PROTEST AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Edited by Isabel David and Kumru F. Toktamış

‘Everywhere Taksim’

Sowing the Seeds for a New Turkey at Gezi

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Protest and Social Movements

Recent years have seen an explosion of protest movements around the world, and academic theories are racing to catch up with them. This series aims to further our understanding of the origins, dealings, decisions, and outcomes of social movements by fostering dialogue among many traditions of thought, across European nations and across continents. All theoretical perspectives are welcome. Books in the series typically combine theory with empirical research, dealing with various types of mobilization, from neighborhood groups to revolutions. We especially welcome work that synthesizes or compares different approaches to social movements, such as cultural and structural traditions, micro- and macro-social, economic and ideal, or qualitative and quantitative. Books in the series will be published in English. One goal is to encourage non-native speakers to introduce their work to Anglophone audiences. Another is to maximize accessibility: all books will be available in open access within a year after printed publication.

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Cover illustration: Street stencil on walls in Istanbul. The defiant penguin who wears a gas mask symbolizes the resistance against AKP rule and police brutality amidst media corruption.

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This book is dedicated to the memory of the young people who lost their lives during and in the aftermath of the Taksim/Gezi protests in the summer of 2013.

Isabel David, PhD
Kumru F. Toktamış, PhD

List of Acronyms

ADD	Association for Ataturkist Thought (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*)
AKP	Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*)
CHP	Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)
DİDF	Federation of Democratic Workers' Organisations (*Demokratik İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu*)
DİSK	Confederation of Progressive Trades Unions of Turkey (*Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*)
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
GAC	EU General Affairs Council
HSYK	High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hâkimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
İP	Workers' Party (*İşçi Partisi*)
KESK	Confederation of Public Workers' Union (*Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*)
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party)
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TGB	Youth Union of Turkey (*Türkiye Gençlik Birliği*)
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*)
TMMOB	Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (*Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği*)
TOKİ	Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration of Turkey (*Toplu Konut İdaresi*)
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

Introduction

Gezi in Retrospect

Isabel David and Kumru F. Toktamış

In late May and June of 2013, an encampment protesting the privatisation of the historic Gezi Park, in the public and commercially vibrant Taksim Square, in Istanbul, began as a typical urban social movement for defending individual rights and freedoms and public space, with no particular political affiliation. Thanks to a brutal police response and a brazen reaction by the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the mobilisation soon snowballed into nationwide anti-government protests (79 out of 81 cities, mobilising 2.5 to 3 million people) (İnsan Hakları Derneği 2013). A coalition of the urban, educated, working- and middle classes was crafted with varying social and cultural concerns about both perceived and actual social encroachments as well as the policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP).

The moderately Islamist AKP party has now been in power for more than a decade and has achieved three national and three local landslide victories in elections since 2002.[1] It has reorganized wealth within the capitalist classes while shifting political and social hierarchies of urban populations by rearranging (i.e. simultaneously expanding and limiting) rights and freedoms. It has liberalized the display of religious symbols like headscarves in public spaces such as universities, established non-violent, albeit still patronizing, civic communication channels with minorities such as Kurds and Armenians, all of which have shaken the state-secular elites' sense of cultural and political dominance. Yet, growing informal and arbitrary control over freedom of the press, occasional limitations on social media outlets such as YouTube and Twitter, non-responsive and evasive actions by government officials at times of public disasters and other social crises have also caused widespread insolence and insubordination among the public. The AKP regime in Turkey has been a paradoxical one with increasing political and social polarisation. This is largely caused by the growing authoritarian and micro-managing attitudes of the prime

1 The percentage of AKP votes was 34.63% in 2002, 41.67% in 2007 and 50% in the 2011 national elections, and 41.67% in 2004, 38.8% in 2007 and 45.5% in the 2014 local elections. See http://www.genelsecim.org/GenelSecimSonuclari.asp?SY=2002. Accessed 27 May 2014.

minister, galvanizing the sentiments of former elites who had enveloped their lives with the certainties of a Republican regime guarded by the military establishment; an establishment now effectively muzzled.

The Gezi protests and ensuing popular uprisings in many corners of the country may be a threshold, marking a cultural shift away from authoritarian forms of political activism in Turkey. The opposition has certainly been shedding its authoritarian uniformity and elite exclusivity and is becoming more democratic, multicultural, and inclusive. The slogan 'Everywhere Taksim,' which emerged in the days of the protests, marked the convergence of the rallying point of all demonstrations and uprisings outside Istanbul, signalling the spirit of frustration, resistance and indignation expressed at Gezi Park.

Gezi is a nine-acre urban park built over an ancient Armenian graveyard and an Ottoman Artillery Barracks in Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul. Taksim has been a site of student protests and labour mobilisation since the 1960s. During the 'Bloody Sunday' of February 1969, demonstrators, protesting against the US 6th Fleet's visit to Istanbul, were attacked by right-wing militia; two were killed and 150 were injured (Ahmad 1977). Taksim has also been the site of 1 May rallies since 1975. The Labour Day Massacre of May 1977 took place there too, when half a million demonstrators were indiscriminately fired upon by unidentified snipers from a municipal building. The official, albeit contested, number of deaths was 34 and the unofficial number of wounded reached 250.[2] Since then, there have been occasional peaceful, but often intensely negotiated, May Day rallies at Taksim Square, whenever the authorities grant permission.

A project to construct a shopping centre on this location is among the multiple urban commercialisation and redevelopment projects undertaken by the Metropolitan Istanbul Municipality, controlled by elected pro-Islamic officials since the mayoral tenure of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan between 1994 and 1998. The reorganisation and redevelopment plan for Taksim was initiated in 2009 by the government and in September 2011 the Istanbul Municipality Council, including the members of the opposition parties, unanimously approved the pedestrianisation part of the project, which was partially contracted in 2012. Almost immediately, the project was challenged by the Istanbul Chamber of Architects and the Istanbul Chamber of City Planners (both affiliated to the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, *Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği*, TMMOB), who petitioned courts in May 2012. They were seeking a cessation

2 http://www.sendika.org/2007/04/30-yil-sonra-kanli-1-mayis-ertugrul-mavioglu-radikal/.

of all the projects on the grounds that the plans for commercialisation were inconsistent with the principles of urban planning and violated the regulations of urban historical preservation.[3] Consequently, the project was rejected in two separate courts in 2013, just around the time the clashes started. An administrative court stayed the redevelopment plans on 31 May and an appeal to another administrative court upheld this verdict on 6 June.[4]

These efforts by the professional chamber associations were closely supported by neighbourhood groups, united under the umbrella initiative Taksim Solidarity (*Taksim Dayanışması*). 2012 had already been a year full of activism for Taksim Solidarity. Prior to 2013, there were at least three large-scale demonstrations organised by the professional chambers and local community organisations, protesting the redevelopment and commercialisation projects. At a demonstration in early March, the second largest labour federation in the country, the Confederation of Progressive Trades Unions of Turkey (*Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, DİSK), joined forces with the professional chambers and local community organisations as the union president declared the symbolic and historical significance of this particular urban square for the labour and socialist movement. He suggested that Prime Minister Erdoğan was acting like an Ottoman Sultan and ignoring the opposition.[5] At the same protest, representatives of the Taksim Solidarity movement were determined to prevent a fait accompli, defining the renewal project as the elimination of human beings, the erection of concrete structures and the loss of the square's authenticity.[6] As the official bidding process to identify and appoint the contractors started, a second large-scale demonstration was called in late June of 2012. During an uneventful summer, the parties continued their court battles and by October 2012, some cafes on the square started receiving their eviction papers. The coalition of groups resisting the project started petition campaigns and called for another mass demonstration on 14 October. By early November, members of coalition groups were taking turns to 'guard the park' as the preparations for construction were underway.

