



KADİR HAS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
PROGRAM OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
PORTRAIT OF AN AFTERMATH
FROM SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES**

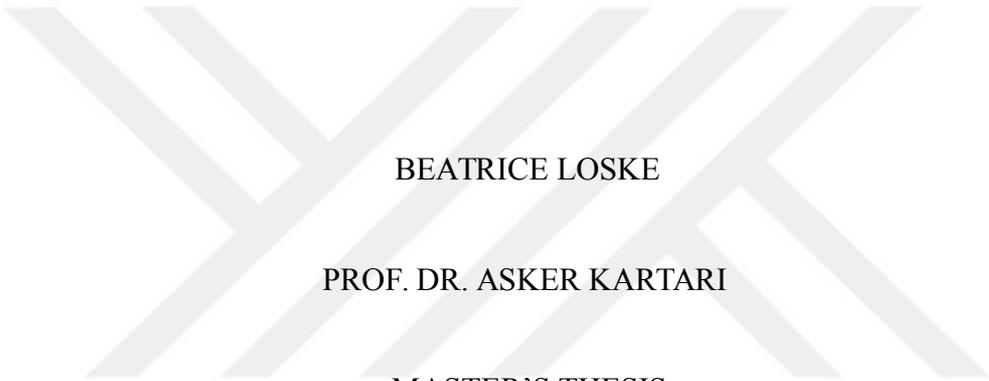
BEATRICE LOSKE

PROF. DR. ASKER KARTARI

MASTER'S THESIS

ISTANBUL, MAY, 2019

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MASTER'S THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Kadir Has University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in the Program of
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

ISTANBUL, MAY, 2019

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METHODS OF DISSEMINATION

I, BEATRICE LOSKE, hereby declare that;

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- I have followed "Kadir Has University Academic Ethics Principles" prepared in accordance with the "The Council of Higher Education's Ethical Conduct Principles"

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BEATRICE LOSKE



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KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: PORTRAIT OF AN AFTERMATH FROM SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES** prepared by BEATRICE LOSKE has been judged to be successful at the defense exam held on **20th of May 2019** and accepted by our jury as **MASTER'S THESIS**.

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SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: PORTRAIT
OF AN AFTERMATH FROM SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES

ABSTRACT

How the aftermath and post-movement was shaped in the case of Gezi will be the focus on the following research report. This research paper pursues questions regarding perceptions and descriptions of the Gezi aftermath in respect of changes, effects and personal approaches to them. Post-protest circumstances will be examined from subjective and inter-subjective perspectives. The field of research regards social and political movements with a focus on the consequences, the aftermath. It will be examined how individuals deal and cope with changing conditions as result from the movement.

The research was conducted with open, narrative interviews which I examined with content analysis to reveal the findings from the material. Interview sessions were done in Istanbul and Berlin. In this way, I ensured various perspectives on the thematic frame. Furthermore, I wrote a field diary, took photographs and had informal conversation regarding my research topic. My interviewees belong to the group of artists, activists, academicians and protagonists that are related directly or indirectly to Gezi.

The focus of the results are essences and essentials originating from Gezi movement as point of reference. Beyond that, psychological aspects such as awareness, imbalance, strength and preservation are of importance. The research delineates an aggravating trajectory of the post-movement phase.

Keywords: Creative Leeways, Post-Movement, Aftermath of Gezi, Preservation, Psychological Aspects, Coping Mechanism

21. YÜZYILDA TOPLUMSAL HAREKETLER: KİŞİSEL BAKIŞ AÇILARINDAN SONUCUN PORTRESİ

ÖZET

Gezi olaylarının ve hareketin sonrasının nasıl şekillendiği aşağıdaki araştırmanın odak noktasını oluşturacaktır. Bu araştırma tezinde Gezi sonrasında meydana gelen değişiklikler, etkiler ve kişisel yaklaşımlarla ilgili algıların ve açıklamaların soruları takip edilecektir. Protesto sonrası oluşan koşullar öznel ve öznelarası perspektiflerden incelenecektir. Araştırma alanı sosyal ve politik hareketlerin sonuçlarına ve sonrasına odaklanmaktadır. Hareketten kaynaklanan değişen koşullarla bireylerin nasıl başa çıktıkları ve bu koşulların üstesinden nasıl geldikleri incelenecektir.

Araştırma, materyalden elde edilen bulguları ortaya çıkarmak için içerik analiziyle incelediğim açık ve anlatıcı röportajlarıyla gerçekleştirildi. Görüşmeler İstanbul ve Berlin’de tamamlandı. Bu şekilde tematik çerçevede çeşitli bakış açıları sağladım.

Ayrıca, bir saha günlüğü tuttum, fotoğraflar çektim ve araştırma konusuyla ilgili gayri resmi bir söyleşi yaptım. Görüşme yaptığım kişiler doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak Gezi ile ilgilenen sanatçılar, aktivistler, akademisyenler ve anlatıcılardan oluşan bir gruba ait olan kimselerdir.

Sonuçların odağı, Gezi hareketinden referans olarak ele aldığım öze ve esasa dayanmaktadır. Bunun ötesinde, farkındalık, denge eksikliği, güç ve koruma gibi psikolojik bakış açıları önemlidir. Bu araştırma, hareket sonrası oluşan ağırlaştırıcı bir yörüngeyi betimlemektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yaratıcı Hareketler, Hareket Sonrası, Gezi Sonrası, Koruma, Psikolojik Bakış Açıları, Başa Çıkma Mekanizması

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Master's thesis has been a long process and ongoing project for the past two years. Finally there is a product, a text which contains parts of the collection that I did in Istanbul and Berlin. I had good words and company on that way, impulses and thoughts that kept me moving on. Therefore I would like to give thanks and express my appreciation for this life experience.

Thanks belongs to my supervisors PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel and Prof. Dr. Asker Kartarı, to Asst. Prof. Dr. Irem Inceođlu and Dr. Ulrike Flader for being support in the very beginning of the whole research process.

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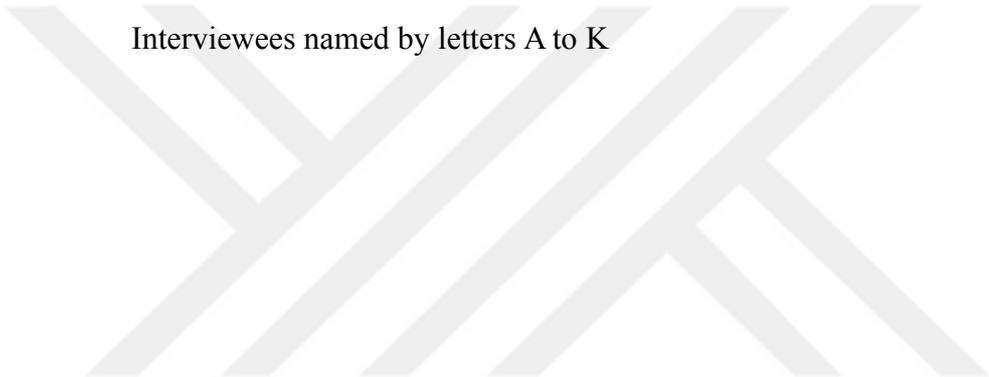
LIST OF SYMBOLS / ABBREVIATIONS

GP Governing Party

Edž Abbreviation for president's name

MP Memory Protocol

Interviewees named by letters A to K



1. INTRODUCTION

When observing social dynamics and societies around the world we will always be able to find problematic issues, controversies, social injustices and a lot more. Not only abroad, but also in our environment. Recognising that a situation begins to worsen and aggrieve, this process requests people's abilities and resources to act on it. There are several ways and approaches to air one's grievances. While especially in the last decade on a global perspective there have been a significant number of protests, social and political movements and Turkey's Gezi resistance is part of it.

Several dynamics and smaller protest experiences in 2013 proceeded to culminate at the end of May and turn into an almost three weeks ongoing protest and occupation in the Gezi park, in the centre of the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul. “A big thing was blossoming suddenly” which is a comment by one of the interviewees of the research, indicating the surprise, empowerment and strength that became diffused within the movement.

Politicking can be a genuine and inventive reaction and answer to years of political dictation and patronization. Initiating in one place, until the end of September 2013 the country witnessed and experienced more than 5000 protests in 79 out of 81 provinces, thousands of people were injured and arrested (Kartarı 2015; Yücel 2014).

Urban spaces are becoming the centres for arguing on power and dominance, pushing the citizens needs and interests aside for opening the ways to neo-liberalism and capitalism. It is expected from political side that the society constantly arranges with changing policies and life conditions. But sometimes it reaches too far and at a certain point opponents are voicing resistance. It is enough!

Every political and social movement is complex and multi-layered and so is Gezi. Further than the visible repercussions, various aspects, dynamics and actions as part of the resistance activities, have an impact on society. Effects in a variety and diversity of manners are always the inevitable consequence, often happening without the chance of active intervention or influence on them. How the aftermath and post-movement was shaped in the case of Gezi will be the focus on the following research report.

This research paper pursues questions regarding perceptions and descriptions of the Gezi aftermath in respect of changes, effects and personal approaches to them. Post-

protest circumstances will be examined from subjective and inter-subjective perspectives.

The first chapter can be understood as introductory. It includes the state of research, aim and relevance of the research and the key concepts.

Within the presentation and elucidation of the research in chapter two, there are several paragraphs which illustrate the developing process and trajectory of the research phase. These include: Initial Steps into the Research, Composition of the Research which consists of – creating Access and Moving within the Field, Decisions which is about – Method Design and Sample, and in the end, Reflect on my Research Position.

Within the research report there is the chapter of analysis and interpretation, the main text in which the material and the findings are revealed. According to the thematic focus a differentiation was made, although the subjects are coherent and interwoven with each other. In order to make it more comprehensive key terms were used as titles.

There is a brief introductory section which is followed by the chapters as such: Awareness, Contingency, Disenchantment, Conflictual Atmosphere, Imbalance and Preservation and Strength. The entire report closes with a conclusion, prospect and subsumption.

1.1 CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

This introductory chapter provides an illustration about the existing material, which has been supportive and informative in a way to read Gezi and go beyond the event itself. Articles, essays, monographs and anthologies included in this overview offer varying thematic focal points. They are ranging in between captures of momentary valuation, deep thought and complex discussions.

Each of them, as part of the description of the state of research, is inspiration and material which can be included within the analysis and interpretation, interwoven with own findings and the textual collage of interviewees voices.

To make this an introduction into the thesis background, aim and relevance will be described and presented, where the research is set and which kind of key thoughts have had influence in creating this certain frame. Within the part of key concepts it shall be ensured to have comprehensive and transparent formulations as preparation and

reference for the presentation of results.

A plethora of material has been written around the thinking and analysis of the Gezi incident. Experience-based knowledge's have been carried together in articles, books, academic works, photography, exhibitions, speeches and films. All this produced different forms of documentation, memory and discussion which found their expression in textual, literary and visual culture.

It becomes apparent that the focus in these works is set on the event itself. Used as a point of beginning, several aspects have been picked out to do research on. Scholars used the material of documentation and developed it further into a frame of analysis and contextualisation. This created an academic space to study and read the complexities of the movement, examining them from various disciplinary perspectives and backgrounds. As examples: political science, social anthropology, art, psychology, media and communication studies, cultural studies and even more.

The publications included in this paper do all deal in a certain way with the aftermath of Gezi, discussing several perspectives and subjects. There are two German publishings who took for their book title main verbal symbolisms representative for the resistance movement. 'Çapulcu' the name imposed on them by the government and 'Taksim is everywhere', one of the slogans of the resistance.

Both books provide a collection of various interview material, offering the ground to different voices of impressions and thoughts on Gezi. The talks and interviews have been conducted in the immediate subsequent period in 2013. Both were published then in spring 2014, in February and March.

“Çapulcu. The Gezi-Park-Movement and New Protests in Turkey” was written by Tayfun Guttstadt. This book offers lots of information about the political scene in Turkey with its developments in the recent past. Therefore it is also shaping the present situation. It articulates the atmosphere and condition of the Turkish society in a very young post-movement time. This momentary capture expresses a vicissitude in-between optimism, hope, pure rational analysis and slightly beginning resignation. Specific for positive judgement is the implicit conviction in the continuation of actions, in the sense of, we see our potential, the future is uncertain and we will make it, for sure.

In contrast to these positive voices in the preface it is written: “Nowadays the regimen

of [the governing party]¹ seems inviolable and is criticised from all sides as repressive, even fascist [...].” It is certain that this was different in the past, when people perceived them “as the power which could finish the rule of the military and could democratise the country.”² There are quotes in the book that provide a far-sighted perspective and put it straight, such as:

“a tapered struggle for power [...] Edg³ nurtures already for a long time a propensity for a one-man-leadership. [...] wanted to bring in a presidential system, in which all powers are hold in his hand. Gezi prevented this happening, that was the most important aspect of Gezi [...] and that rings were run around him. [...]” (article in *Evrensel* quoted in Guttstadt 2014: p.39)

The book is posing the question: What is now and how do we see what recently happened as a resistance-movement? While being on this journalistic journey a great amount of perspectives and opinions crossed the author’s way. Interviewees reflected upon their own analyses, related single facts to the more general view of politics, history and society in Turkey.

The interview material is of importance because it is supportive to identify coherences that outlive the post-movement time while undergoing transformative processes. There is a collection of quotes which will help to draw comparisons and to trace the progress of effects and consequences over time. It makes up information which will consolidate own findings in the analysis.

“Taksim is Everywhere. The Gezi Movement and the Future of Turkey” was written by Deniz Yücel. In sixteen chapters with varying headlines, the report is moving and immersing into rich and detailed information on people, specific situations, urban contexts and social and political background facts of the present and the past.

The narratives develop organically; they connect and put coherences together. They are set into a greater frame of political and social developments in specific local, time and historical contexts.

Problematic and conflict-laden issues are put straight, integrated as common theme/guiding thread which underlines the critical status of uncertainty, intimidation

1 Abbreviation (abbr.) GP or gp for governing party to avoid the use of the proper name

2 Tayfun Guttstadt: „Gezi und die Liebe zur Freiheit – ein Vorwort“ p.9: translation B.L.

3 Abbreviation for presidents name

and arbitrariness. The total picture imparted consists of pluralistic realities, perspectives and impressions. So interviewees are voicing their thoughts and opinions, not only on Gezi, but within a wide scope. They find words for state and social structures and they underline and point out which effects and influences they had and have on their personal sphere of living, on being educated and accepted or not by the society. The interviewees explain what kind of challenges and obstacles they face because of violent, ignorant habits and practices in their direct environment of society and official institutions. Capturing the impressions of a transition period, this book manages to connect and relate key descriptions of the past with profound thinking on the state of being in contemporary Turkey.

Güneş Koç and Harun Aksu are the editors of a publication (2015) named “Another Brick in the Barricade: the Gezi Resistance and its Aftermath”. This collective volume consists of a fourteen essays comprising format. Dividing the writings regarding their different focus and content frame, it's the following: Political Practices and Social Impact, Theoretical Challenges, An Extended Analysis: Historical, Structural and Economical Dimensions and Linking with Global Uprisings. While going through the material the impression is that we are dealing with a contextualisation done by scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds and therefore discussing and examining various perspectives and key subjects. There are some thematic priorities that are also of relevance for the analysis and interpretation of this research report.

Some essays are written within the scope of social practices and psychological aspects that were acted out and experienced during the protest event of Gezi, but do also play important part in daily life politics. Also the use of metaphors is an important aspect as it is effective (impactful) in different social contexts. They have symbolic character and reach from food (gathering) to the characteristics and manners of doing politics.

Leaving the frame of the event, the essays move in direction of a broader and more complex discussion regarding alternatives to authoritarianism. The authors are questioning the background that is shaping the current way of governing, the acted and verbalised attitudes towards a heterogeneous society that is facing and dealing with politically obliged limits. So basically as a subtle question this collection is asking in various ways in what kind of situation(s) people find themselves in, how the movement background and the current social and political state of being can be interpreted and

analysed in the contemporary context of 2015.

