

**FROM THE FRAGMENT TO THE COUP CONNOTATION:  
CASE OF LA CASA DE PAPEL ISTANBUL**

**Dr. Sefer DARICI<sup>1</sup>**

**ABSTRACT**

La Casa De Papel series of themed Istanbul fragment was a long debate in Turkey. In this study, I research at La Casa De Papel Istanbul Fragment discussions through twitter and news. I also explain the perceptual backgrounds of historical traumatic events that are the source of claims for the fragment. As a result, when designing promotional activities in the global market, traumatic social memory and cultural differences should be taken into consideration. Otherwise, it may create misperceptions on its own consumers and become the focus of discussions. Promotional and marketing activities should investigate the traumatic past of the target audience and not use negative triggering arguments.

**Keywords:** Coup Attempt, Gezi Park, Istanbul, La Casa de Papel

**INTRODUCTION**

La Casa De Papel is one of the Spanish series followed with interest all over the world and in Turkey. The series is a Netflix production and is based on a planned robbery theme. Compared with other foreign series aired in Turkey it has a lot of fans. The reason why the series is talked a lot in the Turkish media is not just the content, but also the Istanbul-based trailer that it broadcasts before the 3rd season.

Following the publication of the fragment, some journalists and former bureaucrats have posted tweets and have claimed what given messages in fragman are mark of a new coup or revolution movement in Turkey. Experienced in recent history in Turkey “Gezi Park Protest and failed coup attempt” has caused the spread of these allegations. Then Ertugrul Ozkok of well-known journalists in Turkey, met with Netflix CEO Reed Hastings and he asked these allegations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, [sdarici@cumhuriyet.edu.tr](mailto:sdarici@cumhuriyet.edu.tr)

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although media is a tool used to convince people and societies, it has been used as a concept since the 1920s (Briggs et al. 2004:7). The influence of the media on the individual / society is increasing with the fact that the media is increasingly expanding the scope of its influence and it penetrates almost every area of human life. Today, the media, especially television, has been transformed into a means of power that reproduces, shapes, manages, controls, and even judges and executes (Mora, 2008: 6). In this respect, the media is not a message or da information Bu; produces ideology (Golding & Murdock, 1997: xvii). The fact that cultural studies are strong and specific is due to the fact that they give a sociologically sized content to the media (Morley & Silverstone, 1991; Suar, 2013).

This acceptance of the mass lies in the fact that the structure created by the fictional characters of popular culture meets the viewer's need for imagination and fantasy (Geraghty et. Al, 1998: 65). Movies, series and games are an effective way to do this. The fact that a new self-personality (Mills, 1974: 400), which is given to individuals in this way, creates an escape zone, the existence of pre-life dreams offered in a fictional world (Frith, 1992) and the desire of the individual to sustain it accelerate cognitive acceptance and persuasion. This acceptance in the individual also affects the environment and society in which they are involved. Thus, (Baudrillard 2008) realizes that the real message in the media content actually causes structural change in human relations. It is effective not only in everyday life practices but also in people's cognitive biases, hatred, fear.

By means of mass media, the programs that are being broadcasting also provide the dissemination of the culture of those who control the common network communication. Therefore, the programs produced and disseminated on the TVs of the powerful countries constitute cultural and political oppression to the weaker countries (McQuail, & Windahl, 1997: 117-118). The media as a means of mass communication is not a means of communication of the mass, but a means of communication that the sovereigns use on the mass. This tool serves as the channel in which the ideology of the ruling class is poured into society.

Mass communication means no ordinary transmission, but also control and directing. These transfers can be used to create the public agenda. Thus, there may be guidance about what the society will talk about or think about. This point shows the dimensions of the effects of mass media on society (Radford, 2004: 11).

In parallel with the technology, the series and films made by the media itself, but can target the masses of the target audience can be directed (Şentürk, 2007: 27). This effect of television programs leads to some problems in the structure of today's societies and some negative effects on people. Communication technology and the rapid communication created by this technology have also shaped the popular culture.

Media; music, fashion, film, forms of entertainment, and the ways in which social problems are evaluated and their perspectives on relationships constitute different forms of popular culture and cultural experiences that correspond to various aspects of human life (Yalçın, 2016: 2234). As a result of these programs made with the formation of popular culture, mass media affect their target audiences in the direction they want (Geçer, 2007: 29-30).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The content analysis method was used in the study which adopted a qualitative research based approach in media contents (Riffe et al., 2015). In the content analysis (Cohen, 1963), it possible to understand the content of the content, symbols, ideas, themes or messages that can be transmitted (Neumann, 2003: 219). The case study design was used because of the fact that there is an unreported case in the research (Yin, 2003). A case study is used to draw attention to the questions and topics of the research by examining one or more situations in depth (Christensen et. Al., 2015).