As the construction work was starting in January 2013, Taksim Solidarity, together with the students of the Faculty of Architecture of Istanbul Technical University, called for common breakfasts at the park every Sunday,

3 http://www.mimarist.org/2012-08-13-16-09-05.html.

4 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23644273.asp. See also http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/gezi_parki_raporu_dokunamazsiniz-1135658.

5 http://www.etha.com.tr/Haber/2012/03/03/guncel/taksim-ayaklarin-bas-oldugu-yerdir/.

6 http://www.etha.com.tr/Haber/2012/03/03/guncel/taksim-ayaklarin-bas-oldugu-yerdir/.

starting on 26 January. They initiated another large-scale demonstration with the professional chambers on 15 February. A neighbourhood organisation called the Association for the Protection and Improvement of Taksim was officially created in March, collecting more than 80,000 signatures against the development and organising a music and dance festival on 14 April, which was attended by hundreds of citizens and a few officials of the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). By May 2013, Taksim Solidarity was still organising vigils at the park every Saturday between 3 pm and 6 pm.[7] By 27 May, when police forces started to evacuate the park, hundreds of civic organisations were already in coordination, using social media to make public calls for the space to be defended.

The brutal eviction of around fifty young people occupying the park to save approximately 600 trees in late May turned into nationwide protests and clashes throughout the month of June, exacerbated by the excessive use of police force against peaceful demonstrators. Gezi was re-opened to the public on 1 June and immediately re-occupied by an increasing number of groups from all walks of life; thousands of people marched, some displaying Turkish flags. Taking the streets and even the bridges, denizens of Istanbul reached out to Gezi from different districts of the city, throughout the night, determined to support and shelter young people from further police brutality. The popularity of the occupiers among the city dwellers became clear with the march of more than 10,000 football fans, in an uncharacteristic display of fraternity on 8 June.

For almost two weeks, the park turned into a forum for public festivities with makeshift libraries, kitchens, seminars, concerts, classes from maths to yoga, as well as ongoing clashes with the police force, as the world's attention turned to Istanbul and other cities in Turkey where demonstrators expressed support for the Gezi protestors and vocalized a wide scope of grievances, ranging from freedom of expression to defence of state secularist principles. Forums developed in several cities. These public forums have now become a constitutive part of localized protests and negotiations, mostly related to issues of neighbourhood redevelopment and democratic participation.

7 Interviews with Taksim Solidarity representatives. For the vigils, see http://www.sendika.org/2012/11/taksim-nobeti-gunlugu-taksim-dayanismasi/.

In early June, Prime Minister Erdoğan dismissed the protestors in his now famous 'a few *çapulcus*' speech.[8] This labelling of the protesters as 'looters' was immediately re-appropriated by the protesters with an irreverent twist and developed into an anglicized neologism, '*chapulling*,' loosely referring to 'fighting for one's rights.' Penguins were to constitute another symbol of resistance, irreverence and cognitive disconnect of the media eager to support the government, when CNN Türk chose to air a documentary on the lives of these polar birds instead of broadcasting the protests.

The two weeks of encampment at Gezi Park was a fresh yet exhilarating moment in Turkey's political history. During the intensification of these political confrontations, the government's responses to the protests were not uniform. Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç, who had categorically denied the protestors' list of demands, apologised for the 'excessive use of police force' on 4 June.[9] President Abdullah Gül, who had called for moderation in early June, also took it upon himself to announce the suspension of the redevelopment plans in mid-July.[10] Throughout this period, the prime minister was the only political figure who was unwavering in his defence of the redevelopment project and condemnation of the protests as conspiracies against his rule. His supporters staged a midnight welcoming demonstration upon his return from a North African visit on 7 June, asking for his permission 'to crash Gezi.'[11] Banking on a form of majoritarianism that has replaced any democratic treatment of his opposition, Erdoğan insinuated that 50 per cent of the population in Turkey was ready to attack and destroy 'Everywhere Taksim' protests across the country. Following a series of impatient and brusque warnings to end the protests and the encampments, the prime minister held a meeting with the representatives of the protestors during the early hours of 14 June, during which he declared that the future of the project would be decided by a referendum.[12] At his subsequent counter rallies in Ankara and Istanbul on 15 and 16 June, he reiterated his support for the redevelopment project and called for 'respect

8 http://haber.sol.org.tr/devlet-ve-siyaset/erdogan-onbinleri-birkac-capulcu-ilan-etti-diktatorluk-kanimda-yok-dedi-haberi-739.

9 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/06/20136551212442132.html.

10 http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/gezi-parki-projesi-askiya-alindi/gundem/ydetay/1724812/default.htm.

11 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-erdogan-calls-for-immediate-end-to-gezi-park-protests-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=48381&NewsCatID=338.

12 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22898228.

for the national will,"[13] while addressing his 300,000 supporters and as the police operation to 'clean' Taksim Square was heading towards its most brutal phase.

In sum, 'Everywhere Taksim' was more than an environmental resistance located in one urban park; it was a series of popular uprisings and demonstrations throughout Turkey, particularly between 31 May and 25 June, with participants from a wide array of social groups: Alevis, religious people, Kurds, women, Christians, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI), Kemalists and football fans. The peaceful co-existence between these very diverse and, until then, antagonistic groups demonstrates that something greater happened at Gezi: the creation of a spirit of tolerance that may well sow the seeds for a new Turkey.

The Turkish Medical Association announced that more than 10,000 people were wounded, some critically, during the six weeks of protests.[14] According to the Istanbul Bar Association, more than 900 people were detained in Istanbul alone during the first few weeks.[15] As a result of excessive police force used against unarmed demonstrators eleven people lost their lives, including one policeman in Adana and at least three possible bystanders. Notably, many of the young men, between the ages of 15 and 26, who were killed by police attacks were Alevis (a progressive religious sect that has been politically and culturally marginalized by the AKP regime). The first fatality was Ethem Sarısülük (26), in Ankara on 1 June, later followed by Mehmet Ayvalıtaş (20) in Istanbul, Abdullah Cömert (22) in Antakya, Medeni Yıldırım (18) in Diyarbakır, Ali İsmail Korkmaz (19) in Eskişehir and, most recently, Berkin Elvan (15) in Istanbul, who died after nine months in a coma. In September 2013, Ahmet Atakan also died during a follow-up protest in Antakya.

This volume has two goals: to make sense of the significance of the Gezi protests and to contribute to the literature on social movements in Turkey. It will be contended that Gezi represents a major landmark in Turkey, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Gezi protests showed the world the authoritarian nature of the ruling AKP, shredding the image it had constructed as a liberal democratic party, one that would be capable of acting as a model of reconciliation between Islam and democracy. The protests further proved

13 http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/ak-partililer-kazlicesme-ye-akin/siyaset/detay/1723747/default.htm.

14 http://www.ttb.org.tr/index.php/gezidirenisi.html.

15 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/20/turkey-divided-erdogan-protests-crackdown.

that democratisation in Turkey still has a long way to go. Secondly, Gezi acted as a trigger for the repoliticisation of Turkish society and especially of younger generations, until then considered apathetic. Thirdly, the Gezi protests constitute evidence of a major sociological change in Turkish society, for they provided the first platform for the unification of antagonistic groups, such as LGBTI, Islamists, headscarved women, Kemalists, feminists, Alevis and Kurds. Thus, Gezi was a turning point for overcoming Turkey's deep cleavages. A fourth argument advanced in this volume is that Gezi constituted a branch of the wider global resistance and protest movements that have swept the globe of late.

