshop Report

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International Workshop on the Political Participation of Young People was organized as part of Network: Youth and Participation Project that has been implemented by Istanbul Bilgi University. Main aim of the workshop was to bring academics working on alternative ways of young people's participation in politics.

During the of Workshop on Alternative Ways of Participation, mechanisms and/or methodologies created/developed by young citizens and as an alternative way of participation compared to the conventional political participation mechanisms were discussed. The event was organized with 35 participants from academia and NGOs. During the workshop, debates were focused on answering below mentioned questions:

1) Which actors are structuring the ways of participation? What are the barriers those hinder young people from taking part in the decision making and policymaking process both in the representative and participatory democratic processes? Why are participatory democratic processes not inclusive for all the disadvantageous groups?

2) Is there an alternative way to participate in the public sphere for the disadvantageous groups? Is the subculture (such as their codes, their performances) a way of participation? Is the youth culture a way of participation for young people?

3) Is public sphere "public" enough for everybody? Who regulates the public sphere? Do Graffiti and/or Stencil have an impact on bringing the "invisible" subjects into the public debate (public attention)?

4) How and why do young people express themselves using alternative tools and forms such as humour magazines, comics,

fanzines etc.? What changes via these alternative forms; and how these changes empower young people to increase their participation to public debate? What are the impacts using humour and satirizing on form and language in public sphere? What is the power of the politics of humour today among young people? How are these impacts affecting the public debate?

5) How are the alternative media resources (zaytung, heberler etc.) changing the narrative and the perspective of the news? What are the impacts of "changing the narrative and the perspective of the news" on participation of young people to the public debate? What are the resources for the narrative and who are the creators of these?

6) Is the Internet "alternative" public sphere for young people? What kind of effect do the social media have on the involvement of young people in the public debate? How and in what extent, internet as a "new public sphere", can be used for increasing participation of young citizens rather than reinforcing already existed power relations (or hegemony)? Is social media a more open "channel" for the participation of young people or not? Why?

The opening presentation of the workshop delivered by Alper Akyüz from Istanbul Bilgi University focused on these questions: '*Which actors are structuring the ways of participation? What are the barriers those hinder young people from taking part in the decision making and policy making process both in the representative and participatory democratic processes? Why are the participatory democratic processes not inclusive for all the disadvantageous groups?*'.

In his speech under the heading of 'Barriers to Participation' Akyüz argued before discussing alternative ways of it, participation itself had to be questioned, so that dynamics paving the way for these alternative ways can be analysed. Akyüz focused on Hannah Arendt's approach to politics in his presentation, starting with her categorization of different human conditions as labour, work and particularly action. According to Arendt, action, related to plurality, can exist only in the presence of others and it incorporates both equality with and distinction from others. Action also embraces freedom and individuality as a capacity to initiate something new. Hence, action is also a measure to prevent corruption and decay and it requires stepping forward from private life to create a public space where freedom could appear and communicative interactions occur. Based on these characteristics, action with its collective features is also irreversible and unpredictable in the sense one can not undo an action in the public sphere and control/predict the effects and outcome of it.

Conceptualizing action as a capacity to initiate something new in the public sphere   Akyüz made reference to the concept of power not as a negative concept related to coercion, but a concept about skills to start something new and communicate with others, which is related with legitimacy and deliberation. He argued that participation has been used as a terminology to mask the power dynamics and inequalities with respect to power, making reference to Foucoult's conception of it as dispersed and relational field of discourses and practices.

Participation, through the lens of Arendt is not a buzzword of top-down mechanisms, processes and practices in policy programs etc but is related to power and agency. Hence, it can be meaningful if it has a transformative power by initiating something new but it can also be used by power structures to legitimize and maintain existing power relations, as Cooke and Kothari mentioned in their recent publication 'Participation: A New Tyranny?' which criticized the development discourse used by multinational agencies. In this tyranny, the definition, limits and execution of participation processes are dominated by power structures themselves. Even in the so-called open processes and methods of participation are ignoring and reproducing inequalities between different social groups.

