

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF COMPARISON:
CREATIVE LABOR AND OCCIDENTALISM IN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING
IN TURKEY

by

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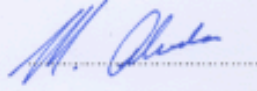
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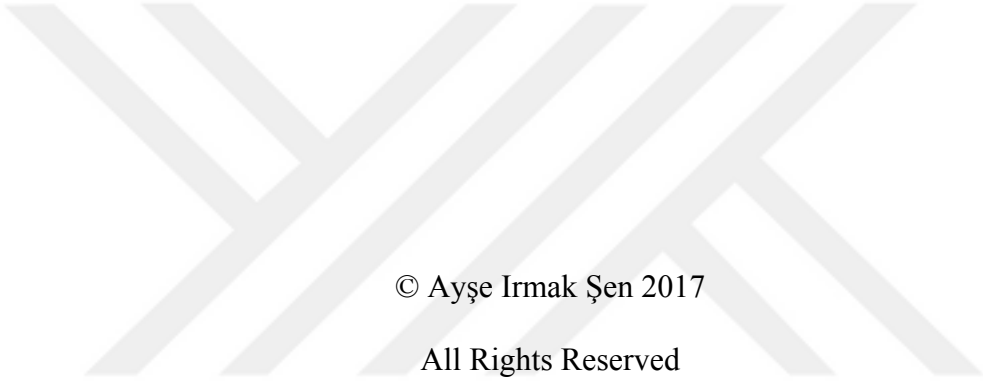
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ABSTRACT

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In order to provide critique of a creative cultural work, besides focusing on political and economic organization of a cultural industry or the content of its end products, some scholars highlighted the importance of focusing on subjective experiences of workers. They argue experiences of the workers must be more in the foreground due to some of characteristics of the work that makes it more complex than other types of work, such as its impacts on the self-esteem of workers or the ambivalent criteria for deciding on the quality of end products of cultural industries. By embracing these perspectives in the literature, with the help of discourses in the empirical data gathered by interviewing with 17 documentary filmmakers, this thesis analyzes subjective experiences of the documentary filmmakers producing in Turkey and accordingly, documentary filmmaking sector of the country.

This thesis argues that the focus of discourses is on the insufficiency of the quantity and quality of documentaries produced in Turkey. However, the literature about documentary filmmaking in Turkey and official accounts address the non-negligible number of documentaries being produced annually in Turkey and they highlight the satisfaction of the audiences and critics on the quality of documentaries. These accounts rather address other kinds of problems such as the visibility and distribution of the documentaries. This thesis argues that the framework of Occidentalism could be useful to discuss the impacts of these discourses and reason of the difference between two tendencies: Discourses that are focusing on the quality and quantity of the documentaries, mostly by emphasizing either being a country that has a strong tradition of cultural production (like 'Western countries') or not, can trap the discussion about the genre. As a result, they can be paving the way of de-emphasizing other kinds of urgent problems of the sector in the country, such as the visibility and distribution of the documentaries.

ÖZET

KARŞILAŞTIRMANIN KISIR DÖNGÜSÜ: TÜRKİYE'DEKİ BELGESELCİLERİN MESLEK ALGILARI VE GARBİYATÇILIK

AYŞE IRMAK ŞEN

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Belgesel, Belgeselcilik, Meslek Çalışmaları, Garbiyatçılık, Kültürel Küreselleşme

Bazı akademik çalışmalar, kültürel üretim yapılan sektörlerdeki iş tanımlarını, çalışanların kendilerini meslekleri ile tanımlama yöneliminin daha fazla olması ve üretilenlerin değerlendirilme aşamasındaki belirsizlikler gibi bazı özellikleri yüzünden diğer sektörlerdeki iş tanımlarından ayırmış ve bu sektörleri kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz edebilmek için çalışanların tecrübelerine başvurulması gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Bahsedilen çalışmaların izinden gidilerek bu tez çalışmasında 17 belgeselci ile yapılan mülakatlar aracılığıyla belgeselcilerin sektör ve çalışma koşulları hakkında yorum yaparken kullandıkları yollar incelenmiş; böylece ülkenin belgeselcilik sektörü değerlendirilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Sonuç olarak belgeselcilerin yaptıkları değerlendirmelerin Türkiye'de üretilen belgesellerin sayısının az olması ve kalitesinin yeterli miktarda olmaması konuları üzerinde yoğunlaştığı ve bu konuların çoğu zaman diğer ülkelerde (genellikle Batı ülkelerinde) üretilen belgeseller ile Türkiye'deki belgeseller arasında karşılaştırma yapılarak tartışıldığı fark edilmiştir. Fakat Türkiye'de belgeselcilik hakkındaki akademik kaynaklara ve resmi kayıtlara bakıldığında son yıllarda üretilen çok sayıda belgesel olduğu görülmekte ve bu belgesellerin içerisinde iyi kalitede belgesellerin olduğu belirtilmektedir. Bu kaynaklarda belgesellerin sayısı veya kalitesinin yanı sıra dağıtımındaki ve izlenirliğindeki sorunlara da dikkat çekilmektedir. Bu tez çalışmasında, bahsedilen iki farklı bakış açısının olası nedenleri ve sonuçları Garbiyatçılık literatüründen faydalanarak tartışılmıştır: Belgeselcilik koşullarını sürekli olarak başka bağlamlar ile (çoğu kez Batı ülkelerindeki sektörler ile) karşılaştıran ve Türkiye'de üretilen belgesellerin kalitesine bu şekilde karar veren söylemin belgesellerin dağıtımını ve izlenirliği hakkındaki problemleri görmezden geldiği ve böylece olası çözüm yollarını gizliyor olabileceği öne sürülmüştür.

To Firuze Avcı, Cemre Maviođlu and Cana Sakaođlu we have lost in 2013, 2016, 2017, respectively, with whom I shared the same classrooms, attended the same lectures at Sabancı University, but did not have a chance to get to know them before they left us.

I can not help wondering whether their decisions would still be the same, if feeling less disappointed was possible in the life of our times, maybe through more variety in the ways we communicate.



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Finally, I would like to mention that this thesis study, in the first place, was possible thanks to the 17 interviewees who generously gave their time and effort.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the four years I spent in documentary sector in Turkey I participated in the small talks during shootings or breaks. Especially, when things did not go well, main topics in these small talks revolved around the working conditions of documentary filmmaking, in which I realized giving reference to documentary filmmakers in Western countries was a popular strategy among filmmakers. This discourse was different from the ones that I had heard before; instead of stereotypic differences of the two different cultural contexts, the examples were more specific and had a tone of disappointment since filmmakers themselves ended up confessing that they have lost the chance to pursue a career in another country. Receptive to these kinds of discourses, this thesis aims to understand what documentary filmmakers think about their documentaries or other documentaries produced in Turkey and their working environments. It also aims to see if filmmakers compare documentaries produced in Turkey and working environments in Turkey with the documentaries that are produced in other countries and working environments of other countries. At the end of the empirical study, the conceptions of creative labor studies and theoretical framework of Occidentalism provided a basis for analyzing discourses surfaced in the interviews. Thus, before introducing the empirical material, in this chapter, the context and conceptions of these studies must be discussed.

1.1 Documentary Filmmakers of Turkey as Creative Cultural Workers

Focusing only to the discourse of the documentary filmmakers is useful while trying to create a representative sample and tracing the similar discourses within similar profiles. However, other reasons of this kind of strategy are explained by the studies focused on the work in the cultural industries. These studies claim cultural industries offer their

workers different working experiences when compared with other types of jobs.¹ Before detailing those differences, describing different approaches in the literature to cultural industries will help to define what is creative cultural work and what are the boundaries of this conception.

Approaches in the literature on cultural industries can be summarized under three categories as Banks, Hesmondhalgh and Baker suggested: Critical theory, Neo-Foucauldian or the governmentality approach and the liberal-democratic approach.² The 'critical theory' approach is based on Marx's notion of alienation of the workers from their products and working processes and Adorno and Horkheimer's account of the 'culture industry.' This approach assumes that the workers of cultural industry are alienated from their working process and their product. Therefore, they are deprived from taking action for their well being in their working environments. In this context, the insecure working conditions that arise from the political and economic organization of the industries, and the quality and the social value of its alienated end products are the main concerns of the scholars. Since the asymmetrical relationship between the commissioners (the capital) and the workers (the labor) is in the foreground even in the recent studies that can be accepted under this category, it is argued that they offer top-down analyses about the cultural work in the industries.³ The subjective experiences of workers are the 'missing subjects' in their perspective.⁴

The second approach in the literature is called as Neo-Foucauldian or the governmentality approach. In this approach, the exploitation of the worker is in the foreground again like in the critical approach, yet unlike the top-down perspective of the critical approach summarized above, this approach puts an emphasis on the subjective experiences of the workers in order to understand the dynamics of the creative cultural work. They use this strategy to find out what are the dynamics of creative work which

¹David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries* (Routledge, 2013), 60.

²Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, Springer, 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*.

³Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, 28; Chris Barker, *The Sage dictionary of cultural studies*, Sage, 2004, 5.

⁴Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 28; Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, 38.

can be ambivalent that can pave the ways for low-quality experiences at work. For example, by detailing the experiences of the workers, they show how the notion of creativity helped workers to internalize flexible working hours and a heavy workload since commissioners and other decision-makers such as audiences and co-workers have the right to say the end product is worthless. Or, because of the prestigious position of the creative careers in the eyes of the public, many people accept to work for free in the beginning of their careers and this situation is threatening older workers in the sector.⁵ (Similar dimensions of creative cultural work that make it fragile will be detailed in the following pages in this chapter.) Also some of the studies within this approach, by looking at the grievances in the sector and discourses of the relevant policies of the governments, emphasize creativity as a buzzword in the discourses, in a way expecting from workers to obey the insecure conditions.⁶ By examining these kinds of dimensions of creative cultural work, studies suggest work in the cultural industries could offer very low-quality experiences to its workers. By highlighting the subjective experiences of the workers and their internalizations of the insecure working conditions, these studies aim to address issues about cultural work in order to encourage resistance movements for seeking better conditions.⁷

The third and final category in the literature on creative work is the liberal-democratic approach, which puts more emphasis on the individual choices of the workers. This approach is accepted by the literature as the optimistic, positive approach when compared with the first and second approaches.⁸ Workers are accepted as autonomous in their preferences in their creative careers because of the variety in the job opportunities through globalization and new technological developments. Those studies do not share the conclusion of the first two categories, that the commissioner-worker relationship in the industries is controlling the workers and leaving nothing much but to obey to the exploitation either by force (critical theory), or voluntarily by internalizing some

⁵Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, 58.

⁶Angela Merobbie, 'Everyone Is Creative: Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy,' in *Contemporary Culture and Everyday Life* ed. Elizabeth Silva et al. (Durham, UK: Sociolgypress, 2004), 12.

⁷Ibid., 65.

⁸Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 12;

characteristics of the cultural work in a self-exploitative way (neo-Foucauldian and governmentality). Rather, this approach suggests that it is up to individuals to be engaged in good working experiences.⁹

This thesis with its methodological strategy distances itself from the critical approach by focusing on the subjective experiences of the workers of the cultural industry. Also, unlike the critical approach, this thesis does not provide a comprehensive account of the political and economic organization of the cultural industry and the quality and social values of the products of those industries.

Focusing on the experiences of the workers, which is also this thesis is trying to do, is a research strategy embraced by the second and the third approaches; yet two approaches diverge on one point. Studies categorized under the second approach¹⁰, on the one hand, see the notion of creativity, as a discourse that will definitely lead to self-exploitation of the worker. On the other hand, the studies that are closer to the third category, besides trying to surface ambivalences arise from the notion of creativity, argue self-exploitation of the workers can be, time to time, a misnomer (for example studies of Taylor and Littleton or Hesmondhalgh and Baker). They, like the second approach, accept that the notion of creativity is overemphasized and contributes to the ambivalent nature of cultural work. They also aim to show how workers can unite and resist for better conditions (such as unionization opportunities). However, by also addressing the positive experiences in the sectors, they are putting a lot more emphasis on the fact that to have a self-exploitative job or not in the cultural industries is the decision of the workers.¹¹

Hesmondhalgh and Baker claim, to study subjective experiences of the workers is as important as to study the quality of the products of creative cultural industries or the political-economic and institutional organization of the industries.¹² Considering creative

⁹Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, 7.

¹⁰Lisa Henderson, "Angela McRobbie, Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Cultural Industries," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 7; Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, (Springer, 2007): 58.

¹¹ Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*; Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*.

¹²*Ibid.*, 49, 55.

work as disguised bad work by claiming that it is alienated can neglect some of other dynamics of creative cultural workers.¹³ Therefore, they wanted to see if there is possibility of 'good work' in the cultural industries although the nature of the work may lead workers to self-exploitation. Rather than dividing the work in the cultural production as 'alienated' and 'unalienated' they use the conceptions of 'good work' and 'bad work'.¹⁴ Their categorization based on the conditions of the working experience such as good wages, working hours, high levels of safety, autonomy in the job, interest to the job, involvement and sociality, the self-esteem and the self-realization of the workers, work-life balance and security.¹⁵ The approach of the studies that focus on the subjective experiences of the workers and to see which areas of the sector does their discourses highlight, the liberal-democratic approach, is also the research concern of this thesis. They put emphasis on personal initiatives of the workers through deciphering the conditions of the creative cultural works. Thus, their conceptions and methodology (interviewing the workers about their experiences) will be used in this thesis. Before proceeding further and start summarizing the main conceptions of the studies, since 'culture' and 'creativity' have open-ended definitions; a simple definition of the work in the cultural industries is useful. Hesmondhalgh and Baker defined creative cultural work as such:

We all, as part of our lives, attempt to formulate, describe and communicate experience. Symbolic creativity -or 'the arts' in Williams's 1950s parlance- should be understood then as particularly intense forms of this ordinary human activity. Creative workers are ordinary too, for they share with anyone else the general capacity to find and organize new descriptions of experience.¹⁶

This definition above describes cultural work through the working process rather than the end product. Creative workers in cultural industries create end products for cultural consumption. While doing that, they use present mediums, or try to create new ones that provide different experiences for communicating with other people. This process defines

¹³Ibid.,77.

¹⁴Ibid.,30.

¹⁵Ibid.,39.

¹⁶Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 61.

the notion of 'creativity'. The creativity process obliges workers to come up with something new more frequently than work in other industries. In order to eliminate the overrated emphasis on creativity today¹⁷ authors accept the working process as 'ordinary', yet they admit, in general, work in the cultural industries offering more complex experiences to its workers when compared other kinds of work experiences. The discussion about the definition of the term 'creativity' and its transformation over the years is provided in detail by the creative labor studies; however authors who are trying to examine the dynamics of creative labor find it more relevant to focus on the perceptions of creativity, and thus, its intersection with the working conditions.

The decisions about the level of creativity of the workers; in other words, decisions on the quality of their end products can be ambivalent. The executives who commissioned the work and the viewers; people from many different backgrounds, can decide on the quality of the works, according to a subjective criteria.¹⁸ Besides the decision of the other people about the quality of the work, the self-evaluation of the worker about his or her job is also more intense than the other sectors. Consequently, workers create cultural products individually or with a team, to be acclaimed by the public or by their self. In this processes, when things do not go well in work, the self-doubt and consequently the self-blaming is also available.¹⁹ Thus, the notion of creativity in the cultural workplace is very much related with the self-esteem of the workers. Because of the never-ending mechanisms of self-evaluation in the work lives, workers can feel vulnerable more frequently as showed in the qualitative studies about the creative labor.²⁰

Another dynamic of the creative work is about enjoyment in work such as socializing opportunities in the working environments. Workers claim the intense teamwork in the industries, (thanks to the long working hours of the cultural industries) are very important

¹⁷Angela Mcrobbie, 'Everyone Is Creative: Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy,' in *Contemporary Culture and Everyday Life* ed. Elizabeth Silva et al. (Durham, UK: Sociolgypress, 2004).

¹⁸Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, (Springer, 2007): 2.

¹⁹Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 7 ;Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 123; Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, (Springer, 2007): 61.

²⁰Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 4.

part of the work in the cultural industries. For example in Hesmondhalgh and Baker's study, interviewees presented the possibility to be able to create something together as the favorite part of their jobs. Socializing and fun was not only present in the teamwork, but also in some of the careers in the cultural industries which required travelling, meeting with different people, encountering with different cultures.²¹ Besides the self-esteem and the process of working with a team, workers expressed that in the cultural work there is always room for self-improvement since daily tasks are enabling them to keep learning; for example while researching for a project or being together with inspiring people.²²

As described above, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, in their empirical study, did not deny positive working experiences in the cultural industries; yet they also highlighted the negative conditions that may occur, as work-life balance is not very stable in the sector.²³ An example will be illustrative about this subject. For example, one subject in Hesmondhalgh and Baker's study, who is a freelance music writer, talks about the period of his life when he was struggling to find a job as: 'that dark place where I panic – "I'm never going to work again and it's impossible to earn a living and I should go and get a [proper] job really"' –working at a *bank* or something'.²⁴ They referred the problematic dynamics of the autonomy of the workers in those industries as 'a very complicated version of freedom', or in their one other study they mention a phrase from a rap singer who presented his work as 'the hardest way to make an easy living'.²⁵ Those definitions are highlighting the dimension of the creative work where dynamics of the cultural work can also frustrate individuals by making them feel insecure about their performance.²⁶

²¹Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 129.

²²Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 129.

²³Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 138.

²⁴Hesmondhalgh, David, and Sarah Baker. "'A very complicated version of freedom': Conditions and experiences of creative labour in three cultural industries." *Poetics* 38, no. 1 (2010): 4-20.

²⁵Hesmondhalgh, David. "User-generated content, free labour and the cultural industries." *Ephemera* 10, no. 3/4 (2010): 267-284.

²⁶Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 86.

Scholars who were trying to focus on the subjective experiences realized that there are ambivalences in the discourses about creative cultural work.²⁷ For example, as quoted above, one subject of the qualitative study presented working in a bank as a 'proper job'. Interestingly, working in a bank has been also used as an example by Selin, who is interviewed for the empirical study of this thesis. However Selin, perceives her experiences working in documentary filmmaking as an advantage compared to working in a bank; while the participant in Hesmondhalgh and Baker's study finds his freelance music writing career unsecure and regrets not having a job in a bank with a stable income.

Two different preferences summarized in the last paragraph show the contradictory discourses are available about the creative work. In the studies this situation was presented as the difficulty to decide on the quality of creative cultural work²⁸; yet at the end of their empirical study scholars were able to comment on the problems of the work by tracing the inconsistencies between the discourses and some of facts about the sectors (such as the unemployment rate, unionization, etc.). For example, at the end of their qualitative study, Taylor and Littleton suggest that the focus of the problems in the discourses in their empirical evidence may be misdirected because there were inconsistencies between some of the positive experiences of the young workers and negative experiences of the older workers. The workers in the latter group were more pessimistic about their work and life balance and bring their disappointments about their career choices into the discussion.²⁹

As introduced, the studies on the creative labor were about the grey area while deciding on the quality of the work and the problems in work-life balance because of the correlations between the quality of the products, production process and self-esteem of the workers. However there is no emphasis on the perception of being 'peripheral

²⁷ Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries.*; Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work.*; Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, (Springer, 2007).