For this purpose, the volume bridges a collection of field research, qualitative and quantitative data, theoretical approaches and transnational comparative contributions. The analyses include a broad spectrum of disciplines, including Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Psychology, International Relations and Political Economy. With its interdisciplinary content and approaches, the volume provides a solid base for historical, local, global and regional comparative analyses. The essays reflect the multidimensional qualities of social movements and provide grounds for further research about Turkish society as well as about the Middle East and Europe.

The contributions to this volume are structured around five broad themes, which try to encompass the main focal points of the protests. Section I addresses the issue of how AKP's rule failed to deliver on the expectations of liberalisation and democratisation in its eleven years of power. These acted as the perceived triggers for the Gezi protests. Section II looks at the neoliberal reforms enacted by the party and how the AKP has sought to consolidate its hegemony through them. At the same time, however, these reforms have alienated and excluded a substantial portion of the population from the benefits of capitalism. Section III deals with protestors and repertoires of protest: in a civil society seen as apathetic, the protests surprised, not only because they brought together completely different and, sometimes, antagonistic sections of the Turkish population, but also for their creativity. Section IV considers the issue of public spaces as loci of contention; it further contends that space is constitutive of identity. Finally, Section V refers to the reverberation of the protests in the international sphere.

The volume opens with Kumru F. Toktamış's enlightening comparison between the two major mass mobilisations against the AKP government: the 2007 protests and the Gezi protests. Through this comparison, the author uncovers the shifting patterns of nationhood in Turkey: from a

top-down approach, prevalent in the 2007 Republican demonstrations, to a multiculturalist one, unveiled by the Gezi protests. Following this idea, and building on discursive and relational approaches from Charles Tilly and Rogers Brubaker, Toktamış contends that despite the party's growing authoritarian tendencies, the AKP period may be seen as one of the most vibrant in the history of Turkish democracy, given the increasing political involvement of people from all walks of life.

Jeremy F. Walton's chapter engages in a mediation between the narratives of the proponents and the opponents of the protests by focusing on the figure of the *çapulcu*, which ultimately created a common identity out of heterogeneous groups. In order to do so, Walton combines three elements that can be identified in the Gezi protests: the politicisation of urban space, with an emphasis on Taksim square; the Bakhtinian concept of 'carnival'; and the inclusion of the Gezi protests as a branch of the global protest movement across the globe.

Ana Dević's and Marija Krstić's chapter presents an insightful comparison of the protests in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The authors focus on elite behaviour in both countries and the failed promises and expectations regarding democratisation and social and economic improvements as the source of protests. To this end, Dević and Krstić conducted field research by interviewing Gezi activists on their perception of measures pertaining to democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms enacted by the AKP. The authors analyse the similar nature of the profile of protestors in both countries, identifying them as the elements excluded from the dominant political system.

Umut Bozkurt's chapter focuses on the interplay between the factors that explain AKP's hegemony and the impact of the Gezi protests on this hegemony. To this end, the author makes use of the concept of 'neoliberal populism,' interpreted in a Gramscian fashion. This hegemony has been secured, Bozkurt argues, not only through neoliberal economic policies that favour the interests of the economic bourgeoisie, but also through the use of symbolic and religious codes such as Sunni Islam, conservatism and nationalism. The author contends that, as a result of the Gezi protests, the AKP's previously expansive hegemony has been transformed into a limited hegemony.

Barış Alp Özden's and Ahmet Bekmen's contribution presents an important comparison of the protests that occurred in Turkey and Brazil, given the similarities behind their motivations and in terms of the social composition of the demonstrators. They explore how the dominant neoliberal populist practice in both countries depoliticizes structural social problems, creates

non-class forms of identity and representation, and thus attempts to defuse social conflict. Özden and Bekmen contend that, ultimately, neoliberal regimes are creating a class consciousness among the labouring classes that might trigger the formation of an alternative hegemonic bloc.

İlke Civelekoğlu's chapter argues for a political economy-based explanation of the reasons behind the Gezi protests. Drawing from Karl Polanyi, the author argues that Gezi demonstrators took to the streets in order to resist the commercialisation of land as well as the commodification of labour brought about by neoliberal policies. Civelekoğlu then engages in a discussion about whether the protestors can be seen as a societal countermovement, aiming to halt market expansion with the goal of protecting society. In this respect, the author discusses the implications and the outcomes of the protests for Turkish democracy.

Özden Melis Uluğ and Yasemin Gülsüm Acar offer a social psychological perspective on the Gezi Park protesters by focusing on social identity theory as an underlying explicative tool for collective action. The authors contend that the defining moment for the creation of a shared identity was the internalisation of the word *çapulcu*. The authors conducted a series of interviews with activists participating in the protests in different cities across Turkey. As a result of their diversity (including Alevis, Anti-capitalist Muslims, Revolutionary Muslims, members of the football fan group *Çarşı*, women's rights activists, Kemalists, Kurdish activists, LGBTI activists, trades union members, members of the Communist Party of Turkey [*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, TKP] and *Ülkücüler*), these valuable interviews allow the reader to perceive the variegated reasons behind the protests. They also bring to the fore a number of shared perceptions that helped unite these often opposing/clashing segments of Turkish society.

Dağhan Irak's chapter offers a ground-breaking view of one of Gezi's most visible actors – the football fans. The author explains how football fandom became increasingly politicised by the growing commodification of the sport and rising AKP interference in football regulations and in fans' lifestyles. These changes, Irak argues, allowed for the creation of a common ground between Istanbul's major football fans, until then divided by micro-nationalisms. In this respect, and using the Bourdesian concept of 'cultural capital,' the Gezi protests may eventually be seen as a springboard for the creation of a fan-based political supra-entity. The chapter thus paves the way for further study on the effects of commodification processes and precariousness on the growing politicisation of sports fans.

Lerna K. Yanık provides another innovative approach to the Gezi protests through the lens of visual humour, laying the foundations for a research

agenda on graffiti and political humour in Turkey. In order to do so, the author photographed and conducted an analysis of graffiti written during the June 2013 events and how these were used to challenge authority. Additionally, the chapter operates as a valuable tool for the memorialisation of the forms of protest that took place, as all of the graffiti have been erased from the streets of Istanbul.

Volkan Yılmaz's and Pınar Gümüş's chapter brings yet another invaluable contribution to the study of the Gezi protests. The authors deconstruct the conventional idea that the Turkish youth was apolitical and further explain how this newly politicised youth was highly influential in the development of the protests. Namely, Yılmaz and Gümüş demonstrate how young people, as members of already existing social movements, transferred their organisational features, their political discourses and their forms of creating and sustaining solidarity networks to the Gezi protests. The authors' findings are supported by field research conducted before and after Gezi.

Ahu Karasulu's chapter analyses the acts of continued resistance that began with Gezi under the theoretical framework of Doug McAdam, Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow's Dynamics of Contention, with an emphasis on the spatial dimension of claims. The author contends, in a dialectical fashion, that contention is not only affected by space but also that it produces space. The fact that space symbolises power must be seen as the key to understanding Taksim Square, which is the symbol of both the Republic and secularism. In trying to close the Square or gentrify it, the government displays power and tries to depoliticise this particular space. Thus, Taksim becomes a symbol of resistance for those who oppose government policies.