Akyüz claimed that one also has to take context and related conditions take into account to discuss the meaning, positive-negative aspects and consequences of participation. For example to assume that disadvantaged groups at large and young people in particular can act as autonomous agents, can be misleading, if it does not take into account the power relations surrounding these groups both within and between. Akyüz made reference to alternative ways of participation in this part of his speech, namely, he argued these new ways of participation which can be conceptualized as new/non-conventional forms of identity expression, are a search out of or a resistance to imposed frameworks, procedures, processes. They create their own language using humor, arts, performance, social media etc., in a symbolic and indirect way. Hence, it is not so easy to interpret the messages delivered through these new ways and understand the complex and dynamic processes behind those. The use of new expression ways to communicate messages is also important to overcome exclusion as a result of not being able to use and understand special terms of formal participation processes, both conventional and non-conventional.

At the end of his speech, Akyüz argued that even non-participation can be a form of self-expression against linear forms of

participation overemphasized by power-holders to legitimize their status and exclusion of others.

In the question and answer part, the main discussion was around the purpose of participation. Namely shall the young people participate to achieve consensus or to change the stagnation as a feature of consensus. Throughout the discussions references were made to the concept of democracy according to Chantal Mouffe's point of view. According to her conceptualization, conflict, resistance and agony are necessary for a real notion of democracy. To ensure that every different individual and group can take part in these conflictual public sphere is one of the main duties of the state and its citizens.

Nancy Fraser's theory of recognition paving the way for the theories of new social movements was also mentioned in the discussions, by pointing out both recognition, redistribution and dynamic relationship between these concepts are important to explain the motivation behind participation. The session finished with an emphasis on the need to advocate the right to use alternative ways of participation not only to take part and be active in the present society mechanisms but also to create alternative ways of life.

The second session of workshop under the heading of 'Alternative Ways of Participation and Youth Culture', focused on these questions :'*Is there an alternative way to participate in the public sphere for the disadvantageous groups? Is the subculture (such as their codes, their performances) a way of participation? Is the youth culture a way of participation for young people?*'.

The session started with the presentation of Christian Spatcscheck from Hochschule Bremen, about youth cultures and alternative ways of participation. According to Spatcscheck, youth cultures have an aesthetic feature connected to street art, music, body modifications, different kind of language, spatial features and are they are also connected to social factors such as concerns about how the society should be, which norms, values and rules should prevail in the society. In this sense they are new ways of life which are both aesthetic and critique, different to adults' as power-holders in the society. They can be both global like HipHop, Hipsters, Metal etc but also local in the sense youth living in different regions create their own HipHop based on the characteristics of the local. Societies facing these youth cultures have some common reactions such as moral panic, activities of correction and control such as filtering the internet and having special kinds of educative activities to get them back into the system. Despite heavy practices of control, there have always been some preserving youth cultures.

Spatcscheck argued that by providing special places of mutual recognition and protection and supporting the development of social capital, youth cultures also have a psycho-social developmental function for young people to develop their identity and role in the society, to decide about their career and to make the world around them 'their world' while dealing with expectations of society to see them as economic subjects, family founders, rational actors etc.

According to Spatcscheck, youth cultures are important to find and raise voices of their own, for different groups of young people who are not recognized by the mainstream society. He claimed that to discover your stance and related demands, to organize and behave accordingly and to find resonance in the society by getting into contact with others are all also aspects of participation which can be a chance for a change even in a consensus-oriented, post-politic society like today. However, he also made reference to the fact that youth cultures have usually been aestheticized and commercialized by power-holders to repress its political aspects and value. The possibility that power-holders in the society choose to control youth by making them feel as if they are participating by emphasizing the aesthetic aspects of youth cultures and letting them 'play in their playgrounds' was mentioned as a barrier for meaningful participation, together with increasing demands and challenges youth are facing in a society with diminishing social rights, where youth can hardly find rooms for experimenting.

