

Marshall Plan Films and Documentaries: A Meditation on Origin of Communication for Development in Turkey

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Abstract

Concerned with exploiting communication tools for development purposes, Communication for Development was born in the specific context of post-World War II years as an implementation area or practice, prior to its establishment as an academic research domain. The same era coincides with implementation of Marshall Plan, which included Turkey among its beneficiary countries. Marshall Plan and its communication, with a specific focus on the films in/about Turkey, constitute the core to the study, which aims to contribute to the limited literature on Marshall Plan communication in Turkey and the history of Communication for Development in Turkey. Underlying impulses of the Plan, its implication, the communication strategies and methods utilized throughout the Plan and films are studied, while the Marshall Plan films about Turkey are contextualized in the modernization paradigm-dominated period of communication for development practice and research.

Keywords: Communication for development, Marshall Plan, Turkey, film, propaganda

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Marshall Planı Filmleri, Belgeselleri:

Kalkınma Amaçlı İletişimin Türkiye'deki Kökeni Üzerine Düşünmek

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Öz

İletişim araçlarını kalkınma hedefleri doğrultusunda kullanma olarak özetlenebilecek Kalkınma Amaçlı İletişim, bir akademik araştırma alanı olarak tesis edilip kabul görmeden önce İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemin kendine has bağlamında bir uygulama alanı ve müdahale aracı-yaklaşımı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Aynı yıllar, İkinci Dünya Savaşı yorgunu Avrupa ülkeleriyle birlikte Türkiye'yi de kapsayan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri kaynaklı Marshall Planı'nın uygulandığı oldukça önemli bir döneme denk gelir. Bu araştırma, Marshall Planı ve Türkiye hakkındaki filmlere yoğunlaşmakta; Marshall Planı iletişimini merkeze alarak hem Türkiye özelinde Marshall Planı iletişimi, hem de Kalkınma Amaçlı İletişim'in Türkiye'deki seyriyle ilgili sınırlı alan yazına katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Planın sebepleri, sonuçları, iletişim stratejileri, yöntemleri ve özel olarak da filmler derinlemesine incelenmiş ve Türkiye ile ilgili Marshall Planı filmleri, modernleşme paradigmasının hâkim olduğu dönem Kalkınma Amaçlı İletişim bağlamında ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kalkınma amaçlı iletişim, Marshall Planı, Türkiye, film, propaganda

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Introduction

Since its implementation (1948-1952), Marshall Plan (MP)¹ has become a model for exhorting planned external intervention elsewhere, to do what the MP is alleged to have done successfully for Western Europe after World War II. Respectively, MP communication campaign in general, and MP films in particular frequently have been hailed as exemplary case of successful international communication, to “sell Europeans on” democracy, shared economic goals and the hope of a new, peaceful, united Europe built on the ashes of the ruined old one (Agnew and Entrikin 2004, 3). Yet, such arguments could easily be disputed when Turkey’s case is taken into consideration.

Although not involved in the World War II, Turkey was one of the countries benefited from the MP. Turkey was also the audience / theme of some MP films, such as *Yusuf and his Plough* (1951), *The Village Tractor* (1951) and *Turkish Harvest* (1952). Predominantly illustrating the transformation of “backward” conditions under which Turkish peasants live, to a “productive and normalized” social environment thanks to MP, these films provide with valu-

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1 Hereinafter, the acronyms ERP and MP are used interchangeably, while both refer to the European Recovery Plan that is the Marshall Plan.

able insights about a certain discourse within which Turkey was embedded, namely development. Particularly in 1950s and 1960, when “modernization paradigm” was leading nascent Communication Studies field under the rubric of Development Communication, development was the most dominant discourse in Turkey.

Focusing on the films, this paper aims to problematize the communication techniques utilized throughout the implementation of MP, which was, according to Ellwood, “the biggest peace-time propaganda ever” (1998, 33). Through a study of the MP films produced for audiences in Turkey, one of the participating nations in the MP, it is aimed to produce a country-specific evaluation of the MP communication campaign that reveals its strong relevance with historical foundations of a particular domain of communication studies, namely Communication for Development. Although neither the MP itself nor Turkey are usually associated with this field of research,² it is argued that the MP communication campaign in general, and in Turkey in particular, may be understood as prologue to Communication for Development, a field concerned initially with Third World development, although since the 1950s its scope has extended beyond, and its paradigms have changed dramatically.

Accordingly, first MP with its contextual significance is introduced in the next section to be followed by a section on MP communication and another one on the MP films. Then two sections are devoted to the MP films in/about Turkey and their analysis. Findings of the analysis are discussed in the light of Communication for Development theoretical framework in the discussion section, followed by a brief conclusion on suggestions for future research.