Emrah Çelik discusses the role of religion in the protests. Through a series of in-depth interviews with secularist demonstrators and activists, the author shows how one of the main concerns was government interference in lifestyles and not opposition to religion as such. The interviews with religious elements at the park, on the other hand, offer valuable insights into the rejection of what is perceived as the anti-religious capitalism promoted by the AKP. One of Çelik's main findings is the growing acceptance of religion by secularists, especially among the younger generations, and how Gezi helped cement that spirit of tolerance, in a major sociological shift in Turkish society.

Clara Rivas Alonso's chapter demonstrates how the protests were fuelled by the AKP policy on urban construction, a pillar of Turkish economic growth, establishing a direct link between urban exclusion and social unrest. The author focuses on the events at Gezi through the prism of the occupation of the public spaces as an exercise of social participation,

grassroots alliances and identity construction. In order to better understand how space is constitutive of identity, the author brings to public knowledge invaluable maps of space occupation by the different groups in the so-called Gezi Republic. Seen as a *mahalle* ('neighbourhood'), Gezi Park provided a 'sphere of possibility' – a space of solidarity and tolerance.

Bahar Baser provides yet another ground-breaking study on the way the Gezi spirit was perceived and picked up by the Turkish and Kurdish diasporas in Sweden, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Based on fieldwork observation and semi-structured interviews, the author explains the role of the diasporas in both denouncing the violent repression of the protests and clarifying their goals in their hostlands. Baser concludes that these acts of solidarity constituted a branch of home events and, as in Turkey, diaspora protests created a sense of fraternity among previously opposing groups.

Beken Saatçioğlu's chapter concludes the volume with a ground-breaking chapter on the implications of the events at Gezi for Turkey's European Union (EU) accession process. Given that the EU has perceived Gezi as evidence of the AKP straying from democratic standards, the author contends that EU-Turkey relations will, from now on, be guided mainly by normative considerations, and not, as before, by intergovernmental or rationalist ones. Saatçioğlu observes a two-fold behaviour emerging from these relations between the parties: on the one hand, Turkey's compliance with democratic norms can be used by the EU to veto, postpone or suspend accession negotiations; on the other, the Union will keep the negotiations open as a policy instrument in order to promote democratisation.

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Section I
Gezi Protests and Democratisation

1 Evoking and Invoking Nationhood as Contentious Democratisation

Kumru F. Toktamış

The Gezi protests and the 2007 Flag/Republic demonstrations constitute the two major episodes of mass mobilisations against the AKP. A comparative analysis of the organisation, participation, claims and immediate responses of both episodes is critical for demonstrating the changing popular discourse of nationhood and citizenship, and indicates a democratic shift in the public definitions of these concepts. With massive historical protests in place, from a Contentious Politics approach to democratisation,[1] the AKP decade might, paradoxically, be one of the most democratic periods in Turkish history; not necessarily due to the actions and policies of the party, but to the extent of increasing participation and political engagement of the population from different walks of life.

Since both waves were clearly critical of and targeting the AKP regime, and neither was centred on addressing the economic policies of the party, during both cycles of mobilisations participants voiced definitions of their collectivities as they envisioned citizenship, democratic participation and nationhood. The most significant shift is from a monolithic sense of top-down engineered nationhood to a multiculturalist sense of citizenship. These shifting patterns and multiple meanings of nationhood indicate an ongoing dialogical contestation, negotiations regarding the criteria of what constitutes Turkishness and what qualifies as the Turkish nation.

A survey of organising bodies and slogans as dialogical contestations indicate that the self-definitions of anti-AKP demonstrators radically changed between 2007 and 2013, and such change can be explained by the paradoxical processes of democracy that were in action during the AKP government. A process-oriented, relational and dialogical analysis of these

1 Contentious Politics, as coined by Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam (2001, 5), among others, refers to collective political struggles that take the form of disruptive – rather than continuous – public claim-makings outside 'regularly scheduled events such as votes, parliamentary elections and associational meetings' and 'well-bounded organizations, including churches and firms.' This approach is significantly more dynamic than classical social movement studies, which often focus on structures and individual movements and ignore the interactive processes of claim-making among the actors.

two episodes of protests indicates an expanded and broadened popular opposition despite possible and imminent reversals of de-democratisation.

The theoretical premises of this essay in terms of democratisation, nationhood and dialogical analysis are eclectic yet complimentary. First, it is based on an understanding that democracy is not a thing to be developed by democratically-minded actors (Tilly 2007 and 2009). Similarly, no nation is to be understood as a given entity, but rather as a historical product of evoking and invoking a sense of nationhood and shifting identities of membership to a politically sanctioned institutionalized community.[2] Finally, discourse is understood not merely as reflective but as a central and crucial constitutive component of mobilisations in the form of interactive repertoires of meanings that could be captured dialogically as contenders challenge authorities and express their claims (Steinberg 1999). All these theoretical debates understand democracy, nationhood and citizenship in a process-oriented and relational perspective, within which discourse constrains and confines the ways in which material conditions of social life become intelligible to the participants and acted upon by agents of social change. Centrality of discursive and interactive meaning in nationhood compels us to look at the claims articulated by the protesters and the contested qualities of nationhood call for an understanding of democracy as a process.

Following Charles Tilly's argument that democracy is not a designed institution, but rather a product of contestation among actors who may or may not be democratically-minded social and political agents, this article argues that the shifting claims and repertoires of the anti-AKP mobilisations reveal a paradoxical process of overall democratisation during an increasingly authoritarian rule by the party. Based on a historical understanding that 'democratization [...] never happened without intense contention' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, 272.) this unique conceptualisation follows the definitions of democracy as the processes during which previously excluded populations participate in political decision making (Schwartz 2009), as contestation (Dahl 1971) and as how opposition is treated (Przeworksi 1991). Envisioning democratisation as a process of expanding, broadening and protected participation of populations, and de-democratisation as the process during which certain groups' access to

2 For Brubaker (2005, 116), 'nationhood is not an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural fact; it is a political claim. It is a claim on people's loyalty, on their attention, on their solidarity. If we understand nationhood not as fact but as claim, then we can see that "nation" is not a purely analytical category.'

political decision-making is limited, unprotected and unequal, provides a powerful analytical framework to capture the many paradoxical predicaments of the AKP regime.[3]

According to the Contentious Politics perspective, 'democracy results from, mobilizes and reshapes popular contention' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, 269) and democratisation and de-democratisation are defined within a contingent continuum where a regime moves 'toward or away from relatively broad, equal and protected binding consultations of the government's subjects with respect to governmental resources, personnel, and policies' (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 216). In this process-oriented understanding of popular participation, democracy is not a 'thing' to be built, but is the product of mobilisations and clashes between the state and its challengers. Moreover, it is not the motives, interest, intentions and policies of the actors that shape a democratic regime, but the contradictions, clashes and contentions among the actors that open spaces for democratic participation. As stated by Tilly (2009), democracy flourishes 'on bargained compliance, rather than on either passive acceptance or uncompromising resistance'. Democracy is not a switch that can be turned on or off, nor is it a product of actions of elite experts or advocates of democratic action; democracy is more like a thermometer that operates in degrees. According to Tilly, every time rulers intervene in non-state resources, activities or interpersonal connections, they encounter resistance, negotiation or bargaining from those who are ruled. The degrees of the thermometer shift as the ways in which rulers organise themselves end in continuous negotiations between the rulers and the ruled over how (social) resources are acquired and allocated.