²⁸ Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 137.

²⁹ Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 141.

producer' within the cultural globalization. This can be a dimension of the self-esteem, which was introduced as important dimension of the cultural work above, of the creative cultural workers in Turkey. As will be showed in detail in the empirical study of this thesis, most of the documentary filmmakers accepted the Western productions as more qualified than the documentaries produced in Turkey. While they are describing their motivation to produce the 'real' documentaries (which are, according to interviewees, hard to produce within the sector of Turkey), most of them are suggesting criteria based on Western productions. Also, interviewees are motivated to idealize working conditions of Western peers while they are talking about their working experiences.

This thesis, while trying to analyze the subjective experiences of the documentary filmmakers also aimed to explain the discourses about producing documentaries in Turkey and tried to use the conceptions of the creative labor studies introduced above such as the self-esteem, the self-exploitation of the workers and feelings of workers about their jobs. To see if the conceptions of those studies can explain the creative labor in Turkey is the first aim of this thesis. Second aim of this thesis is to address how those comparisons are made. By doing that it aims to make a comprehensive analysis about some of the dynamics that may be specific to the Turkish sector. It suggests, the shift of focus towards comparing self with the other countries in the Turkish context, when compared with creative labor studies in the literature, can be described through some of the ideas of the studies about cultural globalization and critiques of modernity. Thus, some of the ideas of these studies will be summarized under following sections.

1.2 Cultural Globalization: The *Work of Imagination* and Documentary Filmmaking in Turkey

Tomlinson describes cultural globalization as *complex connectivity*; the increased interconnectedness between contexts.³⁰ For example, today, like the all other cultural

³⁰ John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

goods, documentaries produced all over the world are more accessible than ever. In this context, since international conglomerates producing cultural goods have superior access to masses, one can argue that they are monopolizing cultural production and thus there is cultural homogenization. Since this thesis is about documentary filmmaking, the popularity of the worldwide documentary channel National Geographic Channel or BBC documentaries in Turkey can be examples. However, some of the studies of cultural globalization are skeptical about accepting that the complex connectivity is accelerating homogenization. They suggest much more complex process for explaining how the local and the global sectors are interacting. Their frameworks are receptive to find out how contexts are connected specifically, according to the needs of the local actors (the consumers and producers of cultural goods) who are free agents.³¹ Hence, according to them, formulating this interaction as homogenization can lead to neglect of context-specific dimensions.³²

Appadurai, who can be categorized under the latter category summarized above, suggests that *work of imagination* is one of the essential reasons behind the actions of the individuals today. Because the ways of consuming cultural goods (that is triggering the imagination of the individuals) is available for everyone; not only for the privileged group, everybody is influenced by the work of imagination in their actions.³³ In the context of this thesis, thanks to the complex connectivity of cultural globalization, documentary filmmakers are constantly comparing their self, their job and their documentaries with their peers all around the world. According to Appadurai's framework, that situation is the work of imagination and has a say on their decisions in

³¹ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

³² Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond "culture": Space, identity, and the politics of difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 6 ;John Tomlinson, *Globalization and culture*, (University of Chicago Press, 1999) ; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3-5.; Ian Condry, "The Social Production of Difference: Imitation and Authenticity in Japanese Rap Music," in *Transactions, Transgressions, and Transformations*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach et al, (New York: Berghan Books, 2000): 180.

³³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3, 5, 7.

life. Therefore, focusing on the way that those comparisons are build by workers in Turkey can help to understand documentary filmmaking in Turkey better.

Examining the work of imagination of a group of local actors (documentary filmmakers in Turkey) could help understand their position within cultural globalization better; yet this thesis does not directly address the new dynamics of global cultural economy. However, the ideas of cultural globalization mentioned above provide an approach that does not accept documentary filmmaking as a predictable, local extension of a monopolized and homogenized global schema for cultural production which is shaped by the Western dominance).

The studies of creative labor highlight the grey areas while deciding on the quality of the products and jobs of the industries. The ambiguity, time to time related with the self-esteem of the workers. The aforementioned cultural globalization studies introduce interconnectedness and invite one to explore the reactions of local actors within the cultural globalization because it is key for a better understanding of the contexts. The discourses of documentary filmmakers of Turkey; surfaced while using set of arguments when they were comparing their conditions and productions with other countries, might be shaped by encountering with the works of other countries. Thus, this thesis argued the perception of being a local documentary filmmaker within the cultural globalization, is a dimension of creative labor in Turkey and it is connected with the self-esteem of the workers.

1.3 Theoretical Framework of Occidentalism

The discourses in the empirical evidence of this thesis that can be in relation with the documentaries watched or knowledge about working conditions gathered from various sources (or in some cases merely through the assumptions of the general image about West in the mind of workers) were mostly expressed through the West-East dichotomy. Thus, conceptions of critiques of modernity and the theoretical framework of

Occidentalism are useful in order to understand the ways the Western image is built in the arguments about documentaries and working experiences.

Mitchell, with the theoretical framework of 'stage of modernity' argues how modernity requires a single narrative in historicity. He gives the example of one-sided story of the development of capitalism although 'non-Western' contributions had a critical role in its development³⁴. The single narrative of history depicts different characteristics of the non-Western contexts as not compatible with their journey to become 'modern'.

With the singular historicity of the modern, the time difference between the West/the modern/the model and the East/traditional/copy is announced and temporality is brought into question³⁵. The singular narratives in historicity has carried the discussions of being 'Western' and 'Eastern' out of geography since there is a singular historical time of modernity. The copy has not yet become the model; thus, its historical time is not same with the model. The *change* required for overcoming this gap, to becoming modern like the model, related with the discourses about temporality. For example, like the *belatedness syndrome* or permanent *urgency* to catch the Western model (in other words, being in the same period of time with the model). More importantly, with the announcement of the singular historical time, as Ahiska claimed, change has become "something to be manufactured according to a model rather than something that would be socially experienced." She characterizes the Turkish context in the following way:

Provoked by the anxiety of always being late to modernity, Occidentalism in Turkey appears as a refusal to know the complexity and heterogeneity of the social, which is consequently reduced to a national idiom and captured in the constantly reproduced timeless polarity of West and East.³⁶

As the scholars who criticized the Turkish modernity also claim, the non-Western subjects are influenced in their identity and historicity building (because it is yet the

³⁴ Timothy Mitchell "The Stage of Modernity," in *Questions of Modernity* ed. Timothy Mitchell (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 12.

³⁵ Mitchell "The Stage of Modernity," 7.

³⁶ Ahiska, "Occidentalism and registers of truth: The politics of archives in Turkey," 26. ; Ahiska, "Occidentalism. The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," 354-357.

copy, or as Göle's conception, is a 'weak historicity'³⁷) by the Western gaze they had interacted or imagined.³⁸ Thus, non-Western subjects also legitimize the singular historicity of the modernity by constantly reproducing differences between what is modern (model) and what has not yet become model according to a singular historicity for example with their modernization strategies (their self, the copy)³⁹. Consequently, the announcement of the model and the copy it is not a top-down process, non-Western and Western subjects both have role on it. This allowed examining the singular historicity narratives of non-Western actors worthwhile in order to understand 'the stage of modernity'.

The conception of Occidentalism framework, developed by Ahıska, allows to trace the conceptions of temporality summarized above in Turkey. Thus, Occidentalism will be used as the main framework while trying to analyze some discourses surfaced in the interviews. Before proceeding further and detailing theoretical framework of Occidentalism, first Said's *Orientalism* must be introduced.

Said's Orientalism reveal how the ways while making a distinction between East and West is providing a base for asymmetrical power relations. For example, Said describes how Napoleon Bonaparte was accompanied 'by chemists, historians, biologists, archeologists, surgeons and antiquarians'⁴⁰ on his campaign to Egypt. At the end of comprehensive study on every aspect of the Egypt, between the years 1809-1828, twenty-three episode *Description De L'Egypte* was published.⁴¹ According to Orientalism framework of Said, the mechanism of defining all of the aspects of Egypt (the Eastern subject) is establishing a medium that is based on declaration of knowing the country

³⁷Nilüfer Göle, *Mühendisler ve İdeoloji*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları): 1986. 23.

³⁸Ahıska, "Occidentalism. The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," 354-357.

³⁹Immanuel Wallerstein, *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1996), 5; Timothy Mitchell "The Stage of Modernity," in *Questions of Modernity* ed. Timothy Mitchell (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 8. ; Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism and registers of truth: The politics of archives in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 34 (2006): 9-29. ; Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism. The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102: 2-3 (2003): 354-357.

⁴⁰Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 83.

⁴¹Timothy Mitchell "The Stage of Modernity," 4.

better than its subjects and this process is not disconnected from the legitimization having power over the country. The West, who has a right to represent the East, also have the right to make critical decisions about the East, without the need of being in dialogue with its actors, the local authorities, and that complex mechanism will at the end cause violence.

According to some perspectives in the literature, Occidentalism is accepted as the reverse of the Orientalism framework, which is summarized above so far. This tenor is defining Occidentalism as an act of Eastern subject; seeing the superior West and its elements (such as the modern city, gender equality, democracy) as a threat for the Non-Western lifestyles and identities. Studies suggest the anti-Westernism is part of the nation-building processes of the non-Western actors, as described in Buruma and Margalit's book called *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*⁴² It was reverse of Orientalism; because as in the Said's framework, distorted image of the subject is allowing a specific way of action, which is in most cases hostile to other. Similarly, Buruma and Margalit show how the Occidentalism, the distorted image of the West in the eyes of the Non-Western actors can drag them to fundamentalism.⁴³

Ahıska diverts the term from being the reverse of Orientalism by saying that Occidentalism is Westernism and anti-Westernism at the same time.⁴⁴ She suggests Occidentalism is a framework, which is not a set of behaviors and consequences, which is distorting an image, and as the consequent of this action: harming the subjects, which is addressed by this image. Rather, it seeks to understand dynamics of the contexts where the 'Western' and the 'Eastern' images are encountered. These dynamics are not predictable because of the authentic dimensions of contexts. They are built, in every moment, according to the needs in the contexts and within the boundaries of the history of interactions of the Western and Eastern images in the contexts.

⁴²Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, (New York: Penguin, 2005); 50-73.

⁴³Ibid. 149.

⁴⁴Meltem Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting*. London: IB Tauris, 2010, 5.

The theoretical framework of Ahıska suggests, in Turkey, in the discourses where the 'Western' and 'Eastern' images of the actors encountering each other; there is an imagined Western gaze. The way the Western gaze is built is not easy to formulate because, during these processes, the image of the West, sometimes does not have a demonstrable connection with the West.⁴⁵ In her context, tracing those processes in the light of the needs (for example, political aims) of the local groups (such as political elites) is equally important. Since Occidentalism is not a particular formulation of behaviors, and occurs according to needs of groups in the contexts; Occidentalism is not always strengthening the West and hindering the East. In addition to the power asymmetry between what is conceptualized as the Eastern (for example Turkey) and the Western actors, the possible power asymmetries that arise from Occidentalism can also be only within the Eastern contexts. For example; as Ahıska shows, Occidentalism enabled radio broadcasters in Turkey in the 1940's to fantasize a society that does not exist.

One of the common consequences of Occidentalism is about how it might be veiling social heterogeneity by trapping the meanings and discussions between the East and West dichotomy.⁴⁶ Ahıska, while providing the theoretical framework of Occidentalism, or other scholars like Koğacıođlu, Parla, Döşemeci or Karaca who were thinking about the dichotomies; modern and the traditional⁴⁷ or being European or not⁴⁸ focus on the issue of neglecting the real dynamics while thinking about contexts which were much more complex than the way they were illustrated. Trapping the discussion to what is conceptualized as Western modernity and non-Western modernity or to the model and the copy can provide a perspective, which will be unable to provide comprehensive analyses.⁴⁹

⁴⁵Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı* (İstanbul: Metis, 2005), 39 ; Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism. The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102: 2-3 (2003): 352.

⁴⁶Meltem Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting*. London: IB Tauris, 2010.

⁴⁷Dicle Koğacıođlu, "The tradition effect: framing honor crimes in Turkey," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 15 (2004):119-151. ;Ayşe Parla, "The" honor" of the state: virginity examinations in Turkey," *Feminist Studies* 27.1 (2001): 65-88.

⁴⁸ Mehmet Döşemeci, *Debating Turkish Modernity: Civilization, Nationalism, and the EEC*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Banu Karaca. "Governance of or through culture? Cultural policy and the politics of culture in Europe." *Focaal* 55 (2009): 133.

⁴⁹Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı* (İstanbul: Metis, 2005), 306.

Besides this shortcoming, according to them, the identities and historicity of Turkish modernity which is trapped between the West and the East dichotomy can pave the way for grievances, inequalities or state violence; thus, they aim to decipher the consequences of those ways of representations, ambivalent nature of identity building based on dichotomies and as a consequence the inevitable complicities. Since they show how these processes could have results on the societies, they inspired this thesis to understand discourses of documentary filmmakers that are relatable with their frameworks.

This thesis suggests that the discourses detected in the interviews about subjective experiences of documentary filmmakers, could be analyzed through Ahiska's concept of Occidentalism for explaining the dimensions of Turkish documentary filmmaking. As discussed in detail above, the literature about creative labor argues that self-evaluation and subjective experiences are more in the foreground in the creative cultural work. The Occidentalism framework that encourages to detail encounters of the Western and Eastern images and also receptive to the subjectivities and performance of actors, in the context of this thesis, according to an ambivalent Western gaze, can be also useful to understand dynamics of subjective experiences. Also, while looking at the trends in the empirical study, the concepts copy and model and the belatedness syndrome that are summarized above and which theoretical framework of Occidentalism comprises, can explain some themes that are surfaced in the empirical study.

The nation building process of Turkey (provided with early radio broadcasting context), the EU negotiation period of early 2000s and historical archives were the contexts which Ahiska uses to illuminate the conception of Occidentalism. So the framework of Occidentalism was used for making political, sociological and historical analyses about Turkey. Because of its research question, this thesis falls short for those kinds of analyses. In order to illustrate how the framework of Occidentalism will be used in the thesis, a brief summary of the argument of this thesis is required.

At the end of the empirical study it seen that filmmakers decided to step out from the institutionalized sector in order to produce documentaries that will have better quality.

(Documentaries free of the government restrictions, commercial interests, or in some discourses; documentaries like the ones in the Western countries.) Thus, documentary filmmakers felt the obligation to make personal investment in order to produce documentaries. Discourses surfaced about documentary filmmaking were more about the quality of the productions; less emphasis was on other problems mentioned by the literature, such as the visibility and distribution of the documentaries that are produced. Thus, it is argued that the focus on quality and quantity of documentaries in the Turkish sector (which is the copy); mostly by comparing documentaries and working conditions between Turkey and other countries (mostly Western countries, as models), and the urgency to create more and more documentaries which must have better qualities, may be de-emphasizing other kinds of problems, in other words, missing to address the complexities of the documentary filmmaking.

On the one hand, the theoretical framework of Occidentalism and other studies that criticize Turkish modernity conduct historical and political analyses of the contexts. For example they criticize the modernization periods of the countries or explain the nation building processes of countries with the conceptions of the critiques of modernity. On the other hand, this thesis, while using theoretical framework of Occidentalism, is focusing on documentary filmmaking in Turkey today, in order to understand its dynamics and problems better as a branch of creative labor in cultural production in Turkey. Using the framework of Occidentalism to understand creative cultural workers of Turkey but not being able to refer to the historical and political dimensions of the Occidentalism is indeed a shortcoming. One explanation of borrowing the conceptions of aforementioned studies can be to see if the conceptions and themes of Occidentalism reverberated in the discourses of creative cultural workers. Deciphering the internalization of the cultural workers of the arguments that can be related with Occidentalism can make the efforts of this thesis worthwhile because documentary filmmakers have role on cultural production; have potential to create cultural goods, which will have effect on masses.

Another shortcoming of using framework of Occidentalism for understanding documentary filmmakers is the danger of being trapped again in West and East

dichotomy. In order to trace discourses about Occidentalism in the arguments, the questions asked were aiming to see if the filmmakers are comparing the productions of the countries. Although asking whether the documentary filmmakers think there are differences in the conditions of documentary filmmaking between the countries is not directing interviewees to provide arguments based on West-East dichotomy, it may be encouraging a discourse that can be related with Occidentalism.

A more important issue than encouraging the West-East dichotomy is about the argumentation of this thesis. *Ahıska* addresses the shortcoming of a kind of argumentation which suggests Turkey is actually modern, thus, offering that there is no need to make comparisons between Turkey and Western countries, and blaming others in the country for ‘doing’ Occidentalism (illustrated with the argumentation of İzzeddin Şadan's piece in *Yeni Adam* magazine published in 1937) As *Ahıska* suggested, he tried to address the inferiority complex in the discourses by again actually expressing in a way his inferiority complex. Because, he was blaming others for not being convinced that they were the same with the West.⁵⁰ This argumentation again trapped the discussion between the West and East dichotomy. The research question and the theoretical frame of this thesis tried its best to avoid analyses that claim documentary filmmaking in Turkey and filmmakers can produce documentaries as good as other countries that the interviewees thinks they are superior. Also, thesis is not trying to show the discourses where problems of Turkey surfaced are delusional in a sector where everything is going well. Rather, this thesis tried using concepts of Occidentalism in areas where it sees inconsistencies in the specific discourses about documentary filmmaking. For example with asking why is there no satisfaction over the documentaries produced in Turkey or why the number of documentaries produced is underestimated by the filmmakers. By showing some shortcomings of the arguments that can be related with Occidentalism, and by showing their possible reflections on the decisions about taking an action for a better sector, this thesis tried to suggest a perspective on documentary filmmaking in Turkey which can address its more urgent problems today in a more specific way, without the West-East dichotomy in discussions.

⁵⁰*Ahıska, Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı*, 81-82.

The organization of the thesis will be as follows: In the next section of this chapter, the methodology of gathering empirical evidence for this thesis will be presented. After the initials of the genre in Turkey is briefly mentioned and the literature review about documentary filmmaking literature is provided in the second chapter, in the third chapter, with the help of the current literature on documentary filmmaking and with the relevant empirical material, the facts of documentary filmmaking (such as the opportunities in broadcasting and funding, regulations, censorship, etc.) is provided. In the second part of this chapter, a career pattern, which is argued as specific for Turkey is presented and analyzed with the help of the creative labor literature introduced in the Introduction chapter. With the light of these findings, some of the other subjective experiences, the opinions of documentaries produced in Turkey, about working environments, perception of amount and quality of the works produced is described. Those discourses cannot be accepted as they are completely about the facts of documentary filmmaking since they reason the lacking features of the sector by cultural characteristics of the country. While looking at those discourses, the framework of Occidentalism is provided; because its conceptions can provide an understanding to see which problems and areas in the production of documentaries is addressed most and why.

