Article

Beyond Muslim identity: Opinion-based groups in the Gezi Park protest

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Abstract

Media depicted Turkish Gezi Park protests as a clash between secularists and Islamists within a majority-Muslim country. Extending a social identity approach to protests, this study aims (a) to distinguish the protest participants in terms of their opinion-based group memberships, (b) to investigate how their religious identification and their group membership were associated with democratic attitudes. Six hundred and fifty highly educated urban young adult participants were surveyed during the protest. Latent class analysis of participants' political concerns and online and offline actions yielded four distinct opinion-based groups labeled "liberals," "secularists," "moderates," and "conservatives." Looking at the intersection of the participants' group identities with their Muslim identification, we observed that the higher conservatives' and moderates' religious identification, the less they endorsed democratic attitudes, whereas religious identification made little or no difference in liberals' and secularists' democratic attitudes. Our findings of distinct groups among protest participants in a majority-Muslim country challenge an essentialist understanding of religion as a homogeneous social identity.

The 2013 Gezi Park protests in Istanbul were sparked by the destruction of a city park to build a shopping mall. The protests quickly spread throughout Turkey and became news worldwide. International media depicted the protests as a clash between secularists and Islamists in a majority-Muslim country. Looking beyond a religious cleavage, the study aims (a) to delineate different groups of protest participants in terms of their opinion-based group identities and (b) to predict their democratic attitudes from the intersection of their religious identification with these group identities.

Our study builds on social identity research on the emergence of opinion-based identities (Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007; McGarty, Bliuc, Thomas, & Bongiorno, 2009; Thomas,

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McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). This research shows that participants in action need not identify with preexisting activist groups, yet opinion-based group memberships can emerge from a common stance on a specific issue (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009). Using this research as a heuristic framework, we propose that the Gezi Park protest gave rise to plural opinion-based groups who are aligned on selective issues or concerns, such as protecting the environment, women's rights, or *laïcité*, through participants' engagement in specific actions. Our study derives different opinion-based groups bottom-up from participants' common concerns (why do they engage in the protest) and their online and offline actions during the protest (how do they engage) via latent class analysis.

Next we aim to explain participants' support for democracy from the intersection of their religious identification as Muslims with their opinion-based group memberships. Whereas religious identification is generally associated with less support for democratic attitudes such as freedom of speech (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Verkuyten & Slooter, 2008), we argue that the political implications of the same religious identity depend on its intersection with different group identities (for intersectionality of gender and ethnicity, see, Deaux, 2001). Specifically, the association of Muslim identification with democratic attitudes should differ between distinct group identities. Democratic attitudes refer to support for democracy as a regime (Ariely & Davidov, 2011), freedom of speech (Verkuyten & Slooter, 2008), nonauthoritarianism (Feldman, 2003), and positive attitudes towards minority groups (Verkuyten, 2007).

This study goes beyond previous research on collective action by studying the emergence and the multiplicity of opinion-based group identities inductively (beyond a single group identity or a dichotomy of supporters vs. nonsupporters) and by covering both online and offline action forms (beyond a narrow focus on direct actions or intentions). Finally, this study de-constructs an essentialist representation of Muslim identity in Western media as a threat to democracy. In what follows we introduce the Gezi Park protests and our theoretical framework.

The Context of the Gezi Park Protests

The Gezi Park protests started on May 26, 2013 as a small peaceful protest in Istanbul against the destruction of Gezi Park. On May 30 and 31, several hundreds of protesters set up tents in the park (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013). On May 30 at 5:00 a.m. the police set fire to the tents. A few days later the protests escalated dramatically with 3.6 million people participating in 98% of Turkish cities. They lasted for about a month (for a detailed account, see, Postmes, van Bezouw, & Kutlaca, 2014).

Two surveys at the beginning of the protests of over 3,000 participants each document the backgrounds, preferences, and demands of early activists (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; Farro & Demirhisar, 2014; KONDA Research & Consultancy, 2013). They were mostly educated young adults, as many women as men; 54% had not previously participated in any protest; and 70–80% did not lean towards any political party (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; KONDA Research & Consultancy, 2013). The Gezi protests emulate contemporary mass protests like the Occupy movement (Milkman, 2014) as bottom-up social movements attracting a wide range of participants; voicing concerns about lifestyles, liberties, and values; and reaching out to traditionally "apolitical" youth (Farro & Demirhisar, 2014; Gümüş & Yılmaz, 2015).

Opinion-Based Group Identities

Building on recent research on opinion-based group identities (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2009), our first aim was to delineate subgroups of protest participants with similar concerns and action forms. Social identity research explains collective action from activist identification (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) or "politicized collective identities" (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). However, contemporary

mass movements such as those in Madrid, Cairo, New York, or Istanbul attracted millions of people: a new generation of mostly urban and educated youth with no record of political activism or interest in conventional politics (Milkman, 2014). Rather than acting on prior politicized identities, participants in mass protests form opinion-based identities: "They simply share a common understanding and stance on a certain issue and hence come to share an opinion-based group membership" (McGarty et al., 2009, p. 849). To map opinion-based group memberships during large-scale Gezi Park protests, our online survey includes peripheral participants as well as core activists.