Democratisation 'is not a finite and linear process and [...] various forms and processes of contention [...] can combine to produce' democratic practices as well as detours, 'not only because some people oppose democracy itself, but also – and probably primarily – because claims made in the name of democracy threaten their vested interests' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, 268).

According to the Contentious Politics approach, public actions and demonstrations, such as the Gezi Protests – and even the 2007 Flag demonstrations –, are by definition democratic because individuals and groups transform themselves into agents of change with immediate and long-term impact on the government policies and actions, thus affecting state-society

3 Such conceptualisation is also disassociated and distinctive from substantive (how much a regime makes people happy, like UN charts), constitutional (legal/formal structures), procedural (elections, etc), ideal (normative) understandings of democracy (Tilly 2007, 7).

relationships. This relationship does not necessarily follow a gradualist evolution towards more institutionalisation of democracy, but is contingent on the processes and mechanisms of the contestation on the grounds that shape the nature, quality and extent of participation by citizens.

Nationhood is not an entity with essentialist properties. Nationhood, as argued by Brubaker, is also a contested ground of collective self-understanding of the polity. According to this understanding, nationhood and citizenship are not only legal and political designations, they are also cultural constructs that are created, supported, maintained and challenged by contending actors. Following Brubaker's argument that nation is a category of practice and not analysis, nationalism is always to be understood as an interactive product and nationhood as relational. Brubaker's work highlights the 'cultural idioms of nationhood' that express and constitute interests and identity. In other words, a nation is not a group with substantive and essential properties but 'nationalisation' is a 'political, social, cultural and psychological process' and nationhood is a groupness 'as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable' (Brubaker 2004, 54).

Collective actions and mobilisations are always resourceful fields revealing a sense of belongingness and the self-identification of the participants. Since identity is never private or individual and always public and relational, and because its deeply interactive character can be exposed in 'constantly negotiated conversations rather than individual minds,' mobilisations often constitute a good source of capturing the otherwise fluid definitions of 'us' and 'them.' Publicly stated contentious ideas of nationhood feed back into the social and political (contentious) relations where new changes take place. The anti-AKP demonstrations of 2007 and 2013, with clearly expressed and challenged 'cultural idioms of nationhood,' are the 'contingent events' that have 'their transformative consequences,' which has constituted the dynamics of nationhood.

Finally, the dialogical component of the shifting discourses of nationhood and citizenship can also be captured within the analytical framework of Contentious Politics. Following Mark Steinberg, who crafted the term 'repertoires of discourse,' based on Tilly's formulation of 'repertoires of collective action,'[4] collective identities such as nationhood and citizenship are formed interactively, in a dialogical manner, and they are bound by the ways in which contestants articulate their claims. According to Steinberg, all social

4 According to Tilly (1995) 'repertoires of collective action' are products of processes of group interaction among multiple contesting parties in a conflict; they are bound and shaped by the context of the contention and constituted of shared routines for collective use.

mobilisations involve discursive contestations when protesters challenge the voice of authority by questioning their interpretation of its meanings. In doing so, they do not come up with a wholesale shift in the meaning, but 'pragmatically engage in appropriation as they find its elements become more transparently vulnerable to questioning and transformation within a specific context. Through this process challengers construct the fighting words essential to [...] collective action' (Steinberg 1999, 17).

Dialogical meaning construction posits that 'all challenging groups are deeply engaged in the process of creating a collective identity, which legitimizes their grievances and claims and provides license for action.' They fashion their collective identities dialogically, developing 'discursive repertoires from the friction of conflict' (Steinberg 1999, 20-21). Drawing heavily on Bakthin's idea of dialogical struggle, Steinberg's (Ibid., 17) work illustrates how

> subordinate groups seek to subvert the power-holders' authoritative voice, first by questioning the accepted interpretations of dominant meanings, [then] when challengers expose these as defined in the interests of power, they can attempt to appropriate and transform the genres into fighting words, which broadcast their shared sense of injustice and resolution.

As Bakhtin (1981, 293) argued, 'the word in language is half someone else's,' indicating dialogue and multivocality, i.e. words carry multiple meanings, interpretations, and they themselves are contested terrains. As such, subordinate groups appropriate dominant discourses expropriating and forcing them 'to submit' their own intentions and accents to construct collective claims and identity.

Regardless of the nature of the claims articulated, collective actions have constitutive impacts in modern democracies; they not only reveal the political agency of the individuals and groups, but also create a relational and contingent space of negotiations between the power-holders and the protesters. Through articulation of claims during demonstrations diverse individual self-understandings emerge and merge as public pronouncements, which are communicated both among the participants and with the power-holders. In that sense, both the 2007 and 2013 anti-AKP demonstrations, along with the AKP officials, were engaged in a dialogical struggle to redefine the collectivities of nationhood and citizenship in Turkey.

Inspired by Brubaker's suggestion that it is the political actors, policy-makers and the challengers that invoke or evoke nation as a putative entity

in order to justify the claims of the collectivity in action,[5] I argue that the participants of the two episodes of protests, by describing and designating their sense of membership in a political community, are actually in the process of the reproduction of Turkish polity and nationhood. Both the 2007 demonstrations and the Gezi protests were moments of negotiation of nationhood with crowds that gathered in public spaces who were experiencing and contesting diverse meanings of national unity (i.e. what are the goals, ideals, aspirations of this collectivity), nationhood (i.e. a sense of belonging to a cultural and political community) and citizenship (i.e. culturally understood, legally acquired membership).

I argue that with the Gezi protests, a new, anti-authoritarian sense of nationhood was *invoked*, in contrast to the 2007 mobilisation, where prevailing ideas and policies of Turkishness with a state-imposed unity and uniformity were *evoked*. In 2007, the demonstrators were bringing and calling memories, images and sentiments from the past, whereas during the Gezi protests, there were earnest requests for a new collectivity, calling forth and putting into effect a new sense of community. This shift from evoking nationhood, i.e. a retrospective homogeneity and a nationalism of yesteryear, to invoking nationhood, which aims to create a new and diverse collectivity, is a product of unprecedented expansion and broadening of democratic participation in Turkey that has been taking place under the AKP, a party which was later deemed by some to have become corrupt and slipping into authoritarianism, despite immense support from almost half of the Turkish voters.[6]

2007 – Nation-Evoking Demonstrations

The 2007 Flag demonstrations were organised by two staunchly nationalist organisations: the Association for Ataturkist Thought (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*, ADD) and the Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*). The former identifies itself as a laicist

5 Here, Brubaker follows Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the 'performative character' of participants' reification of their group, i.e. they 'contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate' (Bourdieu 1991, 220). Brubaker (2004, 69) characterises this group-making practice as 'generic to political mobilisations and representation' and summarises this process as follows: 'by invoking groups, they seek to evoke them, summon them, call them into being [...] to stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle and energize' (Ibid., 53).

6 http://www.opendemocracy.net/kumru-Toktamış-emrah-celik/exploring-erdo%C4%9Fan%E2%80%99s-unwavering-support-in-turkey.

(state-secularist)[7] organisation that promotes the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, and aims to defend his reforms against the imminent threats of Sharia and separatism.[8] The latter was created by a group of female academics who subscribe to a statist feminism, highlighting the Republican principle that incorporated and institutionalized putative political and social rights for women in Turkey.[9] As staunch adherents of state-secularism and supporters of the military's role as the guardian of the Republican principles, in the spring of 2007 these two urban elite organisations called for a series of protest demonstrations throughout the main urban centres with the active support and participation of a dozen other nationalist and state secularist associations – all of which were later active at Gezi – such as the DİSK, Istanbul Bar Association, Youth Union of Turkey (*Türkiye Gençlik Birliği*, TGB), Confederation of Public Workers' Union (*Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, KESK), Union of Patriotic Forces (*Vatansever Kuvvetler Güç Birliği Hareketi*), Association of Women of the Republic and left and centre-left parties.

