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Visual Resistance in Platform Societies: Video Activism in Türkiye's Feminist and Environmental Movements

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Abstract

This article investigates how feminist and environmental movements in Türkiye mobilize video activism to produce visual resistance within digital platforms. Drawing on the four-part analytical framework developed by Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) and Huber (2020)—platform tactics, affective and formal dimensions, manifest meanings, and latent meanings—the study conducts qualitative content analysis of six selected videos. The findings reveal that video activism functions not merely as message transmission but as a layered practice of algorithmic navigation, emotional mobilization, and symbolic construction. Feminist and ecological struggles converge through multimodal tactics that stitch together plurality and solidarity. The study contributes to the literature by situating Turkish video activism within both local political dynamics and global digital infrastructures, offering theoretical insight and empirical grounding for future research.

Keywords

Video Activism, Digital Resistance, Feminist Media, Environmental Movements, Platform Society, Visual Analysis, Türkiye

1. Introduction

The increasing accessibility of digital technologies since the early 1990s has transformed video into a strategic tool for social justice activism. By enabling grassroots movements and marginalized communities—particularly across the Global South—to bypass traditional media gatekeepers, video has become central to campaigns addressing human rights, environmental justice, and indigenous struggles. As production and distribution have become more democratized, individuals and

collectives now use video not only to document social realities but also to challenge dominant narratives and mobilize change (Gregory & Gabriel, 2005). Video activism is defined as the use of online video by civil society actors—independent of state, corporate, or established journalistic institutions—to advocate for political causes, and more broadly as the use of audiovisual tools—particularly portable and digital video technologies—for documenting, witnessing, and intervening in social and political realities. It enables individuals and grassroots collectives to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and produce visual narratives that challenge dominant discourses (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025; Lenzner, 2021). On the other hand, the activist use of video—particularly in protest contexts—also introduces a set of ambiguities and risks. Wilson and Serisier (2010) examine how video activism functions as a form of counter-surveillance, where activists film police conduct to promote accountability and protect themselves. However, this visibility can be double-edged: while video may deter abuse, it can also expose activists to intensified surveillance, legal repercussions, and targeted repression. The authors emphasize that the political impact of such footage is never guaranteed; images may be reframed, co-opted, or weaponized against those they aim to protect. Thus, video activism operates within a complex terrain where empowerment and vulnerability coexist.

Contemporary video activism in digital environments builds on a long tradition of politically committed media practices, yet introduces new aesthetic and structural dynamics shaped by online platforms. Political mash-up videos, in particular, reflect a remix ethos that blends diverse genres, styles, and modes of address while repurposing existing content for activist aims (Askanius, 2013). Askanius proposes a typology to understand the hybrid forms of visual activism emerging on platforms such as YouTube, where documentary and documentation practices converge in politically engaged media. These mash-up practices operate on three levels: as material acts of re-editing online content, as stylistic convergences across media genres, and as spaces where boundaries between political actors and motives become increasingly blurred. Viewed in this light, online mash-up videos represent a continuation of analogue activist traditions while contributing distinct aesthetic forms shaped by the digital age (Askanius, 2013). Askanius (2019) underscores that scholarly treatments of video activism typically emphasize three distinct conceptual lenses—technology, text, and testimony—each providing valuable but fragmented understandings of the field. She contends that to fully grasp the multifaceted nature of video activism, these perspectives must be integrated through a practice-based approach that considers video activism as simultaneously technological, textual, and testimonial. This holistic framing enables researchers to move beyond binary oppositions such as online/offline, digital/analog, or mainstream/activist, and to apprehend how activists *do*, *think*, *and say* with video in their pursuit of social and political change (Askanius, 2019).

Contemporary video activism emerges from a diverse lineage that includes political documentary cinema, broadcast media, journalism, artistic practice, and

public relations. Central to its development is the tradition of committed documentary filmmaking, which seeks to amplify the voices of marginalized communities and advocate for social justice. With the widespread availability of broadband internet, smartphones equipped with cameras and editing tools, and live-streaming applications, a new form of activism has taken shape—one that privileges short, fragmented, and spontaneous content often referred to as "small media." However, an exclusive focus on brief witness clips or socially themed spots fails to capture the complexity of today's digital media landscape. Activist video now operates within hybrid environments that simultaneously foster alternative narratives and counterpublics, while also exposing creators to surveillance, manipulation, and online harassment (Tedjasukmana & Eder, 2020). For example, the UK-based video activist collective Reel News has been producing bi-monthly newsreels since 2006, focusing on progressive movements and campaigns both in Britain and globally. What distinguishes Reel News is its explicit commitment to class struggle and its refusal to seek institutional funding or commercialize its content. Operating solely through donations and subscriptions from individuals and trade union branches, the group exemplifies how video can function as a grassroots tool for mobilization. With thousands of engaged viewers, Reel News demonstrates the potential of activist media to inform and incite action (Kelly & Dey, 2020).

As video becomes an increasingly vital tool for exposing injustice, human rights organizations have begun to professionalize video activism through structured production practices, verification protocols, and formal training programs. This shift has led to the emergence of a proxy profession that strategically positions human rights video within legal, journalistic, and advocacy domains—often privileging institutional frameworks over grassroots cultural practices (Ristovska, 2021). At the same time, Ristovska (2021) identifies four interrelated values that continue to define video activism as an occupational craft: its public function in shaping discourse on urgent sociopolitical issues; its commitment to open and collective media-making; its role as a platform for alternative voices and visions; and its emphasis on emotional engagement as a form of democratic participation. These values not only reflect the ethical-political power of visual storytelling but also underpin the practices of contemporary human rights collectives operating across diverse global contexts.

