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# It is never enough: Exploring the dynamics and aesthetics of enough through video archival testimonies

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Abstract
This article examines the concept of enough in the context of radical image production within politically repressive media environments, focusing on the role of alternative and activist media in advocating for justice. By analysing the case study of the Tekel workers' resistance – a significant workers' movement in Turkey from 2009-2010 – this study explores how visual documentation and its subsequent re-circulation within new media and artistic contexts contribute to representing underrepresented perspectives and assessing archival significance. The article argues that the documentation of the resistance exemplifies an 'aesthetics of enough', wherein the aim is to thoroughly capture and disseminate every facet of the resistance, driven by the urgency of the events. This audiovisual archive not only serves as a historical record but also as a tool for solidarity and critique of government privatisation policies, offering a profound commentary on the socio-political impact on affected communities. The study aims to enhance the understanding of visual advocacy and the aesthetic dimensions of justice in politically contested environments.

**Keywords**: social movements, digital archiving, media activism, visual culture

## Introduction

On 15 December 2009, the Tekel factory workers began their 78-day resistance in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. On day 36 of the resistance, the workers decided to go on a hunger strike. During the announcement, a woman worker passionately voiced her frustration:

> I am a Tekel worker from İzmir. I have given 20 years of my life; I have given my motherhood. We have lost our patience. Enough is enough!
>
> [1] (Figure 1)

The phrase 'Enough is enough' – translated as 'Artık yeter' in Turkish – has been one of the most common symbolic expressions of rebellion and a rallying cry against systemic injustices in the country. It embodies a powerful political statement, denouncing ongoing systems of violence, exploitation, and dispossession, while also drawing attention to historical grievances and envisioning a more just future in which people can live a more dignified life.


Fig. 1: Tekel workers' resistance, day 36. Screenshot from the Sendika-TV video collection.

While enough is a well-known expression of dissent in Turkey's history of social movements, this article seeks to critically examine its significance through two interrelated lenses. We explore its role as a revolting call during the Tekel workers' resistance – a pivotal labour movement from 2009-2010 – and as a conceptual framework for understanding the limits and possibilities of documenting and archiving social movements.

Drawing on the resonance of this expression of resistance, this article delves into the theme of 'enough' from multiple interconnected perspectives. First, we investigate the question of 'how much is enough' in the context of documenting and disseminating social movements in Turkey, focusing on the Tekel workers' resistance. By analysing Sendika TV's video collection of the resistance, we explore how alternative and activist media have become critical channels for representing untold stories and perspectives absent from mainstream discourse. Second, we argue that the documentation of the Tekel workers' resistance embodies an aesthetics of enough, where the goal is not just to chronicle the resistance but to capture its full emotional and political scope. This aesthetic arises organically from the immediacy and urgency of the struggle, with visual documentation serving both as a historical record and a powerful form of advocacy. The aesthetics of enough goes beyond merely documenting events; it mobilises solidarity, critiques the government's privatisation policies, and exposes the sociopolitical conditions faced by the workers.

By reflecting on this emergent aesthetic, we use the concept of enough to understand how this sentiment is captured and represented through audiovisual means, using a typology that considers the architecture, acts, voices, and testimonies and affects associated with enough. Through this typology of the aesthetics of enough, we aim to uncover how visual advocacy and the aesthetics associated with the pursuit of justice – enough with an exclamation point – manifest in politically-contested landscapes. We explore visual strategies that mobilise sentiment, challenge media distortions, and bring working class experiences into public consciousness, driven by the urgency for change. This study deepens an understanding of how visual media documents social movements, humanises them, and creates emotional connections that communicate situated knowledge from the heart of political action. The aesthetics of enough underscores how audiovisual documentation can become an active participant in the resistance, transforming the medium into a space for both representation and mobilisation.

## Media activism and the labour movement

Historically, video has been a powerful tool for activism, used across various political contexts to amplify voices, enhance representation, and explore alternative perspectives.[2] Since the Arab Spring in 2011, a wave of global protests has continued to emerge, each distinct yet politically connected, responding to the widespread expansion of neoliberal policies and the financial crisis. These global movements have garnered support and visibility through alternative media practices, largely driven by the increasing accessibility of smartphones and social media platforms. Activists have not only documented events in real-time, bypassing traditional media outlets that have historically shown bias against social movements,[3] but social media has also become 'centralized in proclamation, organization, mobilization, and maintenance of revolutionary social activity by creating ample opportunities that other media tools have never held'.[4]

In the particular context of labour activism and advocacy for the working class, pro-labour documentaries were part of the nonfiction tradition of social realism started by John Grierson in the 1920s and 1930s, whose films looked at the industrial processes and the economic aspects of labour, portraying it through the experiences of the workers. Third Cinema emerged as a revolutionary movement in the 1960s and 1970s, aligning with pro-labour perspectives by critiquing imperialism, representing working-class struggles, and employing participatory practices to amplify the voices of marginalised communities. In the 1980s, feminist and intersectional approaches further evolved this tradition by challenging the universalising discourse of experience within the workers' movement. These new approaches broadened labour activism to address the diverse, overlapping aspects of workers' struggles, incorporating a deeper understanding of how intersecting social inequalities shape labour experiences. Building on these traditions, contemporary video activism has expanded with the rise of digital technologies and social media, enabling not only the global dissemination of labour issues but also connecting struggles transnationally. Labour activists have leveraged diverse forms of digital media to advance their causes.[5]