1.5 Methodology

Snowball sampling and purposive sampling was used together in this thesis. First interviewees were the co-workers whom I had personal connections. After these interviews, I asked their recommendations. From this recommendation pool, in order to form a relatively representative sample, I selected different profiles based on their level of experience, specialization in the sector, and way of producing. From the Appendix B, reader can reach to the short biographies of the every interviewee in order to trace selection of profiles. Semi-structured method is used in the interviews since it allows

broader space for sharing the working experiences of the interviewees.⁵¹ Interviews were in Turkish language.

The interview questions, which can be found in Appendix A, were designed according to hear first the details about the career of the documentary filmmaker (Question 1), then their evaluations of the sector (Question 2, 5, 6) and their evaluations of local works and foreign works (Question 3). To understand if they think there is a difference between their conditions and conditions of documentary makers in other countries and (if they suggested) to hear their suggestions for the improvement of the sector there was Question 7 and 8. To see if they think technology was affecting the conditions of the sector the Question 11 was asked. Question 12 was about their future plans in order to learn more about their careers. The duration of the interviews was no longer than one and a half an hour. Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5, which was asked to see if interviewees are providing a comparison between Turkey and the other countries and the questions 6, 7 and 8 which was asked to understand what is ways of suggesting and producing of the filmmakers in Turkey, was the priority during the interviews. Thus, in few interviews where there was limited time, questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 was neglected.

The interviews recorded with a voice-recorder except one interview where I took notes. Throughout the thesis, I used pseudonyms for my interviewees in order to protect their privacies.

1.5.1 Conceptualizations

In order to make sense of the sampling strategy and interview questions, some concepts about the documentary filmmaking sector of Turkey that are used in this thesis must be defined. The definition that claims documentaries are about non-fictional issues about life is useful; but can be too general. A popular discussion about the nature of the

⁵¹Herbert J. Rubin, and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*, (London: Sage, 2011): 5.

representation of reality and fiction, which has accelerated in the recent years, shows the difficulty to set boundaries of defining documentary. In the piece called 'What is documentary?' published in the March-April volume of the British movie magazine *Little White Lies*, 18 documentary directors offered 18 different definitions of documentary.⁵² In similar context, Bill Nichols offers to define 'documentaries' (which is a term as much as open-ended as 'culture' according to him) through more than one perspective, such as through the transformation genre throughout the years, documentary filmmakers and its viewer and institutions that are contributed for documentary filmmaking.⁵³

Embracing the eclectic way of defining documentaries like Nichols, this thesis study did not clearly defined what is documentary during the questions. For example, it did not offer distinction between television documentaries and documentary movies, because the production phases, subjects, working style, platforms for broadcasting and the products in these two might be intertwined. Also, the discussion of what is a documentary may be intertwined with the discussion of whether the Turkish productions (both television and movie productions) can be considered as the real documentaries in the account of interviewees. Finding out what was the definition filmmakers presented for a documentary was also important for this thesis; so questions aimed to hear the definition and the differentiations (if they think there are) from the interviewees. Thus, in the questions, 'documentary' is offered as a general term which comprise both television documentaries and documentary movies.

With the similar concerns with the decision to focus both on television documentaries and documentary movies, the interviewees in the sample are not selected according to their specializations. The sample includes directors, directors of photography, producers, copywriters and executives from the sector. Filmmakers of Turkey combine those professions and it is not quite possible to hear experiences based on one specialization. For example, some of them are both the director and the producer of the documentaries or

⁵²Laurene Boglio, "What is documentary?," *Little White Lies*, Mar-Apr, 2016, 21-25.

⁵³Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to documentary*. Indiana University Press, 2017, 43.

some of them are both copywriter and producer. However, considering the possibility to find differences, I asked every interviewee about their job definitions in the first question.

The last choice in the conceptualization is about naming the documentary filmmaking in Turkey as a 'sector'. Throughout the thesis and the interview questions, documentary filmmaking in Turkey is presented as a sector, since the state and private funding, documentary channels and job definitions about documentary filmmaking are present in Turkey. However, because these elements in the Turkish sector was insufficient, the discussion about whether one can say that there is a 'Turkish sector' or not, was one of the common discussions in the interviews which will be mentioned in the next chapter.

The interviews were listened carefully, the most used phrases and most indicated problems, the familiarities and differences between the narratives were traced. The amount of subjects that came into surface in the short duration of the interviews is, in a way, impressive; however it brings disappointment at the same time. Thus, the scope of the data gathered through this methodology is debatable by its very nature. Still, this thesis agrees with Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who said “if enough care is applied to interviews, they can provide relevant knowledge not only about language and the rhetorical strategies people use, but about the phenomena that interviewer and interviewee are seeking to address.”⁵⁴

From the document which could be downloaded from the web address, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nm4eku32h442894/De%C5%9Fifreler.docx?dl=0>, reader can reach to the transcriptions of interviews.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING IN TURKEY

⁵⁴Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 16.

In this chapter, a brief summary of past years of documentary filmmaking in Turkey will be provided with the help of the literature about documentary filmmaking in order to introduce the context of Turkish documentary filmmaking. Then the literature review about documentary filmmaking literature will be summarized and a research gap that this thesis aims to address will be offered.

2.1 Documentary Filmmaking in Turkey: The Initials

The Central Military Office of Cinematography (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi*), was established in year 1915, by Enver Pasha's initiative after he saw the equivalent of the department in his trip to Germany.⁵⁵ The department was working for nationalistic purposes and mostly produced propaganda movies. According to most of the accounts, one of those movies, even there is no record of somebody ever seen it, 'The Demolition of the Russian Monument at St. Stephen' (*Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı*, 1914) accepted as the first documentary produced in Turkey. The shooting equipment for this documentary and the crew was provided by Vienna by the Central Military Office of Cinematography. However, it was found more appropriate if a Turk, Fuat Uzkınay who was an officer in the department, conducted the project.⁵⁶ The Central Military Office of Cinematography continued to make movies.⁵⁷ Also, towards the end to the Turkish War of Independence, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey has established the *Ordu Film Alma Dairesi*, and collected and shot motion pictures of the war. Unfortunately, those archives are lost again like the first documentary movie: 'The Demolition of the Russian Monument at St. Stephen'.

The documentary, 'Ankara, The Heart of Turkey' (*Türkiye'nin Kalbi Ankara*) accepted as an important production in documentary filmmaking in Turkey by the scholars since

⁵⁵Filiz Susar, *Türkiye'de Belgele Sinemacılar*, (Istanbul: Es Yayınları, 2004): 16.

⁵⁶Necati Sönmez: 'Documentary in Turkey: the 2000s' in *Cinema Turkey: New Times, New Tendencies* edited by Gözde Onaran, Fırat Yücel, *Altyazı Project Office*, (2011): 60.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Turkish documentary filmmakers started to mimic the style of this documentary.⁵⁸ Sergei Yutkevic and Lev Oscarovich Arnstam were charged to shot that movie by the Soviet Union for the celebration of the 10th year of the Turkish Republic. The movie was re-discovered in 1969 and is now open to public access.

Some movies produced under *İpek Film*, which was the second private film studio that was established in 1928, are accepted as early documentaries. Nazım Hikmet Ran's *Düğün Gecesi* and Hazım Körmükçü's *Yeni Karagöz* which were produced in 1933⁵⁹ are movies like that; yet, it is commonly accepted as until 1950, the documentary filmmaking was mostly under the monopoly of the state.⁶⁰ The development that has changed the dynamics has taken place in the year 1956 when the Istanbul University Film Center was established by Sabahattin Eyuboğlu and Mazhar Şevket İpşiroğlu. One of the documentary produced by this center about the Anatolian Civilizations called *The Hittite Sun (Hitit Güneşi)*, was also internationally acclaimed, won the Silver Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival.⁶¹ This movie and the establishment of the center was a milestone in documentary filmmaking in Turkey, since the documentary filmmaking started to get rid of state monopoly. The center continued to produce documentaries until the 1974, contributed to the development of the genre in the country.⁶²

The establishment of the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) in the year 1968 was important because this situation have reinvented the dynamics between the audiences and the documentary filmmaking, through broadcasting documentaries from television. Especially on the establishment years, TRT's efforts to create documentaries were very remarkable.⁶³ Before the Internet and the DVDs people watched documentaries from television, only from TRT, state owned channel of Turkey, until 1989.⁶⁴ While

⁵⁸ Can Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' in *The City in the Turkish Cinema* ed. Özge Başgüney (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2014):115.

⁵⁹Susar, *Türkiye'de Belgesel Sinemacılar*, 17.

⁶⁰Ibid., 18.

⁶¹ Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 111.

⁶²Ibid., 116.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴ Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 118.

introducing the impact of TRT; the television broadcasting, to the documentaries, mentioning the transformation of the word *belgesel* (which means 'documentary' in Turkish) is useful.

The word 'documentary' is used first in 1926, when Grierson wrote a critic about Flaherty's movie *Moana* and still being used in the English language.⁶⁵ However, according to Erkılıç's literature review about documentary filmmaking, non-fiction movies in Turkey were first called as *belge film*. Even though today all documentaries are referred as *belgesel*, there was a period where the two words were used together; because critics thought there was a difference between the terms *belge film* and *belgesel*. According to Erkılıç the term *belge film* have been abandoned in the beginning of 2000's⁶⁶

This difference between the *belgesel* and *belge film* was reflecting the two perspectives while looking at the genre. The latter is very rigid in its relationship with reality. It was expository; the focus is not on the features of the film that is related with the issues such as representation of the reality or its interaction with the audience. Unlike *belgesel*, it did not take into account perspectives of viewers, such as the concerns like being absorbing, easy to watch. TRT's role and the television documentaries have changed the dynamics of documentary producing, as filmmakers and commissioners became more interested with the ratings. This dynamic, started to shape the dynamics of documentary filmmaking in Turkey. In other words, the *belge film* was transforming to *belgesel*.⁶⁷

The shift towards *belgesel* can be easily related to the monthly news program *32. Gün*, that started being broadcasted from the year 1985 by the TRT. A new type of television documentary, which was absorbing, easy to watch, not categorized the ones as 'boring' with its didactic tone has emerged. Also, with *Sarı Zeybek* (1993), made by Can Dündar

⁶⁵Hakan Erkılıç, 'Türkiye'de Belgesel Sinema Literatürü Üzerine: Belge Film'den Belgelele,' in *Sinecine* 6:2 (2015): 109.

⁶⁶Ibid., 107.

⁶⁷Ibid.

who were also from the 32. *Gün* team, this type of documentaries started to be available for not only televisions; also for platforms like VHS, DVD or etc.⁶⁸

Documentary filmmakers have found chances to try new methods and styles while shooting documentaries since the TRT and private channels were contributing more for the development of the genre. The late 1990's were the years many documentary filmmakers started to produce independently; but especially after the middle of the 2000's the game changer event took place. DSLR machines, small sized cameras for photography but also able to shoot very high quality videos was on the market. Most of the documentaries are shoot today by especially the most popular type of DSLR machines; the Canon Mark III since it is affordable and has capacity to shoot high quality videos.⁶⁹

Filmmakers who were interviewed for this research referred those change as the 'DSLR revolution' (*'DSLR Devrimi'*) many times during the interviews. It was commonly shared in the interviews that to make a documentary with a good visual quality, which can be acclaimed worldwide, today, one only needs a camera, a lens set and a tripod. This new state in filmmaking brought similar features to the documentary filmmaking sector with the framework of Appadurai. While he is talking about the interconnectedness of the contexts now, he introduces the importance of 'work of imagination' for everyone. The process of taking an action accordingly work of imagination is now not only for privileged people. Similarly, besides the cultural consumption, the opportunities for cultural production are also available for everyone thanks to the *DSLR revolution*; because the equipment to make documentaries is affordable for more people today. This provided many actors to express their experiences by playing with the mediums easily thanks to the technology.⁷⁰ Those conditions in especially in the last three decade formed the backbone of the documentary filmmaking today, where it is accepted that there is

⁶⁸Ibid., 119.

⁶⁹Nazım Ankaralıgil, *DSLR Kameralar İle Kısa Film ve Belgesel Yapımı*, (Konya: Literatürk Academia, 2015).

⁷⁰Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3-5.

variety in the story-telling methods, in the broadcasting opportunities and productions.⁷¹ Those conditions also blurred the line between the amateur and professional production and extended the discussion of the definition of documentaries since the amount and the variety of the documentaries in the field increased. In order to illustrate the complex dynamics of today in Turkey, features of the sector will be detailed in the next chapter.

2.2 The Literature on Documentary Filmmaking in Turkey

Apart from the studies about documentary filmmaking that are not specific to the Turkish context (such as highlighting the types of the medium or the genre itself) studies in the literature about documentary filmmaking in Turkey can be summarized in three categories. The first category entails the works that review documentary filmmaking in Turkey in a chronologic way in order to make sense of the current situation of the sector.⁷² The second category includes the works that focus on the documentaries themselves, such as the selection of their subjects, the story telling techniques, director's choices while representing reality, the research process etc., in detail.

When compared, in the first category there are more works than the second category in the documentary filmmaking literature. Also, studies that can be categorized under the second category are mostly about the documentaries produced two or three decades ago. For example there are many works about Suha Arın's, a prominent documentary filmmakers documentaries.⁷³ Most documentaries of the last decade are summarized and

⁷¹Hasan Akbulut, 'Bellek Olarak Belgesel Sinema: Son Dönem Türkiye Belgesel Sinemasına Bir Bakış' in *Sinecine* 1:2 (2010): 119-124.

⁷²Bilgin Adalı, *Belgesel sinema: belgesel sinemanın doğuşu, İngiliz belgesel okulu ve Türk belgesel sineması*, (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1986). Beyhan Karadağ, *Geçmişten Geleceğe Belgeler Bilgiler TRT Cilt1*, (Ankara: TRT Arşiv Dairesi, 2008); Can Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' in *The City in the Turkish Cinema* ed. Özge Başgüney (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2014):113. Necati Sönmez: 'Documentary in Turkey: the 2000s' in *Cinema Turkey: New Times, New Tendencies* edited by Gözde Onaran, Fırat Yücel, *Altyazı Project Office*, (2011): 60.

⁷³, 'Türkiye'de Belgesel Film - Örnek İki Proje - 'Foto Hasan Behçet' ve 'Anadolu'da Bir Açık Kapı: Köy Odası,' in *Belgesel Film Üzerine Yazılar* ed. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (İstanbul: BabilYayıncılık, 2005), 169-190 ; Bilal Arık, 'Türk Televizyonculuğunda Spor Belgeseli,' in *Belgesel Film Üzerine Yazılar* ed. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (İstanbul: Babil Yayıncılık, 2005), 157-169.

directors of them are introduced with few introductory sentences in the works that belong into the first category where authors provided a chronological review of documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

This situation in the literature may be contingent to the documentary filmmaking in Turkey.⁷⁴ The book *Cinema Turkey: New Times, New Tendencies* starts with the sentence; “It’s been more than a decade since filmmakers in Turkey got back on track to produce films that capture the attention of international cinema critics and jurors” and in the book there is more space for the content of the fiction movies, while there is only a section for documentaries, where the recent works are summarized. Similarly, Asuman Suner, in her book *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory, the Turkish Cinema* highlighted that Turkish cinema is well known thanks to the international reputation of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Semih Kaplanoğlu and Fatih Akın's movies that are produced or shot in Turkey, in Turkish language or includes characters from Turkey. Candan illustrates this position of documentary filmmaking in Turkey, as claiming documentary filmmaking is ‘the red haired step child’ of the cinema in Turkey.⁷⁵ Thus, one can argue since documentary filmmaking in Turkey is not acclaimed internationally, the literature does not discuss the contents of the documentaries in a confident way the literature about fiction movies does. Content of the recent documentaries are mostly summarized at most in one paragraph inside the framework that tries to describe the general situation of documentary filmmaking, rather than detailing the story-telling methods of the directors or other characteristics of movies, individually.

The last and third category is about labor in the media industry in Turkey. As Erkiliç said in his review of the literature about documentary filmmaking, there have been rare attempts to focus on the labor in the literature on documentary filmmaking. Filiz Susar, in her work, focuses on labor in the documentary filmmaking sector, by giving a descriptive analysis of the problems of the documentary filmmaking in Turkey through interviewing

⁷⁴Asuman Suner, *New Turkish cinema: belonging, identity and memory*, (IB Tauris, 2010): 21.

⁷⁵ Can Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' in *The City in the Turkish Cinema* ed. Özge Basgüneş (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2014):113.

and making surveys with 91 documentary filmmakers within the country.⁷⁶ Although not specific to a documentary filmmaking context, a very recent study conducted by the *Sinema Televizyon Sendikası* also focuses on labor in the cinema and television sectors of Turkey by surveying 1205 people and interviewing with 24 people and created a comprehensive report about labor in those industries.⁷⁷ In another work, Ekmel Geçer focused on 46 journalists working in Turkey and their perceptions of Turkish journalism.⁷⁸

These three studies summarized under the literature about labor, provide comprehensive analyses of the problems of the sector by focusing on the working experiences; yet, similar with the scholars of creative labor studies mentioned above, they do not focus on the dynamics of the perception of workers that can be specific for producing documentaries in Turkey. This situation may address a research gap and this study by choosing to trace the conceptions of Occidentalism in its empirical evidence might be offering a perspective about labor in documentary filmmaking sector of Turkey.

To put in a nutshell the literature mentioned above, the labor in the documentary filmmaking of Turkey will be analyzed through the conceptions of the qualitative studies about creative cultural work. The process between the local (the documentary filmmakers of Turkey) and the global (the productions of other countries and filmmakers perceptions about them) is much more complex than homogenization. Complexity encourages studying labor of the documentary filmmakers within the cultural globalization, whose gist is the increased connectivity of the cultural goods produced all over the world.

The literature that is criticizing modernity, is addressing the problems of conceptualizations of the ‘modern’ through deciphering the ambivalences that are based on representations of ‘model’ and the ‘copy’, the weak historicity, belatedness and Occidentalism. Studies show the modernity framework has shortcomings while

⁷⁶Filiz Susar, *Türkiye’de Belgesel Sinemacılar*, (İstanbul: EsYayımları, 2004).

⁷⁷Önder Küçükural, Etrit Shkreli, *Sendika Deyince Aklınıza Ne Geliyor? Sinema Televizyon ve Reklam Çalışanları Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, (İstanbul: Sinema Televizyon Sendikası, 2016).