The call was actively supported by the Turkish Armed Forces when the military made its support clear by publicly echoing the concerns of the organisers regarding the possible election of one of the founders of AKP, Abdullah Gül, whose wife publicly dons the Islamic headscarf. The then chief of staff, General Yaşar Büyükanıt, stated that the election of the new head of state ought to conform to 'the foundational values of the Republic, the unitarian nature of the state and sincerely following the *laicist* democratic state."[10] Freedom of press was heavy-handedly undermined even when journalists from mainstream media questioned the civilian quality of the planned demonstrations and expressed discomfort about the interventionist traditions of the military.[11]

In 2007, there were a total of ten well-organised, heavily attended and orderly 'Republic' demonstrations in nine Turkish cities and one German city. In Ankara, 500,000 participants marched to *Anıtkabir*, the memorial of the Founder of the Turkish Republic, in the aftermath of the actual demonstration with no intervention from the security forces. The most populated demonstration took place in Izmir with over a million participants.[12]

7 For distinctions between Turkish laicism and secularism, see Houston 2013.

8 http://add.org.tr/?page_id=2280. Accessed 1 June 2014.

9 http://www.cydd.org.tr/sayfa.asp?id=22. Accessed 1 June 2014.

10 http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/405388.asp.

11 Weekly *NOKTA*'s headquarters were raided, computer hard-drives were seized and the publication of future issues was effectively ended.

12 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6604643.stm.

Donning and displaying the Turkish flag, participants' slogans expressed three sets of concerns:

a) the threat of an Islamist takeover, evoking the Republican principle of state-secularism: 'Claim your Republic'; 'Turkey is Laicist, will Remain Laicist'; 'neither Sharia, nor a coup, but a totally independent Turkey'; 'The roads to Çankaya [Presidential Palace] are closed to Sharia'; 'We don't want an imam in Çankaya'; 'Turkey sobered up and the imam passed out!'; 'Forefather, rest in peace, we are here.'
b) protesting foreign support, evoking anti-imperialism: 'We want no ABD-ullah as president!' [ABD is the Turkish acronym for US]; 'Neither EU, nor US. Totally independent Turkey!'; and again 'neither Sharia, nor a coup, but a totally independent Turkey' ['totally independent' alluding to the anti-imperialist Marxist-Leninist left of the 1960s and 1970s].
c) indicating the backward, primitive, religious qualities of the AKP in direct confrontation with the prime minister and demanding his resignation: 'Cabinet, resign!'; 'Tayyip take a look at us, count how many of us there are!' [a direct reference to the prime minister's former remark about the numbers of the protesters]; 'Turkey sobered up and the imam passed out!' [pun]; 'Even Edison regrets it!' referring to AKP's emblem, the light bulb; 'As the sun rises, light bulbs dim;' 'We came with our mother, where are you?' [on mother's day, as direct confrontation with one of the former remarks of the prime minister]; 'The Islamic call to prayer, the peal of church bells, and the ceremony of the synagogue are all listened to with respect in this city' [confronting the prime minister's remark that Izmir was an infidel city]; 'Buy Tayyip, get Aydın Doğan for free!' [Doğan is the media mogul whose media outlets gave little coverage to the demonstrations].[13]

With these slogans and several public speeches, the protesters identified their goal of a republican Turkey as an 'enlightened nation-state with integrity and honour, and guided by [principles of] science' as opposed to 'reactionaries' (a euphemism about Islamism), separatists (a euphemism about Kurdish nationalism), collaborators of global exploitation (alluding to the anti-imperialist foundational myths of the post-World War One era), and conspiracies that aim to establish an anti-laicist education system.[14]

They were responding to Prime Minister Erdoğan whose populist remarks were undermining the laicist claims as elitist, by identifying him as

13 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_Protests#Slogans_from_the_rallies.
14 http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/04/29/us-turkey-president-idUSL2910950920070429.

an ignorant religious reactionary who lacked the modern statesmanship as envisioned by the founders of the Republic. A nineteenth-century modernist discourse was apparent during the demonstrations as the participants expressed their fear of what they perceived as 'religious reactionary' politics, and arguing that religious social representation was not supposed to be an integral part of Turkish politics even if represented by democratically elected leaders and supported by large portions of society. The irony was that the protestors identified the 'backward, reactionary' AKP as the ally of the enlightened yet 'imperialist' Europe.

The 2007 protests were well organised, strategic mobilisations of a paradoxical elite mob-spirit that seemed to be fearful of losing its monopoly of the public discourse on nationhood and citizenship. Their understanding of Turkishness and Turkish nationhood was one of following the top-down ideals of a modernizing state, depicting the population and its ideals as designed and designated by the republican principles of cultural uniformity and anti-religious exclusiveness, guarded by the military establishment.

Gezi – Summer 2013

Contrary to the *ex-nihilo* explanations regarding the origins of the Gezi mobilisation, there were almost two years' worth of long strategic organising, involving professional, neighbourhood and community organisations. The rapid escalation of protests throughout the country in the month of June is often described as a massive, spontaneous and unorganised response to indiscriminate police brutality against peaceful protestors. In fact, the original protest was a well-organised strategic action coordinated by local residents of Taksim and the TMMOB (the leading groups and active participants of the Taksim Solidarity, which would later incorporate more than 100 professional and civic organisations) against the redevelopment plans of the government and the Mayor, initiated in 2009. Since its inception, Taksim Solidarity was staunchly critical of the AKP regime, not only in terms of its economic programme, but also its social and cultural policies and its constituents' cultural visibility.[15]

As the protests expanded in scope and number, the original instigator, Taksim Solidarity, emerged as the umbrella organisation of *çapulcus* and *çapulling*, fully re-appropriating a formerly pejorative term that was originally used by the prime minister to discredit the demonstrators. This

15 http://taksimdayanisma.org. Accessed 2 June 2014.

re-appropriation represented the anti-authoritarian core of the ongoing uprising and turmoil in Turkey, where subtle or overt forms of authoritarianism have always been a definitive quality of the polity. Unlike the prevailing and traditional methods of power and protest in politics, the Gezi demonstrators, using methods of occupation and humour, displayed a Bakhtian sense of carnival and laughter.[16] The Gezi protests were 'not a spectacle seen by the people,' but a carnival to be lived in and 'everyone participate[d] because its very idea embrace[d] all the people' (Bakhtin 1984, 7-8). Due to the particularities of a carnival setting they could operate outside the societal rules and limitations as they voiced their critique of authority, i.e. the AKP government and Prime Minister Erdoğan. The humour, or as Bakhtin calls it 'the Rabelaisian laughter,' was employed to undermine the stiffness of authority, parodying almost each and every quotidian encroachment statement uttered by officials of the governing party and the prime minister, such as limiting alcohol consumption, medicalising homosexuality, dictating family sizes, restricting freedom of expression and justifying police brutality. This discursive creativity and humour may be seen as the one common aspect of the protestors who otherwise had highly diverse political goals and expectations.