By incorporating these new media tools into their movement-building strategies, workers' movements have more effectively spread their messages,

mobilised supporters, and challenge prevailing narratives. In the UK, for example, collectives like ReelNews document and publicise struggles against neoliberalism both locally and globally.[6] Platforms such as Labournet TV adopt a global perspective, chronicling workers' struggles and historical documentation of the working class in different countries.[7] Moreover, labour movements and unions have formed their own media outlets. L'info Com-CGT, the communication branch of the General Confederation of Labour in France, produces newsletters, videos, and digital content to support labour campaigns, inform union members, and advocate for workers' rights.[8] Furthermore, platforms like LabourStart, run by labour activists, offer a global perspective by providing news and campaigning websites where trade unionists worldwide can share news, campaign information, and build solidarity.[9]

In Turkey, the first video activist collectives emerged in the early 2000s, coinciding with the rise of new social movements. These collectives documented and disseminated recordings of solidarity actions by minorities, as well as leftist, libertarian, and anarchist groups, including labour struggles, strikes, occupations, demonstrations, protests, and commemorations. Their efforts linked numerous political organisations and events. This audiovisual tradition built on the legacy of militant cinema from the 1960s, represented by the Young Cinema Movement, which used film to document social and political change. During this period, Turkey experienced significant activism in labour, union, and student movements.

Among the oldest accessible footage of social movements is the Saraçhane Rally of 31 December 1961.[10] This landmark event marked the first major gathering of the labour movement in Turkey, drawing approximately 100,000 workers to a historic public space in Istanbul. It represented a turning point that shaped the workers' struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to Saraçhane, trade union demonstrations in the 1940s and 1950s were often disrupted by government intervention. M. Hakan Koçak and Aziz Çelik note that the monumental Saraçhane demonstration signalled a shift in the trajectory of the labour movement, instilling hope for the future.[11] Organised by unionists from the Workers' Party of Turkey, the rally aimed to pressure the government for the right to strike and collectively bargain. However, as Koçak and Çelik emphasise, the impact of the demonstration went beyond these goals, uniting the working class and laying the ground-

work for the establishment of the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK),[12] one of Turkey's foremost national labour organisations.

DİSK maintains an extensive visual archive composed primarily of analogue film and video content. Some materials in this collection originate from the Young Cinema Movement's recordings. Among the most notable footage in the archive, now accessible on various platforms including YouTube, are the May Day marches of 1977 and 1978. The gathering on 1 May 1978, known as Bloody May Day, was a significant turning point not only for the labour movement but also for the political history of Turkey more broadly. Following the tragic gathering that was turned into chaos by gunfire that caused many deaths and injuries, Turkey entered a tumultuous period marked by increased street clashes, eventually leading to a military coup d'état aimed at suppressing dissent and eradicating opposition throughout the 1980s and mid-1990s.

From the mid-1990s onward, labour movements began to resurge. The marches organised by the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK), DİSK, the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş), and the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) saw the participation of thousands of workers, and streets and squares once again became arenas for the rise of opposition. In 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power, initiating a new era in Turkey characterised by intensified privatisation, erosion of workers' rights, and the weakening of the workers' movement through measures that hindered unionisation.[13]

Work-related deaths have surged across 20 years of AKP governance due to insufficient preventive measures. The Health and Safety Labour Watch / Turkey (İSİG), a non-governmental organisation, is known for its monthly reports on work fatalities.[14] According to its 2023 report, 30,546 workers died due to work-related incidents during the AKP's governance since 2002.[15] İSİG and other civil society organisations use data activism to raise awareness. Aslı Odman describes contemporary data activist practices in Turkey as components of a 'civic data movement', which includes categories such as 'data of loss', 'data of debris', and 'data of destruction'.[16] By cataloguing, classifying, and detailing instances of loss, and identifying those responsible, Odman contends that these practices create a 'science of debris'.[17] This approach facilitates the development of shared knowledge,

information, and collective memory through processes of social engagement and collective action. These efforts function as activist interventions into Turkey's necropolitics, revealing its human costs.

## Tekel workers' resistance and the new labour regime

The Tekel resistance holds a unique and significant place in both the history of the labour movement and the broader history of social movements in Turkey. One key reason is the inclusive solidarity that bolstered the resistance. Workers from diverse political backgrounds, supported by the public, sustained their protest for days in a central location of a highly bureaucratic capital town like Ankara. This public demonstration fused the class struggle with many other social struggles and vividly highlighted the injustices of the state's privatisation policies.

Aylin Topal sees the Tekel resistance as 'a re-emergence of Turkish working-class militancy after more than three decades'.[18] Indeed, following the coup d'état of 1980, socialism took a blow as the ruling party aimed to 'tame the political left and trade unions by applying harsh measures'.[19] The activities of all three existing trade union confederations were suspended, and the leaders of many unions were taken into custody. Following the coup, all strikes and lockouts were banned until further notice. As a result, the people were constantly conditioned to follow law and order; acting differently would trigger memories of the chaos of the previous decade.