Video activism refers to the strategic use of video technologies as tools for social and political change, combining documentary practices with activist agendas to enable marginalized groups to represent themselves and challenge dominant narratives. Its origins date back to the late 1960s and 1970s with the introduction of portable recording devices such as the Sony Portapak, which allowed activists to document protests, expose state violence, and circulate alternative perspectives beyond mainstream media channels. Over the following decades, video activism has continuously evolved in tandem with technological developments, shifting from analog tapes to digital formats and, more recently, to online platforms and

social media, thereby expanding its reach and impact while raising new questions about distribution, visibility, and global digital infrastructures (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025).

In the Turkish context, feminist movements have similarly embraced video activism as a central strategy within digital culture. As Kotaman and Şener (2024) show, feminist video activists in Türkiye operate across four key dimensions—production, distribution, ethics, and archiving—using networked platforms to challenge patriarchal narratives and foster effective solidarity. Their work not only creates alternative feminist media spaces but also enables self-reflexivity and subject formation among activists, illustrating how video functions as both a representational and relational tool in contemporary protest cultures. Can Gürbüz and Gider Işıkman (2025) examine how rights-based video activism in Türkiye operates across multiple dimensions by conducting a qualitative thematic content analysis of selected films from the CAM platform. Their study focuses on three key areas: the representation of social groups within activist narratives, the thematic distribution of rights-related content—including gender equality, environmental justice, refugee rights, and freedom of expression—and the regional mapping of activist filmmaking across the country. By decoding these films according to representational, thematic, and geographic parameters, the authors reveal how digital filmmaking contributes to shaping public discourse on human rights, while also identifying gaps in visibility and proposing a future research agenda for media activism and social justice. In conclusion, Can Gürbüz and Gider Işıkman (2025) emphasize the transformative potential of digital video platforms to document, preserve, and expand human rights advocacy. As digital activism continues to grow, decentralized and independent media spaces are seen as crucial environments for amplifying diverse voices—particularly those of marginalized communities—and influencing public discourse.

"Platform society" refers to a social order in which online platforms are inextricably intertwined with societal structures, as social and economic traffic is increasingly channeled through a corporate global platform ecosystem driven by algorithms and fueled by data (van Dijck, 2018). Platforms dedicated to video (YouTube, TikTok) and those rapidly expanding it (Instagram, X/Twitter, Facebook, Twitch, Telegram, WeChat) have made moving images central to global information flows, enabling messages to spread quickly, accessibly, and with strong emotional impact. A diverse array of actors—from governments, oppositional parties, NGOs, and grassroots movements to corporations, influencers, authoritarian regimes, conspiracy networks, and violent mobs—deploy video to inform, manipulate, highlight grievances, mobilize supporters, or intimidate opponents. Yet social-media videos remain deeply ambivalent, serving both democratic empowerment and vectors for disinformation or propaganda, which underscores the need for enhanced media literacy and critical analysis. At the same time, video activism is grounded in values articulated by the UN Global Goals—combating human rights abuses, poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation—by am-

plifying marginalized voices (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Video is not only a powerful tool for activism but also an increasingly important source of evidence and insight for journalism. As Reese and Melki (2019) note, "journalism means bearing witness," a task that today demands a global outlook on issues that transcend specific communities and a deeper empathy across national and cultural boundaries. These authors underscore the value of historically grounded yet globally reflective approaches to understanding the mediation of human rights—approaches that can prepare future professionals and media-literate global citizens to engage with other complex and sensitive stories requiring cultural and historical awareness.

As Askanius (2019) argues, video activism is not only shaped by the material artefacts and technologies involved—whether digital or analogue formats, mobile devices, video-sharing platforms, or screening infrastructures—but also by the broader dimensions of practice: the doing, saying, and thinking that surround these media. The saying encompasses what is expressed in and about activist videos, whether in conversations, campaigns, or public screenings; the thinking foregrounds the lived experience of media-movement dynamics and the political imaginaries they generate. Building on this multidimensional understanding, the present study investigates how video activism in Türkiye produces forms of visual resistance. It examines the ways in which activist videos articulate dissent, mobilize publics, and negotiate visibility. Through a practice-based framework and scene-level analysis, the article situates Turkish video activism within broader debates on counter-hegemonic media, participatory storytelling, and the politics of representation.