The Marshall Plan: Motivations and Implications

MP is one of the most ambitious and extensive economic development initiatives ever undertaken by a government outside its national borders. After its birth, with an act of US Congress signed by President Truman in April 1948, the MP distributed approximately 13 billion dollars in aid to 16 European countries³ over its four years of existence. As the official name of the project - *European Recovery Program* - indicates, the MP was fundamentally designated

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2 For instance, in one of the most respected and referred scholarly volumes of the field, entitled *Communication for Development and Social Change* (Servaes 2008), “Marshall Plan” phrase occurs once, and “Turkey” twice, while both are only touched upon, rather than studied deeply.

3 France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Greece, Trieste, Britain, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Turkey.

to help Europe to recuperate from the harsh multi-faceted effects of the World War II. As stated by Ellwood (2006, 19), in many respects the MP was “a successful international aid program, which, like most such programs, had more than purely philanthropic aims”.

Although defined and promoted as a foreign financial assistance program, MP emerged as pioneer effort by the US to influence world affairs by means of the overt use of economic power in foreign policy (Burk 2001). The Plan was born in the context of post-World War II aid and defense against a Soviet-communist threat. The underlying assumption was that the inflow of American financial assistance, machinery, and production and management expertise would lead to higher levels of productivity and better living standards in the recipient European societies. The improved living standards was in turn expected to help the receiving governments raise enough political support against the local socialist/communist groups, and thereby combating the increasing influence of the Soviet Union in the region. “Containing Soviet Union as such would also promote the US policy interests in the post-WWII world” (Kozat 2007, 3). Furthermore, the prosperous, anti-communist Europe of the future was considered a potential ideal partner and an affluent market for exploitation by the US, whose economy had been flourishing since the post-Great Depression era.

Thus, fervent anti-communism combined with Keynesian economic principles, focusing on boosting production and securing social cooperation, served as the two dominant mindsets which led to the twin objectives of ERP: Modernization and integration. The MP aimed to build a post-war world that would satisfy the ordinary citizen’s demand for a share in the benefits of industrialism. The Planners believed that, regardless of the context, prosperity would automatically lead to the rejection of totalitarianism. However, nationalism as observed in Europe was interpreted as a threat to the integrated European economic structure (Ellwood 2006). Hence, a modern integrated European economy that would undermine communism was the ultimate destination of the MP.

To administer the project, a new federal agency, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), was established in 1948. In addition, to coordinate the functioning of the Plan, which necessitated collaboration among aid-receiving countries a new body was set up the same year: Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). Finally, ECA missions were set up in each participating country’s capital, with their authority recognized by the

host country. These missions were linked to the host governments, through an official committee whose essential task was to ensure the optimal use of the aid received.

Although MP was promoted as a project to stimulate Europe's weak post-war reconstruction, it rapidly evolved into a comprehensive effort to transform Europe's economic landscape. In other words, MP signified a structural reformation of Europe, which involved an essential re-orientation of European state of mind. Therefore, from the start, US policy-makers considered the Plan's ideological and psychological aspects equally important as its economic ones (Whelan 2003). The European public was not simply a homogeneous entity that automatically welcomed US aid, so persuasion emerged as a crucial component of the Plan, and the main aim of the MP communication campaign.

Selling the Marshall Plan: The Communication Campaign

There were various reasons for reservation towards the MP in the participating nations in Europe. First of all, the diplomatic reservations were widespread among the European publics. Such a large-scale economical reformation designed within the scope of the Plan created concerns in European publics about their ability to retain control over their own future. Furthermore, there was a substantial communist and socialist opposition, backed-up by the forces of the Cominform, an international organization set up in October 1947 by the USSR. At a time when communist forces were leading an armed uprising in Greece, and looked capable of taking political power in Italy, and possibly even in France and Germany (Ellwood 2006), the propaganda efforts of national communist parties had convinced significant segments of the public that "the plan was simply disguised American imperialism" (Agnew and Entrikin 2004, 14).

While the tools of diplomacy were deployed to persuade the diplomats, Marshall Planners needed an "on the ground campaign to reach the European citizenry" (Noble 2006, 8). Thus, Information Division was established in early summer 1948 with the task of orchestrating a subversive MP campaign covering all participating countries. Through its headquarters in Paris and 18 country missions, messages in favor of the Plan were distributed all over participating nations. It was intended to create a truly mass program using "every method possible... to reach Giuseppe in the factory and Giovanni in the fields, or as the Paris office put it, slugging it out way down among the

masses” (Ellwood 1998, 35). For the ERP administrator Paul Hoffman, “winning the minds and hearts of Europeans” was the ultimate purpose (Whelan 2000, 322).

With a considerable financial support, highly up-to-date multimedia approach and an integrated perspective, the propaganda campaign produced pamphlets, press releases, posters, radio broadcasts, traveling puppet shows, as well as over 200 films -newsreels and documentaries, created between 1948 and 1954. The ingenuity and subtlety of the communication methods used, positioned the MP campaign far ahead of existing persuasion methods:

The omnipresent logo affixed to every product shipped to Europe was a constant reminder that help came from the U.S. Millions of balloons were launched from MP events in the countries close to Iron Curtain. Waterborne shows toured the canals of Holland, Belgium and northern Germany, as well as the islands of the Aegean. A Marshall Plain train visited major European stations, while caravans brought exhibits to fairs the length and breadth of the Continent (Ellwood 1998, 35).