Individuals, groups, institutions, cultures, etc. as the case may be described as a unique situation can be described as (Patton, 1990). The case study, which is an empirical research method, makes a versatile and in- depth study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; Patton, 1990). The only case taken into consideration in the study was the sub- unit analysis (photo, video, text) (Yin, 2003).

## **3. PERCEPTUAL BACKGROUND: GEZI PARK PROTEST AND FAILED COUP ATTEMPT**

Construction works were started in 2013 for the reconstruction of the historic building known as Topçu Kışlası to the Gezi Park located in Istanbul Taksim. Within the scope of these works, it was decided to plant trees in another place without damage the trees in Gezi Park. But some environmentalist activists have reacted to this. Activists began to react by setting up tents in the park on May 28, 2013, but this reaction turned into anti-government actions with the support of parliamentarians of the opposition parties after a while. The demonstrators occupied the area of the Gezi Park and Taksim Square for nearly two weeks. Despite persistent warnings and negotiations, the protesters were not convinced. The police had to intervene.

A total of eight people, one of whom was a police officer, were killed and thousands were injured. This trauma has been a profound influence on the media and society. The discussions focused on the fact that there was a chain of actions aimed at destroying the government. After about 3 years out of Gezi Park protest, Turkey, experienced a second trauma on July 15, 2016. Soldiers in the army, which is a member of feto, attempted coups. In failed coup attempt against the elected Turkish government, bombs were thrown over civilians who wanted to prevent the

coup by military aircraft and helicopters. The Turkish Parliament was also among the bombed buildings. The soldiers opened fire on the people at random. Tanks crushed dozens of Turkish citizens who defended democracy. Thousands of people were taken into custody and arrested. 251 people, most of whom were civilians, were martyred. The Turkish people gave an unprecedented struggle for democracy.

After the unsuccessful coup attempt, there were interesting developments in the courts. It turned out that feto transmitted confidential messages related to the coup attempt to its members through its own television and newspapers. These lawsuits have been spoken in the Turkish public for a long time and they are still debating.

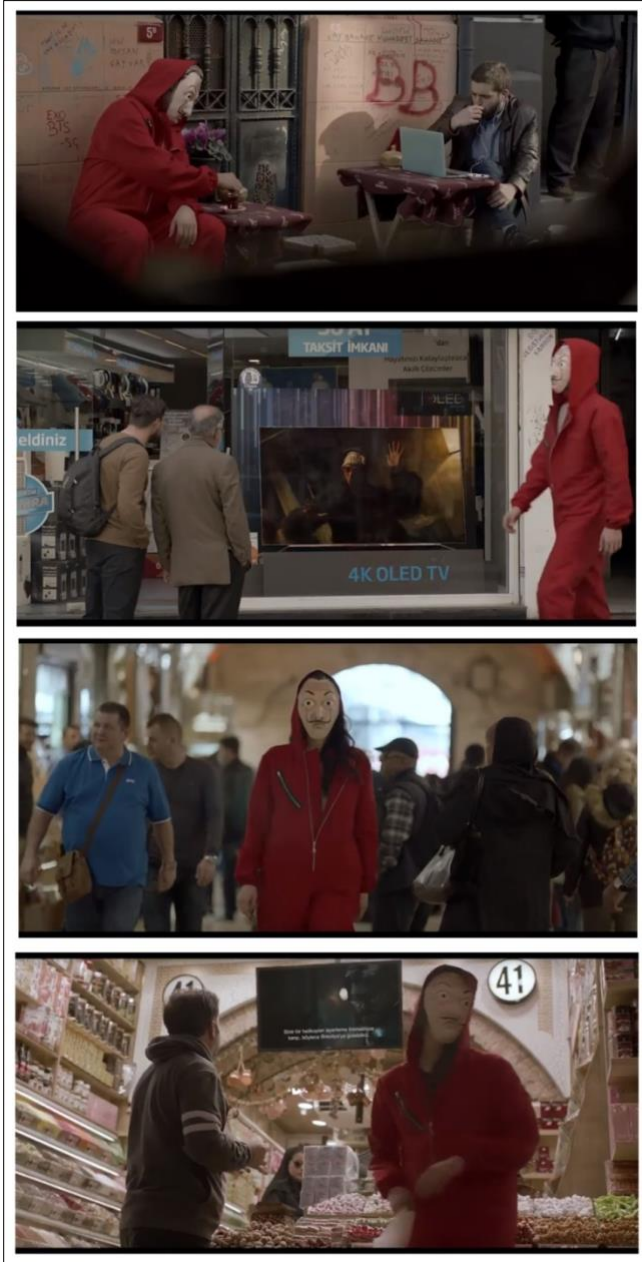
#### 4. LA CASA DE PAPEL: ISTANBUL

The La Casa De Papel series met with the audience on May 2, 2017. From the moment the series first came out, it has been watched with great interest in Turkey. Followers of La Casa De Papel series in Turkey, fan pages, social media interactions and news began to increase. Series characters also sent Turkish messages to Turkish followers in the form of “I love you”. After the 2nd season of the series ended on November 23, 2017, fans began to wonder if the 3rd season would be published. Netflix has released Istanbul themed fragment on the official tweeter address at April 6, 2018.