2. Theoretical Framework

Gaffney and White (2018) emphasize that video has long been a powerful route to political advocacy, describing how Professor Anne Smith in 1980s Aotearoa New Zealand used film not simply as an academic supplement but as a complementary medium to confront gender inequality and promote children's rights. Smith's productions, including *Blue for a Girl* (1981) and later works on early childhood education, strategically raised public awareness and influenced policymakers. The authors argue that these projects illustrate video's efficacy in mobilizing political action, functioning as a "call to arms" that bridges research, public consciousness, and social justice struggles (Gaffney & White, 2018). Video activism as counter-surveillance is "shot through at every juncture with ambiguities, contradictions and ironies" (Wilson & Serisier, 2010: p. 166). The authors demonstrate that while filming protests can empower participants by enhancing safety, modifying the behavior of control agents, stimulating public debate, and serving as a bargaining tool, such practices also carry significant risks. Counter-surveillance may incriminate marginalized actors, provoke harsher responses from authorities, or be absorbed into official narratives. Moreover, the ubiquity of cameras and distribution platforms does not automatically secure accountability or public condemnation

of state violence; images must be strategically framed and narrated to exert political impact. Ultimately, counter-surveillance is not a simple reversal of the gaze but a practice mediated through legal, informational, and individual contexts, producing outcomes that are unpredictable, contradictory, and continually reconfigured in a rapidly changing informational landscape (Wilson & Serisier, 2010).

Sonza (2018) situates Native American film and video activism within the broader struggle against settler colonialism, framing it as both a cultural and political practice of decolonizing vision. Drawing on concepts of hegemony (Gramsci) and representation (Hall), she shows how indigenous filmmakers and activists use visual media to reclaim "visual sovereignty," counter mainstream misrepresentations, and assert control over their own narratives. Sonza argues that video activism both disrupts the invisibility imposed by dominant narratives and fosters new forms of indigenous agency, while also highlighting the practical and theoretical limits of such strategies in achieving decolonization (Sonza, 2018). Zapperi (2022) situates feminist video activism in 1970s France as a collective practice in which women appropriated portable video technologies to contest patriarchal media representations and carve out alternative spaces of expression. Through the work of *Les Insoumuses*, figures such as Delphine Seyrig, Carole Roussopoulos, and Ioana Wieder not only documented struggles but also reconfigured authorship and articulated a feminist gaze that positioned women as political subjects rather than objects of representation. Productions like *Sois belle et tais-toi* (1976) and *Maso et Miso vont en bateau* (1976) directly challenged misogynistic discourses in television and cinema, while the establishment of the Centre audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir in 1982 institutionalized these practices. Zapperi underscores that such interventions were crucial because they demonstrated how video could function simultaneously as a tool of political struggle and as a cultural practice of reclaiming media power, laying the foundations for feminist media activism that continues to resonate beyond its historical moment (Zapperi, 2022).

Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) outline three key concepts for understanding video activism on social media. First, the notion of affect–action highlights how political videos capture attention and trigger emotions that can be transformed into individual or collective action. Second, platform logic emphasizes that visibility and reach are structured by algorithms, moderation regimes, censorship, and dynamics of virality, which compel activists to adapt tactics—sometimes even "outsmarting" algorithms through tagging strategies or coded language. Finally, video formats such as witness videos, documentaries, influencer commentaries, mobilization spots, and subversion clips perform epistemic, affective, appellative, and performative functions, serving to inform, evoke emotions, call for action, and stage events for visibility (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Video activism today operates within what van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) call the "platform society," a connective world where platforms have penetrated the heart of societies—disrupting markets and labor relations, transforming social and civic practices, and affecting democratic processes. Van Dijck, Poell,

and de Waal (2018) also point out that in the news sector, the advent of data-driven publishers such as BuzzFeed and the Huffington Post, together with the rise of the Big Five platforms, has shaken the economic, technical, and social foundations of journalism, as online audience metrics and algorithmic filtering have fundamentally transformed how news is produced, circulated, and monetized. These processes have challenged journalistic independence and the trustworthiness of news (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018). Just as these dynamics reshape the infrastructures and values of journalism, they also condition the environments in which activist videos are produced, distributed, and contested, making platform logics a central concern for understanding contemporary video activism. Building on this, Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) conceptualize such dynamics through the notion of platform logic, highlighting how algorithms, visibility hierarchies, censorship, and the dynamics of virality fundamentally structure the reach and reception of activist videos, while also prompting activists to develop tactical responses to these constraints.

Yu (2025) frames short video activism as an innovative media practice grounded in the media practice approach, which shifts attention from media texts or institutions to what people actually do with media in everyday contexts. In this perspective, short video activism is understood as a dynamic interplay between media objects—such as short videos and digital platforms—and media subjects, including consumers, media practitioners, PR officials, governmental actors, and the wider public. These tactics are distinguished by the specific affordances of short-form video, which are immersive, authentic, simple, and visually attractive, making them particularly effective in amplifying grievances, mobilizing responses, and embedding political expression in everyday consumer practices. Yu further emphasizes the recurring *nao-da* ("make a fuss") logic, whereby activists and consumers seek visibility and exert pressure by publicly dramatizing discontent, compelling corporations and authorities to react. This dual orientation—towards both consumer rights and broader forms of civic engagement—highlights how short video activism blurs the boundaries between consumption, protest, and digital activism in contemporary China (Yu, 2025).

Magaudda and Solaroli (2020) conceptualize the platformization of cultural production as a process that reconfigures the conditions under which media is created, circulated, and valued. Analyzing domains such as music, journalism, and visual culture, they show that digital platforms do not function as neutral intermediaries but as infrastructures that impose new logics of visibility, algorithmic selection, and metrics-driven hierarchies. These dynamics reshape not only the practices of cultural producers but also the meanings and forms of cultural products, as content becomes increasingly embedded within the economic and technological imperatives of platform capitalism (Magaudda & Solaroli, 2020). Building on this, video activism can be understood as similarly embedded in platformized environments. While activist videos provide opportunities for counter-narratives and grassroots mobilization, their visibility and circulation are condi-

tioned by algorithmic logics, virality metrics, and the infrastructural power of platforms. This means that the political potential of video activism depends not only on the content of activist interventions but also on their ability to strategically navigate and contest the platform logics that mediate their reach and impact.