More recently published (2017) is the anthology "In the Aftermath of Gezi: From Social Movement to Social Change?" to which different scholars contributed. Introducing and explaining their focal point, Gezi as a liminal moment (Turners concept 1974) "whose symbolic meaning and political significance has shifted in the years that have passed since the events, and whose long-term historical implications remain to be revealed." (Hemer, Persson 2017: 2)

Having this anthology as a product of a conference in Istanbul in May 2015 the aim is to add substantially to already existing publications on Gezi and its aftermath (2017: 3). Being aware and taking into consideration the "dramatic political developments" (4) in Turkey in 2015 and 2016, the team of editors and contributing scholars decided to revise the analyses "in the light of the current events" (ibid). In eleven chapters a variety of perspectives, themes and approaches are presented and discussed (10). All essays and texts offer differing gazes to read and understand the event itself and as such the various forms of its aftermath (ibid).

A few papers and essays will be introduced as well as part of the state of research. The first one is titled "'Protest Publics" in Egypt and Turkey from 2011 till Present Days: Assessment of Impact on Political Changes' (2016). The authors Alexander Anufriev and Dmitry Zaytsev open up a discussion about the coherences of protest publics, protest movements and its effects and impacts on the mechanisms of political change.

A diversifying amount of theory approaches is discussed in their theoretical framework. As a point of reference they understand and classify political changes as non-linear. If change happens after protest and raising actions for discontent and disagreement, several factors influence them, define their upcoming and what is characteristic for them. Political changes are driven by complex mechanisms.

„The Gezi Resistance and its Aftermath: a radical democratic Opportunity?" with the subtitle "The Spirit of Gezi continues to animate Turkish Politics" written by Irem Inceoğlu (2014) depicts chronologically the first year of the aftermath. Within her work she draws attention and conclusions around direct developments and outcomes that characterise this period. Numerous activities dominating the social sphere in post-movement times are analysed and critically examined. Very much of interest are the actions within engagement of democratic and political matter, keeping people involved

and make them use very creative strategies. It offers a deep insight how people continued life and how they interacted with immediate effects and outcomes when their impact was still unknown and open.

Shifting the view towards youth activism, political participation and civil society organisations, the research and resulting report titled 'Youth activists and *occupygezi*: Patterns of social Change in public Policy and in civic and political Activism in Turkey' is providing an in depth analysis of the meaning and upcoming effects of the Gezi movement. Important to note is the focus on the young generation and it is asked which opportunities and options of informal and unconventional political engagement have been brought on the way. While this is discussed and described from their research material of 39 interviews the scholars Cristiano Bee and Stavroula Chrona observe carefully the social and political context of this aftermath period 2015/16 and include these sharp conclusions in their paper.

The realm of the Gezi movement in the context of research works can be understood as a continuation of studying and writing on protest behaviour, social change and political acting. Coming from the background of social movement studies the scholar works presented in the abstract here do push tight boundaries of theory aside. They move for more interdisciplinary approaches while presenting their discoveries, arguments and research findings following the input they received in inspiring and fruitful interview sessions.

Coming to the last article included in this chapter, it has to be highlighted that the reading of this literature resulted in the intention to use the existing material for the own report in order to corroborate the analysis. The variety of argumentation feels impressive compared to own experiences in the field. What can be noticed as well is that the presented works will be great support in combination with the own interview material.

'Negotiating 'the Political': a closer look at the Components of young People's Politics emerging from the Gezi Protests' is an article which calls for rethinking the ambient of 'the political', widens the understanding of it by taking experiences of Turkish youth and knowledge gained from in-depth interviews into consideration.

Pınar Gümüş's text shifts for breaking with dualism and narrow notions which are outdated. There is a need to overcome them to make up space for far more complex

lived realities which are redefining the political. Its new characteristics are presented in four main passages, divided in categories as such: awareness, everyday life, values and politics as doing. The political with variable concepts and perspectives is discussed in the sense of options for social change, transformation, creation of practices and more.

To sum this up it is noteworthy to tell that the researches done on the aftermath of Gezi by now are analysing a wide range of aspects and factors that shape this period of impact and effects. The collected knowledge is receiving more meaningfulness by putting it in the network; interweaving structure connects these scholar works.

While reading the article by Pınar Gümüş I noticed how much input the here presented researches offered. They point out significances for developments and processes, examine carefully and put their findings in sharp, clear words and precise descriptions of observations. Society in this state of transformation⁴ is offering much material for actual and future learning.

And this is what scholars and their texts offer, to learn, think and draw conclusions, because their researches and findings refer and interrelate thematically to each other. It makes it even more fascinating because the small pieces and facts form a broader image of complexities in the Gezi post-movement. Like a discovery each article brings up additional findings and arguments.

1.2 AIM AND RELEVANCE OF MY OWN RESEARCH

As years were passing since Gezi, several key incidents⁵ started to have deep impact and influence on the Turkish society and politics. What began after the first general election the 7th of June 2015 proceeds until today (Yücel 2014: 7). The situation in here and now consists of a political permanent crisis and a division of the society (ibid).

4 State of transformation is the momentum and is the process that follows after the active movement and resistance (in the example of Gezi). Significant for this phase is the great uncertainty that pushes individuals to remain passive or to become constitutive, active. Perceptions might describe it as a strong feeling of being in-between. The range of options is far and wide and to take decisions is uneasy because nobody knows. The state of transformation is the great unknown.

5 To enumerate, these are the following: the bombings and bomb attacks starting in summer 2015, the war zone in south-east of Turkey, the stop of the peace negotiations with the Kurdish representatives, the coup attempt in July 2016, the long lasting state of emergency, reinforcing economic crisis, the referendum for a presidential system in April 2017, the nationwide elections in June 2018, the immense denunciation of people being terrorists, part of the Gülen plot, wave of firing from their jobs (an act of cleansing), arrests of journalists, academicians, activists, average people, criminal charges, court cases..

Being myself a witness of these incidents while I was temporarily living⁶ in Istanbul, it made me question how this strong political and social turn was possible within a period of only a few years that passed since the uprising.

I noticed how those political key moments caused reaction and awareness for me as an individual and in the position of preparing my research. During my stays in Istanbul there was enough time to absorb and perceive my surrounding and social environment, follow what determined shared and common sorrows at that time, listen carefully to people's talks and comments.

So this experiential frame worked as a basis for my research, because it is shaping also my memory, opinion and attitude, the way I look at things, understand or question them. I can relate to certain phenomena as well out of my own perspective, with my own thoughts and conclusions about them. As this frame is constantly present, it also influenced how I met with people, the way we talked and what has been subject in our conversations.

Reading the material that already existed about Gezi and its related aftermath, it revealed a mosaic of voices, perspectives and facts. The papers were pointing to different interwoven and coherent structures which were influencing and shaping the post-movement conditions. By studying them, in this way scholars began to draw an initial trajectory of the post-movement and aftermath, which is open to be explored even more and consolidated with additional material and research findings.

As being opposed and target of verbal attacks from political side, as living and working in particular, sometimes precarious and conflictual conditions, I decided to focus on artists, activists and academicians to be the voices of my research. Attentively they perceive and interpret the dramatisation in contemporary Turkey.

Art and culture are still scopes that work on delicate issues and topics and refer to social criticism and critical perceptions and perspectives. They keep their position as being part of the discussion and contribute to discourse, even though the spaces for doing so are fewer now. Approaches of art work are diverse in regard of their ingenuity to continue. The places and spaces are provided and ensured for people, for socialising, voicing and articulating in times which request cautiousness and where articulation is censored and restricted.

6 September 2015 – beginning of November 2016; April 2017; February and June 2018

The aim was to investigate and to pursue the question where the emancipatory strength of the resistance has gone and meanwhile which structures, mechanisms and circumstances developed which led to the occurrence of a number of consequences and effects. This research report is aiming to differentiate and revise a static and dogmatic opinion about the Gezi aftermath. In the sense that nothing changed, that the movement in the end has not affected anything. This would be a comment which results in 'we put this aside, this resistance is not of importance any more, it didn't lead us anywhere'. There must be more than a simple conclusion of the resistance time. That's what the research is going after, what is the aim to find out.

In order to create a differentiated discussion and draw differentiated images how the aftermath and post-movement were shaped until now, the analysis and interpretation will combine arguments originating from the own research material and other scholar works. The aim is to corroborate the argumentation and to enrich and deepen the report. Research findings will be positioned beyond the existing, dominating media discourse. In this way the material and arguments can be elaborated and discussed in alternative manner.

13 KEY CONCEPTS

Before I started to write the analysis I had an extended period of reading and informing myself about several topics that were relating to the various aspects in my material. First of all I tried to understand what already exists on social movement research and if the academic writings do consider the topic of outcomes and aftermath. If so, it was of importance for me what they focused and emphasised on.

While searching the literature I came across social and political outcomes to describe and define what determined aftermath periods. Effects and consequences that are measurable therefore that they are visible, concrete and show their impact on specific spheres. But I would rather argue that there is more inherent to an aftermath period, already just out of the fact of its unpredictability.

As a basis from where I developed further the analysis and interpretation, there is Gezi as a social and political movement, the central point of reference. That's why I will first elucidate and expound which concepts have been background for working with the

material and thinking the relations and coherences.

Liminality is a concept which originates from the writing “rites of passage” by Arnold van Gennep (1909) (Neumann 2012). Liminal as a notion and expression refers to transition, being in a process of becoming (ibid). Describing with liminality a condition, Victor Turner characterised it “as existing betwixt and between socially recognised positions” (ibid). Relating a being of in-betweenness to the sphere of resistance, protest and social movements, it poses questions how an incident as such is perceived from interior and exterior. It can be connected to crossing boundaries, a crossover of unpredictable networks and cooperation and might provoke a rejective, ignorant reaction from political parties and politicians in charge.

If protesters do not get recognised from political side, if their demands remain repressed and publicly they are presented with ascribed, imposed criminalising identities, this results in the possibility that they are facing risk and danger by the social environment. For protagonists of resistances this signifies being forced into a position of “between categories” (ibid), lacking social acceptance and being exposed to threat, or even violence.

Conditions might worsen and aggrieve which put people in the position of being trapped and lead to state of impassivity (ibid). This can be the case when violence, verbal and enacted, becomes a political measure to inflame tensions, stir up hatred and fan fear in order to consolidate hegemony and surveillance. Resulting in politically drawn margins and boundaries (ibid).

Bjorn Thomassen who published in 2014 the volume “Liminality and the Modern: living through the in-between” takes liminality “as a key concept within social theory at large” (Swancutt 2018: 217). The concept connects and does suggest to classify liminality as a phenomenon which has become part of the ordinary, everyday life (218). Crises, uncertainties and turmoil do challenge the usual, customary structures and that's why it is argued that “liminality is a pivotal and yet commonplace experience in the modern world” (ibid).

The originating concept from van Gennep in “rites of passage” (1909) emphasised on understanding liminality “as a rupture or suspension of ordinary structures” which put individuals and collectives into the position to “invent new forms of actions and thought” out of necessity (De Rapper 2016: 174). “It is 'the loss of taken-for-granted

structures' (p.113)" (ibid). Contemporary social and political landscapes are shaped "by the widespread and permanent character of liminality: rupture and inventiveness becomes the norm" (ibid).

This is especially the case for states that do govern with restrictive and repressive measures which do ask peoples genuineness to establish and preserve creative leeways and open spaces in narrow political systems. Thomassen refers also to "political revolutions in terms of liminality" (175). States of exception as existing in protests, resistances and social, political movements are seen as "clear-cut liminal situations in large-scale settings' (p. 201)" which show similarity to rituals for the reason to reclaim and appropriate public spaces and "squares as their ritual stage' (p. 207)" (ibid).

It is argued that transformation, change and "periods of "transition"" should be recognised and reconsidered as "liminal phases in which individuals, in a recursive work between experience and thought, invent new forms of living together" (ibid).

"Van Gennep's perspective on the social experience of being in between states" (Neumann 2012) was further developed by Victor Turner. It was in the 1960s that "rites of passage" got rediscovered and found continuation in his work (De Rapper 2016: 174). Turner does argue for relating liminality "to various situations and in particular to those that constitute "social drama"" (ibid). These particular moments and periods of action do interrupt "the ordinary course of life", put it in standstill and simultaneously evoke individual resources for the exceptional state.

As social drama can be seen contemporary societies in which living "tensions, contradictions and transformations" has become part of the normal condition (Boland 2013). Social dramas and disputes take in there a chronic state (ibid). Thomassen (2010) argued that inherent to modernity are incidents and "acute social transformations such as revolutions, wars and other crises" (ibid). With its "significant and decisive meaning", impacting social and political events may lead to "long-term, continuous or permanent experience of liminality, an interminable transition" (ibid).

More convenient than the term revolution, contemporary societies do witness and experience the emergence of social and political movements (Foran 2019: 403), resistances, uprisings and protest. Their activism and actions consist of non-violent approaches and the attempt to "less hierarchical forms of participation" (401), creative repertoire that was also part of the Gezi experience in Turkey.

If today the term social and political movement is used people automatically associate dates, events, images and names with it. Memorising them means keeping their significance and highlight what collective action and activism contemporarily are able to create and put in motion. Social movement is one of the key notions in recent history, but as phenomenon they do exist for many centuries in which they were “struggling against repressive states advancing the interests of dominant classes” (Berberoglu 2019: 1). Main aim for the societies that act out in movements is “to bring about social change and transformations of society” (1). Finding a great number of reasons that led to the emergence of social movements in the history, there are two that have been predominantly: “*exploitation and oppression*” (3).

As a subject and field of studies social movements gained only marginal attention before the 1950s and 1960s (Peoples 2019: 17). It was then that events such as the civil rights movement and “the rise in social activism in the 1960s” made the academic field of social movements to be considered more seriously (ibid). Within this new recognition terms have been coined in order to give input for theories and theoretical approaches. It was Harald Blumer who termed “symbolic interactionism and argued that collective action, even that of crowds, should be understood as purposive, meaningful and potentially creative action” (Chesters & Welsh 2011: 5).

Another term of importance was 'Collective Behaviour' which “applied to the North American School of Social Movement Studies” (46). Focus of studying collective behaviour was the “understanding of the emergence and significance of social movements as agents of social change” (46). Theories were developed and forwarded within the aim “to help explain movement emergence, organization, and structure” (Peoples 2019: 17). Meanwhile the acknowledgement of social movements has taken them to the position to be considered “a legitimate form of (unconventional) politics and view their participants as rational actors who are seeking to address grievances through the means that are available to them” (also their associated activities) (30).

Focus aspects in definitions around the frame of social movements, resistance and protest are expression and voicing of dissent and demands, dynamics that create a coalition among diverse groups and individuals, repertoire of action and “challenge to power holders” (Tilly 1999: 260).

The term collective action does apply in Gezi to a composition and a mixture of

coordinated and instant, spontaneous impulses and reactions. Generally, “opposition tactics and strategies are a collection of individual choices” (Cunningham et al.: 2017: 593) depending on the individuals and groups participating who shape the character of the protest and resisting actions.

“[...] if we conceptualize resistance in the social sphere [...] we are dealing with resistance as a political phenomenon.” (Butler et al.: 2017: 7) In recent years there have been new movements of protest and resistance emerging, where the Gezi uprising belongs to, which were “commonly regarded as a reaction long overdue to totalitarian regimes and their infrastructures of oppression and control” (8).

Therefore resistance can be understood and described as a “viable option of political articulation” and as a “mode of intervention” which seeks and demands “to overcome situations of disadvantaged and disregard” (ibid).

2. INITIAL STEPS INTO THE RESEARCH

Beginning and defining what my field of research would be was a long process. It took a while to frame my subject which should range between art, activism and politics. I needed a concrete topic within this scope. Even though it was not yet detailed, I did two probation interviews in April 2017. The first one took place in Istanbul with an acquaintance that I recently got to know at that time. A guy who is in art and music surroundings and circles, interested in this transfer of political meaning, creative expression and artistic work. This was my first research interview ever which resulted in a pretty long memory protocol. I did not record, but I took notes.

This was again the case for a second probation interview in Berlin. Paper and pen and a two hours meeting with a lot of input and thoughts. Both encounters were still estimated as 'informal talks' for the reason of my own insecurity and the feeling of discomfort with the position of being a researcher and going into the field. I didn't feel prepared and felt the need to have more background knowledge before conducting 'real' interviews. I was concerned not to understand, not to have comprehension about the points the interviewees would make.