As in many mass mobilisations, the role of the heavy clashes with the security forces is hard to delineate among the diversity of the causes that brought participants out for the weeks-long protests. While the initial police brutality seemed to be a major triggering factor, tear gas and water cannon attacks by police forces have never been rare in Turkish street politics; indeed, the country has witnessed worse over the years, especially in the eastern provinces, where clashes and stand-offs with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, PKK) remains a fact of life. This became one of the rallying points when Kurds were openly criticized for not staging supportive demonstrations in Kurdish provinces in the East. Ironically, some protestors expressed discomfort due to the visibility of Kurdish flags and MPs during the demonstrations.[17]

Surveys from the summer of 2013 indicated the political and social similarities and differences of the protestors to those who participated in the 2007 protests.[18] According to one comprehensive survey from early

16 Parody and inflection of irony is central in Bakhtin's dialogical struggle, indicating subversion and irreverence to vacate the authoritarian spaces of the power-holders (Bakhtin 1984).

17 http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal2/gezi_ve_kurtler-1136701.

18 Though there does not seem to be a comprehensive survey of the profile of the participants in 2007, qualitative interviews indicate a similar urban elite background.

June,[19] with 498 participants inside the park or around Taksim square, 58 per cent of the protestors indicated that the primary cause of the clashes was the prime minister and 13.7 per cent believed it was the government, whereas 8.2 per cent indicated that the cause was police brutality, 3.4 per cent the cutting of the trees and 2 per cent said it was the redevelopment project. 46.4 per cent of the protestors indicated that they were participating to support the resistance, 11.8 per cent said it was for freedom, 9.4 per cent to protect the park/trees, 4.8 per cent for democracy, 3.4 per cent for human rights, 2.8 per cent against the government, 2.8 per cent for the independence of Kurds, 2.8 per cent were protesting the style of the prime minister, 1.8 per cent wanted revolution, 1.6 per cent to bring consciousness to people, 1.2 per cent were protesting police brutality and 1.2 per cent were demanding an increase in minimum wages. The most indicative result was that when the protestors were asked who they loved most other than their own family members and friends, 54.8 per cent said Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 9 per cent Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK and 7 per cent said Deniz Gezmiş, a Marxist student activist who was hanged during the 1971 military coup and whose image was displayed overlooking the square alongside that of Atatürk's).

Similarly, in terms of their political identification, one third of the participants categorised themselves as Kemalists, 19 per cent as freedom-oriented, 12.4 per cent as socialist, 8.9 per cent as social-democrat, 6.1 per cent as laicist, 3.3 per cent as revolutionary, 1.5 per cent Republican and 1 per cent as nationalist. The political identifications Kemalist, social-democrat, laicist and Republican are almost exclusively used by the supporters of the CHP, the main opposition party in the parliament. It is unsurprising therefore that 74.3 per cent of the protesters who had participated in elections had voted for the CHP during the last election, 15.8 per cent for the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi,* BDP) and only 1.2 per cent for the AKP. One third of the surveyed protestors had never voted before. 64.7 per cent of the surveyed protestors indicated that they were going to vote for the CHP in the upcoming elections and 13.5 per cent for the BDP. According to the findings of the qualitative GENAR survey (Taştan 2013), half of the protesters were 'atypical CHP voters' whose secularism was different from the state-authoritarian secularism; one third of the protestors were anti-systemic radicals who did not believe in party politics and electoral processes; and the remainder were supporters of parties on the 'left but not the nationalist kind,' with below electoral threshold constituencies. In

19 http://www.genar.com.tr/files/GEZIPARKI_PROFIL-SON.pdf.

addition to the majority's support for the CHP, the characterisation of the participants as urban, educated and middle class was also evidenced in the GENAR survey.

The protests at Gezi were noticeably and uncharacteristically prolific and creative in terms of the claims and demands expressed and the slogans chanted, representing the unusual bedfellows that were challenging the AKP regime and style. The images of the main building on the square covered with the banners of many diverse groups (except LGBTI groups) displayed calls for Marxist revolution, anarchist rebellion, general strike and the resignation of the prime minister. They also displayed images of executed leaders of 1970s student activism in addition to images of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Turkish flag as representatives of nationalism and laicism. Protestors demanded the resignation of the prime minister and expressed their fears and frustrations regarding what they perceived as attacks on their lifestyle, from the increased visibility of religious symbols and practices in urban public spaces to limitations on laicist policies and secular practices. In addition, neoliberal policies endorsed by the government were also criticized, albeit not as widely. The visibility of symbols of LGBTI groups, Kurdish flags and the 'revolutionary Muslims' enhanced the 'people's movement' characteristic of this opposition to the AKP regime. Gezi was a cacophony of demands and polyvocality of claims; however, the boundless irreverence vis-à-vis the authorities and self-limitation in terms of demands to the government rendered Gezi a protest against existing transgressions and violations.

Conclusion

Neither democracies, nor nations are entities that can be dictated or rewarded with neatly packaged gifts to faceless masses by all knowing, all-powerful elites. The problem with absolutist attitudes towards democracy and an essentialist perception of nationhood is their inability to capture its ever-changing fluidity and comprehend its contingency. Expansion of broad and popular participation and demands for protection from arbitrary government action are crucial elements of contentious democratisation and formation of nationhood. Given the contingent qualities of political processes, there are no guarantees that such mobilisations may directly lead to democracy. However, the dynamism of claims during protests is constitutive in terms of defining collectivities and adversaries of the polity as understood by the power-holders and the contenders.

A widespread notion in Turkey, and elsewhere, always regards democracy as a product of the craftsmanship of elites with their eyes on modernisation. Framing and experiencing democracy as a messy process of contingencies and reversals, and as an outcome of strategic clashes between top-down power-holders and bottom-up contenders, is still unfamiliar territory for politicians and intellectuals alike who try to fashion a nation and citizenry befitting some idealized European capitals, or, more recently, an idealized imperial past.

The contrast between 2007 and 2013 is highly significant in illustrating the dynamism of popular claims for political participation and nationhood. The difference among the discursive repertoires of these protests indicates that 2007 was an 'Old Turks revolt' (Taspinar 2007), i.e. it was alarmist about Islamisation, proud of a military past, excluded differences, believed in the civilising mission of the state, supported an assimilationist national unity, was resentful of everything Western including the EU and the US in a Cold War fashion of anti-imperialism and had a specific ideal of republican womanhood that excluded the citizenship rights of conservative female citizens of Turkey. Most importantly, the 2007 protests were defensive, evoking a military, assimilationist past that upheld the state and the military as the primary engines of modernisation and civilisation.

In 2007, it was the opposition that was evoking a distant past, imagining an authoritarian, hierarchical and an exclusionary one. In that past, the 'us and them' discourse was loud, visible and clear as the central pillar of nationalism. Citizenship was not based on equality and nationhood; it was an elite design. Those who evoked nationhood in Turkey in 2007 seemed to be convinced that democracy was a holy grail that could be understood and accessed only by modern-looking men in tuxedos and non-conservative women with no headscarves. Therefore, they were highly critical of democracy as a regime when confronted by the actual political claims of large crowds, and they soon evoked an authoritarian past that could only be attained by military discipline.

The 2013 Gezi protests certainly involved social segments who insisted on evoking a nationhood of yesteryear. However, it left its mark as an inclusive mobilisation with a critical capacity for coalition-building among diverse segments of the society. It was a movement of individual citizens with diverse identities and interests who upheld irreverence, subversive and liberating 'Rebelaisian laughter' (Bakhtin 1984) as a political instrument, undermining the methods of dominant styles, authoritarian stiffness and military orders. The movement invoked the universal values and principles of the individual with rights to collective access to space and political

decision-making, rather than evoking a particular past shaped by modernizing elites. In a peculiar, yet highly dialogical sense, it seems now that it is AKP's turn to evoke a past, this time an imaginary Ottoman one, as evidenced in the prime minister's references to 'ancestors' as models for contemporary social and moral actions. Similarly, his public statements have increasingly polarised the population as 'us' and 'them,' resonating the exclusiveness of the state-secularist elites' narratives of Turkishness. Utilising the dialogical instruments of his former opposition, his narrative aims to establish public support and legitimacy based on the 'others' who are not befitting his sense of nationhood and model citizens.