We go beyond existing research on opinion-based groups in two ways. First, as contemporary mass protests connect various people, there should be plural opinion-based groups in a protest. Most research on opinion-based groups takes a binary approach: whether people support or oppose an opinion (government, Bliuc et al., 2007; a specific movement, Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012; a militant group leader, Thomas et al., 2015). Yet, mass protests mobilize distinct groups with different stances on several issues. For instance, the Occupy movement spilled over into multiple groups from anticapitalists, environmentalists, LGBTQ, to undocumented migrants (Milkman, 2014).

Secondly, we examine configurations of different concerns with specific action forms to elucidate processes of selective alignment through joint participation in collective action. Research into opinion-based groups suggests that they form clear action norms, yet group identities are thought to precede action (Thomas et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2009). Especially in mass protests, however, action may also create new group alignments (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996, 2001). Thus, in-depth retrospective interviews with activists about their experiences during the Gezi protests revealed emergent identities around new alignments across different concerns (Acar & Uluğ, 2016). As our study analyzes configurations of political concerns and actions during the protests (no retrospective

data), it does not imply a strict separation or directionality between concerns and actions.

Political Concerns and Actions

Political concerns—grievances (Klandermans, 1997) or perceived injustice (van Zomeren et al., 2008)—are well-documented triggers of collective action (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Our study contextualizes concerns as perceived threats or violations of values, such as lifestyle concerns, motivating protest participation—in line with a "value path" to political action (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Such value-based concerns better predict current political protests than instrumental concerns such as economic motives (van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & van Dijk, 2009). In this study, concerns refer to general issues in collective action research such as democratic deficits, environmental problems, violations of women's or minority rights, and context-bound issues such as _laïcité_ versus religious threat (rising Islamism) or national unity versus ethnic threat (separatism) (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013). Additionally, protest-based concerns—"incidental disadvantage" (van Zomeren et al., 2008) or "suddenly imposed grievances" (Walsh, 1981)—refer to issues arising directly from the protest including police brutality and authoritarian government attitudes.

We conceive of specific actions people take to express their concerns as a key performative dimension of their group memberships (Klein, Russell, & Reicher, 2007; Reicher, 2001). "Collective action" is defined as action for a collective purpose on behalf of a group to improve its conditions (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Most collective action research has a narrow focus on attitudinal support or "direct" actions (or intentions) like participating in demonstrations or strikes (van Zomeren et al., 2008). We broaden the scope from direct or street-level action to indirect actions such as hanging flags from windows, honking cars, switching lights on and off, or banging pots and pans. Indirect actions deserve attention as they are less costly

than direct action, lowering the threshold for nonactivists to join protests. They are increasingly popular in contemporary protests, as in the 2011 prodemocracy protests in China where participants were holding jasmine flowers (Clemm, 2011).

We also asked about online activism. Social media are an effective action means to spread news (of meetings or emergencies) and to raise awareness about protests. While online protesting such as signing on-line petitions sometimes precludes offline protesting (Schumann & Klein, 2015), online interaction can also set the scene for offline action; and it is an action means in itself (McGarty, Thomas, Lala, Smith, & Bliuc, 2014; Thomas et al., 2015). Due to the censored coverage of the Gezi Park protests by traditional Turkish media, social media became all the more important. Most protesters (69%) learnt about the protests via social media (KONDA Research & Consultancy, 2013). Therefore, online activism was an integral part of the political action repertoire in the Gezi Park protests.

To conclude, rather than relying on preconceived identification either with social categories (e.g., minority groups) or activist groups (e.g., feminist, trade unionist), we cover a broad range of political concerns and actions in the protests to inductively derive multiple opinion-based group memberships among protest participants.

Intersectionality and Democratic Attitudes

The second aim was to predict participants' democratic attitudes from the intersection of their religious identification with inductively derived opinion-based identities (Deaux, 2001). In this way, we empirically question the reification of Muslim religious identity as antithetical to democratic citizenship in international media and public discourse. Most research on intersectionality refers to intersections of race and gender, showing that the same gender identity has different implications for different racial or ethnic groups (Deaux, 2001). Similarly, the same Muslim identity may carry different political meanings across

different groups in the Gezi Park protest. As the contents of specific opinion-based groups are not predefined, we have no specific hypotheses as to the nature of their interaction with religious identification.

Recent research in European migration contexts relating the religious identification of Muslim immigrant minorities to democratic political attitudes and engagement yields mixed findings (Fleischmann, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2013; Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008; Simon & Ruhs, 2008). As distinct from the Turkish context, the religious identity of Muslim immigrant citizens is a minority identity, which sets them apart from the majority population. To have a democratic political voice, this minority identity has to be seen as compatible with the majority national identity (Simon & Ruhs, 2008).

Looking at the dynamic associations between religious identity and forms of democratic collective action or online activism, we underline the cultural constructions of these variables and their interrelationships. Turkey is an interesting context because Muslim identity is a majority identity and is internally diverse. Islam is more established and integrated into the political and societal culture. Consequently, people have different understandings of what Islam or being Muslim mean (see Tessler, 2002, for research on the broader context of the Arab world). This creates a strategic angle to de-amalgamate the Muslim identity of most participants in the Gezi Park protests and to challenge a common representation of Islam and Muslim identity as a threat to democracy in Western media.