⁷⁸Ekmel Geçer, *Türkiye Medyasını Anlamak* (İstanbul: Kolektif Kitap, 2013).

explaining the complexities of the contexts, thus failing to address their real dynamics. Some of the discourses while filmmakers were comparing their self and others were relatable with the conceptions of criticisms of modernity, since they were about the West-East dichotomies. Recent works in the literature on documentary filmmaking in Turkey provide a comprehensive analysis of the different dimensions of documentary filmmaking; however trying to analyze subjective experiences in documentary filmmaking through the theoretical framework of Occidentalism could also provide a perspective while looking at the sector. Therefore, this thesis seeks to understand the Occidentalism in the discourses and how it is connected with the discourses about taking an action. Such as ways of producing documentaries and suggesting a better sector which will be detailed in the following pages.

CHAPTER 3

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING IN TURKEY TODAY

The features of documentary filmmaking in Turkey will be described in this chapter according to the current literature of documentary filmmaking in Turkey and official accounts. Examples from interviews as reflections of the workers about these dynamics of the sector are also provided.

3.1.1 Broadcasting

In Turkey, ways of producing documentaries can be summarized under three categories. First two categories mostly can be summarized under independent production. Filmmakers who produce independently are doing it with the commissioning and acquisition method. Working with commissioning is finding financial support and broadcasters in advance and working with acquisition is looking for those opportunities afterwards. Filmmakers who are working with commissioning can produce as in house workers in a channel with a monthly salary.

The ones who are producing with acquisition are producing independent documentaries. The ones who are producing with commissioning, by having funding by the state or funding from private or public institutions are also producing independent documentaries since it is not decided in advance where they will show their works. However, the ones who are working with commissioning method with television channels, documentary channels or international news or documentary channels, do have a broadcasting slot so their productions are not accepted as independent documentaries.

Independent productions produced by acquisition and commissioning can be screened in festivals and sometimes in cinema; yet it is very rare in Turkey, that the independent documentaries, even the ones who got prizes in the festivals, or recognized through various ways find slots in television. Besides the mainstream television channels, the two documentary channels of Turkey, private and state-owned respectively: IZ TV and TRT Belgesel, established in 2006 and 2009, are also not screening independent documentaries except few rare cases in their histories. Those documentary channels are

mostly broadcasting documentaries that are produced in house, in other words, with the budget, equipment and the shooting crew of the documentary channels.⁷⁹ They are demanding money from the filmmakers⁸⁰ and as expressed by one of the interviewee, Gaye, the money they offer is not satisfying the filmmakers:

(A television channel) wanted my documentary. The amount they offered was 100 dollars. (Laughing) They are not supporting us either. I can't sell my documentary for 100 dollars; I went to Iraq for this documentary. I thought things were going to be different when there will be documentary channels, but unfortunately, it isn't the case so far.

Another way for broadcasting movies is the screening opportunities in the festivals. In Turkey, there are two festivals that only screen documentaries; 1001 Documentary Festival conducted by the Association of Documentary Filmmakers in Turkey (*Belgesel Sinemacılar Birliği*) and Documentarist Istanbul Documentary Days. Documentaries are also screened in the film festivals; in Istanbul Film Festival, Ankara International Film Festival or Istanbul Independent Film Festival. However, during the interviews, some interviewees expressed they are not finding the opportunities in the festivals enough.

We are not bad about festivals. In Turkey, every city, even every county has its own film festival. Thus, I think there are minimum 30-40 festivals are available. However, they all have this rule: documentaries cannot exceed thirty minutes. I mean, if you are making a documentary movie; the better scenario is you can join maximum five or ten festivals. The most famous festival, Antalya Film Festival cancelled the documentary section and accepting documentaries under the same category of fiction films. Every year only one documentary is managing to join to the selection of the Antalya Film Festival. (Merve)

Even though not frequently, cinemas are screening documentary movies. Recent examples are screenings of the documentaries called *Cat* (2016) and *Blue* (2017). *Cat* was in 19 and *Blue* was in 14 theatres for 8 weeks by the organization called *Başka Sinema* distributing independent movies to cinemas.⁸¹ However they were only screened in Istanbul and Ankara. And their ratings were, as other documentaries that were screened in theatres are listed by Akbulut's and Candan's work, way behind of Can

⁷⁹ Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 113.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ "Kedi," Box Office Türkiye, accessed July 29, 2017 <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/keci-2013541>; "Blue," Box Office Türkiye, accessed July 29, 2017, <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/blue-2013575>.

Dündar's *Mustafa*, which is by several lengths the most watched documentary of Turkey with 1,101,014 viewers.⁸²

Another, and the newest way to broadcast movies is through online platforms. The websites Youtube and Vimeo are allowing people to upload and share their videos for free. If the viewer count exceeds the determined threshold, broadcasters also supported financially. For example, Griffin Hammond, an independent documentary filmmaker from USA, announced that he was earning more from online broadcasting than the other traditional ways, like DVD, screening in the cinema or in festivals.⁸³

One of the interviewees for this research, Tolga, is broadcasting his documentaries from YouTube and I found him by watching one of his short documentaries he made about the Eastern Express of Turkey. His documentary has been watched over 24,603 times. It is more from the documentary *Blue*, which was on the theaters for 8 weeks in this year (2017) and watched by 10,928 people or the *Cat* which is watched for 20.000 people according to records.⁸⁴ Broadcasting online, according to one the interviewee, Hasan, is also equalizing the opportunities for everyone in the field and providing broadcasters new career paths.

Say that nobody knows you and you don't have a diploma of a film school. No excuses. Learn it by yourself, shoot something. Edit your video. Upload it to vimeo. If it is good, your work will be accepted to *Vimeo Staff Picks*. All directors, producers are looking at those videos. You will be discovered immediately. It is that much easy now. There is no excuse. Just do something.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker said before celebrating the technology, one must realize there are still limitations of other features about labor, which can limit the advantages of the technology, since people still need to make a living out of documentary filmmaking and

⁸² Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 139.

⁸³ "5 Lessons Learned from my Profitable Indie Documentary," Medium.com, accessed Aug 1, 2017, <https://medium.com/@GriffinHammond/5-lessons-learned-from-my-profitable-indie-documentary-9d73dde9ae16>.

⁸⁴ "Blue," Box Office Türkiye, accessed July 29, 2017, <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/blue-2013575>.

cannot find the money for their first production⁸⁵ as described by a young documentary filmmaker Mustafa.

Actually, if I don't have money, when I go to places with my equipment and try to make something... As a one person... I mean, even if you have the best equipment, it is really really hard.

Besides the technology is changing the rules of the game, it also changes the dynamics of visibility and distribution, as Akbulut indicated in his review about the recent documentary filmmaking in Turkey. The records of low ratings of the documentaries above reminds Candan's concern about the disconnectedness between the consumer and the producer within the sector.⁸⁶ He said there are many good works produced in Turkey; however the problem is the visibility and distribution. The years will show if the Internet, through different inventions of distribution and visibility, can change the dynamics of this problem by providing alternative ways for consumption of the documentaries.

3.1.2 Audience

As described above the ways of broadcasting are not in the sufficient level that will support independent filmmakers in a way they will earn their lives. This issue is also related with the demand of the audience. Studies that focused on the preferences of the audiences are rare but available.⁸⁷ For example, Uybadın watched Reha Erdem's movie *Hayat Var* with an audience who had not watched movies except blockbusters. Since *Hayat Var* was a movie that was conceptualized as an 'art movie', and have low ratings when compared with blockbusters, she wanted to see reactions of people who did not like art movies. At the end of the study she said people were empathized with the story, really liked *Hayat Var* and did not understand why they not had the chance to watch it before.

⁸⁵Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 55.

⁸⁶ Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 131.

⁸⁷Aynülhayat Uybadın, 'Ev Kadınlarının Sanat Filmlerini Anlamlandırma Süreci Üzerine Bir Alımlama Çalışması: *Hayat Var* Örneği,' *Sinecine* 7:2 (2016): 124-147; Nilüfer Pembecioğlu, 'Çizgi Belgeseller Üstüne: Yetişkinlere Yönelik Bir Çizgi Film: Mısır Prensi Üzerine Bir Çalışma'nın Getirdikleri,' in *Belgesel Film Üzerine Yazılar* ed. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (İstanbul: BabilYayıncılık, 2005), 203-223.

Documentary filmmakers are also thinking about the demand and the approach of the audience. Selma and Mehmet, suggested that political oppression in Turkey makes the documentaries in Turkey more alluring to the viewer, thus there is more demand. The rest of the sample thinks that the interest of audiences is insufficient. Few filmmakers offered a conception of 'the respect' for the documentaries and for documentary filmmaking, which they think, is not present in Turkey when compared with audiences of other countries. The popular illustration of these subjects could be seen in the quotation below.

When people ask you about your job and you say you shoot documentaries, they say, 'Oh, so you are spending all your time with animals.' This is what they know about documentary filmmaking. Or they think it is about travelling; you go places, have fun, etc. (Mehmet)

Hasan, another filmmaker, said polarization in politics has also paved the way of stereotyping of documentaries. He complained about the selection of topics. That has divided the audiences hence they distanced themselves the movies accordingly their subjects. For example if a documentary is about religion, it can be easily labeled as fundamentalist, or if a documentary is about politics, it is labeled as having anti-government approach.

Gaye, a director of independent documentaries suggested that, in order to have attention of the audience must find alternative ways for broadcasting. For example, she is planning to pick up a basic documentary projection machine and show her new documentary in the rural places. According to her experiences so far, when there is a screening, people always watch. Gaye's answer was the only answer that assumes filmmakers are responsible for making their documentaries more accessible to the audience.

3.1.3 Education and Specialization

In Turkey, there is no documentary school; the documentary filmmakers who studied Radio-Television and Communications or Journalism under the Faculty of Communications of the universities are accepted, as they were educated for the sector starting from the university; but there are courses about documentaries or documentary filmmaking in the universities. Anatolian University and Bahçesehir University, Bogazici University, Bilgi University and Hacettepe University in their area courses, are opening documentary cinema courses regularly. Those courses are important to form network between the people who are interested in documentaries. One of the documentary filmmaker for this sample, Vural, indicated the importance of that course in Hacettepe University, which his friend is conducting, where they are training their own co-workers for their production companies. Since it has enabled them to find workers from those courses. However, by the literature and by the interviewees, the lacking of a long established documentary school, by mostly referring to its examples in the western countries (USA, Canada, Poland was popular examples) is expressed.

Some interviewees linked the lack of a documentary school and documentary filmmaking tradition with the weak specialization and loose job definitions in the sector Turkey, which they mostly find very problematic. As I also mentioned in the sampling strategy, many documentary filmmakers in Turkey have more than few specialization. Interviewees pictured the Western examples of job specializations as they knew, as the ideals. They expressed those examples with envy, such as a video editor who only edits documentaries or the cameraman who only shoots nature documentaries. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees said, because the job definitions are not clear, filmmakers in Turkey—especially the new ones entering the sector—have more chance to learn and experience many dimensions of documentary filmmaking when compared with their Western peers. Thus, they have a more diverse experience compared to countries, which have more institutionalization in the sector. Nihat's perspective is also illustrative about this issue:

You can be innovative and easily become a director when you start as a cameraman. This can be the advantage, but in long run, the institutionalization of the sector is more important. Otherwise it will be the law of the jungle, which is I think troublesome.

3.1.5 Funding

Ways of producing of documentary filmmakers are indicated at the beginning of the broadcasting section. There are various funding opportunities for finding support before the production for the independent producers who are producing with commissioning (by finding the support before starting producing).

Funding provided by the Ministry of Culture of Turkey twice a year for the selected projects within two categories, for the directors who are shooting their first documentaries and in general, where for every director can apply. According to the official records which is in the website of Ministry of Culture, the last decision of the board for 2017 decided to support 71 documentaries with 5 million 49.000 Turkish Lira.⁸⁸ The number of projects and the amount is not possible to neglect, yet among the documentary filmmakers I have interviewed, there was distrust about the transparency of this process. Interviews thought, funding is conducted according to subjects of the documentaries. Documentaries, which can be categorized as criticizing the current or the previous state policies, are not being considered.

Filmmakers found the amount of the money given by the state as very low. One of the interviewees, Mine, indicated it is nothing when compared with the funding she received in Canada, with her very first project as a young student and finds the amount of the funding as impossible to create a documentary; indicated that it can only be accepted as a small support. She and some of the documentary filmmakers talked about the maximum funding as 30.000 Turkish Lira, but when someone looks at the list published by the Ministry Culture, there are documentary projects which are funded up to 170.000 Turkish Lira. The perception of interviewees about the funding and the real amount of the funding according to official records, interestingly, are not coinciding.

⁸⁸ '2017-2 Sayılı Sinema Destekleme Kurulu Kararı Açıklandı,' T.C Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Sinema Genel Müdürlüğü, accessed Aug 1, 2017, <http://sinema.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,176667/2017-2-sayili-sinema-destekleme-kurulu-karari-aciklandi.html>.

Another example from the sample, which indicates a dimension about the state funding, can be seen by one of the interviewee, Vural's confession. He described in the interview, how he is not keen to get funding from state because he thinks it will show him like he is supporting the current Justice and Development Party government. He thinks it will damage his profile as a documentary filmmaker and position of his documentary in the sector.

Besides the state funding, a funding program called New Film Fund (*Yeni Film Fonu*) by a cultural institution *Anadolu Kültür* established in 2002 to 'support the production and sharing of culture and art in cities across Turkey and abroad'⁸⁹ is accepting admissions twice a year.⁹⁰ They provide financial support, which can be up to the 30.000 Turkish liras. Another way of finding support is the Meetings on the Bridge (*Köprüde Buluşmalar*), a series of workshops for filmmakers, conducted once a year by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) and Istanbul Development Agency (ISTKA). The program is not providing financial support for the documentaries in recent years; yet providing support for their coloring processes in the post-production. Also for selected documentaries they are guaranteeing a slot for screening in cinemas with the co-operation with another institution called *Başka Sinema* which is an organization which is distributing independent movies to cinemas.⁹¹

Another way to find funding and support is the co-production money provided by the European Union, in the projects that are designed to produce documentaries on the subjects comprising the selected themes by the European Union⁹². Esra, who is specialized on documentary filmmaking with EU funding, said during the interview that very few projects are conducted in the recent decade when compared with the 2000's.

⁸⁹'General Information,' Anadolu Kültür, accessed Aug 1, 2017, <http://www.anadolukultur.org/en/about/general-information/3232>.

⁹⁰'New Film Fund,' Yeni Film Fonu, accessed Aug 1, 2017, <http://www.yenifilmfonu.org/en>.

⁹¹'Köprüde Buluşmalar,' İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı, accessed Aug 1, 2017, <http://film.iksv.org/tr/koprudebulusmalar>.

⁹² Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 123.

3.1.6 Censorship

Self-censorship of festivals, are especially accelerated after the incident in the Antalya Film Festival in 2013, where documentary called *Yeryüzü Aşkın Oluncaya Dek* which is about Gezi Park protests in 2013 is banned by the festival executives because it might be insulting the president of Turkish Republic, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and thus, violating the laws numbered 125 and 299.⁹³

Above in the section where ways of funding is described, it is indicated that because of lack of transparency during the selection process of the projects that will receive funding some documentary filmmakers and scholars who were writing about the documentary filmmaking Turkey were in doubt about the censorship taking place in this procedure. More direct interventions from state about censorship is also possible in Turkey in the distribution phase of the documentaries through the legal process of getting the distribution license (*eser işletme belgesi*) from General Directorate of Cinema, which is under Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, for the documentaries. This document is needed when documentaries are ready to be screened. However, there is uncertainty in the law, about whether the movies that are going to be screened in the festivals will need this document, because festivals are not accepted as commercial organizations. Interestingly, for the foreign films, law is not requiring the distribution license; nevertheless for the documentaries produced in Turkey, festivals are accountable for this document if they are asked to.⁹⁴ This mechanism is not working strictly, not all festivals are screening the documentaries with the distribution license and it is not being a legal problem. However, state officials wanted this document for some of the documentaries. As it was the case in the screening of the documentary *5 Nolu Cezaevi*

⁹³Veli Başığit, 'Türkiye'deki Film Festivalleri ve Sanatta İfade Özgürlüğü,' *Siyah Bant* Haziran 2016, accessed Aug 2, 2017, http://www.siyahbant.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SiyahBant_Rapor_Film-Festivalleri_2016.pdf.

⁹⁴Başığit, 'Türkiye'deki Film Festivalleri ve Sanatta İfade Özgürlüğü,' 3.

which reveal the state violence during the 1980 coup, and *Bakur* which is about PKK guerillas.⁹⁵

About the individual censorship, empirical study of this thesis can offer examples. Some of the interviewees agreed that they are implementing self-censoring on their subjects of documentaries because of the possible problems will arouse in the phases of funding and getting the distribution license. For example, Cengiz, who is an acclaimed cameraman, in house and independent documentary filmmaker described his opinions about this matter in a sincere way as such:

In a country like Turkey, not everybody have same perspective. Some people are risking many things in order to tell the story that they want to. For example, Kurds are more courageous on this matter. They are ready to be a prisoner for the documentaries they are shooting. I am calling myself a documentary filmmaker; yet I must confess that I am standing and will stand clear of 'dangerous' subjects.

As another example about the obstacles of the current political oppression is from Hasan, who said the political atmosphere of the narrowing the ways of storytelling by stereotyping documentaries. If you are trying to make a documentary about religion, for example, you are labeled as a fundamentalist and it is narrowing the subjects of the documentaries that are produced in Turkey.

A group of interviewees presented the lack of freedom of speech in Turkey, because of the undemocratic political atmosphere, as a big obstacle for the sector. As an example in order to highlight the importance of that subject for the interviewees can be the recommendation of the one of the interviewees, Esra, who is working as a freelance documentary copywriter. She told me during the interview, since she is not suffering from political oppression in a more direct way it is unnecessary to interview with her while doing a research about documentary filmmaking in Turkey. She suggested trying to arrange an interview with documentary filmmakers who were once prisoned. One of the frequently encountered themes is expressed in Selim's words, who was a documentary

⁹⁵Josh Carney, 'Regarding North: Bakur and the Crystallization of Cinematic Censorship in Turkey,' in Kurdish Documentary Cinema in Turkey: The Politics and Aesthetics of Identity and Resistance ed. Can Candan et al. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016): 145.

filmmaker and an academic studying about the documentary filmmaking in Turkey, and when I asked his suggestions about the documentary filmmaking in Turkey, he started with the question 'What can be done for the documentaries in a country where there is no democracy?'

