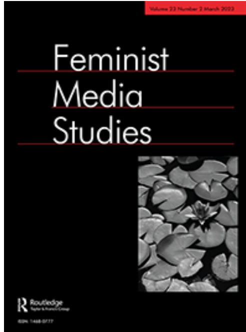


Feminist Media Studies

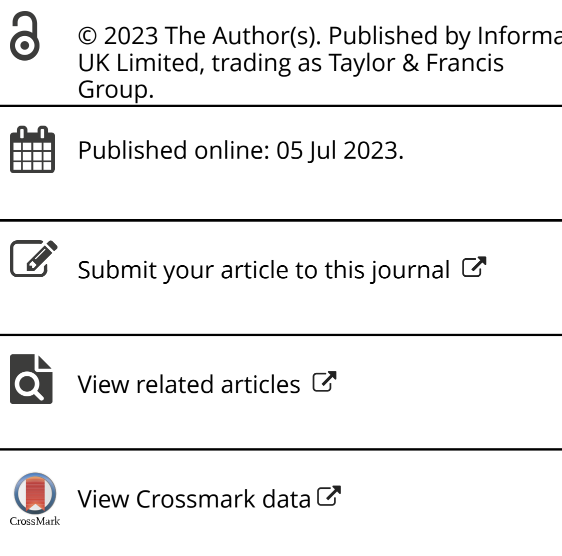
ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfms20

Disclosing gender-based violence online: strengthening feminist collective agency or creating further vulnerabilities?

Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan & Hande Eslen-Ziya

To cite this article: Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan & Hande Eslen-Ziya (2023): Disclosing gender-based violence online: strengthening feminist collective agency or creating further vulnerabilities?, Feminist Media Studies, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2023.2229060

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2229060



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

Published online: 05 Jul 2023.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rfms20

FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2229060

Disclosing gender-based violence online: strengthening feminist collective agency or creating further vulnerabilities?

Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan and Hande Eslen-Ziya

Department of Media and Social Sciences, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

ABSTRACT

The withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention (in March 2021) and the high prevalence of gender-based violence reflect the current patriarchal political atmosphere in Turkey. Such backlash occurred despite the strong feminist resistance and transnational support to combat anti-gender developments. In this political climate, online disclosures of gender-based violence have become critical in shaping public debates about violence against women in Turkey. In the last decade, we have witnessed a movement similar to #MeToo, whereby women shared their experiences of gender-based violence on Twitter. This paper is about six of these disclosures and how they formed networked feminist counterpublics. Through a qualitative study of our participants´ lived experiences of online disclosures, we aim to illustrate what responses and reactions they encountered in online spaces, how these reactions and responses affected their well-being, what online spaces offered to them to counteract their victimisation, and, finally, how these online disclosures contributed to feminist collective consciousness and agency in Turkey. Our findings reveal dual consequences of disclosing gender-based violence online, where these networked feminist counterpublics bring together the excluded stories and challenge the mainstream public knowledge, and yet, at the same time, result in backlashes and digital vulnerabilities.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 10 February 2022
Revised 23 May 2023
Accepted 16 June 2023

KEYWORDS
Networked feminist counterpublics; online disclosure; workplace/sexual harassment; gender-based violence; online mobilisation

Digital media technologies shape the contemporary public sphere and, by proxy, democracy. In the last two decades, social media have played a major role in mobilising collective action and facilitating social movements (Nahed Eltantawy and Julie B Wiest 2011). The social media content created and shared became a platform allowing people to communicate their struggles and desires and help spread ideologies rapidly and widely (Clay Shirky 2011). Social media is faster and more efficient, giving activists a space to be engaged and organised. This space allows for the spread of ideas and stories that are otherwise restricted or marginalised. Hence, social media serve as a common

CONTACT Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan busra.y.ucan@uis.no; busra.yalcinoz@uwaterloo.ca Department of Media and Social Sciences, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

denominator that provides an umbrella for diverse but similar stories, as in the case of the #MeToo movement.

The recent literature studying the #MeToo movement discusses the impact of social networking sites in spreading alternative narratives and "counterpublics" (Nancy Fraser 1992). According to Fraser (1992, 123), counterpublics are "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs." Fraser suggests that this knowledge formed through the counterpublics challenges mainstream public knowledge. Using Twitter to share experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, Fraser's counterpublics are transferred to the digital arena—what Verity Trott (2020, 7) refers to as "networked counterpublics." In this paper, we employ the term "networked feminist counterpublics" by Kaitlynn Mendes, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalynn Keller (2019) while addressing women's online mobilisations via online disclosures about gender-based violence.

The networked feminist counterpublics create unique opportunities for survivors of gender-based violence to raise their voices and seek connection and acknowledgement (Clark Rosemary 2016). These alternative networked spaces then play an important role in legitimising experiences excluded from the mainstream public sphere. In more authoritarian political and societal contexts where there are many barriers to engaging in activism and advocacy work, these networked spaces gain particular importance for people to speak up and mobilise (Huda Alsahi 2018; Gölöm Şener 2021). However, restrictive regimes may also threaten the online counterpublic spaces due to intense state surveillance and control over digital platforms (Gjika Anika and Alison J. Marganski 2020). The current political dynamics in Turkey reflect such a double-edged sword for online feminist activism, and our study is situated within these dynamics. In a societal and political environment where women´s experiences of and suffering from gender-based violence are mostly ignored or delegitimised, we consider it crucial to study online disclosure practices to understand their role in empowering women and strengthening networked feminist counterpublics. It is particularly essential considering that no previous studies in Turkey focus on women's experiences of online disclosures.

Thus, in this article, by using the voices of a small group of women in Turkey, we aim to illustrate i) what online and offline reactions and responses our participants received after the disclosures, ii) how these reactions and responses affected their everyday well-being, iii) how, or whether, making the online disclosures changed their perception of their experiences, and iv) how they perceived the potential of the disclosures in creating networked counterpublics. Asking these questions is also crucial as only a few studies in the literature investigate lived experiences of women who disclose online (i.e., Bianca Fileborn 2019, Gundersen and Zaleski 2021; Rachel Loney-Howes 2020). Instead, most research on online disclosures uses social media data (i.e., hashtags, Twitter posts, blog posts). Hence, our study also adds to the existing literature by providing an in-depth perspective on women´s personal stories concerning how they reflect upon and situate the disclosures in their daily lives and the context they live in.