Method

Participants

During the first 3 weeks of the Gezi Park protests, 650 participants took part in an online survey (June 5–19, 2013). Mass protests began around May 31—though gatherings in the park had begun a week earlier—and ended by June 2013. Our purposeful sample targeted anyone concerned about Gezi Park protests including protesters and strong

to weak supporters. Participants were reached through social media, for example, via Facebook and Twitter (posting with trending hashtags). The effective sample consisted of highly educated young adults (96% university students/graduates, 75% 17- to 30-year-olds) from big cities (Istanbul 62%, Ankara 11%, İzmir 8%, other cities 6%, abroad 14%), and slightly more women (60%) than men. The sample covers a wide range of participants and supporters during Gezi Park protests and its composition is similar to those reported in face-to-face surveys with larger samples (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; KONDA Research & Consultancy, 2013).

Measures

Political concerns. Concerns were mainly value-based (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) or protest-based (Walsh, 1981) with additional instrumental concerns, covering and supplementing common grievances in collective action research (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) with relevant context-specific concerns such as *laïcité*. The specific contents of concerns were derived from early surveys of the Gezi Park protests (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; KONDA Research & Consultancy, 2013). Fourteen reasons for supporting (or opposing) Gezi Park protests were listed and people indicated to what extent they felt concerned on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Value-based concerns (*n* = 9) referred to perceived threats or violations of values in various domains. Protest-based concerns (*n* = 3) were about authoritarianism, police brutality, and violent protesters. Instrumental concerns (*n* = 2) were about economy and foreign policy (for exact wordings of the concerns, see Endnote 1).[1] Higher scores indicated more grievances.

Political action types. Attitudinal support was measured by two items with 5-point scales: "To what extent do you support the protests?" (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *totally supportive*), and "To what extent do you oppose the protests?" (1 = *totally opposed*, 5 = *not at all*). Both items were averaged to indicate "support," $r(639) = .87$, $p < .001$, $M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.93$.

Direct action ("To what extent did you participate actively in the protests and demonstrations by being there?") and indirect action ("Did you participate in any other ways to support the protest such as honking your cars, banging pots and pans, turning on and off lights, putting Turkish flags, etc.?") were measured separately with 8-point frequency scales (1 = *none*, 2 = *a few hours*, 3 = *half a day*, 4 = *1–2 days*, 5 = *3–4 days*, 6 = *5–6 days*, 7 = *7–8 days*, 8 = *more*). Direct action (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = 2.25) and indirect action (*M* = 4.01, *SD* = 2.59) were included as separate action forms, $r(641) = .38$, $p < .001$.

Social media usage was assessed for Facebook and Twitter with two items each: "Approximately how much time per day did you use Facebook/Twitter…" "to follow news and updates?" or "to share/post news and updates about the protests in Turkey?" using 7-point frequency scales (1 = *never*, 2 = *0–1 hours*, 3 = *1–3 hours*, 4 = *3–5 hours*, 5 = *5–7 hours*, 6 = *7–10 hours*, 7 = *more than 10 hours*). Following and sharing items were highly correlated for Facebook $r(639) = .83$, $p < .001$ and for Twitter $r(621) = .84$, $p < .001$, and hence were averaged to construct two variables: Facebook use (*M* = 4.52, *SD* = 1.83) and Twitter use (*M* = 3.97, *SD* = 2.22), $r(630) = .38$, $p < .001$.

Muslim identification. Religious identification as Muslim was measured with one item (Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013) on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very strongly*): "To what extent do you identify as Muslim?"

Democracy. Support for democracy was measured with four items (European Values Survey, 2008) with 5-point scales (1 = *disagree*, 5 = *agree*; α =. 73): "Although it has some problems, democracy is better than other regimes," "Economy doesn't fare well in a democracy" (reverse coded), "Democracies are ridden with indecision, everybody has an opinion" (reverse coded), and "Democracies are not efficient in establishing public order" (reverse coded).

Freedom of Speech. Support for freedom of speech was measured with four items using 5-point scales (1 = *disagree*, 5 = *agree*; α = .77): "In public,

we must be able to say what we think, even if we run the risk of offending religious people," "In public, we must be able to criticize politicians, including the Prime Minister," "In public, we must be able to criticize leading historical figures, including Atatürk,"[2] "It should always be possible to show illustrations which make fun of whichever religion on television and in newspapers." They were adapted from surveys among Muslim immigrants in Europe (Swyngedouw, Phalet, Baysu, Vandezande, & Fleischmann, 2008).

Authoritarianism. Support for authoritarianism was measured with three items with 5-point scales (1 = *disagree*, 5 = *agree*; α =. 71; Weber & Federico, 2007): for example, "In the era we live in, it is necessary to lead the country with an iron fist."

Positive intergroup attitudes. The social distance question was used to measure positive attitudes towards minority groups (European Values Study, 2008): "Whom you would not like to have as a neighbor?" Answers were dummy-coded: 1 = *would not want*, 0 = *does not matter*. Religious minorities (Alevis, Christians, Jews, and atheists), ethnic minorities (Kurds, Romans), and so-called marginalized minorities in the Turkish context (LGBTS, people who drink alcohol) were listed. These groups formed three factors, thus three distance scores from religious, ethnic, and marginalized minorities were calculated (range 0–1). A lower score indicated more positive attitudes.

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations of the study variables.

Control variables. Age was used as a control variable for democratic attitudes (M = 27.20, SD = 7.04, range 17–64 years). Gender and city were dropped from the analysis since they had no significant effects.