While some of the interviewees put a lot of emphasis on the censorship, thus political oppression, others did not choose to indicate during the interviews that they are the obstacles for documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

3.1.7. Regulations

Another state regulation besides the funding and license distribution is the shooting permissions which must be provided by the Ministry of Culture first, and the local municipalities and local security forces: the police forces or from the *jandarma* who is responsible from the places where there is less population. Those processes are described by the documentary producers whose job definition involves getting the shooting permissions for the documentaries and thus, they are frequently in communication with the Ministry of Culture. They described those processes as the parody-like stories of the null functioning of Turkish bureaucracy: never ending circulation of the documents of permission applications and the unaffordable shooting fees for the places when compared with the budget of the documentary filmmaking. Aslı, who is a experienced documentary producer describes one of her experiences as in the below:

For example you go for getting the permission for shooting in places. You go to the Ministry, you go to the Governor's office. Every officer say they are not in charge of giving permissions and directing you to another officer who again is saying the same thing. You feel exactly like you are in one of the Levent Kirca sketches. At the end, you fed up and decide to not take permission. However, when you go to the place without permission, at the minute you start shooting, an officer is popping up, asking if you had the permission. Then he wants a shooting fee which is really impossible to afford. Say like, 3000 Turkish Lira. You say that it is impossible to pay, it is only a documentary, not a commercial movie. Than he

asks 'Well then... How much can you give?'. And also, it is not clear that where this money is going. Those issues are very hard in Turkey. Either you will shoot in guerilla style with a handy cam or you will go mad inside the Turkish bureaucracy.

3.1.8 Social Value of the Documentaries

As Akbulut indicated, in Turkey, some of documentaries helped to understand the social awareness in the many subjects ⁹⁶. For example, Can Candan's *Benim Çocuğum* which is about parents of LGBTI individuals, Orhan Eskiköy's and Özgür Doğan's *İki Dil Bir Bavul* which is about a young teacher going to village in Şanlıurfa where most of the class only speak Kurdish, and many very valuable documentary movies were part of the social movements, screened with panels even now although few years past after they are produced and increasing the visibility of the problems of the country. One of the directors of these movies indicated during our interview that it is very important to keep on produce in order to have more democratic society. In this context, one can argue as the the biggest concerns of the literature on documentary filmmaking, the visibility and distribution of the documentaries produced is the prominent problem in Turkey; because it will increase their impacts on societies.

3.1.9 Role of the NGOs

The Association of Documentary Filmmakers in Turkey (BSB), which is very important actor in documentary filmmaking, has established in the year 1997. Head of the association, Mehmet is also one of the interviewees for this thesis. As he also noticed in the interview and as mentioned by literature, the association functioning as a hub that provides networking opportunities and educational and archival materials for documentary filmmakers. It has an archive consists of 3000 documentaries, organizing

⁹⁶Akbulut, 'Bellek Olarak Belgesel Sinema: Son Dönem Türkiye Belgesel Sinemasına Bir Bakış'124.

panels during the year, and conducting a documentary film festival annually.⁹⁷ They used to have annual publications about documentaries produced and they are still important sources for documentary filmmaking in Turkey.⁹⁸ Also, they are trying to enhance the legal processes for documentary filmmaking in Turkey, by offering clearer definitions on production processes and copyright issues. Mehmet, head of the NGO, said their aim in the last months is to find a way to record the amount of the documentaries that are produced in a year more precisely. Sometimes the association was criticized because of it was not able to reach to young documentary filmmakers; yet interviewees were aware of BSB's efforts.

Sinema Televizyon Sendikası (Union of Cinema and Television Workers) is a labor union established in the year 2015 for the workers of different cultural productions; movie, television, advertisement, music videos and documentaries. Main agenda of the union is fighting illegal employment; especially illegal working hours since are one of the main problems of the media industries in Turkey. Workers who are obliged to work longer hours can communicate with the official inspectors of the union and their employees will be warned.⁹⁹ Union also has two comprehensive publications that are aiming to surface the most important problems of the sector by surveys and in-depth interviews done with creative cultural workers of Turkey.

3.1.10 Different Opinions about the Same Project: Subjective Experiences

Nihat, who is working as an executive in a documentary channel, and Esra and Aslı, who were documentary producers in the same channel has worked together under a documentary project funded by the European Union. When I asked them about their

⁹⁷ 'Biz Kimiz?', Belgesel Sinemaçılar Birliği, accessed Aug 23, 2017, <http://bsb.org.tr/biz-kimiz>.

⁹⁸ Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 80.

⁹⁹ 'Hakkımızda,' SinemaTelevizyonSendikası, accessed Aug 23, 2017, <https://www.sinematvsindikasi.org/hakkimizda/>.

experiences there was a divergence. Aslı and Esra has provided these experiences as the ideal conditions, Aslı said,

While producing those documentaries we thought at some points, are we discrediting the European Union by telling the story in this way? I mean, how will they react? However, we never had any feedback, which contained instructions about the content. I think it is because, the main aim of the EU, was to have realistic documentation about EU policies. We were making research for them. Since they are seeking the truth, they are setting you completely free.

However, Nihat said about the same project,

While we were making documentaries about how agriculture is great in France thanks to EU regulations -because they gave us lots of money- we were watching from the television that how the French farmers were uprising because they were robbed by the new EU regulations. There were clear ideological instructions for the documentary project. Elaborately restrained from the subjects that can be dangerous. EU was seeking legitimation for its regulation; so gave us a lot of money.

Working with the funding of EU is a material condition; however there are two different kinds of experience. From this divergence, it could be seen that different perspectives of the workers have an effect on their opinions about working experiences. Thus, scholars who focused on the creative cultural workers suggested also looking at the subjective experiences of the workers. So far in this section, the subjective experiences were not contradicted much in the level introduced above. However, from now on in this thesis, the grey areas in the discourses will be more in the foreground.

Main features of documentary filmmaking in Turkey are described in this chapter through the current literature and the experiences of the documentary filmmakers that I have interviewed. As it can be seen, it is indisputable that some of the elements of documentary filmmaking in Turkey are problematic. However, as addressed above the subjective experiences about the facts about documentary filmmaking is also important. Thus, last section of this thesis, will try to provide answers for the question: What can be the reasons (according the sample of this thesis) motivate filmmakers to keep on producing documentaries in Turkey, which has many obstacles? Thus, it aims to show how the characteristics of the sector introduced so far in this chapter are setting the

boundaries of production. In order to provide possible answers, discourses in the empirical data about ways of producing will be in the foreground. At the end, a specific way to produce in Turkey, because of the conditions of sector of country will be provided and analyzed with the help of the creative labor studies.

3.2 A Career Pattern and its Analysis Through Creative Labor Studies

3.2.1 Feelings About Job

Documentary filmmakers expressed their sympathy for their jobs during the interviews. One of the interviewee, Selin's perspective can be illustrative about this matter:

I have studied Public Administration in university. I hated it. I'm regretful for not leaving the university. Anyway, now, I have the greatest job. Although it is not that good financially, I don't think, for example, the bank employers are as satisfied with their jobs as I am. This job has an impact on all kinds of things in life. For example, my daughter travelling with me sometimes and despite her age, she can recognize who is Chinese, who is Korean, who is Japanese. It is all about those matters. Otherwise, we can all work in a *bank*.

Hesmondalgh and Baker quoted Raymond Williams in saying “No word carries a more consistently positive reference than creative.”¹⁰⁰ Satisfactions about self-improvement and the self-esteem, like in the Selin's quote and the joy of working with inspirational people within a team and engaging people from diverse backgrounds, are just a few evidences for showing there the good working experiences within the creative cultural work field of Turkey: Like Selin, Merve and Aslı indicated to be a documentary filmmaker was their dream when they were child. Aslı who was working in the advertisement sector before documentary filmmaking, said she changed sectors because the philosophy of advertisement is not compatible with her intellectual perspective (*'kendimi kültürel olarak besleyemediğim için'*). Hasan and Vural's documentary

¹⁰⁰Hesmondalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 39.

filmmaking goes hand in hand with their other interest; nature sports. Mine presented her documentaries as her journeys where she seeks meaning of her life.

Besides the discourses about the job itself, the feeling of longing to the once ideal conditions was present in many interviews, even though there was not specific question. This period was possible with right amount of funding; such as working in a documentary project funded by the European Union or working in a co-production with a foreign crew.

One of my favorite documentaries was the one that was funded by the company, *Toros Tarım*. It was a documentary about seasonal workers. Normally we go places and shoot documentaries within only four days. One year was a real comfort for me. We went there, shared the moment with them, stayed in their tents, ate and worked with them, visited many cities from Urfa to Eskişehir. When the process is like that, I think I understand and describe the story better. Time is very important and the right ways of funding must provide that comfort to the crew.

Very similar narrative provided by Esra, who is a freelance documentary copywriter, when she was working in a documentary project funded by the European Union. For Hasan, the ideal time was the time while he was co-working peacefully with the woman who came from BBC to the head of their department and in a funded project by Mercedes-Benz. Hasan described with disappointment that because of her different working style she was expelled after few weeks. He expressed her leave made as a milestone event in his career. After than incident he became more desperate about the documentary filmmaking. Mine, who is now producing with Al Jazeera International from Istanbul, and studied and started documentary filmmaking in Canada offered similar narrative about her first project, where the funding was very satisfying and she worked with a very professional crew. She indicated that she never had to chance to get that amount of funding and that qualified working environment later in her career. Gaye, an awarded documentary filmmaker and was educated abroad like Mine; studied documentary filmmaking in New York. Quotation below is about her working experience with St. Clair Bourne who is a well-known American documentary filmmaker when she was a new graduate:

I was following his works. I wrote an email and described my project in order to see if he is interested. He replied immediately and said it was a great project and he was looking forward to doing something like that for years. We had a meet up. Because there, the relationships are more... I don't know, in Turkey, there is this selfishness. For example, do you think Nuri Bilge Ceylan has concerns about the education of the young filmmakers? I don't think so. In there, you feel people are supporting you. For example, they say 'I know a very talented video editor, a cameraman who can work with you' or 'Let's have a look at what you have shot today.' I really feel the absence of these kinds of things in Turkey.

Documentary filmmakers in the sample of this thesis study, as creative cultural workers of Turkey, expressed their sympathy for their jobs. Nevertheless, they accepted the inadequacies of the sector as detailed in the Section 2.2. One can argue because of that ideal conditions once they had are brought into discussion with the tone of longing. These feelings about the job justify the effort to understand suggestions of the filmmakers for development of the sector and their ways of producing.

3.2.2 Suggestions for Improvement

Answers about suggestions are gathered through the questions, 'In which areas do you think improvement is required?', 'How do you think these improvements could be possible?', and 'Who are the most important actors who have a role in this improvement?' (Question 8, 9 and 10). An acclaimed independent documentary director and the head of the NGO for documentary filmmaking in Turkey, Mehmet's categorization is a good umbrella for summarizing the trends in the answers. Mehmet described his solution plans by saying 'if we believe everything will be fine' and offered a suggestion, which will be called from now on in this thesis as macro-level suggestions. Macro-level suggestions are related with state funding for documentary production in Turkey or they are about foreseeing a better future by the democratic consolidation of the country. However Mehmet also continued as 'As a second plan,' and provided; more micro-level, what can be conceptualized as an alternative plan, which is highlighting the importance of individual efforts within documentary sector to increase the standards.

Not every interviewee provided his or her ideas in Mehmet's manner. Some only mentioned macro-level suggestions, which is about support of the state and private sector for the filmmaking and did not talk about individual efforts. Every documentary filmmaker offered what can be categorized as macro-level plan when I asked questions 8, 9 and 10; yet some of them besides macro-level suggestions also offered micro-level suggestions during the interview, which is about individual efforts.

Macro-level suggestions and micro-level suggestions were focusing on different areas about documentary filmmaking. First one, since they were about the state and private actors, were about funding, censorship, about the preferences of television channels, trainings and education in the universities before becoming documentary filmmaker. The micro suggestions that are related with individual efforts were focusing on distribution and visibility and technological developments and the alternative education methods for the young documentary filmmakers. Consequently, one can say micro-level suggestions emphasized the role of the individuals for the improvement of the society when compared to macro-level suggestions. Some examples about macro-level and micro-level suggestions are illustrative to present discourses surfaced in the interviews. For example, Selin with her macro-level plan, explained why she is hopeful about the sector as such:

For example, since I am working with companies now, I go to lot of meetings. Most of the executive of the companies are saying that their children wants to make either documentaries or movies. All are having a really nice education. And they have the money. It is interesting. So one must be hopeful for the future.

The discourse on Selin's suggestion was present in the interviews. It is about far future; an in a way erases the efforts which can be done today. Another examples for the macro suggestions for the improvement of the sector is like Nihat's, who expressed that the countries who have socialist governments have better documentaries:

Few good documentaries will not change anything. If there is transformation in the society, the quality of the documentary is also going to be change. Now, because the hegemony is the fundamentalist, there are low qualified works. Tomorrow, when the good power will rise, then, the quality of the documentaries will also increase.

Although Nihat was the only one who were expressing his suggestion through socialist countries versus others, his perspective that highlights political issues as a prominent thing that will contribute to the development of the genre, was present in the interviews. More commonly shared discourse was about the democracy in Turkey. This discourse was again about the far future and erases filmmakers efforts that can be directed to the improvement of documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

There was more variety in the discourses that can be categorized under micro-level suggestions when compared with the macro-level suggestions which are mostly presented with the same discourses. The prominent words while explaining those plans were 'guerilla technics (*gerilla taktikler*) and 'alternative' and 'creative' ways of solutions (*alternatif veya yaratıcı yollar*); phrases that put an emphasis on finding a way to overcome the obstacles present in the institutionalized system.

Vural, while describing a macro-level plan, paused a while and confessed that actually he thinks funding, censorship, and similar matters about filmmaking have not that much critical importance. He indicated, one must educate young documentary filmmakers in order to improve documentary filmmaking in Turkey by giving example from his documentary filmmaking company, where they teach young documentary filmmakers how to do things and how do they fund their first projects. In similar context, Gaye highlighted that she is helping to the young documentary filmmakers who wants to learn something from her. Tolga, talked about how he provides equipment for people who wants to shoot documentaries. Gaye now she is working on a project about showing her recently awarded documentary that is about a basketball team of a city of Diyarbakır, in the rural places of Turkey with a projection machine. As she experienced by now, when she shows documentaries, there are always people who wants to watch them.

Cengiz, Hasan and Tolga who are independent documentary directors, by insisting on the easiness of the production now thanks to the technology, said documentary filmmakers must produce without complaining whatever the conditions are. They gave examples from their creative production ways. As another theme about technology, Selim talked

about the importance of the crowd-funding and suggested that one must buy all of the copies of his or her favorite documentaries from markets in order to create a demand in the market.

Mehmet's categorization is useful to see because some of the discourses show filmmakers did not want to wait for the institutional changes (sometimes because of the desperation); besides their macro-level suggestions, they also wanted to offer micro-level suggestions. The suggestion of continuing to produce was one of the micro-level suggestions and it was commonly shared within filmmakers. For example, Mehmet, Selma and Selim, besides mentioning the difficulties in the Turkish documentary filmmaking, said documentary filmmakers must keep on producing no matter what the conditions are, in order to record and build an archive about what is going on in Turkey.

However, in the context of most popular suggestion, (no matter what the conditions to keep on continuing to produce), asking the following question is indisputable, in a sector with full of obstacles (as detailed in the first five sections of this chapter), how filmmakers can find ways for continuing to produce? Up until now, this chapter tried to highlight the 'before' of the actions of the documentary filmmakers by providing the facts of the documentary filmmaking and documentary filmmakers' reflections about them and their suggestions of improvement. From now on it will focus on the actions; in other words, how documentary filmmakers choose to take action, which is about mostly continuing to produce, in the sample of this thesis.

3.2.3 Alternative Ways of Producing

An interviewee, Mine's, summary about the ways of producing in documentary filmmaking is useful for suggesting an umbrella for documentary production in Turkey. Ways of producing could be categorized under three types; documentaries made by commissioning which to have financial support -either state funding or private sponsorship- before shooting the documentaries, or even sometimes research and writing

phases of project proposal. The second is, shooting documentaries with personal sources and waiting for acquisitions such as money prizes, which could be gathered through festivals or by receiving broadcasting rents from television channels. Final one is in house documentary production, which is producing under a company with a monthly salary. As will be showed, interviewees combined those types of producing.

In the prominent movie magazine of *Altyazı* a manifesto-like article called 'Towards the end of independent filmmaking with support' ('*Destekli Bağımsızlığın Sonuna Doğru*') was published. This article consists a statement like below which can be discussed also in documentary filmmaking context:

'For moviemakers, it is now time to find ways to breathe outside of the sector rather than spending a lot of effort to prevent the interventions coming from the sector.'¹⁰¹

This statement was provided after mentioning problems encountered in the recent years about censorship and transparency issues about funding, as also mentioned in Section 2.2.4 and Section 2.2.5. The statement of the *Altyazı* magazine have reflections on the discourses of empirical evidence. Because there was distrust to the institutionalized sector of documentary filmmaking, filmmakers created their routine of producing, in order to create what they conceptualized as the 'real' documentaries; which are documentaries better than the products of the institutionalized sector because they are free from oppressive interventions based on commercial or political issues and they carry their artistic preferences.

Producing real documentaries, in some of the discourses surfaced, goes hand in hand with comparing the documentaries produced in Turkey with the other countries production; since the discussion is about documentary filmmaker's opinions about what should be the real documentary look like. However, this discussion will be detailed in the following chapter; since it has intersections with the literature about Occidentalism. Besides, the

¹⁰¹ 'Destekli Bağımsızlığın Sonuna Doğru,' *Altyazı*, March 2017, 6.

quality of the real documentaries, there are other reasons of trying to create independent documentaries. For example, Vural, indicated that when he works by commissioning, clients are interfering in the content of the documentaries even though they are not authoritative about the subject and this situation decreases the quality of the documentaries. Thus, in his own documentaries that are mostly about his special interest, mountain climbing and bird watching, he likes when all the control is in his hands and he said the end product is more qualified while he is producing like that. Gaye, who is an acclaimed documentary director, also told me that she thinks in house productions in Turkey are not the real documentaries because they are giving priority to commercial interests. Selim, while introducing his production routine, was saying that his one and only rule, is to have autonomy about the content of the documentaries.

Interviewees who aim to reach to a certain level of quality in their own documentaries (with acquisition method) indicated that the limitations of the acquisition method decrease the quality of their documentaries; yet did not stated that they are not satisfied about their productions made with acquisition method. They have stated that their in house and commissioning works did not satisfy them like the ones they produce with acquisition method. Satisfactions about works in the discourse who prefer to make their own productions with acquisition method are different than the ones who prefer to produce with other ways. The ones who are working with commissioning or as an in house documentary producer, except Mine, who is working with in Al Jazeera International, did not express satisfaction about the documentaries that they produced. Aslı, Merve and Cengiz, who are in house workers, said that their productions in the work are not real documentaries; they are made with commercial purposes in a small time with insufficient research.