The following section starts by looking into the previous literature on online disclosures. We then provide an overview of the relevant literature in Turkey and discuss the current political and societal context. We conclude by illustrating how the networked counterpublics that our participants initiated counteract and transform their victimisation

and create a potential for shaping the terms of public debates about gender-based violence in Turkey.

Development of networked feminist counterpublics and online disclosures

Trott (2020) showed that the #MeToo movement helped survivors elevate their voices and change dominant narratives about sexual violence. Kaitlynn Mendes, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalynn Keller (2018) outline the potential and drawbacks of networked feminist mobilisation challenging dominant rape culture. While the participants of such movements may become visible figures, open to further online harassment and public scrutiny (Trott 2020), these networks also create public momentum and feminist solidarity allowing their participants to express and unite and create public recognition (Fraser 1992). In these spaces, alternative sources of information become available (Fileborn 2019; Tully O'Neill 2018).

Previous studies illustrate that online disclosures enable survivors to communicate their needs, find supportive connections, and reach out to resources and information (i.e., Gundersen and Zaleski 2021; Fileborn 2019; O'Neill 2018). Such studies highlight that sharing their stories online increases survivors' likelihood of being heard and validated. O'Neill (2018), for instance, conceptualises online disclosures as personal "storytelling" and suggests that online communities provide recognition and support for many survivors and, thus, create a sense of "collective identity" and belongingness. Thus, disclosing such experiences "works as a form of personal healing" (Mendes and Ringrose 2019, 1305) and becomes "an avenue for positive coping" (Gundersen and Zaleski 2021, 840).

Scholars also address the political function of online disclosures, particularly in the form of consciousness-raising (Rashaam Chowdhury, and Bianca Fileborn 2020; Mendes and Ringrose 2019; Loney-Howes, Rachel, Kaitlynn Mendes, Diana Fernández Romero, Bianca Fileborn and Sonia Núñez Puente 2021). Speaking out online is emphasised as allowing women to stand together for a common purpose and thus foster collective action (Loney-Howes 2020; Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2019). Heather Lang (2019, 15) suggests that in the origins of online movements, there are two different but complementary purposes: "to build an affirming and healing community for survivors, themselves, and to make visible survivors of sexual assault to the larger public." For Jessamy Gleeson and Breanan Turner (2019), such disclosure is a form of feminist campaigning that goes back to the "personal is political" rhetoric. Hence, these online consciousness-raising campaigns become networked feminist counterpublics as women perform and construct new feminist identities and activism.

However, scholars also highlight some drawbacks, primarily addressing the likelihood of encountering cyber-harassment and victim-blaming (i.e., Fileborn 2019; Loney-Howes et al. 2021; Anastasia Powell 2015). Survivors can be attacked in online spaces, their stories can be discredited and trivialised, and these negative consequences may become further traumatising for them (Fileborn 2019). Likewise, rather than counteracting the dominant societal understandings of gender-based violence, it is argued that survivors' stories and the reactions to these stories could reproduce problematic discourses. Intersectionality and digital inequalities are also addressed as critical issues in this respect, as not every individual has the same level of resources enabling them to use online spaces effectively for their safety needs (Fileborn 2019; Loney-Howes 2020; Michael Salter 2013). Relatedly, people with low

social power are reported as having fewer opportunities for "speaking out" (Serisier 2018), and when they share, their stories may become less visible and discredited more (Loney-Howes et al. 2021). Hence, scholars address that new hierarchies may be created in online spaces (Pinar Tuzcu 2016), "which ultimately reproduce and redefine embodied and cultural borders and power relations between women" (Loney-Howes et al. 2021, 11).

Gender-based violence and online disclosures in Turkey

Gender-based violence is a prevalent problem in Turkey. The last nationwide survey study shows that 38% of ever-partnered women have been exposed to gender-based violence at least once in their lifetime (B Akadlı Ergöçmen, İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu and Henrica Jansen 2013). Independent femicide watch initiatives indicate high rates of women's killings in Turkey (Ceyda Ulukaya and Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan 2023). Studies also highlight an institutional unwillingness to implement violence prevention laws guaranteed by the Istanbul Convention (Şule Toktaş and Çağla Diner 2015). Police are reported as unresponsive and uninformed in dealing with gender-based violence cases (Yalcinoz-Ucan 2022; Berna Ekal 2017). The fact that there are only 143 women's shelters in Turkey is another outstanding example indicating a lack of institutional resources (Ekal 2017). Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021 significantly adds to these long-term problems with implementing and enforcing laws (Margaret Grieve 2021).

These circumstances around the issue of gender-based violence occur within a broader anti-democratic atmosphere in Turkey marked with significant human rights violations. Women and individuals with feminist identities and LGBTQ+ communities are mainly targeted groups by oppressive governmental politics (Şener 2021). This political climate leads to an increase in digital advocacy efforts and online activism. Women's rights activists, feminist advocacy groups, or LGBTQ+ activists are reported as using digital spaces for visibility, awareness-raising and establishing solidarity (G Zeynep Göker 2019; Şener 2021).

As a critical part of these digital advocacy efforts, we witnessed that online disclosure of gender-based violence and seeking support by using digital tools became a common practice in Turkey (Göker 2019; Christine L Ogan and Özen Baş 2020). For instance, the hashtag #sendeanlat (#tellyourstory), which was first used after the rape and murder of a young woman in 2015, turned into a nationwide anti-rape campaign and shaped the public debates about the reality of street harassment and sexual violence (Elif G Ikizer, Nairan Ramírez-Esparza and Ryan L. Boyd 2019). More recently, different groups of women working in various professional sectors initiated two hashtag movements, #uykulariniz-kacsin (#loseyoursleep) and #susmabitsin (#speakuptoend), to share their experiences of harassment and/or sexual violence by their male colleagues, bosses, or supervisors. These movements found broad support and motivated many women to share their experiences of violence (Şener 2021).