Spatcscheck argued that although there is a big need for more participation of youth and youth cultures, youth policies and youth work to empower young people to participate more are very hard to find both globally and locally. At the end of the presentation Spatcscheck talked about a model for good governance where state, market, primary networks such as family and friends, and associations such as NGOs, churches, social movements constitute the main actors. According to this model, if state and market need more civic engagement for a better functioning society, then they should provide more space for participation for associations and primary networks where youth cultures can find their roots. For youth cultures to be active and important actors in the society, both recognition and empowerment is necessary, which can be ensured only if youth are free to raise their voices and supported and protected with social rights of the welfare state to communicate their voices.

The second presenter of the second session was Levent Soysal from Kadir Has University, Istanbul, focused on his ethnographic studies about migrant youth culture in Berlin between 1990-2000 when

the power of alternative subcultures and multiculturalism was a hot debate in academia. Soysal had conducted his study basically on state founded and run youth centers as open door spaces for every youth without any restriction except for age where standardized set of activities with certain pedagogical goals were served by social workers. Kreuzberg, hosting more than 45 different ethnic groups, known as a ghetto place for marginals, alternatives and immigrants, and was the focus of gentrification processes was chosen as the region of study.

According to Soysal, all activities organized for the youth coming to the center from rap, HipHop and graffiti to folk music and dance, were planned according to three main institutionalized discourses. Namely, Kreuzberg is a ghetto and youth living there are marginals who were stuck between two cultures and had to be integrated into the society. To elevate them accordingly, youth centers had to educate them to be more moral and civilized. And to experiment principles of diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism as the main discourses of that era which can easily be recognized by the mottos of the big street art festivals such as 'To stay is my right', 'We all are one' and by the motto of foreign office 'Living Together'. Soysal stated that all these activities and festivals organized by state founded centers are some kind of participation but not alternative ways of participation as many academicians argued.

Soysal concluded his presentation with references to Saskia Sassen's argument 'We should not evict youth from center, not physically, not discursively' and stated that although he did not deny the agency to youth in his study, the main ideology shaping the activities and reflected on the special features of them, was all the dominant ideology of the Berlin municipality state. The youth participating there were not marginal, they were at the center of the state, there was not a subculture, there was a dominant culture associated with Kreuzberg conceptualized as a ghetto, although it was not. That is why he refused to call the work in youth centers of Kreuzberg as alternative ways of participation, he said.

Different issues were addressed in the question and answer part of the session ranging from features of alternative ways of participation to effects of it; from factors effecting the activity level of young people in these new ways of participation to importance of space for youth participation. The points mentioned throughout these discussions are as follows:

Different levels of participation: Although being a part of a system designed and structured for you in a voluntary way, can be considered as participation, the more role one has in the

structuring processes of these mechanisms, the more effective one can be and feel to raise his/her voices. And it is true that, in many regions of Europe, usually only middle and upper-middle class youth can actively take part in these processes.

Changing nature of participation: There is a formal/standardized understanding of youth subcultures and rebellion in academia and politics, deriving from studies about social movements in sixties and seventies. According to the standards of this conceptualization, young people might seem apolitical, although they are not. Thus, one has to take context, time, changing situation of youth and changing nature of participation processes into account, to interpret the level of political interest and participation of young people in a more accurate way.

The importance of space and the nature of alternative ways of participation: Having physical spaces to meet with other young people is very important for youth. If these spaces are really autonomous then they can nourish democracy by providing opportunities to share thoughts, to interact and participate. But these spaces can also serve as places to 'tame' youth to behave in certain desired ways, such as the case in some state founded youth centers. Even in the cases where there are special programs delivered by social workers, if there is enough space for autonomy, youth can create their own agenda and alternative activities to participate, based on their common issues. Issue-based social movements with loose structures can be considered as a feature of alternative ways of participation. To achieve the desired outcome (which is only as important as the process itself), young people have to have connections with other young people and to have access to traditional political mechanisms and people holding power in these mechanisms and the traditional political mechanisms need to be revised to pay attention to and take into account the demands delivered through new ways of participation.