Results

Data analysis involved two parts. First a latent class analysis (LCA) was conducted using Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012). Similar to factor analysis assuming existence of latent dimensions,

LCA assumes existence of latent groups of subjects and that respondents within the same group respond to items similarly (McCutcheon, 1987). Political concerns and action types were entered into the analysis to delineate different opinion-based group identities of the participants in the Gezi Park protests. Second, a series of regression analyses were conducted with these identities and Muslim identification and their statistical interactions as independent variables and democratic attitudes as dependent variables.

Opinion-Based Group Identities

In deciding on the number of groups in LCA, we examined models with up to five latent classes, and selected a four-class model by comparing the interpretability and statistical soundness of different models (McCutcheon, 1987; see Table 2 for fit statistics). The four-class model compared to the three-class model gave better fit statistics (lower Bayesian information criterion [BIC] and Akaike information criterion [AIC] and higher entropy) and significantly improved the model fit over the three-class model using the bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT; Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007). Comparing the four-class model to the five-class model, although the BLRT suggested significant improvement, other model fit indices showed little—if any—improvement in terms of log-likelihood, AIC, or BIC values (figures in the supplementary material); and the four-class model had higher entropy. We concluded that the four-class model was the best fit for our data.

The four different profiles of participants were labeled as "liberal" (20%), "secularist" (42.3%), "moderate" (28.4%), and "conservative" (9.3%) identities.[3] The choice of these labels was driven by the contents of distinctive concerns and actions of each group. These identities can be briefly defined as follows: "liberals" are those who defend liberties for everyone, including the LGBT and ethnic minorities; "secularists" are those concerned with national unity and *laïcité*, "moderates" were labeled as such because their concerns and actions showed selective overlap

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation of study variables.

Variables of the Study	% or M (SD)	CNT2	CNT3	Muslim	Support for democracy	Freedom of speech	Authoritarianism	Intergroup attitudes: Distance from		
								Religious minorities	Ethnic minorities	Marginalized minorities
CONTRAST1: Liberal–secularist vs. moderate–conservative	62.5 vs. 37.5%	$-.23^{**}$	$-.42^{**}$	$-.30^{**}$	$.12^{**}$	$.42^{**}$	$-.27^{**}$	$-.22^{**}$	$-.13^{**}$	$-.25^{**}$
CONTRAST2: Liberal vs. secularist	20 vs. 42.6%		$.10^{*}$	$-.23^{**}$	$.00$	$.06$	$-.13^{**}$	$-.03$	$-.20^{**}$	$-.10^{*}$
CONTRAST3: Moderate vs. conservative	28 vs. 9.5%			$-.09^{*}$	$-.01$	$.06$	$-.11^{**}$	$-.16^{**}$	$.06$	$-.18^{**}$
Muslim	3.87 (2.31)				$-.02$	$-.49^{**}$	$.31^{**}$	$.28^{**}$	$.28^{**}$	$.38^{**}$
Democracy	4.03 (0.65)					$.13^{**}$	$-.27^{**}$	$-.12^{**}$	$-.05$	$-.05$
Freedom of speech	4.28 (0.73)						$-.39^{**}$	$-.26^{**}$	$-.25^{**}$	$-.39^{**}$
Authoritarianism	1.70 (0.72)							$.34^{**}$	$.29^{**}$	$.32^{**}$
Distance from religious min.	0.06 (0.19)								$.49^{**}$	$.45^{**}$
Distance from ethnic min.	0.28 (0.37)									$.42^{**}$
Distance from marginal min.	0.22 (0.36)									

$^{*}p < .05.$ $^{**}p < .01.$

Table 2. LCAs with 2 to 5 classes.

Model fit indices	2-class	3-class	4-class	5-class
Log likelihood	−16464.998	−15798.918	−15423.359	−15423.4
AIC	33185.997	31977.836	31350.719	31067.35
BIC	33758.061	32826.994	32476.97	32470.7
Entropy	0.993	0.926	0.932	0.922
Bootstrap likelihood	1 vs. 2	2 vs. 3	3 vs. 4	4 vs. 5
ratio test (BLRT)	2881.164	1332.161	751.118	407.366
	p < .001	*p* < .001	*p* < .001	*p* < .001
n for each class	C1 = 570	C1 = 66	C1 = 60	C1 = 130
	C2 = 75	C2 = 210	C2 = 183	C2 = 59
		C3= 369	C3 = 129	C3 = 169
			C4 = 273	C4 = 150
				C5 = 137

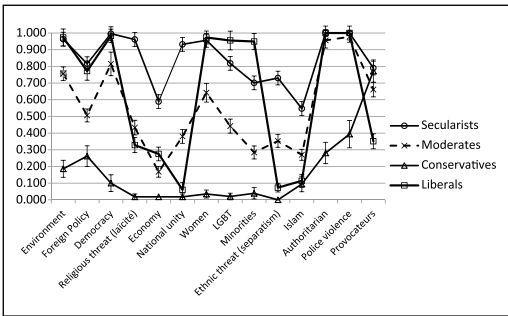**Figure 1.** Summed probability of agreeing and totally agreeing on the concerns by different identities (with standard error bars).

Figure 2. Levels and types of action in the protests by different identities (with standard error bars).

with liberals, secularists, and conservatives; and "conservatives" were those proconservative government. Figure 1 displays the sum of probabilities of agreeing and strongly agreeing[4] to various concerns by different groups. Figure 2 shows the mean frequencies of engagement in protests for each action type for different groups. We discuss next the concerns and action types that differentiate or overlap between different groups.