It could be said that the motto of the *public relations* for the MP was “do good deeds and talk about them. Talk about them so that every audience member understands them and simultaneously views them as being their own personal interest” (Rother et.al 2005, 18). Thus, a recurring propaganda theme was the contribution of the Plan in achieving economic renewal, growth, productivity, mechanization and European integration, or reporting successes. However, the focus of the MP campaign changed particularly with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1951 and escalating Cold War tensions, and became predominantly a struggle against communism, as well as an armament.

Yet, the MP was never a direct assault on European Communism. Nor was it simply an abstraction of numbers, loans, economics, investment and productivity even if these were its key operating tools. Instead, it aimed to reach out to the common people in order to channel attitudes, mentalities and expectations in the desired direction, as defined by the Planners. As the ERP administrator Paul Hoffman explained later, there were only two objectives of the MP: “One to promote economic recovery and the other to promote understanding of MP itself” (Ellwood 1998, 34). It was this understanding or vision of MP which constituted to the overarching message to be delivered by propaganda: mass-production to ensure mass-consumption prosperity. The subtle, lingering message of the MP communication was, therefore, “you too

can be like us” with a clear emphasis on the viability of American approaches to dealing with economic, political and social challenges.

Within this macro frame, interplay between the global agenda and national particularities determined the focus of the communication efforts, as well as the approaches and tools preferred throughout the MP campaigns designed for each participating country. The motion pictures, known as the *Marshall Films*, were to become the most decisive tool deployed by the Information Division of MP in the persuasion of the Old Continent and its surrounding regions, including Turkey.

The Marshall Plan Films

The choice of cinema as the key means of persuasion within MP propaganda was due to characteristics of the prevailing communication landscapes in targeted European settings, and to the strengths of the “novel” medium in comparison with the conventional communication media. In Italy, for example, from the beginning of its activities, the Information Division of the ERP Mission in Rome had clearly understood the inability of press and the radio to bear the central weight of campaign: daily newspaper sales were only one for every twelve Italians, and the access to the radio sets was limited to about half of the population. The experts of Information Division were convinced that visual messages were of key importance, especially in a country where illiteracy still stood at 15 percent. Only the cinematographic medium, they emphasized, “possessed the power of communication, of suggestion and of persuasion – if correctly deployed – to penetrate the ‘most mentally closed’ social groups”, who were, in Italian case, considered to be the Communist workers, or the peasant farmers isolated in remote mountain villages (Ellwood 2001, 33).

Information officials throughout the ERP country missions had the support of the Paris film office, employing predominantly European film-makers, as well as some Americans. It operated primarily to service the needs of the local missions, which proposed ideas to support specific ERP projects or on subjects of local interest. In all, over 200 educational, documentary and early docudrama films were produced by the unit (Hemasing 1994). The films varied according to the widely different interests of 18 country missions, and the information chiefs at headquarters, and the ECA itself, which had its own distinct aims. Nevertheless, despite differences, the majority of the films aimed to illustrate the physical and moral impact of MP, although in particular con-

texts. The first documentaries, in 16 mm black and white film, were distributed as trailers to accompany the main features in the first-run and second-run cinemas in towns across the continent. In some countries, such as Italy, the films were also transported to the remotest villages with the aid of two United States Information Service (USIS) vans, since it was calculated that only 2000 of the 9000 towns possessed a cinema (Ellwood 2001).⁴

According to the ERP report to Congress of July 1950, 50 ERP documentaries and newsreels were circulating across Western Europe, seen every week by almost 40 million people, divided between 30 million for newsreels and 10 million for the documentaries. “Our enquiries in various countries”, followed the report, “have shown to us the great potential of the cinema in transmitting information in ways that spectators can understand, believe and remember” (Ellwood 1998, 36). Turkey was among the 18 aid-recipient nations to which the MP films circulated, but here the campaign message, had a rather different focus.

Marshall Plan Films in/about Turkey

There has been no previous study of the MP propaganda specifically in Turkey, where research is limited to a few studies on the Plan’s general implementation, touching upon on several aspects of MP propaganda (Birinci 2007; Tören 2007; Kozat 2007); and several sources examining MP propaganda in general (Ellwood 1998, 2001, 2006; Hemsing 1994; Garret 2004; Noble 2006). Secondary sources on the films in Turkish context, however, appear to be restricted to a single MS thesis (Aytaç 2008). Therefore, this article should be seen as a modest encouragement to further explore the Turkish dimension of the MP communication campaign, with a focus on the MP films in and about Turkey.