Taken together, these perspectives demonstrate that video activism cannot be understood as a singular or unproblematic practice but rather as a contested field shaped by historical, cultural, and technological conditions. Wilson and Serisier (2010) emphasize that video activism as counter-surveillance is deeply entangled with ambiguities, contradictions, and ironies, involving both empowering possibilities—such as enhancing safety, influencing control agents, and stimulating public debate—and serious risks, including the criminalization of activists and intensified countermeasures. Historically, it has linked scholarship with struggles for social justice (Gaffney & White, 2018), enabled indigenous communities to reclaim visual sovereignty in the face of settler colonialism (Sonza, 2018), and provided feminist collectives with tools to reconfigure authorship and challenge patriarchal media structures (Zapperi, 2022). In the contemporary digital environment, these trajectories intersect with platform dynamics: platforms have penetrated the infrastructures of society and journalism (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018), while platform logics of algorithms, visibility, censorship, and virality condition the reach and reception of activist videos (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Short video activism, in particular, mobilizes the immersive and affective affordances of new media to embed political expression in everyday consumer practices (Yu, 2025). At the same time, the broader platformization of cultural production shows that platforms operate not as neutral intermediaries but as infrastructures that impose metrics-driven hierarchies and algorithmic selection, thereby reshaping both cultural production and political communication (Magaudda & Solaroli, 2020). This theoretical framework thus underscores that the political potential of video activism lies not only in its capacity to challenge dominant narratives but also in its ability to strategically navigate and contest the platform environments in which it is embedded.

3. Methodology

Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) conceptualize video activism through the lens of platform logics, arguing that algorithms, visibility hierarchies, censorship, and dynamics of virality structure how activist videos are produced, circulated, and received. From this perspective, video activism is not simply a set of audiovisual texts but a practice embedded in technological infrastructures and political contexts (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Methodologically, this conceptualization justifies the use of qualitative video analysis in the present study. Such an approach enables the systematic examination of how activist videos generate political meaning by combining formal analysis of audiovisual strategies (e.g., framing, metaphors, performance, emotional registers) with attention to the platform-specific conditions that shape circulation and reception. In this way,

qualitative video analysis captures both the expressive practices of activists and the structural constraints of digital platforms, providing a rigorous framework for investigating video activism as a socio-political practice.

Knoblauch, Tuma, and Schnettler (2014) argue that one of the major cultural transformations of recent decades has been the massive visualization of everyday life, as still and moving images increasingly permeate communication, knowledge production, education, and political expression. They emphasize that video, as a technology enabling recording, storage, and repeated viewing of visual and acoustic data, has become a key methodological resource in the social sciences, with applications in fields such as sociology, anthropology, education, and sports studies. Within this context, the authors distinguish between standardized video analysis—based on pre-established coding schemes and often supported by computer-assisted methods—and interpretive video analysis, which focuses on the contextual and meaning-making dimensions of audiovisual materials (Knoblauch, Tuma, & Schnettler, 2014). Huber (2020) defines Video-Based Content Analysis (VCA) as a qualitative method of content analysis designed to examine both manifest and latent meanings in audiovisual data. VCA extends beyond verbal communication to include nonverbal interaction, performance, and embodiment, making it particularly suitable for studying group dynamics and social practices. The method distinguishes between standardized approaches—relying on pre-established coding schemes—and interpretive approaches, which focus on the contextual and meaning-making dimensions of video materials. Its strength lies in the ability to systematically process large volumes of audiovisual data, while integrating hermeneutic interpretation to capture both explicit and implicit layers of meaning (Huber, 2020).

Borish, Cunsolo, Mauro, Dewey, and Harper (2021) argue that video-based media should be treated as a primary source of qualitative data, allowing researchers to generate insights from the audiovisual material itself rather than relying solely on verbal accounts. They highlight that video analysis makes it possible to examine not only spoken content but also visual cues, gestures, emotional tone, and contextual elements, thereby adding layers of meaning to qualitative interpretation. Moreover, they emphasize that such analysis produces both rigorous academic findings and narrative outputs, positioning video as a methodological tool that simultaneously enables analytical depth and the creation of storytelling forms (Borish et al., 2021). Fazeli, Sabetti, and Ferrari (2023) present the Visual-Verbal Video Analysis (VVVA) method, a six-step framework grounded in multimodal theory and visual grounded theory, for conducting systematic qualitative content analysis of video data. The VVVA method integrates visual, verbal, and gestural modalities, examining not only the general characteristics of videos but also the roles of primary and secondary actors, as well as the emotional, discursive, and compositional aspects of audiovisual content. Through the use of extraction matrices and rigorous coding procedures, the method enables researchers to capture both manifest and latent meanings, providing a comprehensive approach to qualitative video analysis (Fazeli, Sabetti, & Ferrari, 2023).

Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) conceptualize video activism as a practice situated at the intersection of frames, forms, and platforms, highlighting how the affective intensity, symbolic density, and accessibility of video enable political mobilization. Their framework underscores that video activism cannot be reduced to message transmission alone but must be understood as a socio-political practice shaped by platform logics and affective formats. This orientation justifies focusing not only on what activist videos communicate, but also on how their forms and emotional registers function as tools of political intervention (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Complementing this practice-oriented perspective, Huber (2020) introduces Video-Based Content Analysis (VCA) as a qualitative approach that systematically captures both manifest and latent meanings in audiovisual material. VCA emphasizes that video data extend beyond verbal content to include gestures, bodily expressions, performance, and visual composition. Its stepwise procedure—ranging from multimodal transcription to the identification of categories and iterative coding—provides methodological rigor while allowing for interpretive depth. By distinguishing manifest meanings (explicit themes and verbal content) from latent meanings (visual metaphors, symbolic imagery, and implied messages), VCA equips researchers with the tools to account for both explicit and implicit layers of video communication (Huber, 2020). Building on these two complementary perspectives, the present study operationalizes video analysis through four categories: Platform tactics, examining how activists navigate algorithms, visibility, and circulation (Eder et al., 2025); affective and formal dimensions, analyzing formats of witnessing, performance, and calls to action together with emotional strategies (Eder et al., 2025); manifest meanings, focusing on explicit political themes and verbal messages (Huber, 2020); and latent meanings, addressing symbolic imagery, embodied performance, and implicit discourses (Huber, 2020). Together, these categories provide a coherent analytical framework that situates activist videos as multimodal practices embedded in platform environments and layered with both explicit and implicit forms of meaning.

The study analyzes six publicly accessible activist videos selected to compare two fields of contention in Türkiye—environmental and feminist mobilizations—across platform environments with different video vernaculars. The cases include three environmental videos on TikTok (2) and Instagram Reels (1), and three feminist videos on YouTube (3). Videos were chosen because they were produced or circulated by movement-aligned actors, contain clear protest claims and recognizable audiovisual strategies (slogans, testimony, witnessing, or calls to action), and provide sufficient platform cues (captions/hashtags or circulation context) for analyzing platform tactics alongside manifest and latent meanings. The six cases do not represent the full universe of feminist and environmental video activism in Türkiye; rather, they function as strategically chosen cases through which the study operationalizes and tests the four-part analytical framework across diverse platform conditions and movement contexts.

4. Findings and Analysis: Case Studies

To structure the analysis, this study applies four categories derived from Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) and Huber (2020). Each category highlights a distinct but complementary dimension of how activist videos operate as multimodal practices embedded in digital platforms.

Platform Tactics: Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) emphasize that video activism is deeply shaped by *platform logics*—the algorithms, visibility hierarchies, censorship, and dynamics of virality that govern digital circulation. This makes it essential to analyze how activists develop tactical strategies to navigate these constraints, including the use of hashtags, posting rhythms, and cross-platform dissemination. This perspective conceptualizes video activism not just as a mode of expression but as a practice conditioned by digital infrastructures.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: According to Eder et al. (2025), video activism derives political resonance not only from informational content but also from its affective and formal operations. Formats such as witnessing, performance, and calls to action serve as recurring patterns that mobilize viewers emotionally, while symbolic and affective intensity foster engagement and solidarity. Eder et al. (2025) further stress the importance of formats and affect in shaping video activism, arguing that witnessing, performance, and calls to action operate as recurring formal patterns through which videos mobilize viewers emotionally and politically. Such affective and formal dimensions highlight how activist videos rely not only on informational content but also on embodied expressions and emotional registers to create resonance and foster engagement (Eder, Hartmann, & Tedjasukmana, 2025). Also drawing on Eder et al. (2025), this study analyzes the affective registers and formal strategies of activist videos, including witnessing, embodied performance, and calls to action. These dimensions highlight how emotional appeal and stylistic form shape both the production and reception of activist media.

Manifest Meanings: Huber (2020) defines *manifest meanings* as explicit and directly observable aspects of video communication, such as slogans, verbal statements, or clearly articulated political claims. Manifest meanings refer to observable and directly articulated elements, such as slogans, verbal statements, or clearly expressed political demands.

Latent Meanings: Huber (2020) also stresses the importance of *latent meanings*—the symbolic, embodied, and nonverbal layers that underpin audiovisual communication. These include visual metaphors, bodily performances, and implied discourses that extend beyond explicit statements, providing deeper cultural and political resonance.

Together, these four categories—platform tactics, affective and formal dimensions, manifest meanings, and latent meanings—provide a comprehensive framework for examining how activist videos operate across digital platforms, mobilize affect, and communicate both explicit and implicit political messages.

A. Environmental Movements

Akbelen Resistance: Multimodal Strategies of Tactical Visibility

This section analyzes three publicly accessible videos documenting the Akbelen Resistance. Each video is examined through four analytical categories—Platform Tactics, Affective and Formal Dimensions, Manifest Meanings, and Latent Meanings—based on the framework developed by Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) and Huber (2020). All videos include traceable digital evidence such as hashtags, captions, engagement metrics, and cross-platform dissemination.