Later on I understood to interpret and see the research process as a learning process in which I will come across different encounters and they will give me input, hints and impulses. Learning meant in this setting to deal with the information out of the context. In the end this is how I perceived moving in the field, I constantly learned and always tried to understand and take something from every talk. Continuously I observed, talked, thought and arranged information in my conceptual (mental) order. Basically I noticed that the research was like a companion for a long time. It began during my university year in Istanbul in 2015 and 2016, and took clear shape when in summer 2017 the project master-thesis research turned into a work in progress matter. By autumn 2017 the exposé was written. A few months passed, so that the actual interview phase was conducted from the end of January till the end of March 2018.

Finding myself in a complete new methodological terrain, it served time to accommodate, get used and feel more comfortable with this unfamiliar position.

An unbalance in the relation between researcher and informant / interviewee made me question a lot. The question how to handle and how to deal with this uneven level of

personal interaction hold me back. One thought which circulated intensely was that I refused the idea to focus on a specific part of people's life stories, where it gets private and personal. I struggled because for me it was a problem to see this only as knowledge and material. There were emotional components and sensitive areas that I touched by questions, interest and curiosity. It felt like walking a tightrope.

The research situation asked me to be aware and cautious about the setting as well as personal boundaries of the interviewees that need to be taken care of and respected. I noticed that the aspiration was also to have a trustful interpersonal level on which we encounter and communicate as a common basis for sharing.

2.1 COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH – CREATING ACCESS

Therefore that the field is a social system “the way into the field” is better understood “as a task that is never completed and which must be handled cooperatively” (Wolff 2004: 196). My first phase of getting access was determined by a reactivation of a network consisting of friends, artists and academicians. Fortunately they provided some supportive information of contacts, addresses and names from where I could start. This did not include only Istanbul, but also connections to some people in Germany as well. Already before the 'active research' I came across a few art projects performed in Germany that were referring to Gezi and its aftermath developments. They also provided some good input of thoughts and thematic references. As initial phase of access it was helpful to gain some first impressions and insights which people shared with me. In this way I approached slowly the field and circles of people that I wanted to focus on as interview partners.

Something that I noticed right in the beginning by news and current events, people I talked to hinted at as well, Gezi as a topic is still a delicate issue. Still it is claimed that single individuals shall be responsible for the mass uprising, having it initiated and motivated hundred of thousands of people to go out on the streets to protest. Single individuals shall be in charge for a resistance movement that spread across the whole country, being the ones who did Gezi.

So something that I combined and was taught immediately be careful to whom you talk and review before how you can address best the research intention. This requested

caution to ensure a secure and comfortable space in which to encounter and have conversation. As well as how to approach possible interviewees in a decent, unobtrusive manner. While learning and observing I recognized that the atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety was also becoming an accompanying thought in my research (and still is). People feel the need of strong reluctance, being careful and cautious what they talk, where and with whom (who might listen intentionally or coincidentally). Something that I began to take care of even more as well. In this way I made sure that I am a reliable person with academic research interest and secured discretion (Wolff 2004: 200). Thus I adapted to the given environment with its specific political and social climate which shaped the period of the research and field phase.

“What seems sensible is a *progressive field-access strategy* [...] With this kind of strategy what is [...] in the foreground is [...] the *securing and setting up of an appropriate* situational context for the research process.” (Wolff 2004: 202) Carefully and cautious I entered new places and spaces and made transparent my intention and my request. I always gave a short introductory explanation what my thesis project is about and who is the group of people that I approach. The sections of community that the interviewees belong to I would define as alternative, artistic, political and collective circles. These are also my preferred spaces in which I normally move and meet people. Although the approached places were prior completely unknown to me, I could enter them in an unexcited way. It didn't attract any sort of negative attention or rejective reaction as being perceived as a complete stranger or a disconcerting, disturbing factor.

2.1.1 Composition Of The Research – Moving Within The Field

If I should find an appropriate term which describes best my research work in progress phase, I would name it a collection. Beginning in summer 2017, for about one year I carefully attended cultural events, had meetings with people for talks and coffee, gained whenever possible new information. I listened curious to future plans, stories and narratives telling about life in general and specifically in Turkey and Istanbul, and encountered all these differing and coinciding personal voices and point of views. As a collector I tried to be aware and attentive towards knowledge which seemed fitting to my research and could be of interest. That's how I surrounded myself continuously with

post-Gezi related themes.

Most of the places for interview sessions were suggested and chosen by the interviewees. That's how I made sure that it is a familiar, comfortable space which creates a calm and relaxed atmosphere for conversation.

Most of the time we sat in cafés, being away from the hectic, noisy surroundings in the streets of Istanbul or Berlin. Sometimes we had to handle a meeting in a flexible, slightly improvised manner. Which meant interruptions, changes of the room or even that one session needed to be concluded and continued in a different surrounding. This is how I learned also about some personal background of my interviewees. I had the impression that the conversation with some interesting information already started before recording, within the small talk for the reason how we encountered and approached each other. I learned about their current situation at that time, how they felt, what their projects and thoughts were about. All before I started recording. The interaction happened in a comfortable and pleasant way and it was meeting on a trustworthy ground.

I took my time to listen, to ask, to follow words and to reflect on them. The few meetings that had a second session were a chance to get back to certain points of the conversation, or deepen some thematic input. For the research and material collection it was grateful, because in most cases new things came up in the course of the interviews. That's how a corpus was growing and it made it hard for me to stop the actual interview process when I still had more options in mind and at the same time I needed to make an ending point and move on.

2.2 DECISIONS – METHOD DESIGN

According to my first reflections and considerations before conducting the research, I divided the aftermath and its outcomes regarding to the three levels and spheres the interviewees will refer to. These are changes, developments and effects perceivable on a personal, individual basis, on a professional and on a social and political level.

In order to be able to facilitate and to admit thoughts, stories and anecdotes as being part of the post-movement, post-Gezi time, I decided to conduct open, narrative interviews.

According to the context and in order to yield to the current conditions in Istanbul and

Berlin, I needed to decide in respect of the “situational acceptability of particular methods” (Wolff 2004: 201).

In the first place I did two probational, informal interviews in April 2017 which I used as an orientation for a thematic frame. Interview A and B were structured with questions in order to hear about arts and activism in Turkey, post-Gezi developments and perceptions, about the structures and networks that existed before Gezi and what happened to them afterwards. Something that happened right in the beginning and characterised the interview phase. I worked without a prepared guideline.

Most of the interviews contained great parts of narration (C, D, E, G, H, I). In these cases it happened that I turned very silent, following their golden thread without interruption, only commenting from time to time. That was the moment when I questioned my interview conduct a lot, having the impression of doing it completely wrong, missing the main point. Especially C, D and H narrated very independently, only receiving an initial impulse and then they started to speak.

With interviewees A, E and F I met two times. Although for some interviews⁷ questions were developed beforehand, still the answer parts consisted of major narrative paragraphs. In most interview situations I applied only few of the prepared questions and preferred to amplify interviewees statements, to react on them by asking or commenting with own thoughts. Questions that I prepared mostly related to the post-movement, post-Gezi processes and effects and how the interviewee relates or related to them, what is his/her perspective and perception about it. A few questions were more specific, for example when I asked about collectives in Istanbul and how they used the dynamics and energies of Gezi for further developments. But the interviewees put it right, created and proceeded their own golden thread to follow while talking and telling. “Interviewees who narrate freely may, in particular instances, reveal thoughts and memories that they would not and could not express in response to direct questioning” (Hopf 2004: 207).

Besides the interview phase for about two months, January till March 2018, the dramatic intensification of the developments in Turkey had been subject in research and private conversation. It has been a constant companion to reflect upon all these impactful moments and events and what they meant for the society I was temporarily

⁷ A, F, G, J and K

living in⁸. Especially in 2015 and 2016 it was a strange tense and expectant situation originating from the suicide bombings and political uncertainty.

Ambivalences can be found in each narration. Therefore that open, narrative interview had been conducted, I examined the interviews one after another carefully and individually. In a repeated process of transcript reading I was marking significant and meaningful sections in the texts. Comments and statements were collected in sidebars, consisting of codes, key words and associative notions. Out of this I generated memo summaries including quotes and continuative notes.

Apart from these organised memos I had a dozen of handwritten papers, collecting thoughts and hinting (indicating) to similarities and differences in issues and themes raised by the interviewees. These themes arrange around the initially mentioned three levels of reference for the outcomes.

The terms aftermath and post-movement do include a time period of five years that passed since May and June 2013. Serving as an opener to narration in the research interviews, they frame the thematic focus, reflecting and exploring what's inherent to Gezi's post-movement phase.

Constantly I documented with fieldnotes in my research book (diary) striking thoughts, observations and content from informal talks which I somehow connected and related to my research topic. Questions came up and I was trying to figure out some initial contextualisation. While being in Istanbul in February 2018 I integrated two perception walks. During the first one I searched and viewed street art and graffiti on the Asian side, near Kadıköy. I was curious about and interested in what this huge wall paintings were telling to me, which message and impression they addressed to me.

The second walk I took in the Gezi Park and Taksim Square area. A place that witnesses impactful transformation, symbolically and literally. On the opposite of the Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM, cultural centre) there is the construction of a mosque. In February they started the deconstruction of the AKM, the last part, covered behind a high fence to prevent any insight, was demolished the 30th of May 2018. Five years after the Gezi uprising began. Coincidence? The restructuring of the area includes architectural shapes that leave enough space for interpretation and assumptions, if chosen by chance or to suggest some symbolism of dominance in respect of who holds

⁸ September 2015 till the first days of November 2016, April 2017, February and June 2018

the power of decision.

This is what always happened. I kind of lost myself in analysing and interpreting traces, images and visual metaphors. I put them in correlation to Gezi, its aftermath and the greater image of the contemporary political and social landscape of Turkey.

2.2.1 Decisions – The Sample

Table 2.2.1 Sample Overview

Interview Letter	Year of Birth	City/ Country/ District	Nationality Background
A	1981	Istanbul Beyoğlu	Turkish
B	1958	Berlin Schöneberg	German
C	1976	Berlin Kreuzberg	Turkish
D	1986	Berlin Neukölln	Turkish
E	1984	Istanbul Osmanbey Berlin Neukölln	German
F	1961	Istanbul Kadıköy	Turkish
G	1973	Istanbul Cihangir	Turkish
H	1963	Istanbul Beyoğlu	Turkish
I	1966	South Germany	German-Turkish
J	1981	Berlin Tempelhof	Turkish
K	1987	Berlin City Center	German-Turkish
L	July 2017	Berlin Spree	Turkish, German

This table shall give a brief overview about the background of my interviewees and the place where the interview session was held.

Main and most important criteria for choosing a person as interview partner was their professional and personal background. Which means that the person must be based in an art and culture scope and bear reference to Gezi in a direct or indirect way. This includes also individuals who have been participant, protagonist or activist in the resistance days of the movement. I learned about aspects of their self-concept, where and how they position themselves in some private talk before recording, in comments and narratives and through the tone, gestures, mimic and style they used for telling and explaining.

Some short introductory passages might be included at this point, to give an impression and summarise who the people were I talked to and interviewed.



The artistic background is based in theatre, music, dance, acting and performance: A, B, C, D, K and L. People relate in his/her own way and story to the notion of being in an artistic exile, defining and negotiating the impact on life and work: B, C, D, J.

Those interviewees are based in academia: K, C, E, F, B. Besides their profession they engage in social and political projects, live and experience activism in one way or another: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K.

Working for a cultural organisation and being part of exclusive art circles or in social organisations makes them staying in leeways of artistic negotiation, being interested in the transfer of activism, critique and art work: A, C, G, J, D, E, B and I.

He/she calls herself an activist and also sees her experiences in profession and private life shaped by activism of different kinds: D, G, C, A, H and F.

The interviewee perceives the position of being an artist as a bridge, as someone who creates audience and reaches people in a direct way. Art is where you decide it to be: D, G, C and H.

Important for the interviewee is the engagement in cultural and political education. In this professional ambient it is of importance to invent and realise ideas beyond mainstream cultural work. The creative scope embraces backgrounds in history, politics, art, society and culture: G, C, F, D, J, E and I.

Interviewees C, D, E, J and K are moving between both countries and cities, while three of them can be considered as part of the migrating, educated class, being now based in Berlin (C, D and J). Although in conversation with them it was mentioned as subordinate matter, at least for D and J. Instead C was just in the initial phase, recently moved to Berlin at that time and was surrounded by challenges to organize professional projects, personal life and social networks. Moving between cities and countries made them voice out of a privileged perspective and including interior and exterior points of view, putting an emphasis on a variety of aspects in relation to both backgrounds.

The gender balance is almost even, six interviewees are male and five female. The panel included speakers, being female, male and transgender. Of importance was a broader range of ages in regard of life experience, memory and historic, politic eras witnessed at first hand. This made sure that interviewees had the chance and possibility to relate their narratives to a larger context chosen by themselves.

23 REFLECT ON MY RESEARCH POSITION

While being in interview situations I noticed a tendency to show empathic reactions towards the interviewee's narratives. I felt somehow explicitly the need to comment and interpret, share it with my conversation partner instead of keeping it only for myself. It seems quite plausible that this behaviour suggested and encouraged a certain direction for the continuation of interview passages. It happened that a few times when I stated some sort of short interpretation that I was corrected by the interviewee. Hinting that I misunderstood some statement and its actual meaning, how it was actually intended as expression of a different thought.

I was struggling with my position and behaviour during the interview sessions a lot. My impression was shaped by ambivalences. Sometimes I fell back into a very calm, silent position, almost passive even though I followed and listened carefully. Subtle, directive hints could have lead and focus on some important aspects, worth deepening and intensifying. In other interviews instead I encouraged and interrupted with own statements which influenced the natural flow of the interview narrative.

Hopf (2004) names it a "tendency [...] [and] frequency of evaluative statements and comments, mostly intended to be supportive, but in practice distracting and sometimes disturbing" (208). One reason why it happened is that my intention was to create a situation of conversation and to give some input as well. I didn't hold on to a distanced listener position, but also showed some personal perspective and interpretation as well.

I encountered several times in the interviews that the posed question was not clear which resulted in a brief negotiation about the meaning, in order not to be misunderstood by the interviewee. This made me doubt and feel insecure. I understood this as a defect which I tended to correct and complete, the supposed "lack of clarity" in my speech (Hermanns 2004: 211).

Deliberations while being in the field regarded the contention with glorification of the event, romanticise Gezi and what its coherent with. My conviction was to strictly avoid this kind of speech, to look beyond the obvious, search for more meaning. Another sensation that I noticed was the complexity of the context that was personally very overwhelming for me. As experience it was overcharging which made me feel to be stretched to my limits. I was concerned to miss out, miss the points and misunderstand

how people interpret Gezi and its aftermath, explain certain phenomena which I never heard about. I feared to be without knowledge and proper capacity of understanding. Feeling strain that it's an absolute necessity to study and research literature a lot in order to be able to align Gezi within the coherences of the present and the past. To meet my own requirements and aspirations was a crucial point.



3. DATA EVALUATION – ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Material and notes were rich of information. Some of them differed, but there were lots of connecting factors spanning the narratives. The terms aftermath and post-movement include a time period of five years that passed since May and June 2013. Framing the thematic focus, it is about reflecting and exploring what is inherent to the Gezi aftermath. Having those two key terms as points of reference, the interviewees connected and associated different aspects to these phases.

Within the analysis and interpretation, I would like to draw and portray ways and developments of the aftermath, to reveal which forms and manifestations have been shaping and have been part of the great unknown and how it is expressed by individuals. Therefore, the focus of the data evaluation lies on the effects and long-term consequences many-voiced from subjective and inter-subjective perspectives.

In this way, the analysis is seen and interpreted as an exploration, which moves across different phenomena of the post-movement and aftermath period and reveals how they were reflected and told in the interviews.

In order to find a way into the material I would like to quote from another interview collection, which illustrates what the immediate aftermath meant for the people.

“More decisive than some concrete results and outcomes that are measurable, is the new strength, energy and hope that we generated out of Gezi. After a long time the oppressed recovered belief and hope to achieve something together and self-organize” (Benlisoy 2014: p. 252).