Protest-based concerns (i.e., authoritarian attitudes of the government, police violence, and provocateurs) were the only concerns shared by all participants. Participants differed meaningfully, however, in their value-based concerns and to some extent in their action forms during the protests.
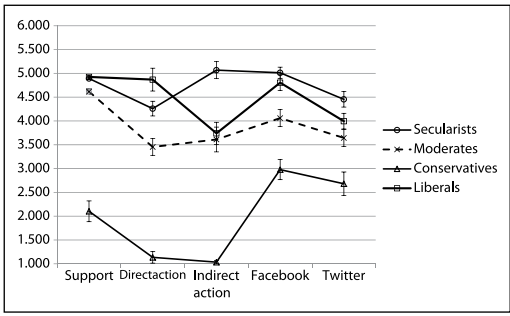
Both liberals and secularists shared similar value-based concerns about threats to the environment, democracy, and women's rights (Figure 1). Liberals and secularists also differed: distinctive concerns for liberals were about the protection of minority rights, those for secularists were about perceived ethnic (separatist) and religious (Islamist) threats to the nation state, valuing national unity, and principled *laïcité*. As for actions, both liberals and secularists supported the protests, participated actively, and used social media, though secularists preferred indirect action slightly more than liberals who preferred direct action (Figure 2).

Moderates showed some overlap with both liberals and secularists on value-based concerns such as threats to the environment, democracy,

and women's rights. Conservatives showed little overlap with others on value-based concerns. Typical concerns for conservatives referred to police violence, violent protesters, and to some extent, the authoritarian government response. Conservatives were also the least willing to support the protests—with moderates occupying a middle ground between secularists and conservatives. As for actions, protest engagement was limited to social media use for conservatives, whereas moderates combined social media with indirect action.

While this comparison across profiles is qualitative, as is generally the case for LCA, we can compare the four groups' overall latent class means statistically. Mplus 7 provides the latent mean differences from the largest class as the reference category, that is, the secularists. The mean difference from secularists was −1.52 for conservatives ($p < .001$), −0.40 for moderates ($p = .046$), and −0.76 for liberals ($p < .001$).[5]

Looking at the importance of predictors (i.e., concerns and action) is also qualitative in LCA: those concerns and actions that differentiate across the latent classes are considered relatively better predictors. Endorsed by each group, protest-based concerns did not differentiate well across the four latent classes. Instrumental concerns about economy and foreign policy did not differentiate well either, as they were not endorsed much by anyone. Actions, particularly social media, did not differentiate secularists, liberals, and moderates. Results of an additional cluster analysis which provides quantitative information on the importance of the concerns and actions support our conclusions and are shown in the supplementary materials.

Finally, since concerns and actions were analyzed together to delineate the group identities, the association between identities and actions cannot be tested statistically. We conducted additional LCA using only concerns to delineate the identities (with very similar compositions to LCA solution here) and additional regression analyses using those latent classes as predictors and action forms as the dependent variables. Results supported our qualitative discussion of identities and action forms and are shown in the supplementary materials.

Associations of Muslim Identification and Opinion-Based Group Identities With Democratic Attitudes

Separate regression analyses were conducted with support for democracy, freedom of speech, authoritarianism, and intergroup attitudes as dependent variables. For intergroup attitudes, the dependent variable was defined as a latent variable with distance from religious, ethnic, and marginalized minorities. As the predictor, the four groups were recoded as three contrasts using orthogonal contrast coding (Field, 2015): First contrast compared liberals and secularists to moderates and conservatives (coded as 2, 2, −2, and −2, respectively); second contrast compared liberals and secularists (coded as 1 vs. −1 with the remaining two coded as 0), and third contrast compared moderates and conservatives (coded as 1 vs. −1, with the remaining two coded as 0; see Table 1 for correlations). Orthogonal contrast coding was preferred because of the distinctions and similarities of concern and action profiles of liberals and secularists versus moderates and conservatives and because of the absence of a single reference category as in the dummy-coding (Field, 2015). Additional analysis using linear trend coding of identities from liberal, secularist, moderates to conservatives shows very similar results to contrast-coding and can be seen in the supplementary materials.

Three contrasts, Muslim identification (centered), and their statistical interactions were treated as independent variables and age as a control variable. The interactions and age were included in the analysis only when they were significant. Four self-identified Christians were excluded from the analysis. Results of the regression analyses are shown in Table 3.

First, participants were asked whether democracy was a desirable regime. Contrast 1 had a significant effect showing that liberals and secularists supported democracy more than moderates and conservatives. The intercept was above the

Table 3. Separate regression analyses showing the relationship of opinion-based group identities and Muslim identification with democratic attitudes.

Predictors	Democracy	Free speech	Authoritarianism	Intergroup attitudes
Contrast 1: liberals–secularists vs. moderates–conservatives	.058 (0.017)**	.142 (0.024)***	−.111 (0.026)***	−.013 (0.005)*
Contrast 2: liberals vs. secularists	.026 (0.038)	.102 (0.045)*	−.180 (0.049)***	−.029 (0.010)**
Contrast 3: moderates–conservatives	.074 (0.052)	.176 (0.085)*	−.194 (0.093)*	−.018 (0.019)
Muslim	.022 (0.013)	−.115 (0.018)***	.059 (0.020)**	.025 (0.004)***
Contrast 1*Muslim	ns	.023 (0.009)*	−.023 (0.010)*	−.007 (0.002)**
Contrast 2*Muslim	ns	.003 (0.019)	−.004 (0.021)	−.003 (0.004)
Contrast 3*Muslim	ns	.010 (0.031)	−.035 (0.034)	−.019 (0.007)**
Age	.012 (0.004)**	ns	ns	ns
Intercept	3.664	4.227	1.714	0.050 (Rel. min.)
				0.214 (Ethnic min.)
				0.250 (Marg. min.)
R^2	.04*	.36***	.20***	.35*

Note. Nonsignificant variables were dropped from the analyses, denoted as *ns*. Unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*) with standard errors (*SE*) in parentheses.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

midpoint of the scale, however, indicating that participants overall supported democracy as a regime. Neither Muslim identification nor the interaction had significant effects.