**Frame 1:** Screenshot of the official twitter account of Netflix Turkey that shared Istanbul themed fragment. Tweet starts with the entrance part of the song Bella Ciao and writes “One morning I woke up” in Turkish.

The trailer begins with the image of the Galata Tower. Then the Turkish people are displayed on the fragment while watching La Casa De Papel with interest from mobile phones, the TV in the store window, or computer.



**Frame 2:** Screenshot of the La Casa De Papel Istanbul Fragment

In the fragment, the characters dressed in red overalls are drinking black infused tea which is very popular among the Turkish people, shopping in the Grand Bazaar, walking among the crowds, getting on the ferry and meeting in Kadıköy Boğa Square.



**Frame 3:** Screenshot of the La Casa De Papel Istanbul Fragment

After the fragment was published, journalist Ömer Turan shared some of his claims with tweets. Turan used the following expressions in his tweets:

“Deep NATO and the big pawn, FETO, are looking for a big treachery again. Let's see, what are they going to try this time? Assassination, Gezi style attempt, economic coup over dollars, political assassinations, terror wave, or a new complot within all of them. Each frame from the music slogan, from the costume to the locality, contains subliminal messages. This should definitely be investigated. I say again, being paranoid is better than being stateless. They made a riot fiction that explicitly referred to the second Gezi under the name of a TV series's fragment. Each frame of the trailer contains a political message. Not the fragment, as if the second sign of the Gezi is the star shell. You may think that the gathering of people in Kadıköy, which is the center of Erdogan's opposition, is ordinary, but I do not think it is ordinary.”

Ömer Turan said that the use of the Italian folk song “Bella Ciao” in the TV series fragment was a sign for the coup. Turan also said that should be taken into consideration that the political atmosphere in Turkey.



**Frame 4:** A screenshot of one of the tweets shared by journalist Ömer Turan.

The former Ankara Metropolitan Mayor *Ibrahim Melih Gökçek*, who said that he also thinks the questions asked by Ömer Turan, shared similar claims with about 5 million twitter followers. Gökçek repeated his claims that images such as red overalls, military boots, Bella

Ciao music, Kadıköy Boğa Square, the meeting point of the leftist, could be the message of coup. Like Turan, Gökçek wanted these allegations to be investigated by the state institutions.



**Frame 5:** A screenshot of one of the tweets shared by former Ankara Metropolitan Mayor İbrahim Melih Gökçek.

As the discussions continued, journalist Ertuğrul Özkök interviewed Netflix CEO Reed Hastings. Journalist Ertuğrul Özkök announced this meeting in the column of Hürriyet Newspaper. Özkök wrote in the newspaper column that Hastings told him “We have no such intention”. Özkök also wrote that

I told Hastings that “I know Melih Gökçek. This answer will not satisfy him. With my correspondence to relieve Melih Gökçek, can you say that “Mr. Mayor, be relieve. It's just a movie. We have nothing to do with conspiracy theories” ? Hastings said that “Yes, you can convey this message ...”



## CONCLUSION

Discussions of La Casa De Papel series about the fragment of Istanbul continued for a long time in Turkey. In comments on the news, social media and forum pages, some people say that their claims are true, while others think they are wrong. It is known that the Turkish people experienced trauma when failed coup attempt and during the Gezi Park protest.

Just as in individuals, social perceptions are influenced by past experiences, momentary events, expectations and desires for the future. In addition, societies accept some cultural elements, words, slogans, music, locations, squares, images, etc. as their symbols. Some of them are universal. The symbols establish a link between past and present. Traumas are unforgettable. It's just covered. It will can be activated again when a symbol / sign / trace to triggering could be detected. It picks up any memories or feelings or ideas that have not been noticed until then and takes them to the visible side of the iceberg. The trailer of a TV series that would not normally be perceived so wrongly can be understood much differently because of the effects of past traumatic events.

Culture, tradition, customs and habits influence the viewpoint of societies. More importantly, the traumas experienced by the societies are more influential. In this case, beyond correctness or inaccuracy of allegations, it turns out that it is very important for the producers of the film to take into account the social perceptions and cultural sensitivities.

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