There are only a few academic studies that examine these online anti-violence movements. Ogan and Baş (2020) analysed various hashtag campaigns initiated after specific femicide cases. They illustrate that these campaigns were widely supported and used for demanding justice and collective action, criticising and protesting the inadequacy of the state actions, showing support for the victims, and disseminating information. Another

study by Ikizer, Ramírez-Esparza, and Boyd (2019) that examines the tweets posted under the #tellyourstory hashtag demonstrates that the posts mainly included people´s reactions towards victim-blaming assumptions, criticism of honour-based cultural norms, and anonymous sharing of individual experiences of sexual violence. A few other studies focus on feminist organisations' use of various digital platforms (Fulya Şen and Halime Kök 2017; Şener 2021; Göker 2019). They show that these platforms are primarily used to create a political consciousness around the issues of women´s rights, patriarchy, and gender-based violence and to gain visibility and mobilise women.

At the same time, the current government targets social media, particularly its use by oppositional groups (Ogan and Baş 2020). We witness that many individuals and groups are accused of being "provocateurs" and enemies of "peace" (Eslen-Ziya 2022). This political atmosphere makes digital spaces vulnerable for citizens and may significantly limit the power of online activism (Şener 2021). Conservative groups are also increasingly using social media platforms for online counter-activism in Turkey (Eslen-Ziya 2022). This backlash use of social media mainly conveys hostile messages towards women, feminists, LGBTQ+ communities, and other marginalised individuals and groups.

Methods

Participants

Participants were selected based on the strategy of purposive convenience sampling, and six women were interviewed. The authors first identified eight Turkish-speaking women on Twitter who publicly disclosed their experiences of gender-based violence. All eight women were initially approached, and four participated in the study. In addition to these four participants, two women referred by one of our participants were also invited to the study and agreed to participate. The women's ages ranged from 21 to 50. The sample composition included urban, highly educated women. Four women were exposed to sexual violence at their workplaces, one to workplace harassment/bullying, and one to psychological violence by an intimate partner who was also a colleague of the participant.

A study information/recruitment letter was sent to potential participants either by using direct messaging on Twitter or by email. Following this initial contact, six women who agreed to participate in the study were sent an informed consent form. After obtaining their signatures, the dates and times for their interviews were scheduled. Ethical approval of this study was obtained by the the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) in April 2021.

Protecting the anonymity of our participants was a primary concern for us, shaping our decisions regarding what information we would include in this article. Thus, apart from providing an overall picture of what is happening in Turkey regarding gender-based violence and online disclosures, we chose not to provide any additional information regarding the specific circumstances in which our participants made the disclosures. Lastly, we decided not to examine our participants´ social media posts and only focused on their interviews because it would not be possible to keep our participants´ identities anonymous if we included the Twitter data in our analyses.

Data collection

Data collection included semi-structured individual interviews, each lasting from 50 minutes to two hours. Both authors were present during the interviews, and all were conducted online via Zoom. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the authors, and the data was de-identified during this process. The interviews were coded and analysed in Turkish, and the quotations used in this article were translated from Turkish to English by the authors. Pseudonyms were used for each participant.

The interviews aimed to examine three interconnected areas of women's lived experiences of online disclosures: i) decision-making processes before the disclosures ii) experiences after the disclosures including online and offline reactions and responses they received, and iii) how the disclosures affected their overall lives and their well-being? This article addresses the second and third objectives. The decision-making processes was studied from a multilevel justice perspective in a previous publication (Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan and Hande Eslen-Ziya 2023), where we show that either distrusting the institutional processes or encountering further injustices when making formal complaints was one of the primary reasons for the online disclosures. Furthermore, our research illustrates that participants´ decisions to disclose online was guided by their experiences of not being taken seriously by others when they sought in-person help. Demanding offender accountability and preventing them from causing further harm, and seeking validation and recognition were the other critical motivators highlighted.

Data analysis

A thematic analysis framework, as described by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2012), guided the data analysis in the present study. Thematic analysis (TA) is described as a flexible yet well-defined methodological tool aiming to identify, organise and interpret the patterns of meaning observed in the interviews. It focuses on exploring common experiences among participants and aims to produce answers to research questions. As the current study emphasises examining shared narratives in the interviews to reveal what participants experienced after online disclosures and how making the disclosures affected their lives and well-being, TA is considered a method compatible with the study's goals.

The current study followed the six-step approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2012) for thematic analysis. The first step, the familiarisation phase, involved intense familiarisation with the narratives to develop preliminary insights regarding how the participants perceived and interpreted their experiences. This phase started during the data collection and continued through the transcription process, where the authors involved themselves in "observational and causal" notetaking (Braun and Clarke 2012). The second step, the initial coding phase, included systematic initial data coding using a qualitative software analysis program, NVivo. As recommended, the coding in this phase focused mainly on the descriptive meanings of participants' narratives and producing semantic codes in small chunks relevant to the research questions to stay close to the content of interviews.

Later, during the third step of the analysis, described by Braun and Clarke (2012) as "searching for themes," we analysed the data to generate conceptual themes that

aimed to represent the essential and shared experiences and meanings in the data. We identified overlapping and similar features of our initial codes and re-organised them accordingly, mainly by collapsing and clustering them. Then, we created a preliminary map of generated themes, which informed the next two stages of the analysis, namely "reviewing potential themes" and "defining and naming themes" (Braun and Clarke 2012, 65). These steps were used to determine the quality and suitability of the themes produced, their boundaries and specific features. Accordingly, we reviewed the themes to ensure that each has an essential focus, which can be related to other themes without overlapping and reflects a cohesive, essential meaning across narratives. The sixth phase is the writing phase of the analysis. We ensured that our analysis represented the data in its fullness clearly and cohesively.

Except for the first and last phases (notetaking and writing phases), where the authors worked collaboratively, all other steps were conducted separately by the individual authors. At the end of each phase, we came together to determine whether our analyses were consistent. We resolved any inconsistencies with further reflexive communication until a consensus was achieved.

Ethics and reflexivity

Research on gender-based violence may involve emotional risks for participants. Although the interviews we conducted did not include any questions regarding participants´ experiences of violence, such memories expectedly came up during their interviews. Besides, talking about the negative consequences of online disclosures and the related re-traumatisation was also emotionally taxing for the participants from time to time—also for us while listening to their stories. To minimise harm and cope with such instances, we utilised a trauma- and violence-informed approach in our research (Dianne Lalonde, Linda Baker, Robert Nonomura, and Jassamine Tabibi 2020). We explained to the participants the potential emotional risks of participation and highlighted their consent as an ongoing process. Additionally, we monitored their distress level during the interviews (either by observing or directly asking them) and tried to create a non-directive and non-judgmental conversation atmosphere.