For endorsement of freedom of speech, all the contrasts had significant relationships showing that the difference between liberals and secularists (Contrast 2), that between moderates and conservatives (Contrast 3), and that between the first two and the last two (Contrast 1) were significant. Identification as Muslim was negatively related to freedom of speech. This relationship was qualified by a two-way interaction between Contrast 1 and Muslim identification ($p = .012$) as shown in Figure 3. A simple slope analysis (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006) showed that the negative slope of Muslim identification was significant for both liberals and secularists ($t = −3.61, p = .001, d = .29$) and for moderates and conservatives ($t = −5.22, p < .001, d = .43$), while the latter was stronger.

For authoritarianism, all the contrasts were significant showing that authoritarianism was endorsed by liberals less than secularists (Contrast 2), moderates less than conservatives (Contrast 3), and the first two less than the last two (Contrast 1).

Muslim identification was positively related to authoritarianism. These effects were qualified by a two-way interaction between Contrast 1 and Muslim identification ($p = .021$) as seen in Figure 4. Simple slope analysis showed that the slope of Muslim identification was significant for moderates and conservatives ($t = 3.10, p = .002, d = .25$), but not for liberals and secularists ($p > .05$).

For the social distance measure, Contrasts 1 and 2 were significant showing that liberals were less distant to minorities than the secularists (Contrast 2) and these two were less distant than moderates and conservatives (Contrast 1). Higher Muslim identification was related to higher distance. There were two significant two-way interactions of Contrasts 1 and 3 with Muslim identification ($p = .002$ and $p = .008$, respectively). For the Contrast 1 interaction, the slope of Muslim identification was significant for liberals and secularists ($t = 2.52, p = .012, d = .21$) and moderates and conservatives ($t = 5.31, p < .001, d = .44$), while the latter effect was much stronger (Figure 5). For the Contrast 3 interaction, the slope of Muslim identification was significant for conservatives ($t = 4.16, p < .001, d = .34$) but not for moderates ($p > .05$).
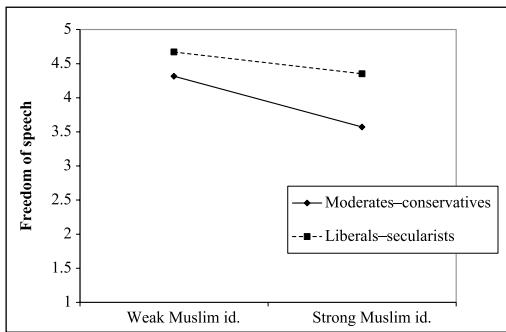
Figure 3. Interaction between Muslim identification and Contrast 1 (liberals and secularists vs. moderates and conservatives) on freedom of speech.
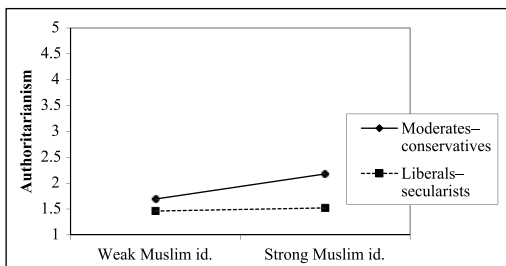

Figure 5. Interaction between Muslim identification and Contrast 1 (liberals and secularists vs. moderates and conservatives) on distance from minorities.
Note. The intercept of the distance from ethnic minorities was used, as the latent intercept was not calculated.

Figure 4. Interaction between Muslim identification and Contrast 1 (liberals and secularists vs. moderates and conservatives) on authoritarianism.

Discussion

This research aimed (a) to delineate different groups of protest participants in terms of their opinion-based group identities and (b) to predict their democratic attitudes from the intersection of their religious identification with these group identities. The focus was on the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey, which was depicted as a divide between secularists and Islamists in a majority-Muslim country. Looking beyond this divide, our research challenges a homogenous representation of Muslim identity and its alleged association with undemocratic attitudes. First, participants' political concerns and actions were clustered in four groups which we labeled "liberals," "secularists," "moderates," and "conservatives." Next these groups moderated the association of Muslim identification with democratic attitudes.
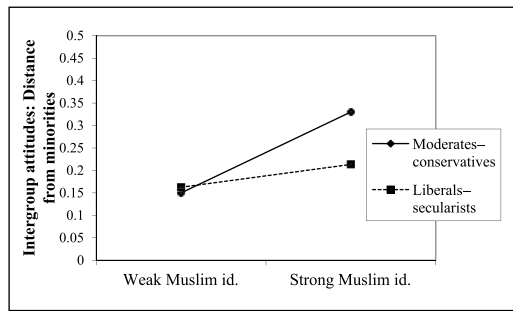
Whereas conservatives and moderates endorsed democratic attitudes less with increasing religious identification, religious identification made little or no difference in liberals' and secularists' democratic attitudes.