The resistance began in December 2009, following the privatisation of Tekel, a state monopoly producing cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol, and spirits, along with its 43 factories. The government announced plans to close these factories and reassign the 12,000 workers to other public sector jobs on 11-month temporary contracts, with pay cuts of up to 40 percent and reduced employment rights. This decision sparked industrial action, starting on 15 December, as the workers protested against the significant wage cuts and the loss of their severance pay rights. Thousands of workers established a tent-city in the heart of Ankara, enduring severe winter conditions for 78 days.

Erinç Yeldan attributes the causes of the resistance to long-standing policies.[20] Since 1999, Turkey's government has aimed to dissolve and privatise Tekel enterprises. The International Money Fund's 1999 directive targeted agricultural sector privatisation. In 2002, the AKP government sold Tekel's alcohol factories to Mey İçki for $292 million, while erasing $200 million of Tekel's debt and covering $25 million in severance. The division was later resold for $900 million, resulting in closures and worker displacement. Yeldan notes that the resistance exposed corruption and economic deterioration in the privatisation process, including declining wages, restricted social rights, and high unemployment exacerbated by the global crisis.

During the privatisation process, Tekel workers were given the choice to either resign for severance and unemployment benefits or accept 4/C status, a temporary employment status with precarious conditions. Workers quickly rejected the 4/C option due to its lack of job security, reduced wages, and no social benefits.[21] Under 4/C status, contracts lasted four to ten months with minimal rights, prohibitions on outside work, restricted work hours, and limited holidays, while compensation often fell below the minimum wage.[22] This situation reflected a broader shift in the country's labour regime, affecting workers' conditions nationwide.

Despite the deplorable working conditions, the government sought to depict workers in a negative light through its media channels.[23] The prime minister at the time reinforced this negative framing, declaring,

> These individuals seek to earn money without doing any work, by laying down. We closed the era of making money by laying down.[24]

This portrayal aligned media coverage with official narratives, which downplayed the scale and significance of the protests while attempting to undermine the movement's legitimacy. The distorted lens through which the mass media represented the workers reflected a deliberate attempt by the government to discredit their efforts. Thus, it became crucial to document and publicise the workers' experiences. By amplifying their perspectives, it is possible to challenge the misleading narratives perpetuated by the mass media and counteract the power dynamics that marginalise their voic-

es. This act can also serve as a catalyst for future organisation, inspiring collective action and mobilisation.

## Defining enough: Rescuing and reclaiming the archival footage

When the Tekel workers' resistance began, mainstream media sought to undermine their efforts by downplaying the significance of their actions and creating a negative public perception, while activist media aimed to amplify the workers' voices and counter dominant media frames. Among these, Sendika TV stood out as the most effective. Sendika TV was a part of Sendika.org, an alternative online media platform primarily established to cover labour movement struggles. Despite facing constant censorship, Sendika TV consistently covered the resistance, providing a platform for the workers' narratives. Additionally, numerous documentary filmmakers, journalists, and video activists documented the resistance daily, resulting in a variety of short and long documentary films about the movement. The 5th Labour Film Festival even dedicated a special section to the resistance, screening these films collectively in 2010.[25]

These films share themes of solidarity, resilience, and the struggle for workers' rights. Some focused on specific events (e.g. *Tekel 51*) or the resistance at particular Tekel factories (e.g. *Name of Resistance Kent A.Ş.*); others highlighted women workers (e.g. *Women Tekel*) and portrayed the resistance through individual stories (e.g. *70th Day* by Tamer Gören and *The Resistor* by Murat Utku). While these films offer diverse perspectives on the resistance and document a key historical moment, this article focuses on Sendika TV's video collection for its unique features: collective creation, preservation under adverse physical conditions, complete digitisation and archiving of raw footage, and its ongoing circulation in various formats.

Throughout the AKP government, Sendika TV and its parent platform Sendika.org faced continuous censorship, with police raids, confiscations, and detainment of journalists. After multiple raids in 2015, Sendika TV entrusted its analogue media formats, including footage of the Tekel resistance and various May Day marches, to the bak.ma digital media archive collective. The collective worked with activists and journalists to create a

comprehensive video archive of the Tekel Resistance, incorporating footage from Çapul TV, the Nazım Hikmet Cultural Centre, and other sources, systematically organising the recordings by date, time, and event (Figure 2).

Fig. 2: bak.ma digital media archive of the social movements. Screenshot from the Tekel Video Collection.

The bak.ma collective, committed to secure preservation through open access, made the raw footage available online on bak.ma.[26] Operating under the principles of the commons, bak.ma ensures that recordings of social struggles are accessible to the public. The archive holds essential documentation of Turkey's labour movement, previously at risk of marginalisation and restriction. Given the historical and ongoing challenges in documenting such struggles, the extent and depth of the collection may never be fully enough. For instance, with approximately 50 hours of footage, the Tekel collection raises questions about its ability to comprehensively represent the 78-day resistance and its pursuit of justice. Determining the sufficiency of archival records is challenging, particularly in Turkey, where historical narratives of social struggles frequently face suppression or erasure.