Video 1: "The Forest Belongs to the People" (*Halkın Malı Olan Orman*)

Platform: TikTok, Source: Workers' Movement Party (Emekçi Hareket Partisi), Date: July 25, 2023, Link: Watch on TikTok

Platform Tactics: This video uses extensive hashtag clustering to enhance algorithmic visibility. Hashtags include #AkbeleneDokunma (*Don't Touch Akbelen*), #ikizköy, #ikizköydirenişi, #akbelenormanı, #iklimkrizi, #kapitalizm, #doğakatliamı, and #özelleştirme. The caption features a direct quote from EHP leader Hakan Öztürk: "O orman bu halkın malı, ne hakla alırsınız?" (*That forest belongs to the people—how dare you take it?*). The video received 5155 likes and 276 comments and was reshared on X and Telegram, indicating cross-platform circulation. These tactics reflect deliberate engagement with platform infrastructures to amplify ideological framing.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: The video combines aerial footage of deforestation with a slow, urgent narration. Chainsaw sounds and visual contrast between green canopy and exposed soil intensify emotional resonance. The pacing is deliberate, allowing viewers to absorb the ecological violence.

Manifest Meanings: The spoken slogan—"Bu orman halkındır, sermayeye teslim etmeyeceğiz" (*This forest belongs to the people; we will not surrender it to capital*)—functions as a direct political claim against privatization and ecological exploitation.

Latent Meanings: The forest is framed as a threatened commons. Chainsaw sounds evoke violence, and the activist's voice becomes a metaphor for collective resistance. The aerial perspective positions viewers as witnesses to systemic destruction.

Video 2: "Stop the Cutting of Akbelen Forest" (*Akbelen Ormanı'nın Kesimi Durmalı*!)

Platform: TikTok, Source: Equality, Justice, Women (Eşitlik Adalet Kadın), Date: July 2023, Link: Watch on TikTok

Platform Tactics: The caption begins with: "#AkbeleneDokunma çağrısıyla mücadeleye SES vermeye devam ediyoruz" (*We continue to raise our VOICE in the struggle with the #Don'tTouchAkbelen call*), followed by the quote: "Akbelen Ormanı'nın kesiminin durması için burada birimizin ölmesi mi lazım?" (*Does someone have to die here for the cutting of Akbelen Forest to stop?*). Hashtags include #eşitlikadaletkadın, #ekoloji, #eşitlik, #adalet, #kadın, #akbelen, #akbelenormanı, #muğla, and #milas. The video received 17.8 K likes and 942 com-

ments, and was reshared on X and Telegram. These tactics combine emotional urgency with semantic clustering to maximize visibility and mobilization.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: The video uses rapid montage to depict protest scenes, police intervention, and verbal slogans. Vertical framing and ambient protest noise heighten urgency. The emotional register shifts from grief to defiance, reinforced by close-ups of crying women and raised voices.

Manifest Meanings: Protesters shout: "Bu doğa bizim!" (*This nature is ours*!), and the caption reinforces the demand to halt deforestation. These statements articulate a collective claim to ecological protection and justice.

Latent Meanings: Crying bodies and felled trees symbolize ecological mourning and state violence. The forest is portrayed not merely as land, but as a home under siege. The emotional intensity of the visuals encodes trauma and resistance.

Video 3: "We Were Detained" (*Gözaltına Alındık*)

Platform: Instagram Reels, Source: Social Opposition (Toplumsal Muhalefet), Date: September 15, 2025, Link: Watch on Instagram

Platform Tactics: The title "GÖZALTINA ALINDIK" (*WE WERE DETAINED*) uses visual symbols and urgency to trigger Instagram's Reels algorithm. The caption reads: "Akbelen'de tüm tepeler işgal altında!" (*All hills in Akbelen are under occupation*!). The video received 3412 likes and 211 comments, and was shared on X and WhatsApp with hashtags such as #Akbelen, #Direniş, and #Gözaltı. These tactics reflect metadata-based mobilization and emotional amplification.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: Handheld footage captures activists being detained amid shouting and raised fists. The shaky camera and ambient noise convey immediacy and vulnerability. The visual instability reflects political tension and embodied resistance.

Manifest Meanings: A protester declares: "Biz buradayız, gitmiyoruz!" (*We are here*, *we are not leaving*!), expressing territorial defiance and refusal to retreat. The caption reinforces the sense of occupation and urgency.

Latent Meanings: Detained bodies symbolize the criminalization of dissent. Hills become symbolic terrain of resistance, and the repeated phrase "gitmiyoruz" (*we are not leaving*) encodes persistence and collective endurance.

B. Feminist Video Activism as Situated Resistance

This section presents a focused case study on feminist video activism as a situated and scalable form of resistance. Rather than limiting the scope to a single commemorative date, the selected videos span multiple years and geographies, documenting feminist protest actions organized by women's collectives across Türkiye. Each video was produced and disseminated by feminist organizations themselves, ensuring authenticity and platform-native agency. The selection criteria include: field-based protest documentation, visual-verbal coherence through slogans, bodies, and spatial choreography, and digital circulation strategies such as hashtag clusters, cross-platform sharing, and engagement metrics. Each video is analyzed through a four-part framework: Platform Tactics examines the algo-

rithmic logic and dissemination pathways; Affective and Formal Dimensions explores visual rhythm, sonic texture, and embodied protest; Manifest Meanings identifies explicit political messages and spatial claims; and Latent Meanings traces counter-narratives, symbolic ruptures, and feminist re-coding of public space. This structure enables a multimodal reading of feminist resistance as both grounded in physical protest and amplified through digital infrastructures.