Unlike the majority of the participant countries, the motivations for Turkey’s inclusion date back to the pre-MP Truman Doctrine of 1947. This consisted 300 million and 100 million US dollars of aid for Greece and Turkey, as well as civilian and military assistance, including the training of personnel in the US. The New York Times headline on 12 March 1947 read, “Truman acts to save nations from red rule; asks 400 million to aid Greece and Turkey” (Truman acts 1947), highlighting the nature of the perceived threat.

Different from the earlier Truman Doctrine, the MP started with core European countries, and Turkey’s demand for inclusion was initially rejected.

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4 For a similar account from Turkey, see (Şahin 1996).

The American experts had explained to then Minister of Foreign Affairs that while Turkey had the capacity to contribute to the reconstruction of Europe, it had not been occupied or destroyed, and also had received both British and American assistance during World War II. Furthermore, the effectiveness in its industry was above its pre-war level, showing a surplus in its foreign trade and a stable currency (Robinson 1956). However, this view did not reflect the reality that the Turkish army had been fully mobilized since the beginning of the World War II, causing severe strain upon the national economy. Besides, the Turkish economy had never been strong enough to compete with European economies, even in the pre-war period. Not least, the Cold War atmosphere defined Turkey as a buffer zone against Soviet threat, and so necessitated its inclusion as an ally, while on Turkish side there was an evident desire to join the block of capitalist democracies. Eventually, Turkey was included in the Plan and signed the bilateral Economic Cooperation Agreement with the United States on July 4, 1948 (Birinci 2007, 49-50).

Thus, it can be concluded that the situation of Greece and Turkey was totally different from the other recipients (Mendi 2002). While, both were perceived as vital regarding defense purposes by Marshall policymakers, in Turkey, the aid program targeted primarily developing agriculture and increasing exports to Western Europe, whilst boosting industrial product import from US and other participating countries. In this regard, the MP in Turkey was defined in terms of the promotion of economic development, rather than post-war reconstruction (Birinci 2007; Tören 2007; Noble 2006). Correspondingly, the focus, content, method and aim of the MP communication campaign for Turkey was defined in terms that illustrate an evident development-bias.

As put out by Hemsing (1994), the last director of Information headquarters in Paris, as in Greece and Italy, in Turkey ECA missions used mobile film units to reach rural populations at showings in village squares, schools and churches.⁵ In most countries, the existing network of USIS offices, such as film libraries American embassies, proved the best outlet for MP films exhibitions. In countries with scattered rural populaces, however, these urban exhibition points played a less significant role. Vehbi Belgil, a film-director and one of the earliest film critics in Turkey, published an article in *Yıldız (Star)* weekly popular magazine in 1952, entitled "Issues of our national film-making", supporting this view:

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5 ECA Athens even employed boats to bring film shows and exhibits to the Greek islands (Hemsing 1994).

What makes America [the US] this much renowned in our country, as it is the case in many other countries, is neither the propaganda conducted by American Government, nor the activities of USIS bureau in Beyoğlu [a major district in Istanbul]. Indeed, even in Istanbul, how many individuals exist who know about where this bureau is?

However, even in the most remote village of our country, it is possible to meet people who know about American history, American life, American cowboys, American negro issue... This became possible only through the long and constant effect of American movies [...] (Belgil 1952, 31).⁶

Although Belgil refers to the Hollywood movies, two important points can be inferred from his account. First, in urban Turkey, the MP films, provided by the USIS bureaus, failed to reach to any level of popularity. This conclusion is supported by the lack of mention of the MP films in the then popular film magazines, such as *Yıldız* and *Yeni Holyood (New Hollywood)*, which were particularly widespread in major cities. The second conclusion that can be drawn is that the rural areas, also, were within the scope of the American movies' coverage in Turkey. However, it is known that at the time there was extremely limited number of cinemas and film distribution networks outside the major cities. Cinema going at this time was exclusively urban, upper middle-class activity. It is clear that "the most remote village of Turkey" did not have a movie theatre in the early 1950s. Taken together, these two facts point out to a significant aspect of the MP films in Turkey: Their use was exclusively for rural populations, which in 1950 constituted to approximately 80 percent of the total population, as opposed to their urban-use in most of the aid receiving countries. Rather than urban dwellers this rural populace was deliberately targeted by the MP propaganda. Film was found to be the ideal medium to reach rural populations, in line with the objectives in Turkey, such as development, rather than recovery, European unity or anti-communism.

Analysis of the MP Films about Turkey

The MP Filmography (MPF) is a report compiled and hosted by George C. Marshall Foundation on the existence and locations of known copies of approximately 262 MP films produced between 1948 and 1954.⁷ Since most of the movies no longer exist in any archives, analyzed data consists of the descriptions of the films, which have been copied or adapted from those available

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6 Translated by the author.