The third session of the workshop under the heading of 'Change of narrative and source: New ways of Media' was structured to focus on these questions: *'How are the alternative media resources (zaytung, heberler etc.) changing the narrative and the perspective of the news? What are the impacts of "changing the narrative and the perspective of the news" on participation of young people to the public debate? What are the resources for the narrative and who are the creators of these ?'* .

In his presentation with the title 'The Mediation of Dissensus', Bart Cammaerts, from London School of Economics and Political Science, introduced conceptual tools to understand the relationship between media ,communication and protests/dissensus by integrating media and communication studies with political science

and elaborating the concept of mediation opportunity structures. One part of this concept, namely opportunity structures are conceptualized as structural constraints that impact on the success or failure of social movements, in the social movement theory. Cammaerts argued opportunity structure is a dialectical concept incorporating both structure, agency and also their dynamic relationship. He made reference to structuration theory of Giddens and stated that power has not to be necessarily coercive, but it can be generative, restrictive and/or productive as Foucault argued. The second part of the concept, namely mediation is also a dialectical concept, encompassing both production and reception of the content, looking both at alternative means of and mainstream media, investigating relationship between what is public and what is private, referring both to symbolic production of meaning and social construction of communication technologies like the use of twitter to organize protests.

In his presentation Cammaerts focused on four aspects of mediation opportunity structure model: 1) The formative nature of protests 2) Increase in activists' self-mediation practices 3) Overemphasis on the internet and not paying enough attention to the mainstream media 4) Resonance and public opinion.

In terms of performance of resistance, activists are very aware of that they need spectacles and try to get them by disrupting elite-organised international events like FIFA World Cup or by creating do-it-yourself spectacles like Greenpeace. The carnivalesque nature of the protests incorporating humour, mockery and fun in combination with political violence is also helpful to reach more spectacles. Cammaerts argued although to engage in symbolic political violence such as occupying elite spaces, damage of property and seeking confrontations with police, increase the instances of mainstream media coverage of the event, it is not always a good way to disseminate the message of the protest since its focus on violence.

Cammaerts approached self-mediation practices with Foucault's notion of technologies of self and tried to explain the motivation behind self-mediation in three different clusters being disclosure of self such as self-mediation to disseminate movement frames, examination of self such as self-mediation to organize and coordinate direct actions and remembrance of self such as self-mediation to record the event. He also stated that different media has different affordances so that activists can use them according to the motivation they have for self-mediation. both in public and private space.

Cammaerts argued that to reach beyond the like-minded people, to increase to scope of conflict and to legitimize their struggle, activists should not turn their back on mainstream media even most of them have a negative bias. Instead, they have to know how to use mainstream media, how to adapt themselves to the media logic by knowing what journalists are looking for and to develop tactics to negotiate with them.

With respect to the last aspect of mediation opportunity structures, Cammaerts focused on reception of the delivered messages and on audiences as publics who are mainly conceived as passive actors. He emphasized the heterogenous structure of the public and stated more research has to be conducted to investigate their points of view.

As concluding remarks about the model of mediation opportunity structure, Cammaerts repeated that it has to be regarded as semi-independent from other opportunity structure, it includes the production, dissemination, and reception of movement frames and it is dialectic and has a spatial as well as temporal dimension.