Video 4: "A Life of Calculations" (Hesap Ede Ede Bir Hayat)

Platform: YouTube, Source: Bread and Roses (Ekmek ve Gül), Date: September 19, 2025, Link: Watch on YouTube

Platform Tactics: This video was published on Ekmek ve Gül's verified YouTube channel (7610 subscribers) and embedded in a related editorial on their website (ekmekvegul.net). It was shared via Instagram, Telegram, and X (@ekmekvegul1), but no hashtags were used in the video description or related posts. The platform strategy relies on emotional testimony, short-format accessibility, and cross-platform circulation through feminist media networks. The video had 1 view within minutes of upload, indicating real-time publication but limited initial reach.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: Filmed in Sultangazi market, the video features close-up interviews with women describing their struggle to afford basic goods. The handheld camera and ambient market sounds create an intimate atmosphere. Statements like "I can barely fill a jar of pickles" evoke economic precarity and emotional fatigue. The rhythm is conversational, with pauses that emphasize the weight of each testimony.

Manifest Meanings: The video foregrounds gendered poverty through lived experience. It documents the cost-of-living crisis and its disproportionate impact on women, especially retirees, mothers, and informal workers. The act of speaking becomes a political gesture, asserting visibility in a context of economic erasure.

Latent Meanings: A woman at Sultangazi market explains her struggle to afford basic goods. Her face is framed tightly, surrounded by produce and ambient noise. By situating feminist testimony in a public market, the video reclaims informal space as a site of resistance. The repetition of "calculating endlessly" transforms private frustration into collective critique, politicizing everyday survival and exposing the structural violence of austerity.

Video 5: "We Spoke in Parliament" (Meclis'te Konuştuk)

Platform: YouTube, Source: EŞİK—Women's Platform for Equality (Eşitlik İçin Kadın Platformu), Date: October 3, 2023, Link: Watch on YouTube

Platform Tactics: This video was published on EŞİK's YouTube channel (1260 subscribers) and cross-posted on their official website (esik.org.tr) and X (@esikplatformu). No hashtags were used in the video description or related posts. The video reached 205 views in its first year. The platform strategy emphasizes institutional legitimacy and direct address, using formal framing and clear audio to enhance credibility. Its circulation through press releases and feminist media reinforces its role as documentation of feminist presence within legislative space.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: Set in the formal space of the Parliament garden, the video presents a composed and assertive tone. Activists stand in solidarity, delivering statements with calm conviction. Phrases like "None of our rights were handed to us on a silver platter" resonate with historical struggle and determination. The static visual rhythm reinforces the gravity of the moment.

Manifest Meanings: The video asserts feminist presence within institutional politics. It challenges legislative rollback and reaffirms commitment to gender equality, legal protection, and democratic participation. The act of speaking in Parliament becomes a declaration of political agency.

Latent Meanings: Feminist activists and MPs stand in front of Parliament, delivering a joint statement. The frame captures unity, formality, and spatial claim. By occupying parliamentary space, the video disrupts masculine-coded norms of political discourse. The garden setting symbolically re-roots feminist demands within the state apparatus, transforming a traditionally exclusionary space into one of collective claim and visibility.

Video 6: "Unique Women, Unique Stories" (Benzersiz Kadınlar, Benzersiz Hikayeler)

Platform: YouTube, **Source**: Flying Broom Foundation (Uçan Süpürge Vakfı), **Date**: May 2025, **Link**: Watch on YouTube

Platform Tactics: This teaser was published on Uçan Süpürge's official YouTube channel and shared via Instagram (@ucansupurge), X (@ucansupurge), and their website (ucansupurge.org.tr). The video description and social media posts include hashtags such as #KadınFilmleriFestivali, #UçanSüpürge2025, and #BenzersizKadınlar. The teaser is part of the promotional campaign for the 28th International Women's Film Festival held in Ankara. The livestream of the opening ceremony reached 6998 views within hours, and the teaser itself was embedded in press releases and reposted by cultural institutions. The platform strategy combines symbolic aesthetics with annual ritual framing, mobilizing emotional engagement and transnational solidarity.

Affective and Formal Dimensions: The teaser opens with a woman sewing, surrounded by vibrant fabrics and soft lighting. The visual rhythm is slow and deliberate, accompanied by ambient music and layered montage. The typography is pastel and rounded, reinforcing a tone of care and creativity. The central slogan—"Unique Women, Unique Stories"—appears both visually and aurally, anchoring the teaser's emotional core in feminist storytelling.

Manifest Meanings: The video positions the festival as a space for celebrating women's narratives and curatorial agency. It highlights the diversity of female experience across geographies and genres, framing the act of filmmaking as a political and artistic intervention. The slogan foregrounds individuality and voice, asserting that each woman's story is both singular and collectively resonant.

Latent Meanings: A woman sews in the foreground, framed by colorful fabrics and the slogan "Unique Women, Unique Stories." The image blends craft, color, and curatorial intent. The central image of a woman sewing evokes a collective

process of assembling feminist struggle—thread by thread, stitch by stitch. The act of sewing here symbolizes the deliberate construction of a diverse and resilient movement. Each stitch represents a voice, a story, a demand—woven together into a shared fabric of resistance. The visual softness does not imply passivity; instead, it signals durability, cohesion, and multiplicity. The slogan "Unique Women, Unique Stories" functions as a counter-discursive gesture that affirms pluralism and rejects homogenizing narratives. This is not a metaphor for private labor—it is a visual grammar of feminist futurity, built through solidarity and sustained through repetition.