One achievement of the Gezi protests was the politicisation of a new generation (ibid). An entire generation was capable of gaining political experience in a short amount of time (ibid). However, more important is the personal recovery people made, the feeling and the attitude they were having after the active phase of resistance: they gained self-confidence (ibid).

It is a sort of personal relief to acquit oneself of an oppressive position. Afterwards they felt empowered and came out of the movement with trust in themselves and their actions (ibid). Something that is not measurable but voiced and shared in conversation in social environments.

Not only the aftermath and post-movement are complex stages that a society was going through. Already the resistance and protest movement Gezi itself is a multi-layered

complex dynamics, “and between each layer there is no such direct maybe consequences [...]” (F 22.2. line 53-55).

Another voice regarding Gezi underlines the aspiration to understand what it consists of, how it is constituted, connects to the opinion that as a phenomenon it cannot be reduced to only the protests of the park (Avcı 2014: p. 253).

„There were polarisation, heavy discussions, declarations of solidarity, some did self-criticism [...]. There happened so much. People organised activities and actions in their own neighbourhoods, there were very provocative ones and in tragical ways a few people lost their lives.” (p. 253 ff.)

She concludes this statement with “it is not simply possible to talk about Gezi, there are many perspectives and points of view that have to be separately looked at” (p. 254). The same applies to all the dynamics and lasting effects that have been influencing and shaping the post-movement years.

We are already talking about a few years that passed since the active Gezi days in the park. In interview E he explains and comments on the difficulty to manage this personal processing (archive work) (line 33-34). It is not only about entering fragmented memories, but also about bringing them back to life and remembering actively. Furthermore, the emotional effort should not be underestimated (line 33-34). The way I asked him and started the conversation made him pose the free association that it would bring up immediately and necessarily a comparison – “it is not the same like... any more” (E line 36-37).

31 “WE WERE SO MUCH ONE” – AWARENESS

“[Gezi] just restored my faith in humanity. [...] When you look back at it, you're caught up in the whole thing, like everything is happening so fast and you don't want it to have a head, you don't want it to become something that is almost what it's protesting against, which it could. Everybody is really careful with that, really careful with everything, very gentle [...] I mean definitely a great experience to have, I guess” (A line 129-136).

As a moment of rush, that is how interviewee B terms the resistance movement with its consequences and effects on life decisions (line 100-101). F names it “the two weeks collective life” which was in her opinion “a very interesting and inspiring experience” (22.2. line 55-57). For her it was like a “Turkish springtime” (line 8-11).

“A precious resistance”, “a big revolutionary action” and “a precious togetherness”

that's how D reflects upon Gezi. Immediately he mentions what remains according to him: “the effects [...] [and] the traumas of Gezi Park” which are impossible to delete for the reason that they are engraved in the memory of the people (D line 26-31, G summary 100). E states that Gezi was an extreme trustworthy and authentic moment of history (line 432, 433) which stands for genuineness.

Moreover, according to E it is important to emphasise that none of Gezi's participants, activists and protagonists asserted a claim that they brought the movement into the world (line 426-430). People followed their impulses, took decisions intuitively, made it as “a collective act” (G line 61). “Gezi doesn't resemble anything. It was totally leaderless, instinctive” with spontaneously driven actions, which were “a great glimpse of a free society” (A MP⁹ line 144,145).

According to J, Gezi was “a moment of breathe” which she relates to the “very repressive environment and time” (line 29-30). Interviewee I underlines the perception and sudden awareness of the power of the masses, how quickly the movement developed and the contentment about taking things into their own hands (line 47-50). This reflects the need to act out what was lying and growing under the surface.

The responsibility underlying the movement can only be ascribed to a collective. Shock moment was exactly this one - a coalition across social boundaries and identities (E line 443-446) which suggested that this could be one of the outcomes: embedded, rooted solidarity. What was uniting the people in this moment was the anger against the government and recognising the strength of the opposition (E line 464-468). Of importance was that a certain limit was reached and resistance was voiced (E line 464-468). The coalition and solidarity among a great diversity of groups who were part of the protests is stated by several interviewees.

C describes it as a “[...] big thing blossoming suddenly, no one was expecting it, [...] we just felt brotherhood sisterhood, really coming together and acting as One” (line 37-39). Interviewee D names it in a similar way: “We were so much One!” with a great awareness of their needs and demands (line 30-31). Social and ethnic identities were fading into the background, the only focus was: “We are Together. If police comes, we will resist together” (D line 180-184).

Brothers and sisters are notions that he uses as well, to underline this strong uniting part

⁹ There were two interview sessions with A. One became a memory protocol, which is abbreviated with MP, in order to be able to distinguish the source of the quote.

(D line 183-184). Important to D is to point out that it was not only his reality, but the reality they all lived, experienced and witnessed (line 191-192).

Furthermore, G underlines this “sudden alliance” as particular vigorousness when different groups and individuals encountered under the umbrella term “together with differences” (summary 2013: line 72-80). To put it straight, J formulates this short summary: “[...] that was a very important climax, turning point for Turkish society, I believe. [...] That was the empathy and connection between eternal enemies that was the main thing, the main gain from Gezi” (J line 98-101).

In a society where identities are profoundly dividing all those groups, it is an unforeseen and uncommon action to create a coalition, which is able to mobilize and establish strength, strong support and backing. For some time, for the particular moment of Gezi it was possible to handle the burden of deep differences and a dominant social hierarchy. G states it in this way: “It was a coalition¹⁰ for the park, [...] it was miraculous in the sense that I was there with a group of people whom I wouldn't think of to be united with, because I am a feminist and a socialist” (line 169-177).

Unexpectedly interviewee G found himself side by side with football fans when being irritated by their slogans of macho, patriarchal character (G line 169-177). As being part of a feminist collective, they saw a chance in training them to seek for more respectful interaction (G line 175-177). Differences among the Gezi participants did require “constant effort and energy in a stateless place through the means of constant negotiation, arguments, fights and acting together” (G summary 2013: line 79-80).

The movement was in need of common, collective and relaxed interpersonal dealings and it was the peoples' responsibility to keep a level of acceptance while improving the situation with training and negotiation. Encounters came across different social, educational backgrounds, habits and understandings. Of course, this had potential for clashes and provocation.

Nevertheless, the general mood was perceived as people being very open and open minded (F line 8-11). The atmosphere between groups and individuals in the park was characterised of being helpful, “very willing to do something, very ready to solidarity”

¹⁰ “[...] the composition of protesters was strikingly broad: socialists, anarchists, environmentalists, students, feminists, LGBTQI individuals, Kurds, Alevis, anticapitalist Muslims, Armenians, football fans, workers, unions' members, nationalists, Kemalists, independent individuals and so forth.” (G summary 2013: line 15-18)

(F line 19-22) as well as “enthusiastic to get together and to plan something” (line 8-11). Mood and atmosphere mirrored an inviting and welcoming state of being, supporting sentiments of contribution, motivation and engagement. Within this sense of openness, the people in the park were able to establish an autonomous, social, communal and stateless space in the centre of Istanbul, in which “the control belonged totally to its inhabitants” (G summary: 2013 line 60 ff.).

D emphasises as very strong part an awareness that was created out of the experienced togetherness (line 87-90). “[...] people there realised we are not different from one another, all our needs are common our desire for freedom and rights are common” (ibid). This led to the establishment of own approaches to handle the aggression against the people and protesters in the park.

Creativity and humour were utilised to turn every harsh, devaluing and discriminating “governmental pronouncement topsy-turvy in carnivalesque fashion” (G summary 2013: line 89-90). Within the first days the protesters were declared 'Çapulcu', a criminalising term which means 'looters', 'scoundrels', 'rascals' (D'Orsi 2015: p. 18). In the following days this verbal process of othering kept changing, until they became on day four the people.

“On the first day we were terrorists; on the second day we were provocateurs; on the third day we were demonstrators, on the fourth day we became the people” (Sign in Gezi Park quoted by Uluğ and Acar 2015: p. 121)

The people in the park were able to transform these ascribing utterances and this insulting language into a reinterpretation and reframing, whereby it was turned into an empowering, encouraging and constituting effect. In this way they managed “to reject and reappropriate to their own advantage the interpretative frame imposed on them” (D'Orsi 2015: p. 18) from the governmental, political side. This frame was aiming to expose and define the ones who dissent “as internal enemies” (ibid).

Out of a need to oppose and escape that powerful hegemonic verbal violence, the protesters created alternative “languages and expressive forms with which to represent [their own] reality” (p. 18). Imposed insults were assumed and rewritten into positively connoted self-designation. Social cohesion and common sense of belonging could be built out of this semantic shift with the help of a novel composition of “a set of shared codes” (p. 19).

As a result, the coalition of protesters upset dominant codes and disrupted the ascribed identities and conventional interpretation of dissent and resistance (p. 24). In this way they breached “previous [consolidated] political, religious, social and cultural distinctions” (p. 17).

Intelligent, clever jokes, special humour, joy and courage (C line 423-424, G summary 2013: line 98) were mechanisms to ridicule and “destabilize the truth that the hegemonic power” (D'Orsi 2015: p. 18) was claiming to hold. Humour and jokes functioned as comments and political statements, a free speech into the direction of the government. Probably the only way to subvert their constantly displayed sense of superiority.

After exploring the emancipatory and empowering moments of Gezi experiences, it is necessary to face the serious and critical aspects. When a government is shaken and struggling for power, fear arouses. In this sense, there are tendencies to decline negotiation between the people and the ruling politicians in charge (Adalı 2014: p. 11). Entities to keep the power are the police, army and press, who are easy to instrumentalise for their purpose (ibid). Tear gas and water gun vehicles (TOMA) were ready for use (ibid). On fear followed attacks and manipulation of information and press (ibid). The state cast off its veil and began to show its true face (ibid).

The true face intermingles with the memory of police violence, which is a dominant memory of Gezi (G line 122-129). Besides the perception of community, common support and the willingness to come together, there is the painful memory of brutal violence. Interviewee F also speaks about the remembrance of the clash, that is now covering the positive sentiments of the experience, a paradox they cannot solve (line 51 ff.). The memory is continuously refreshed by presence and intimidation that the police as state institution hold on to. Police encounters therefore carry this implicit knowledge and experience about past conflicts and fights.

Interviewee A does also reflect on this dark aspect of the resistance movement, the relentless, harsh reaction from the political side. Their violence, verbal and physical, increased (A MP line 144-146). “The government switched the heat pretty fast – the more aggressive they got, they went more authoritarian” (A MP line 150-151). Perceiving the protests as a deep provocation and questioning of the position of power, it provoked that the political side wield strict authority.

“The government was not pleasing and calming the protest situation, instead they followed a strict and stubborn way which made it escalate” (A MP line 166-167).

Painful and violent experiences are part of A's memories as well which is compared with the contrast of dream and trauma. “Trauma: everybody saw violence, tasted the gas. [...] people who got injured or died. The dream made themselves hurt to change something for the better” (A MP line 197-199). Trauma was also voiced by D, when the positive effects of Gezi are contrasted with the harsh intervention from state side which resulted in “We lost so many people [...] so many people arrested because of this. So many people are declared terrorists” (line 38-43).

Instead the dream is about reading Gezi as if “it was an utopia in their minds, standing for unity and companionship, supporting each other, giving and receiving without expectations, living a deep solidarity, just making it for the thing [...]” (A MP line 193-195). An unconditional solidarity, the best thing in A's point of view, because “it reminded people we could help each other”, people were “looking after each other. Instead of trying to topple each other, use the elbows [...] They lift you up instead of tackling you. That was a good (...) remaining” (A line 78-81).

What the people in the Gezi movement achieved was living temporarily an alternative concept of society and community. Gathering and togetherness brought people closer to each other, made them curious and interested in thinking options of different life ideas in contrast to the current system.

As a thoughtful and rational reflective ending of the paragraph, I would like to give space to two voices which don't pedestal the sense of Gezi, import a more down to earth estimation.

Euphoria, meaningfulness and glorification that have been easily attached to Gezi produced a plethora of material and lead to the phenomenon with it's numerous layers having been studied a lot (J line 26-30, 31-35). As a symbol the whole image of Gezi became emotionally charged and portentous. What was bonding was momentary, about that specific situation (J line 47-49). The bottom line is that “it's not like the government changed and then there is a new era started or something, it's like the same thing” (J line 38-39). Remembering it in a spectacular way made it overloaded with meaning (J line 52-56). The contemporary situation in Turkey illustrates an unrealistic image for resurfacing of solidarity (ibid). At the moment the feeling of coalition got interrupted

and completely vanished (ibid).

What bothers interviewee J is the similarity in comments and reactions about Gezi that she comes across in daily life and in academia, which are feeding the whole created image that people were believing in (line 58-62). But especially since five years have passed, the agenda and focus of people was shifting. This evolves in the question what remains after the dramatic aggravation with all the changes that the social and political landscape was undergoing.

“If you ask me, do you continue after the Gezi to be active, to be part of a policy, I just say that it's a process and Gezi not the biggest and the most important thing of the political graphic of Turkey. It's just a (..) point in the history of Turkey” (H line 267-269).

3.2 THE AFTERMATH IN THE MAKING – CONTINGENCY

After a major effort (feat) (K line 87-93) which a society experienced and has been deeply shaken by, there is a sentiment and perception of great uncertainty and vagueness. While being in a social-movement, people are in the present moment, cautious and aware of what needs to be done right there, what is of importance for the present. Thoughts might bring up the concerns of what it will be like afterwards. Only little importance is attached to them for the reason that by then it is still a future cause, which is not considered too much in an earlier stage.

Five of my interviewees do take up and continue the thought of the immediate post-movement phase. E makes up the following scenario: the person describes the situation as somehow candid and open. “No one even knew how, what would come, happen next. There was somehow, I believe, potential that was hopeful and there was political agility. HDP was founded and many of my friends had been active there.” (E line 106-109)

What the interviewee also voices is the motivation in preparation for the upcoming local elections (in 2014) and a conviction of doing something and taking action now (E line 131-132). Inherent to that moment was a strength, the beginning of a new chapter which was yet unwritten. The page had turned in peoples perception and this particular time was metaphorically a blank slate, a particular moment was on the way to arise, a sort of chance to grab.

The person E emphasises the prevailing openness, “a situation of motion and the presence of sentiments [...] such as being overwhelmed, also by Gezi and being engaged to understand. Even more by figuring out what this potential is, what it offers and how people could make use of it” (E line 113-119). This openness is repeatedly voiced, also when it is explained about the forums (next paragraph) in which it resulted in collaboration and cooperation as a positive initial point (E line 494-500).

Being driven by a great number of psychological and emotional aspects during the immediate aftermath, this situation of complex uncertainty demands from people to systematize, arrange and assort what has been turned upside down beforehand. Confusion is also able to release potential and energies, but not only, as K elucidates the ambivalences that were observed while being on a Gezi research in autumn 2013.

The interviewee states that in the beginning the social climate was highly charged, the people were totally euphoric, excited and enthusiastic (K line 16-17). This observation struggles, when she notices slightly appearing resignation in combination with self-convincing comments: “no, it's only a little bit attenuated (weakened), it will return, come again” (K line 19-20). An attitude and mindset which was, according to the interviewees opinion, shared at that time by a broader number of people compared to one year later or today (K line 21-22). By that time the perception was obviously still very positive (ibid).

Euphoria as a sentiment made people remain on a level where they actively kept the idea and the memories consisting of a present and strong feeling of the recent resistance. This was also opening mental paths, shifting to: “this is the point of no return, we showed them, we have the last laugh or, after this breakout (outburst) Turkey is a changed country now and has become different” (K line 22-24).

A metaphor which was used by F, A, E, D and K differing the context, is fire. Referring to appearances on a local level, small flames existed before Gezi, but the resistance-movement “did such a big explosion, political and sociological let's say” so the local flames “are extinguished, they couldn't continue, some of them” (F 22.2. line 8-10). Strong and telling were also the comments by interviewee E who refers as well to the time shortly before Gezi “[...] in those days it was already politically in confusion and then of course, all escalated with Gezi” (E line 55-56).