Doing research on such a disputed issue—where there are supporters and attackers/non-believers—was another challenge that created its dynamics for us as researchers. First, we were not "outsiders" to the participants´ stories. That is, we located ourselves on their side, followed their stories online, and felt part of the solidarity created by their stories. This "insider" position facilitated our understanding of their experiences during online disclosures. Yet, it also created challenges, particularly when we witnessed—a painful witnessing—the attacks they encountered and how their stories and identities were discredited. Thus, it was critical, and sometimes challenging, to employ a "balanced position" where we neither praised the disclosures as evidence of "feminist success" nor undermined what the participants achieved through them on a personal and collective level.

Working on this topic also included a certain risk to our safety as researchers. It was the primary reason we did not create a public call for participation, as we anticipated the risk of being attacked. As we discussed earlier, ensuring participant anonymity was essential

in this sense, too, as not being able to do so would create additional risks to our participants´ safety. One of the participants, in fact, said there is a possibility that her participation, if revealed, can be used against her and would cause us, as researchers, to be stalked and harassed online. We locate these concerns, felt by us as two feminist academics and expressed by some of our participants, within the increasing backlash resistances to feminist identities in recent years in Turkey (Şener 2021; Eslen-Ziya 2022).

Findings

Our analysis revealed two opposite effects of online disclosures: the experience of disclosure as an empowering, uniting force, and the opposite, as digital vulnerabilities. Digital platforms became a venue to raise voice and connect with others, helping the participants create their networked feminist counterpublics. The online connections turn into what they called an online feminist "sisterhood", which enables similar stories to be told and heard despite its limitations. This led to an online consciousness-raising process as virtual feminist spaces got produced and organised. However, the participants also reported that disclosures led to a sense of "digital vulnerability" where they felt like losing control over their narratives. Two main themes were identified to describe these positive and negative experiences, "counterpublics of solidarity" and "facing backlash". In the following sections, we will discuss these two aspects of online disclosures through the participants' experiences.

Counterpublics of solidarity (within and beyond online spaces)

Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2019, 1305) suggest that "participating in digital feminist campaigns ... forges powerful affective solidarities which were often hugely significant for participants and were experienced as life-changing in the micro-moments of connecting, dialoguing, and finding solidarity with others." Digital disclosures throughout such movements allow survivors to give voice to their experiences and seek recognition and solidarity from others, which both are shown to create a sense of healing and empowerment (Bianca Fileborn 2014; Fileborn 2019; Gundersen and Zaleski 2021; Loney-Howes et al. 2021; O'Neill 2018). For our participants, disclosing violence on social media contributed significantly to their recovery from the trauma of violence. Their narratives showed that this empowering process occurred through two interconnected sub-processes, namely "establishing networks for support and safety" and "establishing networks for mobilisation against violence," supporting our initial argument regarding the importance of forming networked feminist counterpublics.

Establishing networks for support and safety

Finding online communities that recognise their experiences and provide support is key for survivors in healing from the psychological trauma of violence (Fileborn 2019; Gundersen and Zaleski 2021; O'Neill 2018). Our findings illustrate it as a crucial factor in enhancing the participants` well-being. Simge, one of the participants, explained the mere effect of disclosing: "The only thing that I wanted was to be heard, and I have been heard and have received support." Disclosing individual experiences of trauma and having the sense that others are willing to hear, recognize, and support them seems to

work as a form of psychological recovery (Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2018). Furthermore, we show that online solidarities sometimes transcend to offline spaces through which the participants found themselves in an expanded support circle in their lives:

> My network was very limited, only my friends and family . . . after spreading my story through social media, there were so many people in my circle, we had a perfect solidarity there. (Simge)

> A person, for instance, who had a relationship with him [referring to the offender] got back to me and said, "Congrats, I support you." Some other people also cut their contact with him . . . This was very surprising for me. (Idil)

Research shows that isolation and having a sense of being forced to silence are common consequences for the victims of gender-based violence (A Lisa Goodman., and Deborah Epstein 2008). Our findings also demonstrate that women often found themselves unsupported and silenced by significant others, which added to their sense of isolation. Online disclosures were then emphasised as leading to support, reminding them that they were not alone, and lessening their sense of isolation:

> I received a lot of support, which has been good for me because when I experienced this incident when I told my friends and family, there was silence and a state of not knowing what to do, and I felt very alone. (Sevda)

Powell (2015, 580) suggests that online communications do not only become "tools" but "mediators of new social practices." Online solidarities mediate offline support practices by bringing people together for a common purpose and creating a sense of belongingness for survivors (O'Neill 2018). This sense of online belongingness, being supported by "unknown" others, also make women feel safer and give them self-assurance:

> You start to communicate with people telling you "Keep going!." It makes you feel assured. Someone . . . contacts you, and they write pages of support messages. These are great things. (Filiz)

> Trusting people was difficult. I overcame this feeling because I found people by my side . . . It was very scary before the disclosure. You walk by, listening to the steps coming behind you, but now it is much better. (Simge)

These narratives demonstrate how online disclosures may become very influential for survivors to find "trusted audiences" and to be acknowledged by them (Powell 2015, 582), which is in direct contrast with their experiences before the online disclosures. Thus, online disclosures may challenge everyday unresponsiveness and indifference to sexual or gender-based violence (Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2018; O'Neill 2018). "Screaming" online, and being heard, then help survivors to recover emotionally:

> People saw what happened, still acted like it never happened . . . I think there was no other way to get rid of this feeling . . . So, it was like screaming . . . Now . . . I can cope with it . . . it is empowering in that sense. (Esra)

Online disclosures become stories of "how someone [our participants] comes to refuse what had previously been endured," and they take the form of "negative speech, a complaint" (Sara Ahmed 2017). These forms of "negative speech" can also

be considered networked counterpublics, which "offer a space for victims to give a voice to their experiences" beyond their personal networks (Mark Wood, Evelyn Rose, and Chrissy Thompson 2019, 379). Creating these networked counterpublics is crucial considering Turkey's increasingly oppressive political environment, where women´s political activism is monitored, restricted, and punished. We see a rising institutional legitimisation of gender-based violence which occurs in parallel with the authoritarian efforts to silence public feminist voices (Eslen-Ziya 2022). A crucial example is that—in addition to the presidential decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention—a lawsuit has been filed in 2022 with the government´s initiative demanding the closure of a major anti-femicide organisation in Turkey collecting and publishing femicide data (SCF 2022). This is a context where feminists and anti-violence activists are criminalised by the State to prevent their further mobilisation. Thus, under these circumstances, we argue that these networked counterpublics created as digital "complaints" carry a potential to counteract state-level legitimisation of violence and open a collective space for women to hear about one another and "speak up" against injustices.