In the question and answer part of this session, one of the main focus of discussions was different attitudes of activists in social movements about mainstream media, majority of which is hostile in nature. Participants pointed out that there are also many activists who are trying to learn how to negotiate and work with mainstream media but this leads to conflicts within social movements and organizations because most of the activists think that mainstream media itself is also a cause of the problem. Activists who are in search of alliances in mainstream media, are trying to make use of fractions in mainstream media, one participant argued, but, because in Turkey there is a sharp polarity between groups of people from different political ideologies, it is likely that one can not reach different people even after finding an alliance in mainstream media, which probably shares a similar point of view of the problem under consideration. Cammaerts agreed with this comment but also argued that social media, which is more homogeneous in terms of the people one is in connection with, also does not offer any solution for this problem. He added that it has not to be forgotten that social media is a corporate place regulated by companies who can close down your groups, delete your messages and/or ban your activities if they want.

Another contribution made by the participants, is that like activists or more than the activist the authorities have been making use of mediation opportunity structures and especially mainstream media both by tactics of provocation to make activist act in more violent ways and/or by accommodation/normalization tactics, to decrease

the size of audiences and coverage by the media, by letting activists to take part in any protest they want, in certain limits, which increase the number of event to 800-1000 a year.

Another question put forward for discussion was related to the power controlling mainstream media, which is usually a corporate interest with tight connections with ruling political parties. Cammaerts put forwards an interesting argument, stating that also liberalism needs a counter-discourse to reclaim its liberal characteristics, which makes it possible for counter-ideologies to assert themselves using opportunities of liberalism.

The last comment of the session was about the communication between mainstream media and social media, pointing out that some 'good' journalists, who lost their jobs because the news they reported are against the demand of the interest of the power-holder, continue to report as citizen journalists in social media and followed by millions of people and institution. However, there is always a doubt about the objectivity and factual details of the news delivered through social media which make people depend on other sources of information for verification of truth.

The last session of the first day of the workshop was about the changes of language and forms of participation, focusing on comics and fanzins. The questions put forward for discussion are as follows: *How and why do young people express themselves using alternative tools and forms such as humour magazines, comics, fanzins etc? What changes via these alternative forms; and how these changes empower young people to increase their participation to public debate? What are the impacts using humuor and satirizing on form and language in public sphere? What is the power of the politics of humour today among young people? How are these impacts affecting the public debate?*

The first speech of this session was delivered by Christina Flesher Fomaya about the power of humour as o form of cultural resistance. Fomaya argued that culture bound up with communication is very central to politics and resistance. Humour which is a powerful critique which is not immediately recognizable as political, has a long tradition in politics especially in repressive contexts. Very high risks people took to share these political jokes with deep meanings ranging from imprisonment to death penalty, can be considered as a sign how important these jokes are for the people living under repressive contexts providing them some sense of independence and trust in solidarity among like-minded people around them. Famoya argued that these are elements for formation of a political collective identity and empower ingroup identities as we vs them.

Famoya also emphasized the crucial role of humour to deliver messages to out-groups which is easily accessible and adaptable for youth in particular. Together with the use of new technologies, internet and social media, both the variety of ways to create messages using humour and ways to disseminate them get expanded.

Fomaya stated that humour makes it easier to capture attention of media and other people and to deliver the messages to them with short but subversive type of messages like 'Yes, we camp' in the occupy movement in Spain. Humour is very crucial for long lasting street protests because it is helpful to lower the guard of people to listen to the critiques made by a counter ideology and to diffuse tension leading to violence. It is also very important to lift the morality of protestors by reducing the sense of fear they have been experiencing.

Fomaya gave different examples of cultural jamming and guerrilla communication where humour has been used in very creative ways such as fake newspapers against the Olympic Games in Madrid or activities confronting gender stereotypes by switching the voice boxes of Barby and G.I.Joe, and showed examples of billboard jamming and political video mash-ups using humour.

Towards the end of her speech, Fomaya also mentioned some problems and limitations using humour as a forms of cultural resistance: 1) Political messaged delivered using humour might be not clear enough for recipients as it is for senders and because they ambiguous they can be ignored or missed totally. 2) Because humour might embody culture specific codes, it is more difficult if one wants to transmit the message to other communities. 3) Especially the guerrilla communication is so multi-layered and complex in nature, sometimes the level of abstraction it demands make it impossible to be understood correctly even by in-group members. 4) People and power-holders who are mocked by jokes and/or people who might feel foolish if when can not understand the jokes, then they might see the jokes in a more offensive way and insist on their point of view. 5) Old school/traditional politically active groups usually tend to show a powerful resistance to use fun and humour for political change especially in their early encounters.