“When it exploded that was a shock [...] but it wasn't coming out of the blue and the

reaction of the state wasn't off-guard, but rather [...] something definitely proceeding” (E line 89-93). The interview partner underlines that the explosion and escalation did not happen unpredictable, it was more that a development was looming ahead. This relates to various smaller protests in the weeks and months before Gezi in which the clashes became more attuned to one another on both sides. That is how a routine developed, the game of cat and mouse (E line 74).

Fire is a natural force, strong, beyond control and if once inflamed it diffuses with great speed. As a metaphor it does also symbolise spontaneity and emotionality that erupts and breaks free. When something is blazing, it is perceived as threatening. In a figurative sense, fire and the other part illustrate the dynamics of Gezi. The government was looking to contain the fire and the exploding power by use of symbolical and real violence. Their priority aim was to regain and reclaim control over the situation. Water cannon, rubber bullets and tear gas in use to an extreme and exaggerated extent were violent equipment for political force.

Expressing conviction, hope and confidence with the fire metaphor, that is how interviewee D, A and K made use of this symbolism. Defining Gezi as “a small flame” (D line 256) the person formulates that even though they are literally not in the park, Gezi will never be over as an experience, “it will continue” (D line 258-260).

Interview partner A mentions “those instinctive moments” which are interpreted as sparks that put people in motion, make them move intuitively “without much of a planning, [and] coordination” (line 222-223). Carrying this knowledge and skills “might be beneficial in the future for something” (A line 223-224).

Keeping the movement alive while being in a waiting position was the connotation of the fire notion experienced in conversation by interviewee K. This experience originates from the initial months of the aftermath. “Apart that it was repressed since a few weeks, maybe it is not a blazing fire at the moment, but glow and sparks are diffused in the smaller groups and we will keep the heat” (K line 24-27).

This confident vision was shared as impression of excitement and potential also by interviewee G. Beyond exciting sentiments it is given a more rational estimation which formulates in contrast to the political agility mentioned by E already a reason for the loss of hope. “Immediately afterwards people were very excited. Actually people were believing in the potential of people. And the artists were believing in the potential of the

people, but yeah after the elections [...]” (G line 73-75).

The expectations regarding an aftermath period are high. People are seeking for change, to implement in society, to do and act what they experienced and learned as a good living beforehand in the social movement. Everyone wants to benefit and take something positive out of the resistance experience, transform and integrate it in daily life structures. In the end, high expectations do collapse according to real happenings on a political level and disillusion comes up.

“Because in Gezi you feel like – 'ah, there is a change coming', but immediately after that in the local elections [2014] [GP]¹¹ won, then another election [GP] won again. And people started to lose their hope and they (.) lost their hope also in collectives, (..) unified policy, I mean united policy.” (G line 51-54)

Interviewee E names it a mixture, somehow disenchantment, that the great upheaval, a radical change did not take place and being taken by the fact that such things are still possible (line 128-130).

Being part of collectives in Istanbul, F underlines the collective energy that was around and perceptible especially in the immediate post-Gezi. For the interviewee it is a kind of synergy, but after a maximum of two years, this peripheral energy disappeared (F 22.2. line 40-44). Synergies existed, before and after the movement (F 22.2. line 41-42). The question is how to protect and use them in an appropriate way, beneficial for all groups and individuals involved (A line 47-48).

In the beginning, no one will know where this all leads to. What people might recognise are tendencies which cause only assumptions about future developments. This phase of aftermath is of unpredictable character. People hold on and might expect visible results, but what they see and experience are throwbacks. It does not lead to immediate interruption and termination, but it initiates a slow process of growing disenchantment and disillusion.

Interviewee A instead turns this around and underlines what E stated as being positively overwhelmed and surprised of the simple fact that a people's resistance and movement was possible to happen in Turkey¹². Therefore, he supports the view that time will tell

¹¹ Abbreviation for ‘governing party’

¹² Ragıp Zarakolu, a Turkish intellectual and publisher does underline the surprisingly fact, because as movements happened in Turkish history, there are not many examples for comparing or to which existing memory Gezi can be added. He was “most delighted by the spontaneity of the resistance. [He] only experienced this once before in Istanbul, during a two-day workers' uprising 15.-16th of June in 1970. All

and show what the Turkish society will make out of it.

“It's really, it might be even early to say what came out of it, because (.) it is the first time in the history of these lands that something like that happened, like true (through?) peoples movement. People really in 80 cities, 80 plus cities, they really all came together [...]” (A line 38-41).

A's quote is bearing witness to the strength inherent to the movement and the scope it was able to reach and take, far beyond hopes and expectations of people. While the interviewee expresses thoughts about outcomes and results, the statements are traversed by ambivalences. Directly she makes a point by underlining several times that “nothing came out of it”, marking the movement was done by the moment it went down, which crushed peoples hopeful expectations for more (A line 30-34).

The breach that he is drawing gets revised when he expresses great uncertainty and vagueness. It seems that there are doubt and conviction competing with each other. “Together with differences” as G stated (summary 2013: line 72) was the characteristic also for A, but inherent to the appreciating, amazing ways how the movement happened, there was fragility. That is why he uses phrases such as “maybe it was bound to dissipate” (A line 44) in contrast to “maybe people would really find a common spot” (A line 45 ff.) regarding the aspect of solidarity and common struggles. Time will tell how and if people have learned from Gezi as an affecting experience, being fruitful for “a future generation” (A line 50-51). In this way, he emphasises and underlines strongly socially conditional probability of several options, resulting in positive or negative effects.

A social-movement is existing and kept alive through its people and all the contributors, if in direct or indirect ways. There have been military coups, states of emergencies and political struggles and challenges in the Turkish political landscape dating back until the times of the founding of the republic. There are wounds, but at the same time people dealt with it. That means within the society there is this inscribed knowledge how to handle such impactful situations. It is an intergenerational transfer, learning from the history and background that older generations experienced. Each impactful situation required and demanded arrangements. However, it is only after time passed that people are able to tell and draw conclusions.

happened spontaneously and by itself.” (Guttstadt 2014: p. 262)

3.3 “IT’S NOT AGAIN GETTING TOGETHER” – DISENCHANTMENT

When reflecting upon the first year of the aftermath and its initial moments, it was interviewee E who mentioned the “political agility” (line 108). The post-Gezi politicisation was shaped by a profound engagement of the activists to utilise and implement “alternative ways of doing politics, which were to be more inclusive, direct and local” (Inceoğlu 2014: p. 27). Since the park was evacuated in the middle of June 2013, the circumstances made people look for alternatives in order to provide and ensure continuity of actions. The park area was declared a “no-go area” for former protesters, police blockades were built to prohibit any sort of gathering.

Consequently, the right of assembly could not be utilised, at least not in the central park in Taksim. It happened then, that people organised locally concentrated meetings, so called park forums. That is how a transfer took place, from one origin mushrooming to other parks in Istanbul and to different Turkish cities (Inceoğlu 2014: p. 25).

Forums took a practice which was constantly present in the park to an extended level. Therefore that people supported and put effort in order to sustain exchange, sharing and respectful interaction between all participants of Gezi, they set a ground and a structure for dialogue. Free speech corners were established in the park as space and places to gather, discuss issues, topics and listen to each other.

In Abbasağa Park, in the district of Beşiktaş was the first and most famous forum in which in the beginning about 10.000 people participated (Erdal 2014: p. 206, 92). “The district was during the resistance days one of the most hard fought” (Guttstadt 2014: p. 92). Which could be an explanation why many people felt the need to attend, to exchange and share their experiences of the past weeks.

One of the strengths was the reclaim of commons by urban citizens, spaces for forums, solidarity and assemblies to negotiate “local issues despite ideological, class and other differences” (Inceoğlu 2014: p. 26). It's the “power of debate and negotiation” which could be practised in an autonomous, self-determined way, “outside the limited discourses of institutionalised politics” (ibid). Public forums were part of an emergence of new political formations (p. 24). One way to read it is a radical democratic opportunity that smoothes and paves the way for an approach of doing politics in a way which is non-discriminatory and promotes inclusive discussions (ibid, p. 27).

The forum idea was based on a few principles: “meet regularly, possibly on a daily basis, and promote discussion and deliberation on a variety of issues in a participatory framework” (Atak 2014: p. 267). According to Guttstadt “the forums had been the greatest and most educational course on democracy in the history of Turkey” (2014: p. 92).

Interpreted as a social benefit, out of people’s involvement in the forums, they were able to create and establish a culture of dialogue and assembly where people were listened to and were let finish speaking (ibid). “Direct democracy that's what we are doing” (Erdal 2014: 206). Holding onto dialogue on conflict and critical issues and hundreds of people listening patiently is according to many, the greatest achievement (Yücel 2014: p. 92).

68 forums existed and it was appreciated that radical ideas and themes could be discussed there (Akyıldırım 2014: 183). It is expressed that there was a need of getting organised, because “otherwise people will return to their old life structures and will adopt again the old, predominant ideas and mindsets” (ibid).

Reflecting a pessimist vision this fine thought was anticipating what was anytime contingent, as interviewee E is stating. The interview partner makes a point when elucidating the coherences between identity-based positioning, categorising and the struggling effort to overcome this socially implemented habit which dominates personal interactions. Anytime ready to be reactivated as implicit knowledge.

In contrast to the prior drawn positive reflections that were voiced during the immediate aftermath, the interviewees opinions in my research rate the forums in a more restrained manner. A points to the naive character that is from his point of view inherent to the forum activity, although “[...] discussing ideas [...] it lasted for a while” (line 14 ff.). As an intention and a basic idea, there was potential, but it needed to be asked how it can be realized. Misleading was the meaning they attached to the forum activity according to A. Whereas sharing and listening to each other is an initial point, dialogue and communication do request that it is taken further, beyond this social meeting frame.

There was a strong and determining belief that “sharing views, sharing perceptions” would bring up some concrete outcomes (A line 18). The people who weren't yet in doubt were still “just hoping something would come out, [...] just call all the ideas and the viewpoints of them and something will come out, but nothing did, didn't come up” (A line 18-21). With no surprise the statement finishes that there was no impact and

outcome for the interviewee originating from the forum gatherings. The naivety reasons in the imagination that sharing might be enough, but this misses any further consideration of how to deal with and handle all the contents and work in the forums. Of course, the forum meetings indicated a willingness to stay active, to organize, encounter and socialise in a political way. Nevertheless, people were actually seeking for more concrete aims and outcomes, which was the missing part, as well as a factual, democratic plan how to realize communication gatherings beneficial for all. Interviewee C agrees to the criticism that was stated by A and adds the following:

“[...] we were just organising a lot of activist meetings and getting forums [...] that were organised in many parks and stuff, people gathering together and sharing ideas, but then it was also getting dead after a while [...] again the same thing, we were just discussing. When we are in our intellectual mind we're searching for a lot of different ways of dealing with stuff and everybody has its own idea. But then it's not again getting together.”
(C line 110-115)

Disenchantment and disappointment can be read between the lines. Potential was inherent to these organised gatherings and meetings, but unfortunately it only stayed on a communicational level. It was a sneaking process to realise that “just discussing” (C line 113) meant they were missing the point, although it was well-intended.

Interviewee C adverts to a diversity of approaches to handle situations and issues, which is asking involved people to compromise in order to find collective solutions which everyone could partly or at best fully agree to. Of course, it is tough to bring all those different minds and ideas in balance, but it is a way to make concessions, offer commitment to and get oneself into the action. Nevertheless, this won't be possible if people remain only in their individual position.

Furthermore, interviewee F is critical about the forums and what they bring to light. An action with good intention, but in the process of doing and realization challenging when important issues weren't paid enough attention, for instance a big splitting, an opening fracture (F line 29).

“In the post-Gezi time, this councils experience were interesting, very interesting, but very quickly I got a little bit pessimist, because I couldn't see that the people don't care too much about this big splitting, big gap, big fracture opened. But it was making me already, still it makes me worrying about the future. What will happen in this way? How to set dialogue again, to deal?” (F line 27-31)

The forums were an attempt and a possibility to continue with direct action and

dialogue. In the end, they crystallised and exposed the Turkish society's inherent barriers, essentialism and prejudices in regard of identities, self-concept (self-image) and the consequent division and polarisation. Within the activities based on exchange and togetherness it became subtly apparent that the ties between people and groups were still loose, not grounded or yet rooted. Especially when the background of a society is constituted by effects of political and power struggles, exclusion and marginalisation and questions of domination by elites.

A fall-back into old patterns of ascriptions in regard of opinions, attitudes and mindsets which are perceived as interwoven and inherent with embodied, acted identities is one of the results, stated by interviewee E (line 494-500). These patterns are connected to people's comportment of categorising their counterpart according to their social, identity or ideological positioning. Assuming that after all, after Gezi nothing has changed and we know what he/she might tell, argue out of his/her position (E line 494-500).

This implies that there is no substantial chance to change this system of essentialism and categorisation if people are not aware of it and won't put any effort into it. The openness and collaboration of people was fragile and ready in each moment to fall apart again, but it existed. Interviewee E puts an emphasis on this rapprochement of people, especially because the moment was perceived as: when if not now? (line 508-511).

As possible explanation for missing continuing effects, the interviewee names extremely strict identity concepts that people are holding onto (E line 477-479). This creates barriers apart from manifesting positions that are of course also of importance (E line 480-484), but nevertheless give rise to separation and division. The interview partner holds the view that in that specific moment it would have been more significant to find other commonalities beyond all those single hyphen identities (E line 480-484). If solidarity and togetherness haven't been experienced and lived for a long time in a society, an immanent process of unlearning may diffuse. Unlearning means that people start to lose skills and abilities to approach each other and interact beyond "obvious" social categories. This plays a part in contributing to stabilise a sort of difficult communication, having the impression to be at cross-purposes whereas it is needed to find common ground and intersections. Furthermore to reach a factual basis and a matter-of-fact manner.

If social labels are deciding and defining, they have too much of an influence in interpersonal dealings. Collectivism, collective demands and aims should come to the fore and determine the being-with-one-another instead of clinging to isolating and separating social categories that are more of a hindrance than a help.

Difficulties and problems resulted in tensions and disenchantment among the people. Competition was noticeable between established groups and organisations, wishing for higher consideration of their focus and interests in the decisions (Atak 2014: p. 268). What has initially been of great excitement forums as communicative and democratic practice after a while, when needs and requirements could not be fulfilled and became real, they were of a heavy and tiring character (Yücel 2014: p. 93).

In the initial phase forums as social spaces had posed questions lying ahead, such as how to establish a network between the forums in order to sustain cooperation and collaboration (locally, on provincial and country level) and to “bring together common demands” (Müştereklerimiz 2013, quoted in Atak 2014: p. 267). Moreover, there were questions about how to organize, manage and involve people so that everyone would benefit.

The amount of work was constantly increasing and required the organisation groups to coordinate and to meet the needs and demands of the people proposing and participating (p. 268). This was a concerning aspect, because the participatory approach led to problems in decision-making (ibid) and had the potential to leave people's voices unheard and evoke discontent.

Interviewee A summarises the perception what led to the slow death of the forums. Of importance in the estimation is the aspect of organisation and coordination, which opens a huge gap by lacking communication and documentation. Matters of interest, ideas and proposals, even concrete ones, could not gain enough attention by the crowd in order to provoke a broader response and acknowledgement.

The attendance waned which resulted in a feeling that “nothing came out of it” (A line 56-57). An impression, which was left behind from a critical status when needs and requirements could not be considered in an appropriate way. When A states that “there is no format for it” (line 57) implicitly there is an association that probably it was an early stage and not yet well-conceived. Furthermore, the forums can be considered as spontaneous and instinctive driven action which was practised firstly without much of a

planning. Dialogue was continued out of the need to stay in the flow with the prior dynamics.

“[...] A lot of things went up in the air. Nothing got recorded, nothing got researched, nothing got worked on. That's why. A lot of centres, a lot of centre-points (.) and no connection, that's the problem. One centre is not anybody wants. It's really it's corruptible, it's hard. You're many centres great, but then if there is no connection, then there are two. It's their destiny to wither out [...]” (A line 57-62).

The attempt to bring people together after the park experience showed clearly that communication as a key aspect was a crucial point. Solidarity and collectivism that had not been practised for years and decades did not change the society within a month to a better one. A society which acts together in the same struggles as a community, facing them as collective, sharing issues and working them out to find solutions.