The collective's concern regarding the archival material prompted discussions that extended beyond merely archiving or making the recordings available online. They also considered the potential for presenting these recordings in diverse settings and formats. Drawing from the chronicles of the resistance, the collective curated a compilation of video diaries, reassembling and selecting fragments from each day. These diaries capture both the euphoric and tranquil moments of the resistance, including hunger

strikes, solidarity marches, interviews with workers, dances, songs, festivals, occupations, rallies, and commemorations. We will now proceed to explore the aesthetics of enough, examining both the video diaries and the raw archival footage.

## The aesthetics of enough

The concept of the aesthetics of enough, inspired by Sendika TV's Tekel collection, encapsulates a powerful audiovisual spectrum of videos that embodies expressions of urgency, defiance, commitment, and collective action by the Tekel workers in response to the injustices imposed by government decisions during the privatisation process. This aesthetic emerges from a breaking point where the line between life and death is at stake, giving rise to strong emotions. The proposed terminology of the aesthetics of enough not only builds on various approaches to politically-committed filmmaking from across global geographies, but also incorporates the diverse typologies of video activism that have emerged with the proliferation of digital media.[27]

The aesthetics of enough is guided by a profound emotional resonance, encapsulated in the term enough. Emotions have become integral to many conceptual frameworks developed by scholars to understand social movements. This approach challenges earlier models that viewed social movements through a purely rational, structural, and organisational lens. Instead, it emphasises how emotions such as anger, indignation, fear, disgust, joy, and love are central to understanding and researching politics and protest.[28]

In audiovisual terms, the aesthetics of enough capture the performative actions, rhetoric of slogans and banners, the physical space of the tent-city, and consequences of police violence, reflecting the everyday culture of the movement (Figure 3). This aesthetic, recorded by various individuals and collectives, contrasts with professional documentaries and news footage due to its low resolution and shaky, amateur quality. Close-up shots of individual protesters humanise the struggle, highlighting personal stakes, while long shots of crowds emphasise collective strength and solidarity. A participatory element stands out, as those directly involved in the resistance filmed the footage. This intrinsic involvement underscores the recordings' dual func-

tion as both a historical document and an embodiment of the resistance itself. The mode of representation encompasses both observation and participation, primarily intended to document and bear witness to the resistance, resulting in extended, unedited sequences that capture the everyday experiences of workers in the tent-city as well as the solidarity of their allies through strategies grounded in realism.


Fig. 3: The rhetoric of slogans, Tekel workers' resistance. Screenshot from the Sendika TV video collection.

In essence, the aesthetics of enough represents an audiovisual language of resistance, embodying the collective determination to challenge injustice and oppression, regardless of the obstacles faced. It serves as a reminder that there comes a point where enough is enough, compelling those affected to take a stand for what they believe in. The aesthetics of enough are nourished by a hunger for justice, fuelled by anger in response to audacious mistreatment, and culminating in the euphoria of collective action.

Through this aesthetic, an alternative space of discourse is created, shaped by the information it conveys, the ethical stance it maintains, and the emotions it stirs. This aesthetic reveals the violence of the neoliberal market and its direct impact on the working class; it focuses on counteracting mainstream images and discourse that obscures the reality of the situation, replacing them with a cohesive visual narrative that mobilises public sentiment; it devisualises the imposed meanings set by the oppressive state and its apparatus of image-making, undoing the constructed narratives of power. Below, we propose a typology of the aesthetics of enough by analysing Sendika TV's video collection, aiming to describe its various manifestations.

## Tent-city culture: The architecture of enough

The aesthetics of enough is vividly displayed in the videos depicting everyday life in the tent-city. These videos reveal the different facets of life within the camp, illustrating the diverse moods and activities that characterise the resistance. Özuğurlu describes the tent-city as a space where a cultural ground was built, wherein this space 'emancipated the women (and the men, as long as they could get free of patriarchy), and where Kurdish workers could freely express their languages, the Alevi workers their sect beliefs, and the workers from İzmir (an Aegean city) their love for Atatürk'.[29] These depictions highlight how the tent-city became a microcosm of broader social and cultural liberation, reinforcing the power and significance of the resistance movement. The spatial organisation of the tent-city demonstrates the values of the movement – solidarity, mutual aid, and egalitarianism – in the arrangement of its communal areas (Figure 4). By reconfiguring public space to reflect this ethos, the tent-city challenges conventional uses and control of public spaces, asserting alternative visions of community and governance. Aylin Kuryel and Begüm Özden Fırat also discuss the highly symbolic creation of a makeshift tent-city, which serves as a powerful embodiment of the precarious conditions that the workers are resisting.[30] Moreover, they argue that the tent-city destabilises the capitalist organisation of space and time, creating its own spatial and temporal coordinates, labelling it a 'liminal space' where 'the public becomes private and the private becomes public at the same time', and 'home becomes a place of gathering, a common place of solidarity'.[31]

Fig. 4: Tent-city at night. Screenshot from the Sendika TV video collection.