7 Filmography is accessible at <http://www.marshallfilms.org/>.

in original catalogues of MP films, by MPF, based in Boston. These can be regarded as non-visual accounts of the films as seen by their producers. When these data are analyzed discursively from Turkey's perspective, the filmography reveals three categories of films: (1) films in which Turkey is the sole component, (2) films in which Turkey is among other components, and (3) films in which Turkey does not appear at all.

Approximately 60 MP films of the third group were dubbed into Turkish language, even though these movies were not about the country. Such movies are outside the scope of this research since they provide no material to examine the portrayal of Turkey in the MP communication activities. However, the existence of these movies implies that the Film Unit's Paris headquarters considered Turkish audiences sufficiently important to be included in the overall reach of the MP campaign, and not simply to be informed about their own national dimension.

In the second category, made up of six films, Turkey is among other components. These films either belonged to series,⁸ or were individual thematic productions. In both cases, the films were amalgams of stories from various aid-receiving countries, including Turkey. Thus, the analysis of these movies enables an understanding of how Turkey was perceived in relation to other participating countries from point of views of both the film producers and the MP Information Division in Paris, whose approval was required before distribution.

It is evident that in these films, Turkey plays a passive-beneficiary role, as a farming nation, whether importing technology from US or railroad cars from Austria, or as a beneficiary of Dutch and French engineering expertise. The European unity, when it comes to Turkey, loses its reciprocal nature, but functions on a one-directional manner: Turkey is always on the receiving end of European cooperation.⁹ Therefore, it is possible to talk about different portrayals of nations within the MP communication campaign; not all countries fit a single MP aid-receiving nation image. Apart from reflecting the factual variations among the nations, these divergences can be seen as the

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8 In MPF, there are three such series, namely *ERP in Action*, *Marshall Plan at Work* and *One-Two-Three*.

9 Such evident parallelism between six representations of Turkey definitely has underlying dynamics, the primary one being the limited exporting (both goods and expertise) capabilities of Turkey in comparison with the mentioned countries.

campaign Planners' differing perceptions across countries. However, since all of the above mentioned six films were newsreel style reports, more factual rather than fictional, they provide less ground for understanding filmmakers' perceptions in regards with individual countries, particularly about specific countries' problems and corresponding solutions. In contrast, analysis of the first category of films, with their focus particularly on Turkey and their fiction-like format, enables us to further comprehend the visual and mental representations of Turkey as appropriated by the MP Film Unit.

The MPF records seven titles, in which whole of the narrative is staged in Turkey. Although no longer available, the earliest, *The Marshall Plan at Work in Turkey* (1950, James Hill, 11 min.), was one of the twelve films which constituted *The Marshall Plan at Work* series. This series were "newsreel-like reports on each nation's progress toward economic recovery; the projects completed and underway, and the benefits reaped" (MPF 2020). Rather than combining reports from multiple countries, each film focused on a single country. *The Marshall Plan at Work in Turkey* film at just over 11 minutes, was made up of two parts (reels). The first, as described by the film-makers, portrays a typical under-developed country, "children in ragged clothing" (MPF 2020) with ordinary people and the usual daily flow, although with some emphasis on her military defense aspects and *traditional* farming techniques, "farmers plant and water tobacco by hand" (MPF 2020). In the second part, however, the agriculture serves as the main background against which the narrative is set: Turkey, as a country with an economy based on traditional agriculture economy, benefits from the new technologies and scientific approaches, which leads to the path of development and prosperity thanks to MP, "an example of the potential chain reaction of the results of Marshall aid" (MPF 2020). Thus, the problem is defined as under-development, which is signified by traditional, non-mechanized agricultural production, while the solution is defined as modernization, with a strong emphasis on economic and technological aspects. Further MP films about Turkey follow in consequent years, with a recurrence of problem definition and the solution path, despite changing plots and narrative, reveal the MP filmmakers' perception of Turkey.

Next five Marshall Films about Turkey are produced as a five-title series called *Turkey and the Land*, and the first film, *Yusef and His Plough* (1951, 18 min.), is described in the MPF catalogue as follows:

On the plains of central Turkey, farming is hard, especially when only age-old methods are used. The surrounding hills have long since been cut bare and offer

little protection from sun and wind. Young Yusef and his father work their land with oxen and wooden plough, exactly as their forefathers have done for hundreds of years. That is, until Yusef attends Agricultural School. Yusef convinces his father to use a metal plough and follow the new methods he has learned - how important it is to let some of the fields lie fallow and not make them yield a crop every year. The youth of Turkey, eager and swift to learn, are introducing their villages to new methods and new equipment being made available by the government under the European Recovery (MPF 2020).