In the following section, we will discuss how these disclosures lead to further collaborative action—networked feminist counterpublics—in our participants' lives.

Establishing networks for mobilisation against violence

Previous literature shows how sharing one´s story of victimisation online functions as a political consciousness-raising practice (Clark 2016; Fileborn 2019; Loney-Howes et al. 2021). This, as inherently feminist political practice, helps survivors to situate their individual experiences within the broader system of patriarchal oppression and, thus, challenges dominant narratives of individualised shame and blame (Fileborn 2019; Loney-Howes 2020). These processes are also supported by our findings, as the participants described their online presence as an element of feminist political activism to raise their voices against violence and create awareness on both individual and collective levels. They said that they did not necessarily consider themselves "feminists" but started relating to feminism through their experiences. Deniz, for instance, described this process as follows:

> "You're a feminist." In fact, it was not like that. I just did it without knowing so much ... I developed my relationship with feminism through my experiences ... I learned from experience. I realise now how feminists supported me.

One aspect of this process was becoming more informed about gender-based violence and, through this knowledge, naming and owning their stories. It seems that disclosure helped them better define what violence is and resolve their ambivalence regarding their experience:

> My first reflex was to blame myself ... But with the support coming after the disclosure, I realised that it was not like that ... The support I did not get from people I had known for years came from others who did not know me at all. (Sevda)

Fileborn (2014, 44) suggests that the process of naming and validation can "transform an individual harm to a collective one". She considers this as an "impetus" for collective action. Similarly, our findings demonstrate that naming their experiences increased our participants' recognition of that sexual violence or harassment is not something to be "trivialised" and helped them define it as a "gendered harm" or trauma (Fileborn 2014, 44).

A participant in our study underlines this: "We learned that this is not a small insignificant thing . . . it is a thing we should name. It is trauma" (Filiz).

Sharing their experiences online also fosters feminist networked relationships, or what A. Fotopoulou refers to as "digital sisterhood" (2016, 37), through which the participants gained a sense of certainty regarding their experiences and actions. Online disclosures, through "peer-to-peer witnessing" (Loney-Howes 2018, 28), create a potential for individual and collective transformation or networked feminist counterpublics. It is shown in the following quotation:

> I was so inclined to think, "Am I exaggerating?" . . . All the messages coming from people . . . helped me to get rid of these doubts . . . Those conversations enabled me to speak confidently. (Idil)

Our findings address how online disclosures could function as a form of digital feminist activism (Fileborn 2019) and could add to and expand "real-life" activism against gender-based violence (Loney-Howes et al. 2021, 7). In some cases, naming their individual experiences created offline forms of organised mobilisation and enabled them to transform the "personal" into the "political:"

> I'm reaching out to others . . . I think social media are of such great benefit in getting people together. Without online platforms, you would not find me . . . but now it will be a study, and people will read these things, they will learn and talk with others. (Sevda)

> I do workshops, and I meet women . . . We try to heal each other. I feel so happy that I made this happen . . . (Filiz)

Alsahi (2018) illustrates that "operating through digital spheres," regardless of its magnitude as a political action, can enhance the visibility of feminist "disruptive" voices and ensure mobilisation. She emphasises that particularly in geographies where political "offline" activism involves "high risks" (i.e., state brutality, imprisonment), digital spaces play a critical role in the sustainability of feminist mobilisations/activism. Similarly, Şener (2021) argues that digital spheres have become highly critical for feminist activism in Turkey, particularly in enabling community mobilisation against gender-based violence and femicide. Our findings also show that the participants use social media as a platform to enable consciousness-raising, mutual solidarity, online and offline mobilisation, and individual and collective transformation. Thus, the use of digital platforms, in turn, situates the singular acts of disclosure into the broader "online" and "offline" spheres of feminist political activism, through which an ongoing collective resistance against injustices and violence is being maintained.

Facing backlash (anti-disclosure mobilisation)

Counterpublics can also lead to a backlash against survivors and feminist politics/identities (Chowdhury and Fileborn 2020; Fileborn 2019). Revealing one´s story online creates a certain vulnerability. Stories become difficult to "contain" as survivors cannot achieve control over how their stories expand and how they are judged (Wood, Rose, and Thompson 2019). It is addressed by one of the participants in our study: "Disclosure leads to public discussion; everybody can question your experiences . . . privacy and safety can disappear completely, which is what I mean by vulnerability" (Sevda).

"Negative witnessing" (Loney-Howes 2018, 28) is something our participants experienced, through which their stories were questioned and discredited, and their identities and personalities were attacked and humiliated: "I got comments that involved verbal harassment. People were encouraged by the fact that their names were hidden … it turned out to be something out of my control" (Simge). The participants´ online visibility sometimes costs them too much. For some, it became a process in which they felt that they were being dehumanised in their personal lives: "You are on a dating app, and somebody says, 'I know you from the disclosure.' This means that the disclosure comes before you … This is dehumanisation … People reduce you to the act of disclosure. (Sevda)
Hence, the disclosures sometimes put them in a place of "digital vulnerability" and led to a diminished feeling of control over their "online" and "offline" narratives. These findings align with research showing that technology-facilitated violence can make digital platforms unsafe for survivors, add to their victimisation, and contribute to the normalisation of violence (i.e., Fileborn 2019, Loney-Howes 2002; Salter 2013). Relatedly, the previous studies address that online platforms can reproduce problematic conventions regarding "what violence is and whose experiences count" (Chowdhury and Fileborn 2020, 3). Some participants in our study also talked about how their experiences of violence were not accepted as "legitimate" by social media users. It was particularly the case if they were exposed to psychological violence or gender-based workplace harassment:

> I wrote about this on Twitter: " … It should be sexual violence. It should be stalking … Only then you say that women's testimony is fundamental." (Esra)

> People took my experience and smashed it … "Is psychological violence 'real' violence?" … "How do we differentiate it from relationship dynamics?" … but how are we going to measure it? … what are we arguing about here? (Idil)

Studies on feminist digital activism in Turkey similarly indicate "a hierarchy of the visibility of women´s issues" on digital platforms (Şener 2021, 7). That means certain issues like workplace harassment, psychological violence, or economic violence do not get enough attention compared to highly visible issues such as femicide or child sexual abuse. We also show that such "less visible" issues were conveyed as less "legitimate" by the public, and thus, the discourses that the participants encountered on social media became problematic. In other words, hierarchies of violence regarding what are the "legitimate" forms of violence and what are not are being created in online spaces, and survivors´ experiences are evaluated and judged based on these publicly conveyed hierarchies.