Daily life in the camp is marked by a range of activities that highlight the workers' perseverance and adaptability. The videos document scenes revealing the diverse emotional states and practical challenges faced by the community. These recordings offer insight into the emotional and practical realities of camp life, from solidarity to daily struggles. One vivid example is the video *The Dance of the Resistance*, filmed on the second day of the protest. It shows workers dancing in a circle, taking turns to perform traditional folk dances while others clap, ending in a collective chant of 'Long live class solidarity' (Figure 5). This celebratory moment reflects the communal spirit and motivation driving the resistance, encapsulating the essence of cultural unity and shared purpose within the camp; 'an embodied collectivity beyond identity, gender and political orientation'.[32] Other scenes, like the *New Year's Day* video showing the distribution of food, depict the logistical challenges of managing resources and the efforts to ensure everyone is served amidst the complexities of camp life.

Fig. 5: *Halay* in the tent-city, Tekel workers' resistance. Screenshot from the Sendika TV video collection.

The idea of expanding discourse and understanding the roots of workers' material conditions is evident in a video showing a nighttime film screening. The screen projects scenes from another protest, with the workers watching attentively and cheering on the resistance depicted. This practice echoes the early efforts of video activists in Turkey, who travelled across Anatolia screening films of resistance movements to inspire and unite workers.[33] In the camp this tradition endures, serving as both motivation and a way to connect historical struggles with contemporary resistance.

The camp's emotional landscape is profoundly marked by the tragic death of Hamdullah Uysal, who was struck by a speeding jeep after 73 days of resistance (Figure 6). A video of the commemoration shows workers gathering at the site of his death, where his photographs are displayed, wreaths adorn tents, and flowers are laid in his honour. The workers participate in a tribute, praying and observing a moment of silence with left fists raised.[34] This act of remembrance highlights the personal sacrifices and deep respect within the camp, underscoring the human cost of the resistance.


Fig. 6: Commemoration of Hamdullah Uysal. Screenshot from the SendikaTV video collection.

In essence, the tent-city reflected the new relationality the workers sought to embody. Accepting the premise that space is a social product,[35] the tent-city illustrated the collective creation of an alternative urban environment, directly challenging the one imposed on them by power structures by marking one's own presence in it. This discontent culminated in a decisive enough moment, fostering a spatial reality that was reflective of their values.

## Performative protest and political demands: Acts of enough

The aesthetics of enough is powerfully conveyed through symbolic acts that encapsulate protesters' commitment and demands. The performative aspects of the protest reveal the depth of the workers' struggle and their determination to make their voices heard. Recent scholarship has focused on the role of protest spaces.[36] The aesthetics of enough builds on these approaches by demonstrating how bodies not only symbolise but actively materialise the protesters' demands, turning physical presence into a statement of dissent and unity. Through collective action, emotional expression, and symbolic gestures, the body becomes a primary medium for expressing and experiencing resistance.

An illustrative example of this is the slogan 'Turkey is here' repeated in several videos. This slogan exemplifies the national scale of the protest. Workers from various cities respond in unison to a megaphone call, creating a powerful demonstration of nationwide solidarity. Each city is named, and the crowd's unified 'here' creates a resounding display of collective strength and unity. This act not only signifies the broad geographic scope of the protest but also emphasises the widespread support for their cause.

Acts of resistance are portrayed through various means, including the wearing of shrouds, displaying banners, and chanting slogans. On the ninth day of resistance, workers wear shrouds with messages like, 'We did not come from Elazığ here to die', and 'AKP, take responsibility for 4/C!' These shrouds serve as a visual representation of their political stance, highlighting both the urgency and gravity of their situation (Figure 7). The close-up shots of workers' faces, combined with the symbolic act of holding loaves of bread, underscore their sacrifice and commitment. The bread, a basic necessity, contrasts sharply with the act of hunger striking, symbolising both their deprivation and their fight for the fundamental right to sustenance. The slogan 'Turkey is our love; our cause is for bread' encapsulates their demand for economic security and recognition.

Fig. 7: Protest in shrouds, Tekel workers' resistance. Screenshot from the Sendika TV video collection.

Indeed, hunger strikes play a central role in the protest, embodying the workers' refusal to accept the government-imposed 'social death' and their determination to assert control over their own fate. Historically significant in Turkey's left movement, hunger strikes are a dramatic assertion of resistance. Ulus Baker approaches the hunger strike as

> not heading towards death but towards life. They have demands related to life, they embrace it and affirm it. Because life is resistance. It does not set a time for itself, does not perceive its end, and when it ends, it is not present…[37]

By choosing this form of protest, the workers make a powerful statement of defiance against imposed conditions. The aesthetics of the hunger strike, characterised by the visual of shrouds and the act of lying down with closed eyes, underscore their unwavering resolve. As workers chant 'We've put on our shroud, there's no turning back', the imagery of them lying motionless with eyes closed further symbolises their commitment and the potentially fatal consequences of their protest, their body becoming the medium through which politics is performed.[38]

The video from day 36 of resistance captures a poignant moment that underscores the aesthetics of enough. Here, a worker announces his intention to begin a death strike. This announcement is followed by a medical emergency, as a protester faints, prompting a commotion and immediate response from fellow workers. The camera captures the scene from above, revealing the solidarity and urgency as people attend to the woman, bring-

ing water and creating space for her to breathe. This moment of vulnerability illustrates the physical and emotional toll of the resistance, reinforcing the life-and-death stakes of their activism. These performative acts, from hunger strikes and symbolic gestures to collective chants, are integral to understanding the essence of the Tekel resistance. They vividly illustrate the workers' determination and the urgency of their political demands.