Let us discuss the four group identities. Extending a social identity approach of collective action, these group memberships were conceptualized as opinion-based group memberships around shared political concerns and actions. Research into opinion-based groups (including the normative alignment model and the encapsulated model of social identity in action) suggests that people who share common grievances may share an opinion-based group membership with clear norms of action (Thomas et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2009). During mass protests, simultaneous processes of alignment and de-alignment of various concerns and actions among protest participants may give rise to different identities (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). The notion of alignment around shared concerns receives also indirect support from research on inductive social identity formation around shared goals or values through social interaction in small groups (Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005). In this study we researched political concerns while the protests were still happening, rendering the directionality test from concerns to actions (or vice versa) less relevant, and we aimed to derive constellations of political concerns and

actions to show group alignments. This study contributes to this research line by highlighting multiplicity: multiple concerns and action forms allow for the expression of multiple group memberships beyond the focus on a single group or a dichotomy of supporters versus nonsupporters.

"Liberals" and "secularists" shared concerns about the environment, democracy, and women's rights but also differed in their concerns about minority rights versus religious and ethnic threat. While liberals took to the streets, secularists preferred indirect action. Indirect action forms such as banging pots and pans are in the repertoire of secularist action means in Turkey to communicate concerns about *laïcité*. This finding resonates with the normative alignment model's argument that opinion-based groups have clear action norms (Thomas et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2009) and with Reicher's (2001) proposition that action types adopted by people document the performative nature of their group identities (Klein et al., 2007). The so-called "moderates" could be considered as conservative secularists because their concerns and actions showed selective overlap with secularists and conservatives. Finally, conservatives' concerns were narrowly protest-based and their engagement was limited to online activism. A qualitative study of conservatives in the Gezi Park protests supported our findings (Çelik, 2015).

Our findings go beyond the Gezi Park protests and suggest new bottom-up methods to empirically investigate collective groups in contemporary mass protests across different cultural contexts. Latent class analysis allows for deriving multiple group memberships from the contents of shared political concerns and action forms. As a drawback of this approach, however, we could not measure self-identification with these groups. Another issue is the difficulty in naming the groups. In Turkish, the term *özgürlükçü* (literally, person defending liberties) is used to refer to liberals while in English, the word "liberal" may refer to those following liberal philosophy. Similarly, we do not claim that "moderates" indicate a group identity by itself but it is an empirically and theoretically distinguishable group from conservatives and secularists.

As for the main triggers of the Gezi Park protests, the value-based concerns such as threats to the environment, democracy, and women's rights, the so-called lifestyle concerns, played a big role, in line with studies underlining their importance over instrumental concerns for contemporary protests (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Milkman, 2014; van Stekelenburg et al., 2009). Protest-based concerns (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Walsh, 1981)—highlighting the mutual interaction between (violent) protesters versus the government and the police—also played a key role (Reicher, 1996). Qualitative studies of the Gezi Park protests document the value- and protest-based grievances—ranging from democracy, minority rights, to police brutality—as the main triggers of the protests (Acar & Uluğ, 2016; Çelik, 2015; Farro & Demirhisar, 2014; Gümüş & Yılmaz, 2015).

Both online and offline activism were common grounds for action, though somewhat differently for different groups. Research does not specify when online activism hinders or facilitates offline activism. One may presume that where traditional media censorship is prevalent, online activism becomes an essential action means. McGarty et al. (2014) showed how important social media activism was in the Arab Spring. A study on the use of Tweeter during Gezi Park protests showed how online and offline protesting were intertwined by analyzing the timeline of the tweets with the major on-the-ground events throughout a month (Varol, Ferrara, Ogan, Menczer, & Flammini, 2014). Future research on both forms of action should consider the context of activism.

The second objective was to investigate how participants' Muslim identification and their opinion-based group identities were associated with their endorsement of democratic attitudes. Based on the notion of intersectionality (Deaux, 2001), we expected that the association between Muslim identification and democratic attitudes would depend on these group memberships. While the Western interest in Muslims' democratic attitudes is increasing, our study provides a strategic angle to this question as Muslim identity

is a majority and more diverse identity in Turkey than in the EU. Thus we raise the question how identities and their corresponding relations to democratic attitudes and forms of collective action are constructed in the culture they are embedded in.

The fact that acceptance of democracy as a regime was consensual regardless of religious identification resonates with cross-national surveys which failed to find significant differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in their support for democracy (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Research comparing Middle Eastern Muslim countries (Jamal & Tessler, 2008; Tessler, 2002) shows that Islamic attachment does not discourage support for democracy. However, comparing democratic attitudes such as freedom of speech and acceptance of minorities, Muslims were found to be less democratic than non-Muslims (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Verkuyten & Slooter, 2008).

Going beyond this research, we showed that a common Muslim identity does not have the same political implications for democratic attitudes—such as support for freedom of speech, antiauthoritarian attitudes, and positive attitudes towards minorities— and that these depend on the different political stances of protest participants. For liberals and secularists, it did not matter much whether they were strongly or weakly Muslim-identified, they endorsed democratic attitudes nonetheless. For conservatives and moderates, however, increasing religious identification meant being less supportive of democratic attitudes.