These experiences show that solidarity, empowerment, and healing through online counterpublic spaces are not experienced as something straightforward but always with risks for further harm (Loney-Howes et al. 2021; Salter 2013; Wood, Rose, and Thompson 2019). How making the online disclosures leads to a sense of dissatisfaction and further injustice is underlined in the following quotations:

> It stole from my life, from my time … This man is doing whatever he wants … This is indeed a very big injustice. (Deniz)

> The sense of justice? My answer to this question is not so positive … He did not withdraw; he did not think about looking into what he might have done … In fact, he recently translated

> a book about feminism . . . I tried to tell people something, the things I talked about. Were they so worthless? (Idil)

Here, it is important to note that our participants had mixed feelings about the online disclosures. While they stated that they regretted their disclosure, in other anecdotes, they discussed how lucky they were to be surrounded by supportive feminist allies. Hence, our interview with them was a journey towards their experiences, an introspection and maybe a look from outside, which they questioned as they talked with us whether this journey was empowering or discouraging for them:

> Sometimes I regret it, but then I say, "No, it was something that had to be done." But I am ambivalent, and I'm questioning whether it was worth it or not . . . because . . . all the mental burden, it all exploded after the disclosure. (Sevda)

The participants sought to weigh up the trade-offs of the disclosure for themselves and answer the question of what it took from them and what it provided. This question also led them to think about their positionality in the process. In doing so, they talked about the intersectionality and commented on how things would have been different if they were, or were not, who they are:

> What if I were a student who was sexually assaulted, and let's say I witnessed this process on Twitter? I would probably feel afraid. I do not know whether making the disclosure turns it into an opportunity for others or it becomes something like, "oh my gosh, look at the things happened to her" . . . I experienced this despite all the resources I had, so what will people do? I feel hopeless when I think about this.

This quotation conveys a significant meaning as it shows that online disclosure is a privilege some women can afford, but others cannot, which restricts the transformative potential of these acts (Loney-Howes et al. 2021). Research in Turkey shows that disclosing gender-based violence is a "high-cost" act (Ergöçmen, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, and Jansen 2013; Yalcinoz-Ucan 2022). Ergöçmen, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, and Jansen (2013), for example, demonstrated that only 8.4% of women who have been subjected to violence by their partners sought help from formal institutions. Women with no individual income, with low levels of education, and living in rural areas and working-class households were illustrated as less likely to disclose and seek help (Ergöçmen, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, and Jansen 2013). This relates to the fact that disclosing violence does not straightforwardly enable women to find support and resources; in contrast, studies show that many women who disclosed their experiences to formal services (mainly the police) or their informal networks (families and friends) could not get the help they needed and, furthermore, encountered multiple barriers jeopardising their safety (Yalcinoz-Ucan 2022). Although digital disclosures would bring opportunities for women to get recognition for their experiences and find support, our study addresses that, similar to offline disclosures, there may be inevitable trade-offs of and barriers to disclosing online, particularly for those with fewer social and material resources. Having limited or no access to digital technologies is another related factor making digital disclosure not a possible choice for many women. It explains why feminist digital activism is still a context that predominantly involves urban, educated women and mostly lacks marginalised voices in Turkey and anywhere around the world (Anika and Marganski 2020; Loney-Howes et al. 2021; Salter 2013).

Limitations and implications for further research

The current study contributes to the broader research literature on digital feminist activism by providing an in-depth perspective on online disclosure of gender-based violence regarding its role in creating and reinforcing networked feminist counterpublics. However, it also has limitations. First, our study is based on a small sample size due to the limitations of the participant recruitment process. This creates challenges to drawing generalizable conclusions from the findings. Another related limitation is that as all participants were educated women living in urban settings, the representativeness of the study for women living with fewer social and material resources (i.e., less educated, rural, and/or poor women) is restricted. This limitation also creates questions regarding the accessibility of networked counterpublics for women who live in less privileged circumstances and the representation of their voices in digital feminist activism efforts.

These limitations primarily highlight a need for further qualitative studies with larger sample sizes and more diverse populations on the use of online spaces to disclose gender-based violence and feminist activism in Turkey. This would particularly allow for a better understanding of how women from different socioeconomic backgrounds and with diverse identities participate in online discussions on the issues around gender inequalities and gender-based violence. It is also crucial to investigate potential barriers to such online participation, the risks of using online platforms for disclosing personal experiences of violence, and how such risks can be mitigated.

Concluding comments

Although we acknowledge that the political and societal context is primary in determining the nature of online disclosures (Anika and Marganski 2020), we illustrated that the participants' experiences in our study mostly reaffirm disclosure practices situated in North American and European contexts. This similarity may be partly explained by the societal impact of the long-established feminist mobilisations in Turkey and large-scale socio-demographic transformations towards urbanisation and industrialisation since 1950s (Yeşim Arat 2008), which both directly and indirectly lead to "westernised" societal dynamics. However, these modernisation efforts were mainly available to a limited demographic profile—to people from urban middle-class families and having opportunities to access higher education. Similarly, our participants also inherited some of these privileges. We argue that these opportunities provided them with resources and skills to demand a voice and exercise agency to disclose their experiences and ask for support. Therefore, this points out the "non-inclusivity" of digital spaces (Narayanamoorthy Nanditha 2022), primarily for the lower socioeconomic profile of women in Turkey.