## Ethnography of enough: Voices and testimonies

An essential element of Sendika TV's video collection is the extensive series of interview videos featuring the workers. In these candid recordings, workers speak directly to the camera, offering a transparent portrait of their motivations and objectives. They articulate how their political perspectives have evolved and how the resistance has empowered them, despite the hardships of prolonged absences from their families and the demanding conditions they face.

One aspect of the resistance was its ability to challenge and overcome the false dichotomy between identity and class. As articulated by Topal,

> Living in the tent city for 78 days, sharing a tent with other fellow workers, neighbouring with workers from 22 provinces, workers saw the unifying collective labour behind Turk–Kurd, Alevi–Sunni, Man–Woman, Secular–Religious fractures that had been reinstated since 1980s onwards, particularly by the AKP government in the last decade. Therefore, the resistance proved that struggle could indeed bring peace and solidarity between constructed conflicts.[39]

This sentiment is echoed by the interviewees who describe how the camp environment fostered an unexpected sense of unity and collaboration among traditionally divided groups, thus reflecting the evolving political subjectivities of the workers. One participant shares,

> The people we voted for are not with us today. They are not standing with us. Left-lenient parties and people are standing with us. In the past, I had a negative opinion about the left-wing before but I was misinformed. I see the truth here. Now we stand together.

Another worker expresses frustration with the lack of support from right-wing groups:

> I don't understand why right-wing people are not supporting us. Only left-lenient people are supporting us. I don't understand this.

Such reflections illustrate how the resistance impacted political consciousness, leading to a re-evaluation of alliances and support networks, and exposing participants to new political alignments and solidarities that transcended their previous biases.

Another worker poignantly reflects:

> Politicians were speaking about the Peace Process. The peace process is happening here actually. We learned that here, we are living it.

This statement underscores the experiential realisation that, while the formal peace process between the state of Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) faced challenges and ultimately collapsed,[40] the resistance itself became a space where genuine dialogue and cooperation thrived, illustrating the potential for reconciliation within the camp.

A sense of empowerment and determination can also be felt in the interviews, reflecting the new political agency emerging from their experience. 'The resistance taught us to demand what was rightfully ours', says one worker, while another one exclaims 'what we are struggling for is our right to work and rights cannot be negotiated'. And yet, there is a personal price that they pay. The personal sacrifices and emotional toll of the resistance are evident in the interviews. Workers recount the impact on their families – children left without their parents, loved ones who passed away while they were away from home. Despite these hardships, the unwavering support from their families demonstrates a shared belief in the righteousness of the struggle. One poignant moment features a mother with three children speaking to them about their school reports. She encourages them to continue their education and persevere, just as she continues her fight. Her words, 'I am fighting so that you can have better futures', articulate the

deep personal commitment driving the resistance and the hope for a more just and secure future for her children.

## Confronting violence: The resistance of enough

The collection showcases witness videos of police violence and the protesters' unyielding resolve against state repression. On the third day of the resistance, clashes with police highlight the fight against systemic violence. Despite threats of forceful dispersal, the protesters' defiant spirit remains unshaken. A protester's bold declaration, 'Kill us, kill us, no force can take us out of here', epitomises their commitment and refusal to be subdued by state authority, reflecting a profound determination even in the face of relentless oppression.

The confrontation escalates as the police deploy water cannons to disperse the crowd. Despite being soaked and subjected to the intense force of the water, the workers continue to chant their slogans with unbroken resolve. The chant 'Victory will belong to the resisting labourer' rings out amidst the chaos. The scene becomes even more intense as tear gas is fired into the crowd, creating a dramatic contrast between the heavily protected police officers and the vulnerable bodies of the workers obscured by thick white smoke. The video captures the enveloping clouds of tear gas and the workers' eventual motion to move away from the choking fumes. The footage reveals a tableau of resistance: coughing and shouting punctuate the scene as the gas becomes almost unbearable. Despite the escalating brutality, the workers remain steadfast. The resilience of the protestors is evident as some collapse from the effects of the tear gas, yet no one is left behind. Fellow workers are seen carrying their fallen comrades away from the protest space, offering support even in the midst of their own suffering (Figure 8).

Fig. 8: Day three of the resistance. Editor's view of the Sendika TV video collection on bak.ma.

The scene also shows workers helping each other by handing out lemons, a common remedy to alleviate the burning from tear gas. This mutual aid underscores their collective resolve: 'We will not move from here.' The camera captures individual faces in the midst of the turmoil – some are too affected to act, their middle-aged faces marked by pain as they struggle to breathe, while others look back at the camera with defiant expressions, shouting, 'These are crimes against humanity!' Amid the chaos, some workers are taken into custody, their resistance subdued as they accept the handcuffs. Yet even as they face arrest, the spirit of resistance endures, encapsulating the ongoing struggle and the workers' commitment to their cause.