At the end of the presentation, Famoya stated it is not easy to measure the impact of this type of cultural resistance and reminded that also the dominant culture and power-holders can make use of the same techniques. She argued that the effects of any cultural resistance depend upon factors such as the political

context, political opportunity structures available for the movement, levels of oppression and independent public sphere, the nature of political climate and receptivity of mass media so on. But independent of its impacts, humour has always a very important and nourishing meaning for activists themselves, she concluded.

The last presenter of the forth session and first day of the workshop, was Bülent Somay from Istanbul Bilgi University with his speech about utopian phantasy narratives. He started his speech with a memory where an 18 year old, shy Kurdish boy started a conversation with him making reference to Lord of the Rings where he assigned the role of Orcs to the special forces in Turkish army. Lord of the Rings is not a humourous book, it is a phantasy book with a certain kind of seriousness, Somay argued, and gave examples of humour during Gezi protests which make use of phantasy realness and phantasy role playing games. Answering the question he put forward about how nerds playing these role play games became the heroes of Gezi, he argued it was not something about the victory of disproportionate intelligence against disproportionate police violence but it is related with the notion of carnivalesque which not only includes humour, games, free sexuality etc. but also violence going side by side with these fun activities especially at times of moment of freedom for oppressed clans. He gave examples from Bacchanalia, Carnival of Rio and Stoning of the Devil to support his argument in a manner defending the naturalness of the presence of violence in these festivals.

In the second part of his speech, through making references to his memories about different kinds of oppositional movements he took part both in Turkey and abroad in Canada, he mentioned the conflicts and resistance of traditional oppositional leftists against new and carnivalistic ways of opposition where one can have fun and has not to be asexual. Somay argued it is not possible to differentiate between innocent fun-loving protestors and violent protestors and illustrate his argument by giving examples from Lord of the Rings where even the act of killing by the Hobbits as the innocent figures of the story, can be justified by dehumanizing the Orchs, as the evil side which can be seen in many circumstances throughout the history where virtues were made of out of necessities.

In the last part of his speech Somay emphasised that one has to be able to recognize and look at the violence and aggression in his/herself while protesting and demanding, because there is some kind of violence in every carnivalesque. Somay finished his speech with quotes from Brecht paraphrased as follows: 'We, who want to

give friendliness to the world could not be friendly ourselves because anger against injustice makes your voice hoarse and anger against inequality makes your face ugly. My will for coming generations is, when you think back of us, please think back of us with compassion.'

In the question and answer part of this session participants questioned the power of humour and presenters argued that used as a part of cultural transformation, which is a slow but long-lasting change, humour is a very powerful element of cultural resistance.

In the following discussions about the nature of humour, participants pointed out the anti-lgbti phrases in the jokes and presenters argued that remedy is in the carnival itself by giving examples from Gezi protests.

Participants also shed light on the self-referential nature of people in social movements. Namely, making use of a special language based on common experiences and understandings, this processes became exclusionary for some people who either are coming from a different age cohort or out-group or are not able to use the mediums the in-group is using etc. However, it was also argued this uniqueness of language has an important function for the protest groups themselves, namely to support the motivation of the group.

At the end of the question and answer part of this session, the importance of humour as a cornerstones to remember and reconnect with the uprising events and with the collective identity created throughout common experiences of resistance, was emphasized and two questions were put forward for further discussion. Namely, one is about the conflict feminist activists might experience when it comes to making use of violence besides humour in the carnivalesque. The other is about sanctification of youth who are taking part in the protests as unorganized naive individuals, by the state and majority of the citizens. Participants raising this question have concerns about that significance of being organized especially for the long-run effects of uprisings might not be regarded as seriously as it should.