However, while underscoring urban, educated women´s "privileges" to "speak up," we should also acknowledge that, under the highly restrictive regime in Turkey, speaking up against inequalities and injustices are getting less affordable for many citizens, regardless of their social status. In 2022, for instance, new legislation has been introduced, enabling enhanced state surveillance and control of social media and prosecution of social media users (Aslı Aydıntaşbaş 2022). The new law creates the legal ground for the ongoing efforts by the state in silencing and criminalising oppositional groups, including feminist and anti-violence advocates, among many others. It also benefits online anti-feminist

mobilisation in the form of legitimised "networked misogyny" (Eslen-Ziya 2022). Thus, while the experiences of online disclosures that the participants in our study shared with us are quite similar to the women´s experiences in the European and North American contexts, these also uniquely reflect the very political context in Turkey: strong feminist mobilisations (Şener 2021; Göker 2019) and a political backlash against gender equalities (Ogan and Baş 2020). According to Deniz Kandiyot (2016), the latter, in fact, works as a masculinity restoration, a struggle to resist the collective feminist agency. It also reflects the unique circumstances where our participants experience privileges and oppression simultaneously (Iris Cardenas 2023). While taking part in an empowering collective feminist agency through online disclosures, they nevertheless encounter strong anti-gender resistance, creating additional risks to their safety.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the women who shared their experiences with us. This research would not have been possible without their input.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan is a Marie Curie postdoctoral fellow at the University of Stavanger, Norway. Her project investigates the transformative use of digital technologies in the context of gender-based violence and immigration. She previously worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Waterloo, Canada and holds a Ph.D. from Bogazici University, Turkey.

Hande Eslen-Ziya is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Stavanger, Norway. She has an established interest in gender inequalities and social activism, and currently working on how right-wing ideologies by creating troll-science discourses oppose the scientific facts and gender theory. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland.

ORCID

Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8335-6779
Hande Eslen-Ziya http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7113-6771

References

Ahmed, Sara. 2017. June 30. https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/06/30/no/

Alsahi, Huda. 2018. "The Twitter Campaign to End the Male Guardianship System in Saudi Arabia." *Journal of Arabian Studies* 8 (2): 298–318. doi:10.1080/21534764.2018.1556871.

Anika, Gjika, and Alison J. Marganski. 2020. "Silent Voices, Hidden Stories: A Review of Sexual Assault (Non)disclosure Literature, Emerging Issues, and Call to Action." *International Journal for Crime, Justice & Social Democracy* 9 (4): 163–176. doi:10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i4.1439.

Arat, Yeşim. 2008. "Contestation and Collaboration: Women's Struggles for Empowerment in Turkey." In *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, edited by Reşat Kasaba, 388–418. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aydıntaşbaş, Aslı. 2022, "Turkey´s New Media Law is Bad News – but Don´t Report It." https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/10/18/turkeys-new-media-law-is-bad-news-but-dont-report-it/

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2012. "Thematic Analysis." In APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, *Vol*. 2. Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological, edited by Harris Cooper, Paul Camic, Kenneth Sher, Abigail T. Panter, Debra Long, and David Rindskopf, 57–71. American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/13620-004.

Cardenas, Iris. 2023. "Advancing Intersectionality Approaches in Intimate Partner Violence Research: A Social Justice Approach." *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 32 (1): 1–11. doi:10.1080/15313204.2020.1855494.

Chowdhury, Rashaam, and Bianca Fileborn. 2020. "Break the Silence Bangladesh: Examining Everyday Experiences of Sexual Violence Through Online Activism." *Women's Studies International Forum* 81: 102379. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2020.102379.

Clark, Rosemary. 2016. "'Hope in a hashtag': The Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed." *Feminist Media Studies* 16 (5): 788–804. doi:10.1080/14680777.2016.1138235.

Ekal, Berna. 2017. "Collaboration Gone Awry: The Formation of Women's Shelters as Public Institutions in Turkey." *Mediterranean Politics* 24 (3): 320–337. doi:10.1080/13629395.2017.1398904.

Eltantawy, Nahed, and Julie B. Wiest. 2011. "The Arab Spring | Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory." *International Journal of Communication* 5 (18). Accessed January 14, 2022. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1242.

Ergöçmen, B. Akadlı, İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, and Henrica A. F. M. Jansen. 2013. "Intimate Partner Violence and the Relation Between Help-Seeking Behavior and the Severity and Frequency of Physical Violence Among Women in Turkey." *Violence Against Women* 19 (9): 1151–1174. doi:10.1177/1077801213498474.

Eslen-Ziya, Hande. 2022. "Establishing Networked Misogyny as a Counter Movement: The Analysis of the Online Anti-Istanbul Convention Presence." *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 28 (6): 1737–1753. doi:10.1177/13548565221089218.

Fileborn, Bianca. 2014. "Online Activism and Street Harassment: Digital Justice or Shouting into the Ether?" *Griffith Journal of Law & Human Dignity* 2 (1): 32–51. https://griffithlawjournal.org/index.php/gjlhd/article/view/569/530 .

Fileborn, Bianca. 2019. "Naming the Unspeakable Harm of Street Harassment: A Survey-Based Examination of Disclosure Practices." *Violence Against Women* 25 (2): 223–248. doi:10.1177/1077801218768709.

Fotopoulou, Aristea. 2016. *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks: Between Empowerment and Vulnerability*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. doi:10.1057/978-1-137-50471-5.

Fraser, Nancy. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 109–142. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gleeson, Jessamy, and Breanan Turner. 2019. "Online Feminist Activism as Performative Consciousness-Raising: A #metoo Case Study." In *#metoo and the Politics of Social Change*, edited by Bianca Fileborn and Rachel Loney-Howes, 53–69. Cham: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-15213-0_4.

Göker, G. Zeynep. 2019. "Memories, Stories and Deliberation: Digital Sisterhood on Feminist Websites in Turkey." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 26 (3): 313–328. doi:10.1177/1350506819855414.

Goodman, A. Lisa., and Deborah Epstein. 2008. *Listening to Battered Women: A Survivor-Centered Approach to Advocacy, Mental Health, and Justice*. American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/11651-000.

Grieve, Margaret. 2021. *Turkey's Withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention: A Step Backward for Women's Human Rights*. https://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/1644/turkey_step_back_final.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Gundersen, Kristin, and Kristen Zaleski. 2021. "Posting the Story of Your Sexual Assault Online: A Phenomenological Study of the Aftermath." *Feminist Media Studies* 21 (5): 840–852. doi:10.1080/14680777.2019.1706605.