## Emotional spectrum of protest: The heart of enough

By viewing the video footage, one can discern the trajectory of the resistance and its evolution over the 78-day period, communicated through the overall emotional reality captured. According to Randall Collins, the transformation of one emotion into another is part of the successful social ritual operating in the collective gathering of social movements.[41] Anger and outrage are the core emotions that fuelled the resistance. These emotions were expressed at various moments and often functioned as cathartic sparks. These potent emotions not only united workers but also drew support from a wide range of political groups and organisations. The video footage captures these expressions, revealing how anger and rage mobilised solidarity and protest. Moreover, the recordings provide testimony not only to the initial anger but also, as Collins points out, to its extension beyond, into the enthusiasm bolstered by solidarity, and moments of joy and camaraderie. This emotional spectrum reveals, as time progresses, the workers' growing impatience and boredom, their longing for their families, and the gradual deterioration of the resistance. Particularly in the later recordings, there is a noticeable increase in expressions of sadness, grief, and more depressive emotions among the workers.

On day 78, protesters begin dismantling the camp, marking a pivotal moment in the resistance. Packing up items in their living environments, there is a spectrum of emotion. Some hug each other goodbye, eyes in tears.

One young female protestor expresses anger and betrayal at the decision to end the encampment, feeling as though they are abandoning the fight. Others say to the camera that no, the resistance will continue despite the loss of the common resistance space. The contrast between the dismantling of the camps and the resilience of the protestors creates a bittersweet atmosphere. The homes are reduced to piles of garbage, collected by waiting garbage trucks, marking the end of a chapter. Yet amidst this scene of closure, the spirit of resistance remains undiminished. As garbage trucks clear away the remains, workers with drums chanting slogans enter the frame. The camera follows them as they declare, 'everywhere is Tekel, everywhere is resistance', reaffirming their commitment and inspiring hope for the future.

This imagery and the enduring spirit of the protestors highlight the need to understand the resistance in its full context. Özge Çelikaslan reflects on viewing the Sendika TV footage: 'I had visited the tent-city several times and participated in the demonstrations at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010, yet it was only upon viewing the video footage that I gained a comprehensive understanding of the resistance in all its aspects.'[42] She references Kate Eichhorn, who stresses the importance of alternative archives as spaces for knowledge creation. Eichhorn argues that creating archives often marks the genesis of knowledge, rather than seeking pre-existing knowledge in places and methods that obscure ideas.[43] Such archives write history from the perspective of the subjects as they live it, challenging the dominant narratives imposed by government ideology and their state apparatus, thus shaping a more inclusive and accurate historical record through audiovisual means.

## Conclusion: The spectre of enough

Alternative media and video activist practices, while significant, are not enough to fully address the needs of media historiography and archival documentation of social movements in Turkey. This inadequacy is rooted in political and social factors that systematically disempower, silence, and erase labour struggles and their documentation practices. Consequently, the existing media and archival efforts fall short in capturing and preserving the

comprehensive history and impact of these movements. Despite these challenges, a resilient aesthetic persists in the documentation efforts of grassroots initiatives. This aesthetic approach is the embodiment of an emotion that is conveyed through various communicative strategies in their footage, culminating in a typology of enough.

This effort, characterised by an affective and participatory approach to documenting political events, often involves serendipitous encounters. In the Sendika TV video collection, there is a video titled *Ethem* from day 14 of the resistance. This footage captures Ethem Sarısülük's presence during the Tekel Resistance. Ethem Sarısülük was a protester who was fatally shot in the head by a police officer during the Gezi Park protests in Ankara in June 2013. His appearance in the video offers an example of what we believe is the essence of the aesthetics of enough. As Ethem appears in the camera's frame, walking through the tent-city with his hands in his pockets, his figure stands out amidst the sea of black and grey (Figure 9). His bright red turtleneck sweater symbolises his distinctiveness and serves as a visual representation of hope and determination on day 14 of the resistance. This footage gains added significance when viewed in retrospect, knowing Ethem's fate. Recognising Ethem in the video prompts reflection on his deep commitment to the fight for justice and his political alliances in the recent history of social movements in Turkey.

It evokes a sense of enough, as viewers confront the injustice faced by individuals like Ethem in the present. His death raises questions about the prevalence of such tragedies and the systemic violence perpetuated by capitalism.[44] How many more Ethems are there in the Tekel Resistance? Through the aesthetics of enough, the video reveals the interconnectedness of past and present injustices. Three years after the Tekel resistance, during the Gezi Park protests, many of the tactics and practices exemplified through our typology of enough were adopted, driven by a shared sense of enough. This emotion connected Gezi to Tekel, while today, as this article is being written, the same sense of enough reverberates through the strikes of mine workers in Ankara, demanding improved workplace safety, higher wages, and job security.[45] These ongoing struggles for justice highlight the urgent need for systemic change. The aesthetic dimensions of justice, through visual documentation, challenge the status quo by offering alterna-

tive imaginaries, helping us envision and articulate political futures that resist oppressive structures and provide new avenues for collective action.