Second day of the workshop started with Professor Aslı Tunç's presentation titled "Social media, a new public sphere?" In her talk, Professor Tunç emphasised the popularity of social media amongst Turkey's younger generations, while noting that the digital gap is still a reality. She stated that the popularity of social media amongst Turkey's younger generations might be understood as a result of younger generations' distrust towards the mainstream media. For her, this statement was validated especially during Gezi protests, given the fact that recent research found out that the majority of

young people heard about Gezi protests from social media. However, Tunç argued, there is a tendency of young people becoming more conservative towards social media. Tunç finalised her speech by underlining the fact that young people do not see the outcomes of their social media activism, the reasons of which have to be discussed further.

Following Professor Tunç, Thierry Vedel presented his paper titled "The Internet, citizen participation and democracy". Vedel started his presentation by claiming that Internet improved citizens' access to information, created a platform for open discussion and provided citizens' with new arena of participation and engagement in decision-making processes. In that sense, according to Vedel, Internet facilitated citizen participation. He noted that there are three different perspectives within the literature on Internet, citizen participation and democracy: those who are optimistic about the impact of Internet on citizen participation, those who are skeptical about the impact of Internet on citizen participation and those who find out that Internet has mixed effects on citizen participation. Vedel positioned himself within the third perspective. He suggested that while Internet has late gate keeping than the mainstream media, it still has gatekeepers such as Google. In addition, gatekeepers of Internet and the selection process that is behind what we see on the Internet might be considered less transparent than those of the mainstream media. He argued that the importance of TV and its power of political agenda setting remained central even after the rising popularity of Internet. Another drawback of Internet, according to Vedel, might be the fact that online political debates and campaigns are mostly carried out amongst like-minded people. Given this fact, Internet might not be as egalitarian, accessible and inclusive for all. Vedel finalized his speech by posing the question of whether there is a dilemma between high intensity democracy for happy few and low intensity democracy for everybody.

Cihan Ertan presented a paper titled "Tattoo as a resistance and its public reaction" using the interview material he collected for his doctoral thesis. Ertan conceptualised tattoo as "the political voice of the skin" and argued that tattoo can be considered as a resistance or a challenge to the traditional body form. Given that tattooed body does not conform to the socially acceptable ways of keeping one's own body, Ertan suggested that tattoo might symbolize one's own agency over his/her own body. However, for Ertan, tattoo is also a social act and an alternative public representation. In addition, social forces might also subject those with tattoos to othering. Therefore, Ertan argued, tattooed bodies might be considered at the intersection of tattooed individual's agency and the social

structure and these bodies are the locus of tension, conflict and negotiation between these two forces.

Following Ertan's presentation, Ayşe Çavdar gave a talk titled "Public sphere and alternative ways of participation". Çavdar presented the case of Hope United (Bir Umut) as an alternative way of political organisation. Hope United supported the victims of 1999 earthquake in Turkey, which then focused more on organising the resistance against labour killings and urban regeneration projects that would result in the marginalisation of the poor in urban space. Çavdar presented their innovative political strategy of using legal framework in a creative way. As a political strategy, Hope United attempted to make legal discourse more accessible for the poor and reinterpret laws to make them work for the advantage of the poor. Finally, she noted that the interest of alternative media on their campaigns helped them to make their case heard in public as the interest of alternative media also created an interest among mainstream media.

Last speaker was Huda Smitshuijzen Abifares, who gave a speech titled "Design, Text, Image in Social Media for Social Change". In her presentation, Smitshuijzen Abifares argued that online networks could be regarded as alternative platforms for critical engagement among young people. Drawing on her experience in Khatt Foundation, Smitshuijzen Abifares suggested that young people from diverse backgrounds might work together especially in the area of arts if inclusive methods could be developed to cater all forms of diversity within the group.