Besides the self-esteem of creating the real documentaries in a level that satisfies the filmmakers, there is also other kinds of discourse which can be about social responsibility when someone asks the question to the data: What makes filmmakers diverge from the commissioning or in house type of production if there is little chance for gaining something in the acquisition method? Selim, an academic and an independent

documentary filmmaker, described main task of documentaries as a tool for strengthening social movements and civil society, which will consolidate democracy of Turkey. Like Selim, every documentary filmmaker in the sample of this thesis mentioned about the social importance of the documentaries than any other mediums. Even the ones who indicated that they are working in the documentary sector because they simply need to make a living mentioned the meaningful results of documentary filmmaking. The head of the NGO for documentary filmmaking, Mehmet's opinion is illustrative about this aspect of documentary filmmaking:

I can say that for many of my friends. The reason people are continuing to produce is because they are feeling responsibility. They are disturbed by the current situation and they want to record those concerns. The self-esteem and satisfaction about the production, is in the background. It is also one of our problems which decreased the quality of the works.

Aslı, who is producing independent documentaries with acquisition method besides her in house job in a documentary channel again said about the same subject:

Our priority is not money. Of course if we gain something at the end of the day it will be nicer. We will give it to the people that we made the documentaries about. Or, if they know you in sector, you will receive more funding and you will have more autonomy. Nevertheless, our main purpose to make social difference.

In the article *Altyazı* magazine, the ways of finding financial resources from the state for the real documentaries that will be free from interventions accepted as nearly impossible. Hence the commissioning method with the state funding is not possible for producing documentaries with good quality. Since the mainstream media which also comprises private channels are under political oppression, in house documentary filmmaking is also not allowing one to be free. What is left for filmmakers who want to be free is, besides the commissioning method with the funding except state, (which has been available but rare, as mentioned in the Section 2.2.4) is the acquisition method. However, it is very hard to find support after the documentaries are shot. As discussed in detail, television channels are not buying the documentaries of independent producers and cinema viewers are not in the level that will provide a financial gain. Thus, producing with acquisition is not just a regular way of production in Turkey; the term has transformed and gained

another meaning within Turkey's context since it is hard to find any kind of support after the documentaries are produced.

Filmmakers who are producing with the acquisition method are trying to build their ideal working experiences that are distanced from the censorship, funding problems of the sector outside of the institutionalized sector for documentary filmmaking. As could be traced in award winning documentary filmmaker Cengiz's words, that way of producing is actually what they really want to work. Cengiz is at the same time working in a documentary channel; however accepted that he was not satisfied by his production for the channel.

My desired future career is being an independent documentary filmmaker. I want to write my projects and find financial support before or after shooting them. This is also the way that I want to study today. Sometimes I am able to do that, but I want to make it full time. However, now, I have to have an in house job in order to make out a living.

What is important is, even though it seems like an amateur way of production, documentaries that are produced with acquisition method are the ones which are joining to the national and international festivals, winning prizes and acclaimed; referred as the ones that have good qualities by the literature on documentary filmmaking and critics. Hence, the amateur and professional ways of producing is very much intertwined in Turkey's documentary filmmaking.

A parenthesis, which will the occupational education of the documentary filmmakers is illustrative to detail another dimension intertwined nature of amateur and professional productions and non-institutionalized documentary sector of Turkey. Mustafa, who is the assistant to documentary directors in a documentary channel in Turkey said in interview that he wanted to continue documentary filmmaking and added 'I am doing my best for that. Nevertheless, because I don't earn enough money, I must do other things' and he added with discomfort mixed with humor: 'Like wedding videos.' He is doing nature sports professionally and wants to shoot documentaries about them; but he said, he wanted to be documentary-like-objective and said there is no hope in the sector. At that

point comparing his situation with the same aged interviewee, Tolga is useful for understanding the impacts of the situation of the sector that are accepted as unfruitful to the experiences of workers. Tolga is a student in a medical faculty who is also shooting documentaries and broadcasting them via YouTube. He is hopeful about his documentary filmmaking career. Tolga's plan is as such:

Documentary filmmaking is one of the main aims in my life. I want to produce more and more in future; but at first, I must finish the medical faculty. I thought, in the future, being an M.D., will provide me the financial support for my documentaries. I am lucky from that way. People only studying cinema in the universities and they can't find financial support. My family and me are thinking in that way.

It is an interesting observation that Mustafa, who studied Radio-Television and Communications in university, not enthusiastic as the future medical doctor of Turkey about documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

Turning back to the acquisition method, the amateur way of; but at the same time, the professional way of documentary filmmaking in Turkey, requires one to ask if the money is not coming from the sector for making the real documentaries from where do the filmmakers have it? Because they found funding as insufficient, documentary filmmakers who are producing independently that are interviewed most of the time using their financial sources for their documentaries; the money which they earn from either from their in house jobs on documentary filmmaking or from their day jobs that are irrelevant than documentary filmmaking.

Gaye is the only one who produce with acquisition method in the sample. However 8 out of 10 interviewee who are producing with acquisition method are collecting sources in order to make real documentaries, either from irrelevant day jobs, or from again documentary production jobs; whose productions, as indicated by them as not in the same level with their own productions. Hasan, who is an awarded documentary filmmaker, is collecting sources for his documentaries from professional acting. Mehmet and Vural have production companies and they are producing documentaries with commissioning

and sometimes shooting commercial videos for companies. Aslı, Merve and Cengiz are collecting their sources from their in house jobs, where they think they do not produce real documentaries. Selim is studying in the university in order to make documentaries, explained it in the interview with the phrase, 'I must receive a salary from somewhere.' Aslı has earned the money and migrating to Germany to find funding for her future documentaries.

The double life of filmmakers where they get sources for their productions from irrelevant jobs surfaced another theme. In the empirical study, there was a relationship between the obstacles of the sectors made documentary filmmaking in Turkey and self-dedication. Filmmakers expressed in detail how despite all the negativities they were able to produce as the 'survival stories'. Hasan who was one of the interviewees who had the best storytelling skills explained the phases of his preparations for some of his best documentaries in a very detailed way, where they worked day and night for weeks and overcame all of the obstacles in order to produce a good documentary. It is commonly shared that one must give her all time and effort in the disadvantageous sector of Turkey, in order to create the 'real' documentaries. Since the real documentaries are only achievable with the acquisition method. According to the empirical study, the obligation to have double life required the filmmakers who are producing with acquisition method in Turkey to be self-dedicative. For example, one of the interviewee told sincerely, she has an unaccommodating personality (*'Ben biraz rahatıma düşkün olduğum için...'*); so that is why she does not prefer to produce with the acquisition method.

Discourses about continuing to produce although the conditions are very harsh, can have many other explanations in Turkey, which this empirical study fails to address. Documentary filmmaking may be increasing the popularity of the filmmakers and allow them networking for finding jobs; they may be providing cultural capital through documentaries. Nevertheless, filmmakers indicated that they are not gaining something financially and socially and they are imagining better conditions where their works will receive more attendance. Moreover, the records that are introduced in the second chapter are supportive that the opportunities to get funding, broadcasting or recognizability is not

satisfactory. Mark Banks, in his book *The Politics of Cultural Work* shared his personal comment that coincides with the discussion as such:

Over the course of a number of years studying cultural workers, despite their instrumental tendencies and inveiglement in market relations, I have often been surprised by how far divorced the motives and ambitions of so many seem to be from the rational and acquisitive modes of being adjudged to lie at the heart of entrepreneurial endeavor. Workers routinely fail to demonstrate – in words, and more importantly, *deeds* – a clear commitment to capitalist norms such as profit maximization, disinterested exchange or wealth accumulation. In fact, frequently, they are openly antagonistic to these values, and will often make strenuous efforts to sustain this (contrary to Bourdieu’s analysis) over time and space.¹⁰²

Comment in the above coincides with the amateur-professional way of producing of the documentary filmmakers. In the Turkish context, because interviewees distrust to the elements of the sector which is provided above, and especially because they are not expecting (even most of the them, are not applying) funding from state and private institutions because of the patronage and political oppression (with their conceptualizations), they have eliminated the possibility of gaining something in return because there is desperation. Thus, documentary filmmakers are ready for self-dedication; empirical evidence showed that documentary filmmakers are expecting to gain not much both financially and socially. As described in the Introduction chapter, this thesis is aiming to take into account of the workers seriously as the other qualitative studies on the creative labor literature did; so their indication of not gaining much after they produce documentaries is taken as a variable in the empirical evidence.

The self-esteem of the filmmakers in the sample of this thesis is related with their satisfactions about their works and with the theme of social responsibility. Those concerns are orientating them to a specific kind of career pattern as detailed above. They are ready to confront all of the negativities of the sector by returning not much in return. Authors like McRobbie, Littleton and Karen, Hesmondhalgh and Baker suggested that the ambivalence of conditions that are related with the self-esteem of the workers time to

¹⁰²Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work*, 184.

time caused self-exploitation.¹⁰³ They accepted the trend in the discourses that is, 'living on the edge' while producing might nourish the self-exploitative feature of the creative labor.¹⁰⁴ By looking at the unemployment rate of people who are older age, maternal leave and conditions after, and long years of unpaid internship of young workers, scholars highlighted the ambivalent characteristics of the work is making the internalizations of insecure working conditions and might lead workers to oblige very harsh conditions.¹⁰⁵

Findings of qualitative studies on creative cultural workers will suggest the career pattern introduced as not an ideal working experience. However, the documentary filmmakers who were producing with acquisition method did not express their grievances. Because documentary filmmakers were convinced that it was impossible to create the works with good qualities and good social values, they were ready to give their time and money and they did not expressed their misery. They talked about their productions in a good way and introduced their future projects with enthusiasm and did not express their financial problems as a critical issue in their lives as the empirical studies of other literature. They accepted all of the obstacles and to be self-dedicative to produce.

The difference in the empirical study from the other studies in the literature might be because those studies were focusing on the workers who are earning their lives through their creative cultural work. However, in Turkey, as I showed, some of the documentary filmmakers, including the ones who were professionally producing (getting prizes, creating a social impact, etc.) were producing with acquisition method and earned their lives through other kinds of jobs.

¹⁰³Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*; Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*; Angela McRobbie, 'Everyone Is Creative: Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy.'

¹⁰⁴Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 45.

¹⁰⁵Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 107, 141.

This context-specific nature of the sector making it not easy to analyze it through the conceptions of qualitative studies about the creative cultural workers; however, scholars of the creative cultural industries who were doing a qualitative research were also confused by the ambivalences in their empirical studies where interviewees expressed satisfactions and dissatisfactions at the same time. In order to be able to comment on those inconsistencies, they step out and tried to find inconsistencies in the discourses.¹⁰⁶ The inconsistency in the Turkish context is the high level of the self-dedication of the filmmakers while they are producing; however they did not complain about it. Besides the possible reason of the intertwined amateur-professional production, it might be related with the contents of the discourse that can be related the fantasies of the filmmakers; in which imaginations of a better sector in the interviews was present. It was a very popular discourse to express an imagined sector, a better version of documentary filmmaking sector of Turkey, mostly compared with other countries which have the 'ideal' conditions for producing. Putting all the efforts and since imagining a completely different conditions of filmmaking for Turkey, may have intersections with the self-exploitation concept of the creative cultural workers. Since this situation can be better described with the Occidentalism framework, this discussion will be detailed in the third chapter.

3.2.4 Giving Up

On the one hand, filmmakers were trying to find a creative escape way from the conditions of documentary filmmaking that frustrated them. They started producing documentaries with their financial sources. On the other hand, some were losing their faith and giving up. It may be the reason of migrating to another country or from time to time, as expressed in the interviews, strong regret about not leaving the country earlier to build a career in another country. Aslı accepted that she is not hopeful about documentary production sector of Turkey and migrating to Germany to have better conditions as a

¹⁰⁶ Hesmondhalgh and Baker. "'A very complicated version of freedom', 20; Taylor and Littleton, *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*, 107, 141.

documentary filmmaker. Even though not because of her job, Esra is moving to Canada because of her concerns about the future of the country and she thinks language will be a problem there and not planning to continue producing. Ahmet said he is waiting for his retirement to quit the sector and pessimistically added that his career will be completely different if he was in another country. Nihat wants to continue; yet he confessed that the most important reason of his continuation is simply for earning money. He did not want to work in other areas as soap operas or advertisement productions; because he says working for documentaries is more meaningful.

In this chapter, after presenting the facts about documentary filmmaking, a pattern in the documentary filmmaking production is suggested. It is the perception of an obligatory step out from the sector, because of the distrust to the current possibilities within the sector. Filmmakers stepped out of the institutionalized system, by eliminating the funding opportunities and in house projects, because they think is the only way that they can create the documentaries that could be categorized as the 'real' documentaries. Thus, acquisition method summarized above which is first shooting the documentary and then collecting the sources, in the sample of this thesis is mostly conceptualized as one's will to produce their documentaries which they think as closer to the 'real' documentaries, with better contents.

Some of discourses revealed that filmmakers were ready for self-dedication for creating real documentaries. This pattern coincides with the creative labor studies. The scholars suggest the ambivalent areas of cultural work could lead to bad work: self-exploitation through long working hours and insecurity. Pattern is showing documentary filmmakers have internalized, because of the obstacles of the sector, that they have to work really hard to produce documentaries and in return they accept the risk of gaining nothing, both financially and socially. However, sector of Turkey, according to the sample of this thesis, has a different dynamic. As also could be seen from the empirical evidence of this thesis: the amateur and professional production is intertwined in Turkey. The documentaries produced by 'amateur' filmmakers (because who are not earning their lives

through documentary filmmaking) are the ones who are screened; win prizes, accepted as the documentaries with better qualities. Because filmmakers earn a living through different jobs, it can be understandable to not express grievances about earning a life in the discourses in the discourse. Thus, calling the act of continuing to produce documentaries no matter what the conditions and the gain as self-exploitative, at this point of discussion, is not possible.

The theme of grievances was not present in the discourses; however the fantasies about an ideal and a better sector were present. One of the reasons of the decision to step out from the institutionalized system was because the quality of the works did not satisfy the filmmakers. Some of discourses surfaced that while deciding on the quality of the works some of the documentary filmmakers were comparing productions with the Western documentaries. It was commonly shared in the interviews that documentaries produced by Western countries have better quality and filmmakers in those countries have better working conditions. This framework allows one to analyze some of the discourses through the conceptions of critiques of modernity including the theoretical framework of Occidentalism. The discourses in the empirical data which can be related with fantasies, will be revisited in the next chapter again, in order to show they can highlight a different dimension of creative cultural work in Turkey and how it can be a veiled self-exploitation of the workers and thus, it can also affect the sustainability of the sector.



CHAPTER 4

CREATIVE LABOR IN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING IN TURKEY AND OCCIDENTALISM

His eyes, at least, were all but declaring, 'You see our bridge, miserable Russian; well, you are a worm before our bridge and before every German because you do not have such a bridge.' You will agree that this is offensive. The German, of course, never said any such thing, and perhaps it never entered his mind, but ... at the time I was so certain that this was precisely what he meant to say that I finally flew into a rage. 'The devil take you,' I thought. 'We invented the samovar too... we have journals... we do things officers do... we have...' In a word, I was infuriated.¹⁰⁷

Fyodor Dostoyevsky - *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863)

¹⁰⁷ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (Northwestern University Press, 1988), 23.

We watch documentaries produced by other countries and they amaze us indeed. However, one cannot help wondering the result, if our documentaries with these important and critical subjects were produced with their technologies of storytelling, within their work environment?

Mehmet-Award winning documentary director
(During our interview for this thesis, April 4, 2017)

In *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, published in 1863, Dostoyevsky was inspired from his one-month journey to 16 European cities. Saying that it is an outdated attempt to design it like a travel book he preferred to record his feelings about encountering the Western world after so many years of fantasizing about it. From the inferiority complex to the joy of realizing his being different, 150 years ago, he described a repertoire of feelings, which could be traced in today's discourses about the West, in Turkey. For example, the two quotes above are relatable; since they both refer to Western images, which has the technologic superiority when compared with self.

In this chapter, through the interviews, discourses that are about documentaries being produced and working conditions will be presented. As a final effort, the analysis of the discourses is provided with the help of theoretical frame of Occidentalism.

4.1 The Question of 'Real Documentary' in the Interviews

While analyzing documentaries produced in Turkey, Sözen, in his study, referred to criteria is based on Western productions.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, most of the interviewees preferred to compare the documentaries of Turkish sector through productions of Western countries, as could be traced from the quotations below. They referred to the difference between the documentaries that are old-fashioned, expository and the documentaries that

¹⁰⁸ Mustafa Sözen, 'Belgesel Filmin Tasarım Boyutu ve Türk Belgesel Sinemasından Örnek Uygulamalar,' *ZKU Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, Number 11, (2010): 241–266.

can be accepted more up-to-date, interesting, and well designed in terms of creativity and intelligence. (Most of the time, in the discourses, the latter were the documentaries produced in Western countries)

There is all that drama. All those fancy words. For example, 'Our traditional skills at risk of dying out.' I mean, of course. We are in the year 2017; but you don't have to tell the story like that. You can offer a solution or you can review the things made for cherishing. We have hundreds of documentaries, which are looking at this subject from the same perspective. (Vural)

When I look at the works produced in Turkey, I mean, when compared with the foreign productions, I think they are very funny. There is no need to talk about other fields such as movies or soap operas. (Hasan)

(Talking about the Turkish director Ceyda Torun, the director of recently popular documentary called *Cat*) I think she studied in London. This is understandable. *Cat* is a documentary which can be made with a perspective you can only acquire when you are educated abroad. If people don't see different examples, they will always do the same thing. The conditions are not good either, so the documentaries produced from the Turkish sector are usually bad. I don't see any good works. (Mine)

I have watched some documentaries recently produced by other countries. I see intelligence in those works. They are proof of creativity and fluency is also the case when the subject is documentaries. I don't see works like that in my company or in festivals that I am attending. Yes, there are good documentaries; yes, I learn something when I watch them; however, I am talking about something else. By saying that, I am not trying to underestimate other producers in the sector. Actually, I am talking about myself. I am asking to myself, why can't I produce works that have that level of intelligence? Maybe it is because of the differences in the way we are educated. (Merve)

The quotations above show documentary filmmakers are thinking a lot about the quality of the documentaries produced in Turkey: The discourse of Vural's criticism is similar is with the discussions after journalist Ahmet Hakan introduced a conceptualization of 'Turkish type of documentaries' in his column.¹⁰⁹ This discussion, also illustrated by Necati Sönmez his review about documentaries produced in Turkey in which he highlights the one of the strongest trends of documentary filmmaking in Turkey as 'the lament for that which is no more (ancient civilizations, the last great masters, last

¹⁰⁹ Ahmet Hakan, 'Türk tipi belgeselcilik,' *Hürriyet*, 28 September 2005.

remaining nomads),¹¹⁰ in a dramatic, non-scientific and most of the time, in a boring way. Hasan, who is a young documentary filmmaker have no trust on documentaries produced by the Turkish sector. Merve besides comparing also made self-criticism. Mine has reasoned the better quality of the recent documentary by a Turkish documentary filmmaker, through the director's education abroad.