Although it was demanded that “everybody must communicate to each other [...] in the practice it became more hard, more difficult” (F 22.2. line 60-62). What the neighbourhood councils brought to light and made visible was the harsh split within the society (F 22.2. line 63-64). Besides, people in the districts were forums were hold, did follow the political rhetoric and understood the activities as part of a plot and stayed far, kept their distance (F 22.2. line 64-65).

Even though “some of them tried to involve, but the hard team, hard core team doesn't like them, because they see that this is, they are kind of other part. So it became impossible. The dialogue got broken, for me. My observation” (F 22.2. line 65-68).

An interrupted dialogue does result from the division which was noticed by F in the forum activity. Although personal discrepancies regarding other participants might not have been directly communicated, it was perceivable from the social climate within the group. There was a “team, hard core team” and on the opposite people that were perceived as being “kind of other part” (F 22.2. line 66-67). To conclude, although the forums had a participatory approach and wanted to invite people from diverse backgrounds and stances, they were facing categorisation and serious excluding mechanisms.

This underlines what was stated by other interviewees as well, it is not getting together and cooperation was rejected, because there was scepticism, antipathy and dislike.

Between people there were and are huge and deep ditches (fosses), hard to overcome although they shared being in opposition to the governing party for different reasons (K

line 124-127). “[...] it wasn't realistic to keep that coalition on [...] Those who are against the government are fighting with each other a lot” (G line 179-183). C voices it even as a sharp critique in direction to the “intellectual, leftist, resistance people” (line 82-83). The hand full of people in these circles “[...] this hand is not making a fist, getting together. This hand is eating each other” (C line 85-86).

Not establishing a strong cooperation between the people does feed for the good of the government (C line 87-89). It is not even necessary to use exterior methods for division therefore that the circles are already divided by the individuals themselves, each remaining in own positions, being divided in their “intellectual mind” (C line 89). C finishes with deep disenchantment, because it is disturbing to reach never a point of “becoming 'Together’”(line 90-93). Instead it is realised and rated that all the activism the interview partner followed and did “is a masturbation” (C line 90-93).

What was working in an emotional protest and resistance as Gezi does not count for rational projects, such as founding and organising a political party (K line 130-136). Pretending that there are no differences or counting on cooperation is a way not to face and ignore the fact of insuperable, contrasting, opposing positions (ibid).

Polarisation with its rift strikes the whole society and is for a long time inherent to its functioning structures and mechanisms (E line 119-122). It depends much on the personal placing and situatedness as well which interviewee E reflected on. A project with teenager could reveal that also the youth, the young society was completely polarised as well (E line 122, line 107-111).

The current governing party does represent the interests of a new religious Bourgeoisie (Yücel 2014: p. 141). “Along with it the leading party does continue the authoritarian hegemony of the Kemalists only with an Islamic veneer” (ibid). Forms of paternalism and dictation (ibid) are continued, aiming and reaching now for other sections of the Turkish population. It is about forms, mechanisms and structures which implement and reproduce unequal and discriminatory treatment. Laws and rules that are restrictive and discriminating led and lead inevitably to exclusion and division. Seemingly the phenomenon of polarisation is a process which pursues. Changing is the extent of visibility and exploitation.

By utilising a separating and derogatory speech, the political side plays on identity concepts dating back until the founding of the republic. A national identity could

develop by negating and rejecting the before heterogeneous constitution of the population. This is how a homogenisation and adaptation was realised in the first place¹³.

Nowadays these concept and mechanisms are reactivated and reproduce enemy stereotypes. In this way, the polarisation is maintained. Society shall be formed according to the vision and image that the government wishes and expects (Yücel p. 120, Guttstadt 2014: p. 138). In the past there has been pressure and strain to seek for homogeneity and uniformity of the individuals, only one type of person should exist (Guttstadt *ibid*). All people who did not conform with it had been already addressed with derogatory speech from political side¹⁴ (Yücel 2014: p. 120).

“[...] claim to breed and educate a devout generation, but actually [there is the aim] to have an obedient generation” (Eliaçık quoted in Yücel: p. 144). By speech and verbal utterances in 2007 after the election was won, it was made clear what future and life in the society under the governing party will signify (Temelkuran 2015: p. 142).

The words of this speech were meaningful and symbolic: “[the governing party] is now the centre point of society!” (p. 143). In a figurative sense it means that the fact being “the centre“ (*ibid*) defines qua position what is conform, normal and excludes the rest as marginal (*ibid*). “Meaning that neither this state nor this people nor this public is yours; you are “other”” (p. 144). Forms of othering, Ötekileştirmek (Yücel 2014: p. 42) were verbally utilised, underlining the dichotomy in ““us” and “them”” (Temelkuran 2015: p. 141) and stands for manners to ostracise, marginalize and segregate people. I would rather name it an open form used to address the public and declare sections of the population to “social death” (Hannah Arendt).

Who holds the power to name, explain, define and inform dominates the language and the discourses. “From the instant [the political side] began to endorse the division of “us” and “them”, a nation that was already precarious in its culture of coexistence split right down the middle” (Temelkuran 2015: p. 144). The dichotomy was deeply affecting after Gezi which functioned as “keyword to make a separation, categorization” (F 22.2 line 81-83).

The social atmosphere was determined by judgement being “a Gezi participant or not”

¹³ Supportive source is the text: “Citizen, Speak Turkish! A Nation in the Making” by Senem Aslan

¹⁴ Non-Muslim, Alevi, secular women, homo- and transsexuals

(F 22.2. line 82-83). This is what interviewee G felt within the direct neighbourhood surrounding as “obvious accusations [...] [being] supporters of Gezi” (G line 197-198). The contrast was made up to: “they are Rabiacı, we are Gezici” (G line 199). In these days tension and polarisation became perceivable and noticeable “even on a daily basis” (G line 196-197). The rift does divide citizens into two components, being a supporter or a traitor (G line 259). This is how a demarcation was done, by creating a sense of cohesiveness, defining who is in- and out-group (Vester 2006: p. 244).

Speech has impact and can be violent. Language use is determining which identities and labels are ascribed to people and which real, social consequences they cause. Notions get functionalized and are of stigmatising character, such as the separation made by the category Gezi. Psychology of dominance, a term coined by Birgit Rommelspacher (1998) expresses real anxiety and fear of loss of power. By dominating speech and discourses it is ensured to be in control of the situation.

Support for the government was never broad questioned, also “after seeing the police violence in Gezi, they still continued [...] didn't see it as something negative” (G line 187-188). Having a hegemonic frame of interpretation imposed on the protesters (D'Orsi 2015) as being “against the regime [...] the state [...] the system” the public opinion legitimized in this way the violence “[...] of course, they should be punished” (G line 189-190). For G this a painful confrontation, “this is hurting actually” (line 190), watching people losing all sense of humanity and common sense.

The rhetoric was harsh, “making an enemy and that almost kind of hate speech (.) it stayed there” (G line 259-260). Presenting, judging and separating into traitors, non-citizens, the marginalize group on one side who oppose the citizens and supporters on the other side (G line 256-260).

Polarisation does establish an imbalance with its structures and mechanisms. Purpose is that a divided society does not group and get together, is not able to develop mutual power and strength. As a consequence they cannot defy control, evade laws and political impacts and make a stand against (set against) either.

3.4 “IT WAS CLEAR THAT GEZI WAS THE LAST GATHERING” – CONFLICTUAL ATMOSPHERE

Polarisation and division accompany and substantiate a continuing process of aggravation and intensification of social and political dramatisation which results in a highly conflictual atmosphere. Interviewee E used a very fine and sharp metaphor to describe the ambivalences inherent to the Turkish social sphere which was always traversed by so called 'conflict lines' (line 331). Differing was their aspect of visibility, coming more or less to the surface (ibid).

“This was the case during Gezi and also afterwards” (E line 331-332). Compared to now, the big difference is that the 'conflict lines' have become and turned into a deep chasm (line 333). “Sadly, emotionality and hatred has extremely grown on both sides, also the incomprehension for the other side. Back then it was more permeable, during Gezi anyway and still in 2015 [...]” (line 334-337) which poses the question: what is the current status?

To outline an impasse and to underline a conflictual character inherent to the conditions in Turkey right now, some of the interviewees used metaphors as illustration. Interviewee C expresses a downwards turn with the words “the air has changed” (line 330). C voices similar observations and perceptions as G when telling about the neighbourhood and how the polarisation and accusation could be felt on a daily basis (3.3). This extends to the general interaction and encounter in the streets (C line 330). C notices “a lot of aggression and violence” and senses this negative energy shaped by unhappiness and depression (line 331-332).

Using a symbolism to mark the contrast of pretending, faking of a normal situation, it is called “[...] this is the orchestra of Titanic” which “is sinking” (C line 335-336).

The direction is downward, felt in the streets as deep, profound and powerful sentiments of a threatening, tense atmosphere (C line 338-340). This development gets serious and close to eruption that “only a small match to start a fire” might be enough to cause “like a big explosion” (C line 340-341). The interview partner C points out that “it creates a very dangerous situation” which originates from the division within the country and the hatred among people which increased and became stronger, corroborated by media and politics (C line 54-58).

The “splitting in two fronts” is of great concern also for interviewee F (22.2. line 90). In her point of view the silence, the lack of dialogue gets “more serious [so that] small conflicts turn very quickly to big fights” (F 22.2. line 90-91). There is an emphasis on the tension and the potential for contention and argument in a threatening atmosphere.

An indicating statement for passive aggressiveness, pressure and anger was expressed by interviewee G, stating again an example from the interviewee's neighbourhood: “seeing videos of the people who are our neighbours shouting like – 'ah, we stand with the police; the hands that are hitting the police should be broken'[...]” (line 7-9).

This is of very intimidating character and at the same time underlines the need to be extremely careful and cautious in particular environments. It illustrates that under the surface there is an accumulation of strong and explosive emotion which is always ready to erupt and to be addressed towards people of their opposition.

“Anger, violence, authority and hate speech” are also the notions that A uses to put in words how the interviewee perceives the contemporary situation in Turkey (MP line 135-137). Having the power and authority to be the voice listened to, it leads to the creation of own, governmental interest favouring narratives, which use mechanisms of blaming, manipulating and victimizing (A MP line 135-137). Measures to ensure and corroborate support, polarisation and silencing.

“It's going on a roller coaster now” (line 267) that's how J describes the perception “of the current oppressive atmosphere” (line 105). On focus are the effects caused by it, seeing all the terribleness on the Turkish Agenda (line 105-106). Massive impact originates from the “military operations” (line 107) in which “soldiers, guerillas, civil folk [...] are being killed” and which are changing “so many peoples lives” (J line 107-109).

In recent years there have been several key events and pivotal moments which supported an aggravation of the general atmosphere and situation. The coup attempt on 15th of July 2016 was one of it. It was impacting on the feeling of oppression, a radical, drastic cut that the burden became immense (E line 169-173). After this incident people faced contention with short-term political terribleness which asked their mechanisms to deal and to cope (E line 172-173). A worsening of the situation was also according to interviewee G the impact of the coup attempt (line 77-78). G states that coming to the coup, the status was already characterised of “serious limitations on freedom of

expression” and “people were imprisoned” because of making use of this right (line 76-77). Then, “state of emergency became [the] normal” and caution diffused in regard of criticising politics and the government (G line 77-79).

Interviewee D is also naming a list of incidents that progressed and sharpened the situation, using the metaphor “we are having trauma on trauma” (line 266). One political or social incident is followed by the next one, and all leave marks and set unpredictable effects.

“[...] the last trauma was the state of emergency, arresting this academicians, putting them into prison and all this people that got dismissed, fired from their jobs” (D line 513-515). According to D the worsening that came with the state of emergency “is making lives of people even harder and harder” (line 516). Seriously threatening is also the fact of arbitrary behaviour from political side, that “people are just attacked or prisoned because of their words [...] what they share on Twitter, what they draw [...]” (D line 516-518).

“The current situation in Turkey is extremely frightening. In consequence of the existing lists there rules such an arbitrariness with the result that potentially everyone could get arrested or imprisoned” (B line 49-52). These lists function to report people. Who is marked is known by the government, is facing business struggle and risks to be blamed for diverse sorts of accused crime (C line 39-43, line 50-51). In sum, this causes strong effects on the whole life (C line 43).

“[...] a lot of friends are taking in only because they signed a petition for peace. You can not say anything you want any more. You can not even say peace. Peace became the most dangerous word to pronounce in my country” (C line 52-54).

Remaining is a bitter laughter and bitter taste, although they are trying to cope with irony and sarcasm, the fact stays cruel. Imprisoned friends and her are turning the jail situation into a joke, saying that it must be “the most, very educated prison around the world” because you can find their many “academicians and journalists” (C line 68-70). Reporting facts in journalism, work investigative and independently, voice criticism and giving space for various opinions and perspectives, these professionals are treading on thin ice, are moving on delicate terrain.

With increasing authority came vulnerability. “It has turned into a sin” that's how interviewee A begins the description of this novel phenomenon in Turkish politics (MP

line 235-238). Opposing politics or particular politicians is at the moment something unacceptable. Some roles and characters got created, for instance the great leader, also interpreted as sultan issue, “who the Turkish society, the Turkish population needs” (A line 235-238). This personage guides to be “on the right path” (ibid). Another metaphor to illustrate a role who is admonishing and determining, of punishing, decisive character is the father figure (I line 98-99). It creates a discrepancy, a shifted position compared to a democratic society (I line 100-103). Of importance would be to govern in the way of a public official, instead of embodying this subjective role (I line 100-107).

Enemies were found in the people who reclaimed the streets during Gezi, who showed a disobedient behaviour (I line 43-45). Target became artists, intellectuals and creative workers (“labourers of art”, “real art producers” C line 419; I line 43-44). This process is named by F the “concept of war” which refers to a basic and essential mechanism, “to create an enemy and to focus to destroy it [...] use with weapon or without” (22.2. line 119-124). In this way it is ensured to exclude, eliminate and silence who does not belong or arrange with the dominant group and according to their thought (ibid).

Apart from being destructive, war is also a “constructive action” which “creates some very strong solidarity between the parties” (F 22.2. line 129-131). At the same time “war place” supports a consolidation of “many small problems” which “then create a homogeneity” (F 22.2. line 138-140).

Basically it refers to an intentionally utilised process of division which pushes and impacts profoundly into the society. In this way it becomes an instrument of guidance and dominance. As an action of purification the interior gets clarified and purified and who does not belong is expelled and eliminated (F 22.2. line 125-128). The interior delineates from an exterior other, which is separated by a boarder (ibid). In this separation lies the constitutive moment for a group, the phenomenon of demarcation (Vester 2006: 244).

The general impression and image has become gloomy and even more depressive (K line 94, 102). On the other side there is an opposition standing, which “completely burglarised, lost vigour and strength and feels extremely straitened, alone and powerless” (K line 83-86). Remaining is the sensation of being paralysed, the loss of influence and capacity of acting which results in a reduced, marginal policy discretion. Furthermore the other part, the civil society which is pluralistic and resistant faces

nowadays an unlike increasing strain and is exposed to major repression (L line 204-208). While the space turned to become narrow and strait, the risk got higher (L line 210-212) due to enacted arbitrariness.

Current oppressive mechanisms do request a reluctant position from the people, which is commented on by C with the words: “[...] I mean it's not safe and no one would dare to make a move” (line 467). The interview with G underlines and clearly emphasises that people are acting with reluctance. Although the interviewee still attends protests profound sentiments of intimidation, inflamed tensions and fanned fear are noticed. Nowadays gatherings are predictably connected with police presence and violence which was something novel in the beginning and became yet an expectation and habit (G line 115-118). Those structures evoke cautiousness and reluctance because the social climate is characterised of paranoia, scepticism and suspiciousness.

3.5 “PEOPLE DISCHARGED THEMSELVES SO WELL, THEY WENT SO HIGH AND THEN CRASHED SO LOW” – IMBALANCE

In some interviews the ranging and ambivalence between pessimism and keeping some last hopeful part in mind was underlined (G, F, A). Interviewee A reflects about the silence that followed the great upheaval, seeing this as an active utilisation to let the politicians talk, giving all these explanations and accusations. By doing so they unmask their own contradictions, lose themselves in constantly changing statements (A line 150-151). Hopeful about this, people might reveal and understand what lies behind the constructed stories, what kind of political and social function they fulfil (A line 163-165). The hope is that at a certain point understanding will lead to turn and “common sense will prevail” (A line 165).