Together, these three videos—capturing market testimonies, parliamentary declarations, and festival imaginaries—demonstrate the situated power of feminist video activism in Türkiye. Despite their differences in tone and setting, they converge around a shared logic of resistance: a commitment to visibility, plurality, and collective construction. Whether voiced in a crowded market, articulated in front of Parliament, or stitched into a curatorial frame, feminist struggle is rendered not only as a political demand but as a visual grammar—one that affirms multiplicity, assembles solidarity, and insists on being seen.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined how environmental and feminist movements in Türkiye mobilize video as a form of visual resistance, situating their practices within the analytical framework derived from Eder, Hartmann, and Tedjasukmana (2025) and Huber (2020). The findings demonstrate that activist videos function simultaneously as tactical responses to platform logics, affective performances of protest, explicit political claims, and symbolic acts of meaning-making. By applying this four-part structure—platform tactics, affective and formal dimensions, manifest meanings, and latent meanings—the analysis shows how activist media in Türkiye negotiates visibility, mobilizes publics, and encodes dissent in multimodal ways.

Consistent with Eder et al.'s (2025) account of "video activism as practice," the videos analyzed here reveal that activists in Türkiye carefully adapt their production and circulation strategies to platform infrastructures. Hashtag clustering, cross-platform dissemination, and metadata-driven mobilization illustrate how tactical engagement with algorithms and virality is indispensable for securing visibility in digital spaces. At the same time, affective and formal dimensions—such as witnessing, embodied performance, and calls to action—proved central to the resonance of activist media, echoing Eder et al.'s emphasis on the political force of formats and emotions.

In parallel, Huber's (2020) distinction between manifest and latent meanings offered a productive lens for interpreting the explicit and implicit layers of communication. Manifest elements included verbal slogans, articulated demands, and direct political statements, while latent layers emerged through symbolic imagery, bodily performances, and metaphors that infused activist videos with cultural and

affective depth. This dual reading highlights how activist media communicates on both explicit and implicit registers, producing layered forms of meaning that exceed immediate verbal claims.

The findings also resonate with Kotaman and Şener's (2024) study of feminist video activism in Türkiye, which identifies production, distribution, ethics, and archiving as crucial dimensions of feminist media practice. The feminist case studies in this article—ranging from parliamentary statements to testimonial videos and festival imaginaries—confirmed that feminist collectives in Türkiye use video not only to document protest but also to foster solidarity, self-representation, and counter-public visibility. In this sense, the present study affirms Kotaman and Şener's claim that feminist video activism functions as both representational and relational practice, while extending the analysis to environmental struggles where similar strategies of testimony, embodiment, and platform negotiation are deployed.

Taken together, these results indicate that Turkish video activism aligns with broader international patterns theorized by Eder et al. (2025) and Huber (2020), yet also demonstrates context-specific articulations shaped by local political dynamics, repression, and activist creativity. The integration of feminist and ecological struggles within the same analytical framework represents a novel contribution, showing how different movements converge around shared tactics of platform navigation and affective mobilization, while also encoding distinct thematic and symbolic repertoires. This comparative perspective advances scholarship by demonstrating how video activism in Türkiye operates at the intersection of digital infrastructures, political struggle, and cultural resistance, offering both theoretical insights and empirical grounding for future research. Practically, the cases suggest two tactical lessons for activists and civil society organizations: First, visibility is strengthened when platform-native formats (short, mobile-first witnessing/testimony clips) are paired with deliberate metadata strategies (consistent hashtag clusters and captioned framing) and cross-platform redistribution. Second, videos travel further when they combine a clear, quotable claim with affective cues (embodied performance, ambient protest sound, and symbolically dense imagery), allowing the same content to function as both documentation and mobilization.

In Türkiye's contemporary political context, feminist and environmental mobilizations are relatively visible arenas of activism and contention. This makes them analytically suitable for examining how platformed visibility and platform-specific norms shape what becomes legible and shareable as activism online. The findings of this study are based on the analysis of six selected videos and therefore do not claim to represent the entirety of environmental and feminist video activism in Türkiye. The chosen videos stem from specific movements and platforms (TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X/Twitter), which limits both the thematic and platform diversity of the sample. Moreover, while indicators of digital visibility (likes, shares, comments) were examined, these metrics alone cannot fully cap-

ture the broader social and political impact of video activism.

In addition, interpreting "latent meanings" involves an inevitably interpretive dimension, and different researchers may emphasize different symbolic cues or cultural references in the same footage. To mitigate this risk, the analysis anchored latent-meaning claims in clearly observable audiovisual features (e.g., recurring symbols, embodied performance, spatial framing, and sonic cues) and cross-checked interpretations against the manifest content and the broader case context. Although these limitations prevent overgeneralization of the results, they also point to productive avenues for further research. At the same time, the findings suggest that Turkish video activism contributes to a shared visual grammar of resistance, one that links ecological and feminist struggles through multimodal tactics and affective resonance.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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