Ikizer, Elif G., Nairan Ramírez-Esparza, and Ryan L. Boyd. 2019. "#sendeanlat (#tellyourstory): Text Analyses of Tweets About Sexual Assault Experiences." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 16 (4): 463–475. doi:10.1007/s13178-018-0358-5.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. 2016. "Locating the Politics of Gender: Patriarchy, Neo-Liberal Governance and Violence in Turkey." *Research & Policy on Turkey* 1 (2): 103–118. doi:10.1080/23760818.2016.1201242.

Lalonde, Dianne, Linda Baker, Robert Nonomura, and Jassamine Tabibi. 2020. "Trauma- and Violence-Informed Interview Strategies in Work with Survivors of Gender-Based Violence." *Learning Network* (32). Accessed 21 August, 2022. https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-32/Newsletter_Issue_32.pdf

Lang, Heather. 2019. "#metoo: A Case Study in Re-Embodying Information." *Computers and Composition* 53: 9–20. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2019.05.001.

Loney-Howes, Rachel. 2018. "Shifting the Rape Script: 'Coming Out' Online as a Rape victim." Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 39 (2): 26–57. doi:10.5250/fronjwomestud.39.2.0026.

Loney-Howes, Rachel. 2020. *Online Anti-Rape Activism: Exploring the Politics of the Personal in the Age of Digital Media*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited. doi:10.1108/9781838674397.

Loney-Howes, Rachel, Kaitlynn Mendes, Diana Fernández Romero, Bianca Fileborn, and Sonia Núñez Puente. 2021. "Digital Footprints of #metoo." *Feminist Media Studies* 22 (6): 1345–1362. doi:10.1080/14680777.2021.1886142.

Mendes, Kaitlynn, and Jessica Ringrose. 2019. "Digital Feminist Activism: #metoo and the Everyday Experiences of Challenging Rape Culture." In #MeToo and the Politics of Social Change, edited by Bianca Fileborn and Rachel Loney-Howes, 37–51. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-15213-0_3.

Mendes, Kaitlynn, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalynn Keller. 2018. "#metoo and the Promise and Pitfalls of Challenging Rape Culture Through Digital Feminist Activism." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25 (2): 236–246. doi:10.1177/1350506818765318.

Mendes, Kaitlynn, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalynn Keller. 2019. *Digital Feminist Activism: Girls and Women Fight Back Against Rape Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nanditha, Narayanamoorthy. 2022. "Exclusion in #metoo India: Rethinking Inclusivity and Intersectionality in Indian Digital Feminist Movements." *Feminist Media Studies* 22 (7): 1673–1694. doi:10.1080/14680777.2021.1913432.

Ogan, Christine L., and Özen Baş. 2020. "Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Turkey: Use of Social Media in the Struggle Surrounding Violence Against Turkish Women." *International Journal of Communication* 14: 5556–5574. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/12035/3262 .

O'Neill, Tully. 2018. "'Today I speak': Exploring How Victim-Survivors Use Reddit." *International Journal for Crime, Justice & Social Democracy* 7 (1): 44–59. doi:10.5204/ijcjsd.v7i1.402.

Powell, Anastasia. 2015. "Seeking Rape Justice: Formal and Informal Responses to Sexual Violence Through Technosocial Counter-Publics." *Theoretical Criminology* 19 (4): 571–588. doi:10.1177/1362480615576271.

Salter, Michael. 2013. "Justice and Revenge in Online Counter-Publics: Emerging Responses to Sexual Violence in the Age of Social Media." *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal* 9 (3): 225–242. doi:10.1177/1741659013493918.

SCF (Stockholm Center for Freedom). 2022. "Turkish Authorities Start Legal Process to Close Down the We Will Stop Femicide Platform." April 13. https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-authorities-start-legal-process-to-close-down-the-we-will-stop-femicide-platform/

Şener, Gülüm. 2021. "Digital Feminist Activism in Turkey." *Media London School of Economics and Political Science Working Paper Series*. https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/working-paper-series/WP67.pdf

Şen, Fulya, and Halime Kök. 2017. "Sosyal medya ve feminist aktivizm: Türkiye'deki feminist gruplarin aktivizm biçimleri." *Atatürk İletişim Dergisi* 13: 73–86. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ataniiletisim/issue/33999/359456.

Serisier, Tanya. 2018. *Speaking Out: Feminism, Rape, and Narrative Politics*. London: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-98669-2.

Shirky, Clay. 2011. "The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change." *Foreign Affairs* 90 (1): 28–41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25800379.

Toktaş, Şule, and Çağla Diner. 2015. "Shelters for Women Survivors of Domestic Violence: A View from Turkey." *Women's Studies* 44 (5): 611–634. doi:10.1080/00497878.2015.1036158.

Trott, Verity. 2020. "Networked Feminism: Counterpublics and the Intersectional Issues Of# MeToo." *Feminist Media Studies* 21 (7): 1125–1142. doi:10.1080/14680777.2020.1718176.

Tuzcu, Pınar. 2016. "Allow Access to Location?: Digital Feminist Geographies." *Feminist Media Studies* 16 (1): 150–163. doi:10.1080/14680777.2015.1093153.

Ulukaya, Ceyda, and Busra Yalcinoz-Ucan. 2023. "Femicide in Turkey." In *The Routledge International Handbook of Femicide and Feminicide*, edited by Myrna Dawson and Saide Mobayed Vega, 264–277. New York: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781003202332-28.

Wood, Mark, Evelyn Rose, and Chrissy Thompson. 2019. "Viral Justice? Online Justice-Seeking, Intimate Partner Violence and Affective Contagion." *Theoretical Criminology* 23 (3): 375–393. doi:10.1177/1362480617750507.

Yalcinoz-Ucan, Busra. 2022. "Seeking Safety from Male Partner Violence in Turkey: Toward a Context-Informed Perspective on Women's Decisions and Actions." *Feminism & Psychology* 32 (4): 501–519. doi:10.1177/09593535221085497.

Yalcinoz-Ucan, Busra, and Hande Eslen-Ziya. 2023. "Online Disclosure, a Mechanism for Seeking Informal Justice?" *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal* : doi:10.1177/17416590231153077.