The amount of hesitation differed from interviewee to interviewee about the quality of the documentaries. Some of them accepted they did not see any documentary in Turkey, which is in the same level with the Western standards. They said, in general, documentary filmmaking perspective in Turkey was way behind that of Western countries; the trends had changed and producers in Turkey were unable to catch them for various reasons and were belated. In some discourses interviewees were undecided about whether the documentaries in Turkey can be categorized as 'real' documentaries. For those ones, commonly shared discourse was to explain this problem with comparing the documentaries with the productions of Western countries.

On the other hand, criteria of some discourses while deciding on the quality of the documentaries were based on individuals rather than countries. For example, Mehmet said, documentaries are not fast food-like productions, not easy to watch for all of the people in the world. Aslı, a young documentary producer, provided her experience about seeing bad documentaries produced in Western countries. Aslı's comment was the only example in the empirical study that indicated Western sectors could also create bad productions. However, consequently, the superiority of the Western documentaries was a commonly shared discourse in the interviews.

4.2 The Cultural Misfit and Lack of Know-how

¹¹⁰ Necati Sönmez: 'Documentary in Turkey: the 2000s' in *Cinema Turkey: New Times, New Tendencies* edited by Gözde Onaran, Fırat Yücel, *Altyazı Project Office*, (2011): 60.

Ahiska, in her study focused on early radio broadcasting in Turkey mentions that broadcasters explained the 'rational mind' of the Western workers is not present in the Turkish context.¹¹¹ Similarly, sometimes in the interviews, the lack of know-how is explained by the cultural characteristics of Turkey. Some argued that the presence of strong family ties or what they conceptualized as lack of individualism present in the Turkish culture is not allowing self-dedication, which is required within the tough conditions of the Turkish documentary sector in order to produce. Aslı, Merve and Hasan explained their perspectives regarding this issue respectively as such:

Maybe they are more patient in the research process. We don't have that habit. We don't wait for the documentaries. Why is it absent? I think it is because you really need to dedicate yourself. You must make self-sacrifices. For example, maybe you will never have a family. In Turkey, there is no individualism, family is important. Maybe it is about being Eastern.

You can't trust people in Turkey. I don't know how it is in other countries but I think there is more discipline. Here, you call a person, he or she says 'Sure' to everything. Then you go to his or her place, he acts like he doesn't know you.

There are good ideas, however our people are lazy and wimp. No one is ready to take risks. For example when I look at the crew of the National Geographic (continues with providing a comparison)...

The discourse about cultural characteristics, which is originated from being Turkish or an Eastern country, as the regressive elements of the Turkish context provides an ambivalent base for the arguments, thus they are being easy to negate. For example, according to Aslı, documentary filmmaking is hard in Turkey because Turkish culture not allow people to dedicate their lives to their jobs. However, when I interviewed a Turkish documentary filmmaker, Helin, who is working in London, as a freelance cameraman in companies including BBC, she also indicated the negative features of the media sector, such as the self-dedication required to work in the cultural production sector. In parallel, Hesmondhalgh and Baker's empirical study shows, how the work-life balance is problematic in the sector.¹¹² However, in the some of the discourse of the empirical

¹¹¹Ahiska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı*, 64.

¹¹²Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 55.

evidence; the tension between the family and the self-dedication of the working conditions were presented, as they were specific for Turkish culture and Turkey's conditions of documentary filmmaking. Considering the grievances of Turkey as they are specific for Turkey because the cultural characteristics of the country; can pave the way of self-exploitation of the workers. This issue will be revisited in a more detailed way in the Section 3.4.

4.3 Absence of a 'Family Photo Album': Tendency to Neglect Documentaries

Gaye started with commonly used phrase during the interviews: 'We don't have problems about finding subjects' (*Konu sıkıntımız yok*) and continued as such:

Because, in Turkey, the variety of subjects is unbelievable. I mean, we *have to* make documentaries. That is the only hope I have about documentary filmmaking in Turkey. Patricio Guzman, a documentary filmmaker from Chile says 'A country without a documentary is family without family photo album.' I agree, every country needs an album. *We don't have it*, but we are going to build it. Inch by inch. We are going to build it.

The family photo album example of Gaye, can be illustrative regarding two themes in the discourses: neglecting documentaries produced in Turkey, and the urgency to acquire better conditions (which are most of the time set according to a criteria based on 'Western' documentary filmmaking) for documentary filmmakers.

According to which sources documentary filmmakers were commenting on the documentary filmmaking sector is nearly impossible to detect from the empirical evidence. However, the phrase 'I cannot watch the recently produced documentaries but...' (*Çok da takip edemiyorum ama...*) was popular in the interviews and can have a say about this situation. In the few interviews, similar discourses like Esra's surfaced when she answered the question 'So how do the documentary filmmakers of Turkey produce despite all these obstacles?' as 'Who is producing? Are there people who are continuing to

produce?' The perspectives in the literature agree with the problems about the sustainability of the sector. There are problems about censorship, production processes, visibility and distribution, as described in detail by the second chapter. Nevertheless, as the head of the NGO for documentary filmmaking, Mehmet said, approximately 500 documentaries are produced in Turkey in every year. (Mehmet indicated they are having problems about recording number of the productions and one of the NGO's main future tasks is to find means to record the exact number).

The numbers of documentaries that receive funding and are screened in the festivals which are described in the third chapter also shows there is active production going on that is very hard to neglect. As another indicator, interviewees who join the festivals as jury members or competitors agreed on the amount of documentaries produced in Turkey are very hard to neglect. Even though quantity does not equal quality some of the studies of the literature and the critics agreed that good documentaries are produced in Turkey every year. However as introduced so far in this chapter, some of the discourses are very much skeptical about the quantity and the quality of the documentaries. This ambivalence; which is the part of the main argument of the thesis, will be discussed in detail below.

The second theme in the family photo album example is the question of temporality. Even though interviewees mentioned about the once ideal conditions while producing documentaries, they did not mention them in a way connected with contexts of those times. They were rather coincidental. Although some of the interviewees worked in those periods, during the interviews the conditions in the years 80s, 90s and early 2000s is not mentioned. The absence might be because filmmakers do not see their period as a part of progressing sector; and thus, it may be related with the themes in the discourses that are related with the urgency. For example, because the family album of Turkey is absent Gaye added, 'Everybody should be shooting documentaries with his or her mobile phones nowadays.' This discourse, which is about starting to take action (this action is, creating more and more documentaries) as soon as possible in order to overcome the negativities of the sector; the urgency, was commonly shared in the interviews. The themes in the

discourses summarized above will be discussed in detail below with the framework of Occidentalism.

4.4 Subjective Experiences of Filmmakers and Occidentalism

Four tendencies in the interviews are provided above are: comparing the documentaries produced in Turkey and the Western productions (which filmmakers think superior to productions in Turkey) (1), explaining the 'belated' documentary filmmaking of Turkey with the cultural characteristics of the country (2), through described the family photo album example above, underestimating the active production going on in the sector (3) and the theme of urgency in the discourses because of the 'belated' documentary filmmaking sector in Turkey (4). Although it is hard to build a correlation and provide a framework includes all the tendencies in a consistent way, when they are analyzed with creative labor and Occidentalism literature it will be argued that they have intersections.

As already discussed, due to the complex connectivity of cultural globalization, cultural products are being consumed easily today. Filmmakers of Turkey have access to the documentaries that are produced all over the world. As shown in Section 3.1, filmmakers might be deciding on the quality of the documentaries produced in the country according to the documentaries that they have watched, mostly produced by Western countries. Also, some of the discourses showed filmmakers might be comparing their working conditions with those of documentary filmmakers of Western countries. Those comparisons are, besides their real experiences, sometimes based on the idealized Western image ('the rational Western mind'). Consequently, the discussion about what is a real documentary and whether it can be produced within the working environment of Turkey went hand in hand with the comparison with the Western 'model'. Analyzing it with the concepts of criticism of modernity that are introduced in the Introduction chapter can offer a perspective for the critique of documentary filmmakers, as creative cultural workers of Turkey.

Ahiska's theoretical framework of Occidentalism while analyzing the Western and Eastern images in the Turkish context, highlights the dimension of the Turkish context; where its subjects are performing according to a imagined Western gaze (in most of the case; who are able to see their inconsistencies).¹¹³ Similarly, in the context of this thesis, in most of the discourses, the comparison between the Western documentaries and documentaries produced in Turkey was in the foreground. This showed documentary filmmakers were deciding on the qualities of the documentaries by comparing them with the Western documentaries in other words, based on a Western gaze (1). Also, some of their efforts for creating 'real' documentaries (discussed under Section 2.3.3) can be categorized as efforts to 'copy' the quality of the documentaries produced in Western countries (the Western 'model') which they think superior to their documentaries. It is argued that the copy and model relationship in this context; can explain the discourses about cultural misfit (2), underestimating the active production going on in the sector (3) and belatedness (4).

As discussed in the first chapter, critiques of modernity introduce the problematic West-East dichotomy. According to their approach, a framework accepts the modern is the model, and the copy is trying to be modern despite its traditional characteristics can be problematic; and provide basis for inequalities.¹¹⁴ Concerns of critiques of modernity can be traced in the discourse of this thesis. In some of the discourses the lacking know-how for producing documentaries is as a result of being a non-Western country (2). Trapping the decisions about the productions and working environments to the East (copy) and West (model) dichotomy; a discourse which accepts the obstacles specific for Turkey without questioning it because they are part of the culture of the Turkey, also accepts that those obstacles are very hard to overcome.

In the context of Hesmondhalgh and Baker, it was the buzzword 'creativity' and its perceptions, which convinced workers to work longer hours for low payments. Besides the notion of 'creativity', in Turkey, the argument of deficits of Turkish culture may be

¹¹³ Ahiska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı*, 67.

¹¹⁴ Koğacıoğlu, "The tradition effect: framing honor crimes in Turkey," 119-15 ; Parla, "The" honor" of the state: virginity examinations in Turkey," 65-88.

helping filmmakers to internalize the problems of the sector, as they are normal. Thus it is argued in this thesis that the cultural work, which by nature can be self-exploitative, has another dimension in Turkey; another level on the internalization process of the self-exploitation: Accepting the obstacles of Turkey as they are specific for the country and thus they are very hard to change. The change, which is overcoming the cultural differences in this context, is a very long-term plan and it can burden the creative cultural worker, who may already be burdened by the heavy workload due to the nature of creative cultural work, as discussed in detail in the first chapter of this thesis. Addressing more specific problems rather than generalizations about culture can remove the heavy burden of being belated because of the cultural characteristics. Also, the obstacles that are presented as results of cultural characteristics is negated by the conceptions of creative cultural work in the literature; since they show some of the self-exploitative features of the creative cultural work can be universal.

The family photo album example of Gaye was useful to present two themes in the discourses: neglecting the recently produced documentaries or documentaries produced in past (3) and the urgency to catch the Western standards sourced from the feeling of a gap between the 'self' (the copy) and the 'real' documentaries (the model) (4). The current production, which is hard to neglect because of its amount and the quality, as discussed in this thesis, was the missing subject in some of the discourses. Not only the current productions; in those discourses, the documentaries or working environment of documentary filmmakers of the previous years are also not referred. For example, even though interviewees mentioned about the once ideal conditions while producing documentaries, they did not mention them in a way connected with contexts of those times, they were instead presented with coincidental conditions, such as the right amount of funding once received.

However, the absences in the discourses can mean the surplus.¹¹⁵ For example, Ahıska, mentions a methodological problem while she started to study early radio broadcasting in Turkey. There were no proper archives of records; and people who were authoritative

¹¹⁵Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı*, 71.

about radio broadcasting commonly shared that it was unnecessary to look at those periods because they were not significant¹¹⁶. Also in her other study about the organization of the historical archives of Turkey, she claimed that the logic in the organization of the archives had changed; started again in with every executive change.¹¹⁷ In those processes of de-institutionalization, with the theoretical framework of Occidentalism, she highlights the importance of the role of the imagined Western gaze. Similarly, the discourses in the empirical evidence that Western gaze were present, not referring to the elements of previous contexts (such as the documentaries and working environments of previous decades) or even some discourses are neglecting the documentaries produced in the country very recently. This situation can be related with another theme; the urgency (4). Seeing the Western as the 'ideal/model' and the self as the 'copy', created a time difference between the two. If the model is trying for years but not succeeding to become as the 'ideal' (a stage decided accordingly the imagined Western gaze) it feels always at the starting point. In the discourses, it can be argued that the conditions and the productions of the previous years are not introduced because filmmakers are feeling as if they are at the starting point. As discussed in the Introduction chapter, that drags 'copies' to try urgently to catch Western standards. Filmmakers, since they did not think sector was developing (which is decided according to a Western gaze); they, as the subjects of that sector, are always in a hurry to catch the standards of the Western documentaries, the 'ideal'. This urgency can also cause the neglect of the works produced, because according to the Western gaze, they are not at the level of quality that satisfy the filmmakers.

Under Section 2.3 where a career pattern specific for Turkey is introduced, discourses relatable with urgency is present in the concerns of filmmakers. Some of the ideals of the filmmakers may be related with the discourses where filmmakers presented the Western documentaries as the superior (the model) to the documentaries of Turkey (copy). They were under a heavy burden of creating the 'real' documentaries, without expecting to gain something in return, financially and socially (ratings and approval). In order to try to

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 81-82.

¹¹⁷ Meltem Ahiska, "Occidentalism and registers of truth: The politics of archives in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 34 (2006): 9-29.

produce more documentaries, they are convinced that they need to step out from the current institutionalized system (can be also conceptualized by overcoming the cultural misfit as discussed under the section 4.2) which has many inadequacies. They are saving money from their day jobs and mostly in their annual leave; they are shooting their 'own' documentaries. Documentary filmmakers in an enthusiastic way, talked about their upcoming projects. They did not mention other problems like the other accounts (the literature or official accounts) such as distribution and visibility. Also, they indicate the documentaries produced with their own resources satisfy them more than works that are produced within the institutionalized sector of documentary filmmaking. Thus, like in Gaye's example, the theme of urgency, to create more documentaries that have better quality was present in the interviews. According to those accounts, with the new documentaries, eventually the family photo album of Turkey will take shape. Thus, as revealed in some of the discourses, while documentary filmmakers were taking an action, the focus of the discourses was on the quality and the quantity of the documentaries that were produced. With the conceptions of criticisms of modernity and framework of Occidentalism, it is argued that discourses that neglect the current productions or do not refer to previous years of documentary filmmaking while offering an analysis can be related to the situation of always performing according to a Western gaze. According to this gaze, the sector of Turkey is never in the same level of the Western productions; thus, theme of urgency of catching the Western standards is in the foreground while taking action for the improvement of the sector.

Littleton and Taylor, in their qualitative study about creative cultural workers, said the focus of the discourses in their empirical evidence was misdirected and it might pave the way for the self-exploitation of the workers. In another qualitative study, Hesmondhalgh and Baker concluded their study about creative labor by indicating that to be in a bad work or a good work is the responsibility of documentary filmmakers.¹¹⁸ In the light of these argumentations, which put an emphasis on the individual choices of the workers in the discourses, this thesis argued the focus of the discourses about documentary filmmaking might be misdirected. The discourses are in trapped in the West-East

¹¹⁸Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 226.

dichotomy. Documentary filmmakers, while talking about filmmaking, mostly preferred to indicate their concerns about the quality of their works; about their plans to make the quality of the documentaries better in their next production; but not their concerns about the visibility and the distribution of their documentaries. However, the problems about visibility and distribution, was presented as problems that were more important than the quality and the quantity of the documentaries produced, by some of the scholars. Also, the problems in visibility and distribution of documentaries are also presented in the Chapter 2 with the help of the facts. The visibility and distribution; the interaction between the produced documentaries and the audience or the social value of the documentaries are also the constitutive elements of the documentary filmmaking in Turkey. They are in the background in the discourses that are related with taking an action. Eliminating other problems in the discourses can harm the sustainability of the documentary filmmaking, which will at the end also have negative impacts on the documentary filmmakers. Thus, the tendency to focus mostly on the quality and quantity of documentaries, while offering an analysis about documentary filmmaking in Turkey can be accepted as misdirection.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In the second chapter, first, facts about broadcasting, funding and other elements of documentary filmmaking in Turkey were provided. Then, the subjective experiences of the workers about the sector were on the foreground. The connection between the self-esteem and productions of the workers legitimized asking their suggestions for improvement of the sector and their way to survive in the difficult nature of the Turkish sector. Thus, a career pattern specific to Turkey was suggested in order to show how filmmakers were producing despite the obstacles in the sector and thus, making decisions about their careers in a way which will enable them to produce the documentaries that they found more qualified than the ones produced within the institutionalized (or not institutionalized) sector of Turkey.

Filmmakers as creative cultural workers of Turkey indicated no matter what the conditions they will continue to produce and they did; although they were not very hopeful about visibility, distribution and financial gain of their documentaries. Focusing at the ways of producing enabled to see blurred line between the amateur production and professional production in Turkey. Professionals of the sector whose works are awarded nationally and internationally, act and wish like amateurs because they are not expecting

some gain in return and also not very hopeful about the ratings of the documentaries. The continuity in production can have many other explanations, which this thesis fails to address. For example, documentary filmmakers may be considering their cultural capital through documentaries they produced; yet they indicated that they are not gaining something financially and socially. Moreover, the records that are introduced in the second chapter supported this discourse.

According to creative labor studies, expecting nothing in return, in other words the blurred line the amateur and professional production is a self-exploitative act and decreases the sustainability of the sector, thus will be conceptualized as bad work. However, as discussed in the second chapter, explaining the dynamics of documentary filmmaking explored in the first part of the empirical study (Chapter 2) with the conceptions of creative labor studies is not very possible. Some documentary filmmakers do not make a living through filmmaking even though their works were acclaimed as the 'real' documentaries of the country. They make money through other kinds of jobs as shown in the Section 2.3.3. Unlike the empirical evidence of the studies in the literature that have inspired this thesis, in the empirical study of this thesis, it is seen that documentary filmmakers did not indicated their financial problems or their fears about future.

According to some of the discourses, while taking an action, the motivation of the filmmakers was to produce documentaries, which are more qualified than the documentaries typically produced in the institutionalized documentary sector of Turkey. In some of the discourses, the will to create the 'real' documentaries can be correlated the theoretical framework of Occidentalism as shown in the third chapter. Thus, some of the documentary filmmakers tend to present documentaries produced in Turkey as documentaries that are old-fashioned when compared with the documentaries they see produced by the Western countries. They step out from the institutionalized sector to eliminate the unfertile conditions, and produce something closer to the ones they think as the ideal. Also, in some of the discourses, the working conditions of Western countries

were idealized; and sometimes they define the lacking know-how is reasoned with cultural misfit of Turkey (in other words, not having the Western rational mind).