The text makes clear that there is a natural barrier against efficient farming in Turkey, however, the real problem is antiquated methods deployed by the farmers, and new methods and new equipment provided by MP is an effective solution. A close reading of the film through the discourse¹⁰ highlights some implications.¹¹

Yusef and His Plough opens up with scenes from a small village in Turkey where “the fruit of the soil is hard-won” (*Yusef and His Plough* 1951). While men play backgammon as they listen to a radio talk on the MP, the young protagonist of the story, Yusuf,¹² is introduced by the narrator. Yusuf asks his father if he can use a small part of his land to try out a metal plow, and with encouragement from village men, the father, with nothing to lose, agrees. With his father’s approval Yusuf happily rides to the farm school and asks the farming school director, Bay Hasan, for the metal plow. Yusuf receives the plow and during a lengthy scene he works the land. A year passes before the next sequence, in which, instead of sowing by hand, Yusuf uses a seed drill, provided by Hasan Abi, the farming manager. In the final part, Yusuf is visited by Hasan Abi, who admires his wheat and compliments his success. Following the harvest, the villagers gather around Yusuf, praising his crops. The school director then proposes other modern techniques, including acquiring a tractor for the village. Highlighting also the importance of the expertise provided by going to agricultural school, the film ends with a reference to the novel agricultural technologies as follows: “they are the tokens of prosperity;
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10 Close reading of available films is conducted through discourse analysis which would provide with an understanding of the filmmakers’ mindset as well as Marshall Planners’ positioning of Turkey as an aid-receiving country.

11 Some of the films, including *Yusef and His Plough* were obtained thanks to the kind cooperation of Linda and Eric Christenson, creators of Marshall Plan Filmography, to whom MP scholars and film historians, including myself, are indebted.

12 In MPF catalogues, the main character of film is stated as “Yusef”, yet in Turkish language the name should be “Yusuf”. Hereinafter “Yusuf” is used to refer him.

they are the foundations on which to build tomorrow's plans" (Yusef and His Plough 1951). A narrative deployed in several MP films is observed in *Yusef and His Plough*:

An older character refuses the 'modern' change, and then another positive character, who is typically younger, enacts this change, often without the permission of the older one. As the youth practices the new techniques, the film introduces a crisis in which the modern methods of the youth save the crop or otherwise completely change the mind of the older character. (Noble 2006, 40)

As astutely stated by Noble (2006, 40), the central axis of the narrative, the tension between the young and the old represents "the dichotomy between modern and traditional, as well as between hard-working and laid-back, open-minded and conservative". The same theme is developed in the second film in the series *Turkey and the Land*, namely *The Village Tractor* (1951, Clifford Hornby, 14 min.), which provides a more complex series of events, but similarly describes the enlightening of a traditional Turkish village, which was previously skeptical of modern farming techniques, and of modernity itself. In the two films, skepticism and ignorance respectively are overcome by MP technology and expertise.

In MPF, there is another 22-minute film called *The Turkish Harvest* (1951, Clifford Hornby, 22 min.) from 1952, which is largely a combination of the two films mentioned-above, using their footage. "Produced as a more general version to show to less-specialized audiences" (MPF 2018), this compact version of the two films clearly reveals the preferred representations of Turkey by the MP filmmakers.

The opening sequence of the film is devoted to the contextualization of Turkey, both geographically, by the use of maps, and historically, by use of monuments. Istanbul is used to symbolize the long history of Turkey by the voice-over narrator. The focus then shifts to a field in Central Turkey, the one in *The Village Tractor*, concentrating on the contrast between urban prosperity and rural backwardness. The agricultural efforts in the village, described as "habits and traditions of another age" (*Turkish Harvest* 1952) are portrayed in sharp contrast with the modern city life in Istanbul. Then an agriculture agent takes over the voice-over: "I tell them, villagers in my district, how to use new tools or new methods of working with their land, so they can produce more food for market and buy more things for themselves" (*Turkish Harvest* 1952). However, the agricultural agent is uncertain about the reception of his mes-

sage by the villagers: “They will listen, but when I’m gone I wonder if they will shrug their shoulders and ask what a government official knows about farming which we do not know” (Turkish Harvest 1952). Then, he tells a story to emphasize hope for the future: “Let me tell you the story of this boy, Yusuf” who is “my chance to show the village what could be done with new ideas” (Turkish Harvest 1952). The story follows that of the film *Yusef and his Plough*; however, Yusuf’s persistence against his father’s rejection of mechanization of farming is more strongly emphasized, and his success story ends with the agricultural agent stating, “however that was only the beginning” (Turkish Harvest 1952). At this point begins the second part of the film, which is devoted to a shortened version of *The Village Tractor*.

Here, a Canadian tractor engineer, is introduced and takes over the narration: “Yes, you only begin moving in a country if you get machinery. Then you can really get starting in the job of getting more food” (Turkish Harvest 1952). He explains the reason for his own presence in Turkey:

When people get machinery for the first time, that’s when you’ve got to be careful. You’ve got to see if they know to use the stuff properly. In Canada, we’ve had the same kind of problems, and we’ve overcome some of them, now and then. I suppose that’s why they got me over here (Turkish Harvest 1952).