An oxymoron is the fact that the political struggles the government and the president had to face did not lead to a weakening of their influence. Instead, having a personal analysis of interviewee G, it consolidated their power. In the end with some tactical aptness, the president and the government were able to turn and modify challenges into positive, beneficial outcomes for their plans (G line 260-271).

“The coup is making him more powerful, Gezi is making him more powerful, I don't know how, but or the bombings, or now the recent war” (G line 267-268). For G it is not

really an enigma, because he already suggests an explanation according to very personal observation. “He's using, manipulating everything to keep his, to consolidate his support, consolidate the regime. Unfortunately this authoritarian regime” (G line 268-270). The hope for interviewee G lies in the young generation and how they will act on an authoritarian system. Being “hopeful in the long run” (G line 243 ff.) means to believe in the people and their ability at some point to stand against repressive measures, will not let a repressive regime continue for ages (G line 242-247).

Interviewee F agrees to the statement of not being hopeful in the short run, but therefore focusing on long-term developments within the society (G line 243). “So I think life pushes us some solution, sort of. [...] I describe myself like a hopeful pessimist” (F line 79-80). Both interviewees, F and G, take in a waiting position. Only the society and generations can help themselves to get out of this patronizing status quo. This requires time to prove and initiate a developing process, counting on the young generation and their willingness to demand a different form of society and system than the current one. Orientating towards future developments is an option to handle, but brings up the need to ask how to get along with the situation in the present. Keeping hope for the long-term does not prevent to perceive the contemporary situation as having reached an impasse. This evokes sentiments such as hopelessness and feeling stuck. Interviewees expressed psychological aspects of post-Gezi with the following terms: post-trauma, psychological dilemma, frustration, collapse, isolation, depression, loss and disappointment.

The uncertain and insecure character of the aftermath shapes an atmosphere, which is of difficult and complicated status. Being pushed into a position of not being able to “really act on it” (C line 149) people are forced into passivity “just watching it happening” (C line 48). Passivity originates from “aggression and violence” (C line 47) that was used against the people during the resistance. In the aftermath it continuous to be exposed and enacted from state institutions, for instance the police, which creates successfully fear and intimidation. In this way, a narrow frame of acting is constructed which leaves people with the sentiment “not [being] capable of doing anything” (C line 47), of being trapped without capacity to react. For C this is “the most painful thing” (line 48). What the interviewee describes is a sneaking process which needs time to become aware that “this kind of regime” (line 44) comes slowly, subtly, coated in limitations for people and ensuring more agency for politicians.

The poked oppressive and aggrieving situation does consume and exhaust peoples personal resources, in an emotional and psychological sense. Beyond ambivalences, which range between hope and pessimism, the third interview contrasts with drawing a rough and intricate image of personal conditions and states of being.

While interview partner C moves on to tell about his observations and his personal analyses it delineates a downward spiral. Talking in an open way, in a profound trustworthy moment, he says directly what is on his mind with a strong, but emotional tone: “I can just start crying, because we lost basically everything that we owned to fascism. It's such a strong thing that really bonds you, it's like a bondage all over your body and you cannot get rid of it” (C line 128-133).

Interviewee C emphasises the sensing towards own changes in emotional state, the loss of inner resistance force which is dominated by a profound feeling of compulsion to surrender oneself to the situation. To surrender in the sense that in one's personal capacity, in emotional human resources there was a certain limit reached, a boundary crossed where things became unbearable.

“[...] it's like the whole thing is kind of collapsing, whole thing is collapsing. And as a person who lives there you cannot do anything, you just watch it happening. Then it's so much in your brain and in your heart that you can't anymore” (C line 240-242).

In the quote C connects closely hope as a motivation and motor to keep going in life, with plans and perspectives. Hope keeps you healthy and in motion, because there is still energy to move on. It is a sort of optimism that remains while there is hope. Having always the chance of different ways to follow and having in mind alternatives as options. But if you lose all that, the burden grows and sneaks into your life, into your thinking and causes a serious, heavy state of mind.

“I was also trying to resist. Stay there! Stay there! [...] there comes a moment that you lost hope, and when I realised that I lost hope, you loose hope, you loose everything! You can not dream any more! There is no future! There is the burden of the past and (.) you can not be present any more.” (C line 71-74)

In the end the burden unites with psychological struggles and can turn for an individual into a fight to stand against resignation, hopelessness and frustration. A political situation which “is a continuation of a lot of other political games” played years ago (C line 287-292) is still impacting on the social and personal sphere, making life a

challenge. Strength that people were trying to keep is slowly superseded by becoming unstable. “[...] our people were strong, [...] now they are falling” (C line 292).

A slow processing of instability is accompanied by a worsening and aggravation of the situation. Falling and becoming unstable climaxed in negative sentiments of impotence, powerlessness, isolation and loneliness. This process can be termed a downward spiral, carried by the loss of believe in hope, in change (C line 143) which culminates in the feeling of being paralysed, completely powerless.

“This isolation, I think it's a big process (.) and you start also feeling really lonely. You isolate yourself actually, somehow, but you also start feeling very lonely and you start to loosing all your believes about any hope, any change. [...] check the news [...] and every day there is something (.) worse happening, you know. And it's getting worse and worse.” (C line 141-143)

The cycle of negativity is pushing and moving forward. A heavy state of mind compounds by turbulences and challenges, which pushes individuals in a position of only reacting to newly occurring political and social circumstances and conditions. Stress and burden are caused by news and information, which do feed emotions of great negativity, draws people down and triggers despair. The worsening is noticeable in a general climate in the society and in the statement and comments from political side. “After 2013? Well, everything has been downhill from that time on [...]” (A line 175) which stands in hard contrast and contradiction to the before collectively experienced flow in the movement. This demands a process of realising and coping from the people. Interviewee A terms it a hard and rough crash, so that disillusion was an instant consequence after the hope and the spring that accompanied the resistance days (line 210-212). “Afterwards, in relation to trauma, there was a depression, right after, losing the spirit, the floating of the movement which kept the people going vanished and disappeared. After flying high, that was the rough crash” (A line 207-209).

The crash caused for A a huge depression after the excitement of glimpse and possibilities, the great high that was collectively experienced beforehand (A line 127,128). In this transition period no one knew what to expect and what might follow. The movement itself transformed from active resistance days with alternative life in the occupied park, demonstrations, clashes and fights to participatory meetings. Mechanisms of coping and self-protection were used during the Gezi period to overcome fear and to contribute to the movement activities, to take care of yourself and

other people (D line 230).

There was no moment or time to prepare for a personal transition. Participants, activists and protagonists were already going through change on a very personal basis. In this individual process people were on one's own as a consequence of the situation of an instantly, out of the blue beginning aftermath, the switch of worlds in a very short time. Unavoidably people's ability to arrange was asked. After an amazing resistance with surprises and unforeseen developments the immediate breach and subtle feeling of defeat resulted in an emotional crash and depression (F line 57).

“They enjoyed too much these days and after a while they get very disappointed, nothing stayed, nothing in the hand, everything got evaporated, kind of. So they get very depressed and they go very down and mostly many movement was very effected, many social movement are very effected from this depression. (...) And maybe it's a good time now, I don't know it's a kind of post-traumatic.” (F line 57-62)

The process that the interviewee depicts is that after the deep affecting depression in the social and personal sphere, a novel state initiated: post-traumatic. Furthermore, the political groups and collectives which were still working on their projects and issues could notice the effects of the depression. By now, it could mean that enough time passed, so it is giving place again to the people.

“Everything got evaporated” is a metaphor which illustrates several actions and behaviours inherent to the post-movement and aftermath time period. After the eviction of the park house painters were ordered by the municipality (Yücel 2014: p. 37). The state and politics had an interest in cleaning and erasing all the silent witnesses such as graffiti and slogans on the walls around the Gezi Park area (ibid). Urban art of drawing and phrases were testifying the humour and spirit of the movement (ibid). That is why it was one of the first objectives and priority to make them disappear and paint over (ibid). Whitewashing as measure to pretend as nothing ever happened (ibid).

On the other hand it is the aspect that “nothing stayed, nothing in the hand”, the lack of some concrete, rational, realistic outcome. Something that interviewee C describes as: “[...] you feel [...] you couldn't gain the thing, you lost it completely and you feel that you lost it completely, after it happens, you feel it more I can say.” (C line 118-119)

The convincement inherent to the strong moment of direct and immediate aftermath was superseded by a process of realising the traumas. The interviewee names for example dangerous situations, brutal violent acts, the loss of friends and emotional and

psychological wounds (C line 98-102). Seriousness and severity reaches to peoples innermost part, to the their core. It darkens, gets heavy and wistful.

“The whole thing is really creating a lot of big traumas in your soul and when you're resisting, when you're inside of the thing happening you don't feel it. There is a lot of adrenaline, there is a lot of people supporting each other, but then when you go back to your house after some days of resistance and tiredness, you realise what was happening.”
(C line 104-107)

What happens in the movement as moments of rush, spontaneity and instinct is back in the private environment a place to calm down and order thoughts and sentiments.

After the noise, turbulences and vivid life outside, moments of silence and being alone follow when turning back to inside, to the private sphere. An alienation process in order to realise, reflect and think did begin. The normal became questioned, even rejected.

To manage and handle the situation personally, social withdrawal and introversion were possible consequences. Interviewee C was witnessing and observing how the emotional state was turning into a downwards direction. The increase of anger and frustration led to more isolation and more separation concomitant with the loss of hope and a harsh cut with the movement memory. “[...] thinking and isolating ourself and getting more angry and frustrated and (.) loosing a bit more hope [...] and then people stopped talking about it, stopped thinking about it, stopped forgetting what was bringing us together” (C line 122-124). This underlines disenchantment, so that different issues came to the agenda, because in the short term there were no big moves expected as immediate result of the resistance movement.

Depression as a phase and social atmosphere was lying heavy over peoples interaction and perception. Trauma, disillusion, frustration and other profoundly discouraging sentiments were impacting and shaping for a long time the general climate. F points to a transformation that “now slowly it disappears again, but we are not in the starting point” which is contingent in some “optimistic future” vision (line 63-66). The depression clears up and forms itself to a post-traumatic status (line 62). What this means, only time will let people know.

3.6 “CREATING THE POSSIBLE” – PRESERVATION AND STRENGTH

Complex circumstances and aggrieving situations demand peoples' resources and personal strategies to arrange and cope with them. As instinctive reaction it happens automatically that when life conditions worsen and become threatening to look and search for individual solutions. These range from different meanings of mobility up to keeping and preserving liminal interstices (D'Orsi 2016: p. 22) which subsist in microcosms and sheltered spaces.

Depending on a level of knowledge and awareness, already as immediate consequence of Gezi, people decided to migrate (E line 204). Especially when they were sensing the unpredictability of the state by that time (E line 205-206). Migration became a possible solution and reaction. A collective named “Kopuntu” coined an appropriate umbrella term to name this phenomenon: new generation diaspora. In more colloquial speech, interviewee C gives it the notion of a “crazy brain drain” (line 30). According to her information “[...] around 35.000 Turkish people immigrated and those are mostly engineers, doctors, lawyers, artists, academicians...” (C line 66-67).

People that are deciding to leave and furthermore have connections and networks abroad are the ones considered as “upper class, professional people” (G line 237-238) with good education and job prospects. Interviewee G perceives this dynamic also in the close social network, “many of my friends are leaving, especially the academics” (line 238). Artists attempt to find residencies and interview partner G's general impression and perception is that people are “trying to escape the country” in contrast to “being here, being united and fighting against the government altogether” (G line 239-241). This might indicate that instead of having common solutions and embracing challenges in solidarity, people shift for oneself and bethink of one's own.

One coping strategy is to establish a distance by leaving the environment and context people got used to and were living in for ages. The possibility which was created is an individual solution: an escape, an urban exodus, a drop out from a toxic social and political life under tension. Circumstances and conditions pushed and forced to a more radical decision, to leave the comfort zone behind in order to be able to hazard a new beginning. A process of intrinsic cleaning, looking for ways to find balance again, to get

back to a status of even temper (C line 156).

“[...] So some people moved to south of Turkey [...] Antalya, Bodrum, finding a little farm, being trying to be in the nature, trying to align themselves with the nature and being happy with the nature and get cutting about the news. They don't follow the news any more to be able to keep the mind a bit more healthier. Or the others are (.) coming to Europe if they can [...]” (C line 156-161)

An important aspect is health. Since the news and the flow of information were deeply affecting the emotional and the sense of well-being, it was necessary to ban them from the personal sphere as much as possible. In this way people prevent to engage in a struggle of worsening news, deciding to hold them at a distance.

As the news do belong to the state, they write and filter their own reality (Gündüz 2013). The perception becomes focused on sugarcoated images or modified narratives, in regard of political and institutional favours (Gündüz). “Television is a sort of morphine. Every day one needs more of it, but it does kill one every day a little bit more [...]. People start losing sense for reality” (Gündüz). This shows that there are good reasons to ban and get rid of the news. Out of necessity they are pushed out of the private sphere. In contrast, the search for alternative and more independent information sources is supportive in the way to get an idea and provoke own opinions and conclusions.

In general, the aggravation and dramatisation of the political and social situation led to an increasing awareness of options. Migration became a possible solution, as well as creating a reconditioned understanding of mobility. Collective mobile experiences can induce a novel understanding for people of horizontal structures and involvement in social activism in their leisure time (H line 22-24). According to the agenda of their collective, they are using an approach which is named poly-aesthetic-activity and is a fusion of politic and aesthetic action (H line 121-124). Being connected to environmentalist groups and organisations the forest becomes the setting (H line 115, 128). The collective is organising for instance performances or a painting exhibition held in the nature place as artistic and political intervention (H line 128-130). What they try to reproduce are some experiments of non-violent poly-aesthetic-activities in contrast to classical, political actions (H line 130-133).

Classical means in this case having banners, a crowd and fights with the police under use of violence, which is the complete opposite to their invented approach (H line 131-

133). Their activity is able to gain attention and point to problematic issues in their direct environment. This also reverberates and reaches certain circles of people. Engagement and involvement as forms of activism are also strategies of coping in order to dedicate oneself to tasks and works that were chosen on one's own. It also widens the own understanding and puts thoughts in motion while experiencing a contrast to hierarchy and leads inescapable or in the best case to question personal attitudes as well (H line 253-260). The interviewee comments this process in the following way: “This is a cultural ecosystem [which] [...] started to affect people” (line 259-260) in a sustainable manner. People who are part of the collective benefit from shared activities and learning while practising. What the collective was able to establish within their group and meetings is the rejection of hierarchy among them and underline in this way that “everybody is as important as the other” (H line 254-255). They managed to create an interaction on equal terms. It is a sort of breath and free space in contemporary narrow conditions.

In contrast to the collective who did use their resources, capacities and capabilities to establish creative leeway and space to follow and realise in unhampered manner own ideas and projects, attention should be drawn on how another artist abandons and copes with an oppressive and depressive situation.

“They trap me, the country itself is trapping me, and is cutting my arms and legs like, I don't have enough space to express my art. I cannot help nobody. Another artist friend of mine said to me 'go, just continue doing. And do it wherever you can, but go as long as you can, like, always move. Don't let things kill you, trap you, arrest you, harass you, whatever. Always take good care of yourself and always go and spread the word. Go on, create and go on.' Like, this is also another way of resisting. It's not running away, it's creating the possible. So, my focus to be in Berlin is also about that. Some of us will tell the stories..”
(D line 437-444)

Interview partner D uses strong words and metaphors in order to voice and give meaning to the sentiments and self-perception. His way of working and doing arts is not adequate to norms that are expected from political side. Nowadays politics in Turkey penetrate into spheres of life and occupation. As a result, the personal becomes inevitably political. The system in Turkey is rigid and restrictive. It aims only to allow and implement a certain standard which is compatible with the political agenda, orientation and ideology of the contemporary government.