A following question concerns cross-cultural implications of these findings. Looking at Muslim immigrants in Europe, how would the dynamic relationship between their Muslim identity and democratic engagement unfold? Research across different European countries shows that the ways Muslim identities of immigrants are related to their civic identities and democratic engagement depend on the sociopolitical context (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Fleischmann et al., 2013). This relationship may also vary according to Muslims' own political stances on certain issues, or their opinion-based group identities. For instance, future research can investigate the ethnic versus civic political concerns of Muslim immigrants (e.g., their positions on a homeland crisis vs. discrimination in the society they live in) and how these would interact with their Muslim identification to predict when and how they would engage in collective action.

Another question is whether there was intersectionality of Muslim identity in the so-called "democracy watch" protests in Turkey against the military coup attempt of 2016 (Unver & Alassaad, 2016). Research by KONDA Research and Consultancy (2016) showed that most protesters were proconservative government; they identified their lifestyles as conservative (83%) versus modern (17%); their Muslim identifications ranged from extreme (17%), moderate (67%), to weak (17%); and they were concerned about national unity, supporting democracy against the attempted coup, and supporting the president. Although the profile of these protesters and the content of their opinion-based identities could be different from those of the Gezi Park protesters, there are similarities. First, online activism played an important part to promote protest participation as that in the Gezi demonstrations; yet this time coupled with mosque prayers calling people to the streets as in the Arab Spring (Unver & Alassaad, 2016). We can also speculate about intersectionality: Muslim identification could have different implications in terms of democratic engagement and demands for participants who self-identify as conservative or secular ("modern"). However, we should recognize that there are different "democracy" conceptualizations, which could in itself entail a religious versus secular divide.

On a cautionary note, our correlational findings reveal that opinion-based group memberships and democratic attitudes are associated but the association may work both ways. Sharing a common stance on a certain issue may contribute to participants' endorsement of democratic attitudes. Democratic attitudes can also be socialized in children and youngsters through family and school and inform participants' concerns during

the protests. There is some qualitative evidence to support the former: intergroup contact among protest participants with diverse backgrounds changed their attitudes towards minority groups, such as the Kurdish minority, for the better (Acar & Uluğ, 2016). Finally, the possibility of reverse causality does not undermine our objective to demonstrate that the different group identities moderate the association of Muslim identification with democratic attitudes.

Another limitation concerns the sampling strategy and the use of online survey. While self-selection of people in online surveys is an issue, this could be less problematic in this study as we aimed to reach (strong to weak) supporters of the protests. It was vital to include peripheral as well as core activists in our analysis to show the broad range of people who were interested in and concerned about Gezi Park protests and to understand how the protests impact many more people than just core activists. This is an added value over other qualitative studies on the Gezi Park protests which focused on the "activist" identity (Acar & Uluğ, 2016; Gümüş & Yılmaz, 2015). Moreover, participants' demographic profiles and shared concerns described in this paper correspond to those in other face-to-face surveys about the Gezi Park protests with much larger samples (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; KONDA Research and Consultancy, 2013). Consistency across several surveys lends support to the external validity of our findings. One final limitation is the use of a single item for Muslim identification. It would be interesting to see how other dimensions of identification including performative ones such as religious practice are related to democratic attitudes.

Overall, this research adds to the collective action research in psychology by looking at plural opinion-based group identities in a contemporary mass protest, their intersection with Muslim identification, and the role of these social identities in democratic politicization. It shows that opinion-based group identities of people in protests can be inferred empirically from their shared concerns and action types and that these plural identities intersect with Muslim religious identification.

It also highlights how the meaning of Muslim identity and its relationship to democratic engagement is culturally embedded. Thus, Muslim identity is not a monolithic identity; it has different meanings and consequences for democratic attitudes.

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Notes

1. The exact wordings of the concerns were: "I was/am concerned/worried about. . ." "gentrification and harmful *environmental* policies, including Gezi Park, the third bridge over Bosphorus," "tense international relations with neighbor countries" (shortened as *foreign policy* in Figure 1), "deterioration of *democracy*," "deterioration of principles and reforms of Atatürk" (shortened as *national unity* in Figure 1), "deterioration of *laïcité*," "deterioration of the *economy*," "deterioration and restriction of *women*'s rights," "negative attitudes towards and the crackdown on *LGBT people*," "deterioration of the situation of *minorities*," "the recent reconciliation policies leading to *ethnic separatism*," "deterioration of *Islamic* values," "*authoritarian attitudes* of the government and the prime minister," "*brute force* use by *police* during the protests," "the *provocateurs* during the protests." Italicized words are the labels shown in Figure 1.
2. Atatürk is one of the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic and his principles and reforms go beyond *national unity* and include French-style *laïcité* and patriotism among others. A detailed discussion of these reforms is beyond the scope of this paper.
3. The four-class model also provided a theoretically better fit for the data since the five-class model differentiated secularists further into two classes; studying further differentiation of secularist groups in Turkey was beyond the scope of this paper.
4. Mplus 7 calculates robust standard errors for maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) analysis separately for each probability—separate standard errors for the probability of agreeing and strongly agreeing. In Figure 1, the higher standard errors (generally those of strongly agreeing) are shown.

5.   For the remaining comparisons, chi-square model difference test was used by setting equal the latent mean differences. Liberals were significantly different from moderates, $\chi^2(1) = 8.40$, $p < .01$, and all were significantly different from conservatives, $\chi^2(2) = 17.06$, $p < .001$.

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