Then, he tells the story of Amin – the young protagonist of *The Village Tractor*, who is clearly contrasted with Necid, the *ignorant* villain of the story. Then, the agricultural agent takes back the narration, stating that both villages are in his district, and both shows the problems he experiences in Turkey. After illustrating the developments in villages, thanks to new ideas and new machinery, he concludes, “more food for market means better living standards in villages”. The film closes with a return to the original narrator, showing a parade of combine harvester, describing this “ancient land, which still has much to give” (Turkish Harvest 1952).

The problem, the solution and the final destination are presented in parallel in the two movies that are combined in *The Turkish Harvest*. However, there exist some further aspects, the historical contextualization of Turkey being the primary of one. Turks are portrayed as the descendants of “proud” Ottoman Empire, while as the film progresses, the adjective “proud” is used this time with a negative connotation, to describe the ignorant protagonist Necid, who is ultimately overcome by Amin, the only open-minded character in the village. Here, the village, which “still lives in the ancient times” (Turkish Harvest

1952), is introduced into the film to highlight the total contrast with Istanbul and Ankara, the modern cosmopolises. Another interesting feature of *Turkish Harvest* is the inclusion of the Canadian tractor engineer, who represents the MP experts in the field. His declarations expose the deep-rooted skepticism of the village people against “expert knowledge”, as perceived by the MP experts. Furthermore, we can see the expert’s approach to the Necid, who represents the “dark” Turkey in contrast with “bright” one represented by Amin. Necid’s ignorance is presented as the problem which must be eliminated through mocking. Finally, as illustrated by the agricultural agent, who represents the cooperative Turkish-side, the audience is reassured by the total agreement between the open, collaborative Turks and the MP experts, not only on the definition of Turkey’s problems (ignorance-skepticism-backwardness), but also on the solutions (modernization via mechanization and its proper use) and the direction (more production and prosperity).¹³

Discussion

As illustrated so far, MP communication efforts, approaches and tools in each participating country were determined as a result of an interplay between the global dynamics and national particularities, although all followed a macro direction defined by the Planners, the American model. As the analysis of the MP films in related to Turkey shows an evident focus on economic development, rather than war recovery, unity or anti-communism, as was the case for other aid-receiving nations. In those films which consist of stories from different countries, and in which Turkey is included, the individual nations are portrayed according to perceptions of their contribution to European collaboration. In all six films, Turkey is portrayed as a passive, aid-receiving country in comparison with others, reflecting the macro frame in which Turkey is contextualized by the MP communication unit.

This perception becomes more clearly defined when the films solely about Turkey are taken into consideration. Almost all of these, take as their

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13 There are three more titles in MPF where Turkey constitutes the sole subject of the films, kept out of this article for space and relevancy concerns. *Care of Tractors* (1952, 20 min.) from 1952 takes the audience back to the theme of first two films mentioned above: Tractor increases the productivity of Turkish agriculture however ignorance is an obstacle. *Control of Water* (1952, 19), a 19-minute production from 1951, displays a more documentary presentation of the water-related developments in agriculture thanks to MP aid. 15 minutes *Jets over Turkey* (1952, 15 min.) is from 1954, which is post-Korean War period when the anti-communist and military aspects of overall MP propaganda dominated the content.

focus the issue of under-development, signified by traditional, non-mechanized agricultural production in rural-areas. The corresponding solution, as presented in the films, is the development via modernization with a clear emphasis on the economy. The two-fold method to be followed is presented as following the MP guidance, firstly eliminating deep-rooted skepticism, and secondly overcoming ignorance in majority of the Turks through MP technology and expertise. In other words, the films served to support MP activities by the dissemination of messages encouraging public support for development-oriented projects, primarily in agricultural domain. This aspect of the role of MP films, especially in the Turkish case, can be contextualized within the emergence of the domain of Development Communication, discussed below.

The attention of the “Western world” and, its most influential member, the USA, was consumed by rehabilitation of work in war-ravaged Europe, MP being the primary example. From the 1950s and on into the 1960s, however attention turned increasingly to the Third World, which in 1955 accounted for the two-thirds of the world’s population, but only 15 percent of its income. The MP period saw the birth of multilateral development assistance through International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations family of specialized agencies, as well as the emergence of bilateral development assistance to help the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This assistance comprised monetary help as well as knowledge of scientific techniques and technologies in areas such as health, agriculture, mass media and human expertise to facilitate the acquisition of the new information (Melkote 1991, 20-35). This purpose - to ensure the messages of development projects were received and digested by the Third World publics ultimately led to the emergence of the Development Communication field (Rogers 1976; Fair 1989; Escobar 1995; Servaes 1999, 2008).