In order to discipline the people according to the imagined and requested norms, there

are various intimidating and repressive measures which lead to a standstill in the art field. “There is more destroyed and damaged than personal biographies. The entire artistic development of a country is reverberated, arrested and blocked” (B line 55-57). Expressing the sentiment and perception of being and feeling trapped does connote to find yourself in a paralysed position. Restrictiveness with its straight, strict and stiff corset of norms, moral principles and silenced, censored possibilities of expression are effective measures to hamstring.

The advice of the friend means an act to disentangle oneself out of this narrow, incisive situation which takes his room to breathe (which does smother him). Suggesting to be in motion and never remain stuck in a trapping moment enables the expressive artistic mind to create the possible. This means in his case to locate and accommodate in a new environment. Nevertheless, always keep his own chosen task and work as an artist as priority, tell the stories, be with and learn from people and listen carefully to them.

In order to remain healthy and to find a way out of the trap, interviewee D left and had the chance to move on somewhere else. With the expression “I cannot help nobody” he reflects on the position as an artist in society: contributing, inviting to think, discussing, arguing on themes, opening angles and perspectives, putting them in motion. The interviewees artistic understanding is based on this approach: being a bridge (D line 119). Using a bridge position as being an artist and an exact observer within the Turkish society, implies a challenge to preserve artistic licence and therefore artistic existence, defend it against a politically requested normativity.

Creating the possible is another way of resisting (D line 442-443) which means to comprehend resistance as artistic assignment. Interviewee B continues this statement when she formulates the following thought: momentum and importance lies in “the personal conduct and the openness in the search for forms of resistance in a repressive system” (B line 64-67). Artists apprehend their professional nature as a constant relocation according to contemporary conditions, developments and circumstances. This results in a continuing search for spaces although the frame of the system is extremely limiting. Out of necessity, for artists this means introversion and withdrawal in the sense of hiding oneself away in a cocoon, surviving somehow (B line 53-54). This poses consequently the question, “how do I survive artistically in my inner exile?” (B line 59). There are various ways and personal solutions to act individually or collectively on

restrictive measures to be able to undermine their impact and effects.

A repressive system demands strategies to defy and cope with politically and socially drawn boundaries in order to provide and secure activism and progressive, supportive ideas. Tactics are needed to preserve capabilities in microcosms.

This is applicable especially in teaching positions, to stay inside the field of pedagogy and education. "It's worth it trying to keep going in an education place, in order to prevent leaving the young individuals to the hands of other people" (I line 193-196). Interview partner I reports from the experience of one friend, an example of how to subsist within the system. Being in the system means for this case to remain in teaching positions, assimilate to the outside but still interpose different viewpoints in a sheltered, hidden way. Although this friend witnesses that the student body is changing, that also the students assimilate and align, she is able to keep her microcosm (I line 203-204).

For the teacher it means "[...] a small circle where she uses her competences to be thought-provoking and set the students thinking. She does not negate their comments and statements by saying it's wrong, instead she asks questions!" (I line 204-206). In this way, she established her own structure and methods to interact with the students.

For instance, the teaching friend does not force a bias of right and wrong, instead she uses education as a safe space to give impulses and suggestions. Moreover she shows interest in their opinions and ideas and asks about their background knowledge.

This might also trigger questions in them as well. This example illustrates that it can be appreciating and necessary, especially in oppressive times, to care about room for communication and interaction. That is a way to pave a ground for debate in making use of questions and react, instead of ignoring and acting indifferently. Through the tense and restrictive atmosphere and the changes the education system was undergoing, she became more sensitive and cautious in order to keep her position. Caution is necessary in order to prove to one's surrounding to be part of the system and work in the expected manner. That is how one can consolidate his/her position and still use small, gradually widening niches to preserve thinking, questioning and ensure information that are beyond mainstream sources.

Sheltered spaces and microcosms form safe areas where people can still hold on to creative leeway. For interviewee E "[...] the spaces, in which people encounter and discuss, probably they became less or retired into private spheres" (line 176-178). This

view is supported by interviewee I when he shares how he perceives the actions that are happening under the surface of repression. Retirement to the private means for I that it is a conscious decision to let activities become more invisible and liminal in order to have “this reliable, familiar space” which is needed (I line 182).

Issues in this case are self-protection, self-security and “protection of those spaces” as well (I line 183). Preservation can only be managed and succeeding if certain precautions are considered and a sensitive awareness is accompanying the activities.

“The more cautious I do certain actions, the more there are chances to carry and continue those actions. If I do act thoughtless and show up around very much combative, it's quite possible that it causes negative, harmful effects” (I line 184-186).

What is described with retirement into private spheres (E line 178) changes its meaning when it is named withdrawal and introversion from visibility and open access.

Reliable spaces can only be kept by taking good care in order to preserve them. This requires maintaining a low profile and cautious planning by slow degrees. That is a way to guarantee shelter to the people, to the safe, secured space and the possible actions held in it (I line 190-191).

The same applies for organisations in the art and cultural sector that perceive their occupational alignment in working on various themes and issues with social, political and historical relations. With this intention they are touching delicate scopes, nevertheless this is part of their educational mandate in their self-understanding.

A delicate position of in-betweenness due to the occupation is also experienced and described by interviewee G. In order to unite cultural and artistic interests, idealism and occupational alignment, precautions need to be taken. Interviewee G who is working for an art and culture organisation voices the following scenario, when they had an exhibition on Gezi. Although it was a documenting and informative collection to illustrate the chronology of the events, the interviewee is underlining and excluding that “it wasn't like a propaganda thing” (G line 32-33). This shows that he considers automatically various modes of thought and public image that might have taken and accused the documenting, informative character to a suspicious act of propaganda.

“But when we had that exhibition, we didn't put the banner outside, for example. As the neighbourhood is very (..) very much against Gezi uprising. So we didn't put the banner outside and we didn't serve alcohol, because alcohol is already an issue in this neighbourhood. So we kept it low profile to outside, but it was very popular, many people

visited it.” (line 34-38)

Reinterpretation and misinterpretation relate closely and have the ability to evoke harmful consequences. To be able to hold this exhibition they avoided any kind of provocation, risk and negative impression to the outside. Therefore that the neighbourhood has only less acceptance for Gezici and the whole initiative of the protest, the art organisation was in need to contrive ways and means. In this sense, establishing and preserving a safe space and area while considering the tense situation with the neighbourhood.

To not put a safe and sheltered space at risk, there are several techniques to keep them closed and only open to reliable people. It becomes more introverted, exclusive and retreats to the private sphere. Being in art circles means also to have liability towards the people of that group, collective and the space which needs to be preserved and taken care of. “Art and subculture remains within the circle, in their own created and established context” where it is “almost invisible” to the outside (A MP line 121-124). “Art work they do for themselves and share with people who are having the same mindset” (A MP line 121-124).

The scene is kept in interior spaces, following the awareness of security and keeping creative, free, unwritten spaces alive. Meeting in private environments and in private comfort has the advantage of providing places for debate, discussion, sharing and exchanging. Interests, knowledge and opinions encounter there which offer inspiration, impulses and updates “within the circles and same mindsets” (A MP line 134).

Interview partner A's vision of the art scene is influenced by the idea that the resistance-movement could have gone underground (A line 23) in the way to initiate “an art movement” (line 118), “an art wave, like a new way of looking at things” (line 88-89) which “could have taken art in a different level” (line 118-119). Nevertheless, the actual situation is that “there is no active role for the arts right now, just the sharing and keeping people inspired” (A MP line 132-133). He is mourning the potential that could have been possibly preserved if the resistance-movement would have turned into an underground movement (A line 87-90).

That the art scene is complex and ranges far is commented and told by other interviewees who were sharing about their professional life and approaches which were beyond established, elite understandings of stage and audience.

Interviewee C is mentioning about his profession experience in arts in the past. When talking how art was produced in Turkey, it is referred to the prior situation until 2010. By that time, Istanbul was the European Capital of Culture (C line 365). Being member of a collective who built up a studio, dance company and choreographed productions, all their art labour was based on no money. But there is no regret in her words, more pride: “This is how art was produced, but we did many things” (C line 371).

Besides telling about the corrupted system in the art sector, he mentions on his vision and the potential that he sees in art, also for a country that has fast devaluing methods. Seeing the professional background of interviewee C, it strengthens the approach that art is something on the basis, instead of connecting it to prestige and elite. He names it “real art producers” and “labourers of art” (line 419), a basic need to breathe, feel, express, learn, explore, be curious and discuss.

“[...] they could have accepted many nice projects that could build up a new country, a country full of art. [...] we had also projects like we would perform for free in every high-school in Anatolia, because dance is a common language, [...] everybody finds something connected in dance. [about her work, piece] [...] It's something understandable.” (C line 383-389)

The interviewee puts a strong emphasis on the vision of a country, a society of a different kind, where art is given a position and is granted recognition. Art would perform several functions, for example to create a sense for the common, for sharing, exchanging, using art as space to experiment and a learning field. Consequently, this would mean to turn away from a stuck and narrow understanding of culture and art, to move beyond.

The informal educational part makes this high-school performance idea very precious to her, although it is an exhaustive work therefore that teenage audience means also being in a challenge. “[...] BUT between 500 there are 50 who are interested and who are taking something. [...] That's a way to create audience, to create interest in art and getting connected for people [...]” (C line 393-396).

This idea is based on working with the young generation and their potential in order to empower and to encourage responsibility, self-determination, independent thinking and action. It is a created space which helps people to get in touch with each other and which demands involvement and debate of life issues and themes. Furthermore, interviewee G is emphasising the potential of the youth, which should be used to

educate and train them in culture and arts to promote an emerging understanding and need for democracy and peace (G line 19-23). Interviewee G points to a transformation of the society with implemented and embedded arts as ways of expression. The role of art could mean for a generation to derive strength, inspiration and thought from art. In this sense art is understood as process of negotiation, which offers situations and moments of encounter with prior unknown perspectives of diverse contents.

“[...] what an artist is showing to its audience, an artist should be [...] really critical and objective, should take and see and observe, [...] to have a word to say from the stage to the people, a perspective [...]” (D line 95-99). Artists are giving thoughts a form and a voice. They make them meaningful and listened to. Engagement in life issues require attentive senses and powers of observation. His artist self-understanding is based on “the Common!” (D line 125). He seeks always for finding a common language and for him “It's Art!” (D line 132). As artist the position is to witness and to tell the stories, which is one of his main targets “to spread the word” (D line 283-286).

Art and artists occupy a particular position in society, having capabilities to verbalise, mirror, criticise and subvert in a subtle way established repressive structures. “[...] it's a risk for institutions and for the artist to say things very directly. At the end it is usually indirect. Art has this advantage of saying things in an indirect way, in a more abstract way. Artists are doing it in one way or another” (G line 80-83).

Even what may be perceived or defined “to be autonomous art is also politically situated, even when not overtly declared to be so” (Finley 2018: 570). The advantage is that artists are negotiating spaces and creative leeways for their own ways of expression. “Artistic creations are never neutral. Implicitly or explicitly, they take a stance positioning themselves in one way or the other within current artistic, cultural, and political discourses” (ibid).

4. SUBSUMPTION, CONCLUSION AND PROSPECT

First, while planning the analysis and interpretation I had a different structure in mind. Initially I wanted to reveal the trajectory of the aftermath, illustrating the dramatisation and aggravation of the conditions and situation. Somehow, it is still near to but also differing regarding the content. “Awareness” shows the essences and essentials which were narrated by the interviewees. The speech utilises meaningful language and words, finding idioms and synonyms to describe their personal interpretation of the Gezi resistance. Surprise is revealed about the coalition, a functioning autonomous space within a repressive system and how careful interaction was enacted.

They found approaches to negotiate also moments of conflict and tension during the resistance movement. With reference to specific termini for the protesters the topic of speech and language is opened. In “Awareness” it is argued that out of a hegemonic position the political side imposed and ascribed devaluing words to prevent attention and recognition for the protests. At the same time it could be shown how the opposition made use and transformed the dominant discourse for their own purposes.

In contrast to the emphasis the interviewees make on the coalition and collective experience, there is the authoritarian and violent act from political side and state institutions. The first chapter is closed by a short abstract which puts Gezi interpretations in question for the reason, that it becomes glorified and portentously. “Contingency” describes and argues about the guiding thread of great vagueness and uncertainty inherent to the immediate phase of post-movement and post-action. The euphoria from the beginning of the aftermath was through a sneaking process superseded by disenchantment. To keep the unpredictability inherent to this phase in perspective, the conviction naturally transformed. Expectations met with real circumstances and began to collapse.

The chapter “Disenchantment” highlights the process of political agility which was characterised in the first place by the forum activity with participatory approaches and the aim to implement a different political discourse by opposing the political mainstream system. Stating more restrained opinions and estimations, the interviewees saw the factual fail to accomplish dialogue through the forums. Therefore that the

gatherings remained on a communicational level concrete outcomes were missing. However, the activity mirrored and brought to light the split, the fragile coexistence of individuals within the Turkish society. Polarisation and division have the basement in the history of the country. Still it can be reactivated and politically instrumentalised, which is done for the reason to consolidate and concentrate power. The reproduction of stigmatising language is corroborating a dichotomy in supporter and enemy, aggravating the polarisation which leads to more conflictual, tense potential.

As 'conflict lines' that is how one of the interviewees titles the division and "Conflictual Atmosphere" being interwoven in the social status quo. The tension of the atmosphere and situation increased and had come to a crisis which proceeds to turn into an impasse. If the conditions become more threatening, simultaneously this requests peoples ability to take precautions, adapt to the circumstances of paranoia, scepticism, arbitrariness and suspiciousness. Political, social key events and pivotal moments sharpened the image of intractability in recent years.

The last two chapters of the analysis have a shift to psychological and personal spheres in regard of emotions and coping strategies. "Imbalance" elucidates how political, restrictive measures and mechanisms created a narrow frame in which people attempt to arrange and systematize. This puts them in the dilemma to be paralysed and powerless, trapped and forced into the position of watching it happening for the reason that there is no solution or possible way for now to act on it.

Self-confidence and empowerment which was gained during the resistance disappeared and let come up resignation, hopelessness and frustration. This results in emotional unstable states of being and uncertainty how to cope the dilemma people were forced in by the circumstances and by political measures.

In the chapter "Preservation and Strength" the question is posed how to establish, ensure and preserve interstices and creative leeways within a repressive system, how to keep normality while being challenged with inappropriate normativity. One interviewee names it "creating the possible" which is multi-faceted in approach and solution. According to the professional scope those safe spaces are created in different ways. Staying in the official system requests the implementation of personal microcosms to continue, being preserved under the surface of repression and still existing.

The trajectory of the aftermath shows a line that is moving in downward direction.

Interviewee J was stating the “roller coaster” effect which means that the political situation is of great unpredictable character by now. Although the power is now concentrated and becomes constantly manifest, the political side uses force and does not govern through consent (G). Being in Istanbul always takes me on a visual journey. Last year before the election in June 2018 there were interesting, metaphorical visuals, poster, banner and announcements around Taksim and Gezi Park. The eyes were sensing and the mind began to analyse and interpret what I just noticed or recognised before. It is like a coverage of small, subtle indicators suggestive positive perception and connotation of politicians, parties and so on.

One group of interviewees that I did not include in the research was the young generation, the youth that is the hope for some interviewees. As I learned in the election night in June last year, they feel deeply powerless. How the results were presented, the speeches that were broadcast, body language and tone of the politicians, the effect of it was of psychologically manipulating and intimidating character. This generation is smart enough to reveal what is behind, but at the moment they find themselves in a silenced position as well with a big question mark, how to act on it.

While being with friends and new acquaintances, whenever we shift to politics to talk gets heavy, the mind grey veiled, the lightness disappears from the face. They are having plans and visions, relating it to mobility and creation of personal and professional space. Censorship and cautiousness reached the level of daily basis. Every step might be thought carefully not to risk any harm or impacting consequences.

Having friends dealing with a case in court does involve the whole network of friends and social contacts, everyone is helping and supportive. Therefore they experience the effect on first hand, witnessing the possibilities of arbitrariness by state institutions and entities. One option might be keeping a distance to media, to social platforms to avoid the flow and storm of news and information. This might take off slightly the heaviness and burden that is imposed on people.

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