In the context summarized in the paragraph above, even though filmmakers did not express their problems about making a living because they were producing as amateurs, one can argue they expressed their fantasies. They imagine producing in a sector like in the Western countries; want to produce documentaries in the same level with the Western documentaries and have the working conditions of their Western peers. These discourses were the most popular discourses found in the empirical evidence. Thus, it is argued that documentary filmmakers see the Western productions as the model and their productions as the copy; they have not become as much as qualified as the model yet.

The 'model' and the 'copy' conceptions bring into question temporality. Filmmakers are not seeing their self as actors of a sector that is well functioning (institutionalized) or progressing throughout the years and another finding of the thesis was, sometimes the documentaries that are produced today or in the previous years are neglected. It is argued that neglecting the works are also contributing to the gap between the copy and the model the sector is analyzed through the Western gaze in the discourses. Consequently the gap is causing the urgency to catch up. Thus, this thesis argued, while looking at one of the most popular trends in the discourses, biggest concern of the some of documentary filmmakers while taking action was to create documentaries that have closer quality of documentaries produced in -what is conceptualized as- Western countries. They do not present their self, as the actors of a genre that is transforming throughout years and is producing documentaries that satisfied filmmakers with their quality. Thus catching up the level of the Western documentaries is becoming the main task and the motivation. This urgency and belatedness syndrome in Turkey may be increasing the already ambivalent nature of creative labor detailed by the literature. Documentary filmmakers are dedicated to produce filmmakers no matter what; and they focus on the quality of the documentaries.

On the other hand, while the quality and the quantity of the documentaries were such popular in the discourses, in the literature, besides the quality and the quantity of the documentaries, scholars indicated concerns about the visibility and the distribution of the documentaries and the facts of the official accounts supported those concerns. The mismatch between the literature and official accounts and the discourses of the documentary filmmakers is explained through framework of Occidentalism. The comparison between the quality of Western productions and Turkish productions is indeed required for the improvement of the genre and quality of the documentaries. Nevertheless, the documentaries produced in Turkey are in languages spoken in Turkey and about the issues of Turkey. Some of them are only screened in Turkey. Since documentaries have organic connections with the societies; have social values as cultural products, besides the focus on their qualities and amount, their visibility and distribution is also important. Supporting them and increasing their accessibility may be equally important as increasing their quality. However, underestimating the documentary filmmakers who are producing in good quality (a theme surfaced in some of the discourses) can prevent to have a clearer picture of documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker said self-exploitation can be a misnomer and concluded their study about creative labor by indicating that to have a bad work or a good work is the responsibility of the documentary filmmakers.¹¹⁹ Taylor and Littleton said the misdirection in the focus on the discourses about working experiences could help workers to internalize the self-exploitative characteristics of the work. This remarks in the literature about creative cultural work allows one to make following comments. Documentary filmmakers, choose to produce with their own means in relation with their self-esteem. They did not expect not much in return. When documentary filmmakers, as one of the groups that are most influential in documentary filmmaking Turkey, only take action to create more documentaries that have better quality, and present the quality and the quantity as the most important problem of the sector, they may be de-emphasizing the problems about visibility and distribution that are introduced by other accounts such as literature and official records.

¹¹⁹Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*, 226.

At that point, one can say, filmmakers may be producing only for their own pleasure and they do not have to express their own gains or the best of the sector. However, the discourses in the interviews filmmakers, repeatedly, talked about their fantasies for a better working environment in the country. When this misdirection of focus is analyzed together with their fantasies, one can suggest it might draw back them to take an action for a better sector, which they fantasize about.

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, the shortcoming while using the Occidentalism framework was not being able to offer broader political and social analyses. Besides seeing the effort of the thesis as worthwhile while trying to see the reverberations of the conceptions of critiques of modernity on group of people who are actors of the Turkish context, this shortcoming of thesis can be excused by accepting its efforts while trying to highlight the inner processes of the actors worthwhile because they stand in a critical place of the production of the images of the West and the East. This thesis is not focusing on the discourses of the documentaries that are produced, however, knowing what the motivation and the working processes of the actors who produces documentaries, can be considered as a branch of the Occidentalism framework and can be explanatory for the broader analyses which this thesis is not able to do. Filmmakers, in the end, are actors who are creating cultural goods that will be consumed by the masses.

Another finding which can be important is, besides the misdirection of focus, the 'bad work' conception of creative studies, which was not useful to understand the discourses of the filmmakers in the empirical study presented in Chapter 2, have provided a basis for analyzing discourses when used together with the Occidentalism discourse in the third chapter. In Turkey, filmmakers internalized the 'bad work' by thinking that it is specific for Turkey because of the cultural characteristics of the country because it does not have Western know-how and a strong tradition of documentary filmmaking (when compared with Western countries). Some of the discourses idealized the working conditions in the Western countries and suggested that their Western peers are producing with peace and they are rewarded every time for their efforts. As the literature and interview with Helin

who is a filmmaker in London shows, the subjects that are illustrated as specific for the Turkey's sector were also the problems of other contexts than Turkey. Using the framework of Occidentalism and creative labor together helped to see the already ambivalent nature of creative labor in Turkey. The insecure working conditions can be triggered with Occidentalism because it helps workers to internalize those processes, as they are special for Turkey.

As described above, by exploring what could be conceptualized as Occidentalism in the documentary filmmakers discourse and suggesting it as a dimension of the creative labor in Turkey, this thesis aimed to detail the two main problems of documentary filmmaking in Turkey. First one is, some of the discourses about documentary filmmaking indicated some of the problems of the sectors as specific to Turkey. It is argued in this thesis that this situation can pave the way for exploitation in their creative labor and can decrease the sustainability of the sector. The concern of studies of critique of modernity which was introduced in the Introduction chapter, which was critical about trapping the discussion between Western and Eastern images and missing the complexities of the reality, was present in the discourses of documentary filmmaking in Turkey.

Besides the self-exploitative dimension of the documentary filmmaking revealed with the analysis through the Occidentalism framework, the second point the framework revealed is how filmmakers were in urgency because they were deciding on the state of documentary filmmaking in Turkey and qualities of the production according to a Western gaze. This urgency is causing them to focus only to the quality and the amount of the productions. As it is discussed in detail only taking action for creating more documentaries might be veiling other problems such as the visibility and distribution.¹²⁰

This thesis study, by criticizing the fantasies time to time, itself fantasizes a documentary filmmaking sector, in which the good works will be visible and rewarded. Or in which filmmakers rather than only planning and shooting new documentaries, also think about the issues about distribution and visibility of their and other filmmaker's documentaries

¹²⁰ Can Candan, 'Documentary Cinema in Turkey: A Brief Survey of The Past and The Present,' 127.

after they are being produced. The normativity of this argument is open to discussion; however this thesis accepts the approach of Raymond Williams that indicate creativity can have good impacts on society. By providing different ways of communicating, it can strengthen interpersonal trust; can consolidate democratization by raising awareness about important issues about the contexts.¹²¹ In order to have more sustainable sector, it assumes the perception of the problems by the documentary filmmakers is also important. For example, while we were interviewing, Hasan, an awarded filmmaker, said:

When I meet with young documentary filmmakers, they say they have a very nice idea. I ask them, 'So why don't you start?' This is a very simple question which can have simple answers. They are mumbling. They have no answer. If they can state the obstacles in a clearer way, we can, together, work on those things.

Hasan is calling his future co-workers to decipher problems in a more specific way. While talking about the nature of the cultural industries, studies suggested by examining the subjective experiences, scholars can address to the subjects that the resistance is required in order to make the good work possible in the industries.

There are many dynamics about documentary filmmaking, which makes it complex, and hard to define as discussed in the earlier section of this thesis. Some of them are explained by the house metaphor by the documentary distributor Oli Harbottle, which will be also useful to think about documentary filmmaking of Turkey:

I like to think of documentary as a house, where there are various windows on different to the world outside. But the windows are also mirrors, as they all offer a chance for in the house, in the same way that there are no boundaries or rules in documentary. So I guess the house isn't a true house, in the same way that documentary should not be seen necessarily as truth. But there is a roof for the community who opens those windows and extend those walls, and the foundations for the house are there and are deep-rooted in reality. And the door is always open and everyone is welcome.¹²²

House metaphor may answer the questions like 'Why there are documentaries?' 'What are documentaries?' or 'How the genre is transforming, how it is interacting with other kinds

¹²¹Hesmondhalgh and Baker, *Creative labor: Media work in three cultural industries*, 7.

¹²²Laurene Boglio, "What is documentary?," *Little White Lies*, Mar-Apr, 2016, 23.

of genres and might be forming a new kind medium?' With this thesis I aim to show, these questions while thinking about documentaries are less popular in Turkey than the the question 'Are there documentaries in Turkey?' (in other words, Do we have a 'house' in Turkey?). In order to answer other types of questions, more studies about the social impacts of the documentaries that are produced might be useful besides the studies about the content and the situation of the sector. Since in the recent years many documentaries have become popular and increased the visibility of social problems (such as a documentaries like '*Benim Çocuğum*', '*İki Dil Bir Bavul*') their social value, impacts on the audiences can be traced like the studies about other genres in Turkey did. ¹²³

This thesis tries to detail discourses about documentary filmmaking sector in order to provide a perspective while focusing on the problems of the genre in Turkey. An interviewee's, Selim's words are useful to describe why such efforts are worthwhile.

In a country without democracy, human rights, one thinks, what can be done for documentaries? Nevertheless, on the other hand, it is the chicken and egg situation. In order to consolidate democracy, you must have a strong civil society. Making documentaries could contribute for that. Thus, we are obliged to make documentaries. We need to continue producing. This is our contribution, our way of resistance.

¹²³ Aynülhayat Uybadın, '*Ev Kadınlarının Sanat Filmlerini Anlamlandırma Süreci Üzerine Bir Alımlama Çalışması: Hayat Var Örneği*', *Sinecine* 7:2 (2016): 124-147 ; Nilüfer Pembecioğlu, '*Çizgi Belgeseller Üstüne: Yetişkinlere Yönelik Bir Çizgi Film: Mısır Prensi Üzerine Bir Çalışma'nın Getirdikleri*', in *Belgesel Film Üzerin eYazılar* ed. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (İstanbul: BabilYayıncılık, 2005), 203-223.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you start your career?

1.1. *If the career path did not start within the documentary sector,*

Why did you choose to work in documentaries?

2. Do you think there are different conditions in the documentary sector for every country? What are the conditions special for Turkey?

2.1. *If interviewee is making comments about the sector but not mentioning his profession,*

What are the conditions special for Turkey for a documentary producer / director / copywriter?

3. What do you want to say when you compare foreign productions with Turkish ones?

3.1. *If interviewee is talking about the Western productions but not making division between the Europe and the US,*

What do you mean by West and why did you made that division?

4. Do you think Western productions that are about Eastern countries are representing the countries in a proper way?

4.1. *If interviewee thinks they are not,*

How it is reflected differently?

5. *If interviewee has working experience abroad,*

What do you want to say about your work experiences abroad when you compare them with the ones in Turkey?

6. *If interviewee worked in EU supported project,*

Do you see differences when you compare the EU supported documentary project with your ordinary working process during the preparation and the production stages?

7. *If interviewee said documentary sector in Turkey must improve,*

In which areas you think improvement is required?

8. How do you think these improvements are possible?

9. What are the most important actors who have a role in this improvement?

10. Do you think foreign productions have an impact on the Turkish productions? How?
11. As production equipments get lighter in weight day by day, now people can work easily in other countries. How do you think globalization will have an impact on the documentary sector?
12. What is your career plan?

If interviewee also works in other production areas such as movies, news, series,

In which sector you want to work most? Why?



APPENDIX B: SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

1) Aslı - Documentary Producer

Aslı (33) is documentary producer, who has started her career in advertisement sector. When she was a child she always wanted to be a documentary filmmaker. She started working as an in house documentary producer in a private documentary filmmaking TV channel in 2012 and worked there for 4 years. Besides her day job, with her co-workers they produced award winning independent documentaries. We interviewed with Aslı and after few days later she has left the country and migrated to Germany, in order to find better conditions for her future documentaries.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on October 20, 2016.

2) Hasan - Documentary Production Assistant

Hasan (26) studied Radio-Television and Film in Anatolian University. When he was a student he started to work in as a camera assistant. Hasan left his in house job and started working as a freelance camera just before we interviewed. He wants to produce his own documentaries, which is about his special interest; nature sports. He indicated he wanted to documentary-like-objective though: he is not hopeful about gathering financial sources for his own documentaries.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on October 21, 2016.

3) Ahmet - Former Documentary Director, Advertisement Director

Ahmet (55) studied Fine Arts in the university and worked over 20 years in state owned TV channel, TRT. He is now working as the head of the advertisement department of a private television channel. Few years ago he completely step out from the documentary

filmmaking sector. He is waiting for retirement in his in house job and not planning to turn back to the sector.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on October 25, 2016.

4) Hasan - Documentary Director and Actor

Hakan (32) is a professional actor who is playing in blockbuster movies and also produces independent documentaries. He won the Golden Orange prize with his first documentary in Antalya Film Festival. While the interview was conducted, he was working on a bigger documentary and trying to get state funding before starting to shoot it.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on October 26, 2016.

5) Selin - Copywriter and Producer for documentaries

Selin (42) is working in Coşkun Aral's production team, who is a household name in documentary filmmaking. She did not study media in the university. Selin was one of the filmmakers who emphasized the importance of the young people; and she is hopeful for the sector because she finds the young filmmakers of Turkey very talented.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on November 4, 2016.

6) Tolga - Independent Documentary Director and Student in Faculty of Medicine

Tolga (26) is a medical student. In his travel to Balkans, he started to make short documentary videos and started to broadcast them via YouTube. His videos became popular in the internet. In the future, he wants to continue documentary filmmaking,

besides his day job as an MD. He hopes to use financial sources that he collects from his real profession for the documentaries that he wants to produce.

We interviewed in Eskişehir, on November 26, 2016.

7) Merve - Documentary Producer

Merve, (35) besides her in house job as a documentary producer, produces independent documentaries with her husband, Cengiz, who is an in house documentary director of photography in the same channel with Merve. Merve said documentary filmmaking was her childhood dream. Merve said Cengiz received prestigious awards for their independent documentaries. Both indicated they are not satisfied from their documentaries that they produce in in house manner and see their independent documentaries as the ones that satisfy them. Their aim is to open a production office and only produce independent documentaries.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on December 13, 2016.

8) Nihat - Executive in a Documentary Channel

Nihat (45) is an executive in a documentary channel. He is responsible from the advertisement and public relations departments. He said he wanted to work in documentaries because he finds them more meaningful than any other jobs in the cultural industries. Nihat is a politically active individual and he has only one suggestion for the future of documentary filmmaking. If Turkey will have a socialist government, the quality of the documentaries and the sector will rise automatically.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on March 11, 2017.

9) Gaye - Independent Documentary Filmmaker

Gaye (42) studied film in New York and started to produce documentaries starting from her student years. She won the best documentary award in 2017 of *SİYAD* (Cinema Writer Association for Turkey). She was one of the interviewees who mentioned most about finding an alternative and guerilla ways to increase visibility and distribution of the documentaries.

We interviewed in Bodrum, on March 31, 2017.

10) Cengiz - Independent Documentary Director and In House Documentary Director of Photography for documentaries

Cengiz (37) studied Radio-Television and Film in Anadolu University. He started to take courses on documentary and by the time he graduated he had already shot two documentaries. He started working in a documentary channel and in the recent years, he started to produce documentaries independently. He and her wife, Merve, who I also interviewed for this thesis, is planning to open a production office where they can only produce independent documentaries that they want.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on April 3, 2017

11) Mehmet - Independent Documentary Producer and head of the NGO for documentary filmmaking in Turkey; *Belgesel Sinemacılar Birliği*

Mehmet (55) started documentary filmmaking in the news program *32. Gün*, which was a milestone in documentary filmmaking, as described in the second chapter of this thesis. He directed over ten documentaries and his documentaries gained lots of awards in the

festivals including Istanbul Film Festival and Golden Orange Film Festival. He is member of Association of Documentary Filmmaking in Turkey, starting from its early years. He is now head of this NGO and continuing to produce documentaries. He has a production company where he also makes commercial videos for companies. He said he is doing it for gathering financial resources for his documentary projects.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on April 4, 2017.

12) Selma - Independent Documentary Producer

Selma (60) started documentary filmmaking while he was a undergraduate student in Bogazici University with the cinema club of the university. Then, she went to London and attended documentary filmmaking courses of the British Film Institute. She is currently working on two documentary projects.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on April 7, 2017.

13) Esra - Freelance Producer and Copywriter for documentaries

Esra (35) is a documentary producer graduated from Media and Communications Studies of Galatasaray University. She has started to become interested with the documentary filmmaking in her student years. After her graduation, she started to work in a documentary TV channel where she was responsible from the production of the EU funded documentaries. Now she is working as a freelance documentary copywriter and producer. Because she is immigrating to Canada, she is concerned because she may not be continuing to work for documentaries, since the language can be a problem.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on April 6, 2017.

14) Mine - Independent Documentary Producer and Film Director

Mine (41) graduated from Film Studies in Canada. She has started to produce documentaries in her undergraduate years. She worked with Al Jazeera International, as the documentary producer of channel based on Istanbul. Mine sees documentaries, by her own words, as part of her journey in the life, since every documentary opening new doors for understanding the life. She wants to continue producing documentaries; but she is now working on her fictional film project, which is funded by the Republic of Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on April 21, 2017.

15) Selim - Independent Documentary Filmmaker and Academic

Selim (47) is an academic and an independent filmmaker who started producing from his student years where he studied film in the USA. Selim was one of the interviewees who preferred to present documentary filmmaking very close with political activism. He is currently working on pre-production of his documentary project. He tries to make it via crowd-funding.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on June 20, 2017.

16) Vural - Awarded Independent Documentary Filmmaker and State Officer

42-year-old documentary filmmaker Vural is producing documentaries that are mostly about nature. He is working as a state officer in the rural places of Turkey for the development of the environmental policies. Most of the time, he is producing with his friend who has a production company. Their documentaries are awarded several times in

the international festivals. In the company, they are also producing commercial movies; Like Mehmet, they are using the financial sources of those projects for producing their own documentaries.

We interviewed in İstanbul, on November 20, 2016.

17) Helin - Freelance Videographer

35year-old videographer Helin, was working in a documentary channel in İstanbul before she has came to London. Now she is working as a freelance videographer for the news and television documentary departments of BBC and Russia Today. She is planning to have a baby; yet concerned because it is very hard to keep a job in the competitive media sector of the U.K.

We interviewed in London, on February 1, 2017.