Although development strategies diverge widely between countries, the overarching pattern of the early Development Communication efforts shaped by “modernization paradigm” was informing the population about the projects and their benefits and encouraging support. A typical example of such strategy is found in the area of family planning, where means of communication like posters, pamphlets, radio, and television were used in persuasion attempts. Similar strategies have been used on campaigns including health and nutrition, agricultural projects, and education (Servaes and Malkihao 2005, 94). As the previous sections emphasize, MP films about Turkey show all the characteristics of early Development Communication, although incorporated

into a program specifically aimed to help war recovery for the First World, rather than a development project for the Third World.

The claim becomes more visible on consideration of another component of the MP communication campaign in Turkey, namely the health brochures distributed within the MP implementation. The pamphlets, about various aspects of health, such as epidemic diseases, child care and parental care, all open with the same statement from George Marshall's Harvard speech: "Our policy is not to fight with any country or a country's doctrine; we try to prevent hunger, poverty, hopelessness, and chaos" (Birinci 2007). According to Birinci (2007, 200-201), the extremely simple explanations in these brochures reflect a perspective that "the booklets were distributed to villages and the village people were deeply ignorant and did not know even the most basic terms and cases". Moreover, from a macro point of view it can be argued that the attitude of the MP health brochures as well as of the MP films produced for and distributed in Turkey, were argued to be vertical in nature, authority-based, top-down, expert-driven, non-negotiable, well-intentioned, and thus hortatory in orientation, qualities that were characteristic of the development communication efforts of 1950s and 1960s (Ascroft and Masilela 1989; Melkote 1991).

In that sense, the Turkish case of MP communication can be seen as a prologue to the early development communication initiatives, which were, as stated by Hemer and Tufte (2005, 15), "corollaries to the highly problematic modernization paradigm". In a similar vein, the heroes of the MP films about Turkey, young Yusuf and Amin, against the villains, the father and Necid, can be considered as the precedents of the protagonist in the Daniel Lerner's major contribution to modernization literature "Passing of the Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East" (1958): the socially mobile and change-accepting Turkish village grocer, who Lerner praises as the nucleus (Melkote and Steeve, 2001) of the "modernizing Middle East that seeks to become what the West is" (Lerner 1958, 47).¹⁴

Arturo Escobar, in his work "Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World" (1995), characterizes development as a historically produced discourse; certain representations that become dominant, and shape the ways in which reality is imagined upon. In order to do

14 A meta-research of development communication publications showed that after 1987-1996, "Lerner's modernization model completely disappears." (Fairs and Shah 1997, 7)

this, he analyzes the characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that define the development discourse: The forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes to being (definitions, declarations, documents etc.); the systems of power that regulates its practice (networks of institutions, agents etc.); and the forms of subjectivity fostered by development discourse (Escobar 1995, 9-10). Applying his framework to the Turkish case of production of development discourse, it can be said that MP played a vital role as a system of power which allowed development to become a dominating discourse in Turkey. In this regard, the MP films (as well as other tools of MP communication in Turkey) functioned as the forms of knowledge that refer to development, and the knowledge through which development becomes visible, presentable, and therefore, *real*. Although the last axis, the subjectivity fostered by the development discourse in Turkey, is outside of the scope of this paper, a few insightful anecdotes can give an impression of Turkish subjectivity in regards with the development discourse.

Primarily, since the initiation of the MP, the perception of the Plan by the Turkish public, as well as the way the Plan was promoted by the Marshall Planners was mainly concerned with development. The Turkish translation of the ERP was not “European Recovery Program”, but “European *Development* Program”, not only in the public language, but also in all MP related official documentation. Secondly, the direction drawn (or the discourse produced) by the MP for Turkey (development via mechanization, water supply control, highway building etc.) became sacrosanct, an unchallengeable path in political sphere. The themes of more tractors in the villages, more dams for irrigation, and more roads were increasingly exploited in election manifestos of centre parties, further increasing voters’ aspirations. Finally, the current government party, which has maintained power over the last two decades largely through investing heavily in the construction sector, has chosen the name Justice and *Development* Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP) with good reasons.

Conclusion

To conclude, development emerged as one of the major discourses through which Turkish people imagine their reality while development discourse was a product of various dynamics’ combination, detailed in this article. MP was one of the major systems of power, which by dictating necessity of development to Turkish public, particularly on the rural populations, convinced them of their chronic under-development. MP films effectively supported this

process, by portraying – on the screen – their own story, which was shown as a simple choice, and persuading them to choose the modern over the traditional and the hero over the villain.

Beyond the limitations and boundaries of this article, certainly remains much to be done in relation with MP films and academic literature on Communication for Development in Turkey. Primarily, the emergence of new MP films that are known to be non-existing until recently is a high possibility thanks to digitalization of film archives and materials all over the world. Secondly, the production realms of MP films in Turkey is potentially a fruitful topic of research. Additionally, MP films may be analyzed in conjunction with other MP communication/propaganda tools and materials produced for and used in Turkey. Finally, deeper study of MP films about Turkey would certainly shed more light on this rather obscure era of film in Turkey as well on this initial, modest meditation on the origin of the field of Communication for Development.

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