Fig. 9: Ethem Sarısülük in the Tekel workers' resistance. Screenshot from the Sendika TV video collection.

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Özge Çelikaslan's visual and scholarly work focuses on counter-media narratives of social struggles, exploring overlooked moving image artifacts and archival absences. She completed her PhD at Braunschweig University of Art, where her research on archives as commons led to her 2024 publication *Archiving the Commons: Looking Through the Lens of bak.ma* (dpr-barcelona). She currently teaches at Mannheim University of Applied Sciences, is a research fellow at the Center for Arts, Design, and Social Research, as well as a digital fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude together with the Bakma Collective.

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## Notes

[1] See https://bak.ma/CCZ/player/00:02:15.406 (accessed on 10 June 2024)

[2] For a historical overview of how film has been used for political purposes, see Waugh 1984 and Hogenkamp 2013. For the emergence of guerrilla television, refer to Boyle 1997. For politically-active video movements of the 1960s and 1970s, see Nigg 2017. To understand how contemporary digital video activism connects with these earlier forms, consult Chanan 2012.

[3] Numerous studies have examined media bias against social movements, focusing on various frameworks that delegitimised these movements, often due to their potential to destabilise the status quo. Cf. Amenta et al. 2012, Dardis 2006, and McLeod & Hertog 1999, among others.

[4] Çoban 2015, pp. vii.

[5] Alexander 2023.

[6] See https://www.youtube.com/@ReelNews (accessed on 3 June 2024)

[7] See https://en.labournet.tv/ (accessed on 3 June 2024)

[8] See https://www.infocomcgt.fr/ (accessed on 3 June 2024)

[9] See https://www.labourstart.org/news/index2019.php (accessed on 3 June 2024)

[10] The footage, shot by İsmet Soydan with support from the Mine Workers Union and produced by Arif Keskiner, includes fictional elements. In his book, Keskiner describes their attempt to create a romantic narrative between two workers amidst the events. The actors are seen in demonstration scenes in Saraçhane Square, blending with the workers and adding a sense of joy. Wide-angle shots capture the large crowds and the workers' collective actions, providing insights into their era and circumstances.

[11] Koçak & Çelik 2016, p. 648.

[12] DİSK was founded in 1967 by the founders of the Workers' Party of Turkey as a breakaway union from the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions. This was following the Trade Union Act of 1964, which allowed workers to organise for collective bargaining and strikes; this gained momentum in the political arena at that time for revolutionary and socialist movements. There are currently over 300,000 members in the organisation.

[13] Kayabaşı 2020.

[14] See https://www.isigmeclisi.org/ (accessed on 17 June 2024)

[15] See ISIG's 2023 report: https://www.isigmeclisi.org/20828-at-least-1843-workers-lost-their-lives-in-work-related-murders-in-2022 (accessed on 17 June 2024)

[16] Odman 2019, p. 112.

[17] Ibid., p. 114.

[18] Topal 2018, p. 280.

[19] Ibid., p. 281.

[20] 2010, n. pag.

[21] Topal 2018, p. 283.

[22] Savran 2010, n. pag.

[23] For a detailed analysis of how the media at the time reinforced dominant ideologies about labor, refer to Çoban & Tuna Çoban (2016).

[24] Gerdûn 2010, n. pag.

[25] ILFF 2010, pp. 37-44.

[26] See https://bak.ma/grid/created/Tekel&category==Tekel (accessed on 17 June 2024)

[27] For video activist typologies, see Askanius 2013; Eder & Tedjasukmana 2020; Notley et al. 2017; Mateos & Gaona 2015.

[28] Goodwin et al. 2001, pp. 1-2.

[29] Özuğurlu 2011, p. 185.

[30] Kuryel & Özden Fırat 2013, p. 43.

[31] Ibid., p. 46.

[32] Ibid., p. 48.

[33] See Erensoy 2019.

[34] See https://bak.ma/CDL/player/00:03:29.774 (accessed on 17 June 2024)

[35] Lefebvre 1991.

[36] See, for example, Butler 2015.

[37] Baker 1996.

[38] Pabst 2010.

[39] Topal 2018, p. 286.

[40] In 2009, the government of Turkey introduced the Kurdish Opening initiative to address Kurdish grievances through reforms and dialogue. While a truce was working until 2013, it fully collapsed in 2015, leading to renewed violence between the state of Turkey and the PKK.

[41] Collins 2001, p. 29.

[42] Çelikaslan 2024, p. 151.

[43] Eichhorn 2014, p. 4.

[44] The capitalist violence in Ethem Sarısülük's case is further accentuated by the fact that police violence and judicial impunity are deeply intertwined, reflecting broader issues of state control and suppression of dissent. Despite clear evidence that the officer who shot Ethem acted unlawfully, his acquittal speaks to systemic issues within policing and the judicial system, where such acts of violence go unpunished, reinforcing the conditions under which social protests are met with aggression. This links back to the dehumanising aspects of capitalist systems, where public dissent is often criminalised.

[45] See https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-police-detain-fernas-miners-on-second-day-of-hunger-strike-news-65109 (accessed on 20 October 2024).