In 2013, the protesters' 'us and them' discourse was mostly indicating the difference between the power-holders and the protesters, not highlighting an unequal citizenry. From a dialogical perspective, it is not surprising that now the power-holder's, i.e. the prime minister's, public statements are based on a) 'us and them' discourse and b) unequal citizenry.

The non-hierarchical resistance at Gezi invoked a sense of collectivity that did not require a top-down disciplining by leaders or elites. Rather than following pre-designed formats of mobilisation, even in the face of police brutality, they invoked individual creativity and collective solidarity. This new formation of individual expression and political unity is already leaving its mark on the Turkish polity, regardless of possible reversals of democracy and attempts at authoritarianism. At the same time, the Gezi protests became a threshold in displaying a sense of nationhood that incorporates diversity and multivocality, unlike former state-secularist and present mild-Islamist regimes, which seem to have more abundant similarities than differences.

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2 'Everyday I'm *Çapulling*!'

Global Flows and Local Frictions of Gezi

Jeremy F. Walton

Introduction: Gezi and Rumi's Elephant in the Dark

> Some Hindus have an elephant to show. No one here has ever seen an elephant. They bring it at night to a dark room. One by one, we go in the dark and come out saying how we experience the animal. One of us happens to touch the trunk. 'A water-pipe kind of creature.' Another, the ear. 'A very strong, always moving back and forth, fan-animal.' Another, the leg. 'I find it still, like a column on a temple.' Another touches the curved back. 'A leathery throne.' Another, the cleverest, feels the tusk. 'A rounded sword made of porcelain.' He's proud of his description. Each of us touches one place and understands the whole in that way. – Rumi, 'Elephant in the Dark' (Rumi 1995, 252)

In the immediate wake of the Gezi uprising of summer 2013, which shook Turkish political society to its foundations, local and global pundits alike imitated the men in the dark of Rumi's famous parable: attempting to grasp the totality of the elephant that was Gezi, they mistook specific aspects of the demonstration for its whole. For some, Gezi was principally a matter of class resentment; for others, it was solely a denunciation of the governing AKP. Yet another chorus of voices emphasised the relationship between Gezi and ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey, especially Alevis. Like Rumi's sightless men, commentators seized on various parts of the beast, without fully envisioning the whole.

The bulk of interpretations of Gezi crystallised around a dominant polarity. This polarity focused on the relationship between the demonstrations and the AKP, with particular emphasis on the figure of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Two competing narratives emerged. For most supporters of the protests, Gezi marked an unprecedented outpouring of public, liberal dissent, aimed both at Erdoğan's draconian pronouncements and at the pervasive illiberality of the Turkish state and political culture more generally. Defenders of the government, on the other hand, articulated a counter-narrative – in their estimation, Gezi was merely the reactionary spasm of a crumbling elite, previously favoured by the illiberal state, that

has witnessed its privileges and prerogatives erode in the context of a new Turkish political culture.

My aspiration in this essay is to pursue a multi-faceted reading of Gezi that mediates between, and thereby unravels, these two polar interpretations. In doing so, I forward a comprehensive portrait of Gezi that avoids substituting one part of the protest for its whole – only by doing so can we hope to grasp the entirety of this elephant. In what follows, I take up three distinct features of the Gezi demonstrations: the historical roots of the politicisation of public, urban space in Republican Turkey, with particular reference to Taksim Square; the character of the protests as a post-modern, Bakhtinian carnival; and, the resonances of the demonstrations with other recent outpourings of mass dissent across the globe. In order to unite these three themes – the genealogy of public space, protest as carnival and the global horizons of contemporary protest – I focus on the character of the *çapulcu* (roughly translatable as 'looter'), which came to define Gezi's heterogeneous demonstrators and remains one of the most distinctive legacies of the protests. As I argue, the semiotic and political density of the *çapulcu* defies the simple polarity between liberal dissent and populist legitimacy that has defined the two dominant narratives about the demonstrations.

The Politics of Public Space in Urban Turkey: Taksim Square, Proscenium of the Nation

In recent years, a bevy of social scientists has directed attention to the dense relationship between the aesthetics of public space and political argument in contemporary Turkey. Generally, these theorists have traced the myriad transformations of politics and public space that have characterised Turkey since the 1980s, beginning with the restoration of civilian government in 1983 following the 12 September 1980 military coup and the subsequent neoliberal reforms of the Turgut Özal era (Öniş 2004).[1] Among the markers of the vivid, neoliberal public sphere of Turkey are: a profusion of commodities in all public spaces (Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002); a recalibration of the relationship between statism and public space, with a particular proliferation of informal rituals of the state (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Özyürek 2006; Hart 1999); and a renaissance of pre-Republican, Neo-Ottoman discourses and aesthetic forms (Walton 2010). Furthermore, this

1 http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/12907/brand-turkey-and-the-gezi-protests_authoritarianis.

newly fragmented public sphere has also witnessed a reorientation and retrenchment of Kemalist secularism, both as a congeries of commodities (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Özyürek 2006) and as a mass subject of political protest (Tambar 2009). To paraphrase an argument made by anthropologist Chris Dole (2012), neoliberal Turkish public space articulates a new 'distribution of the sensible,' in which the verities of Turkish statism, nationalism and Kemalism can no longer be taken for granted.

With this broader context in mind, the incalculable importance of Taksim Square as the site of the Gezi demonstrations comes into focus. As Alev Çınar (2005, 110 ff.) has argued, the city of Istanbul in general and Taksim Square in particular maintain pride of place within a Turkish Republican imaginary of modern, secular nationhood. Even as Ankara was rapidly developed as the post-Ottoman capital in the 1920s and 1930s, Istanbul continued to constitute the privileged stage for the drama of Turkish nationhood. The centrality of Istanbul to Turkey as a whole has become even more entrenched in recent decades, as the new 'global city' (Sassen 1991) mediates the relationship between the nation and transnational political, economic and cultural flows (cf. Appadurai 1996). Throughout Republican Turkish history, Taksim Square has functioned as a proscenium on the political theatre of Istanbul and Turkey generally. Although the square and its surrounding districts were a lively area of the city during the late Ottoman period – the nearby neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu and Pera were the undisputed centre of European-oriented Istanbul, home to large Greek and Armenian Christian communities as well as a substantial number of Western European expatriates – the relationship between Taksim and the revolutionary state project of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his cohorts was cemented in the early decades of the Republic.[2]

Arguably, the most important material embodiment and index of the statist, secularist dispensation of Taksim is the Republic Monument (*Cumhuriyet Anıtı*), which stands at the centre of the square. Designed by renowned Italian architect Pietro Canonica, the monument was erected in 1928. Its eleven-metre-tall bulk features two massive bronze statues of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In the north-facing sculpture, Atatürk leads a battalion in a military operation; in the second, south-facing sculpture, he strikes a diplomatic pose in a neat three-piece suit, flanked by other key figures from the Turkish War of Independence (*Kurtuluş Savaşı*), including İsmet İnönü and Fevzi Çakmak. Thus, the two sides of the monument express Atatürk's two key roles as warrior and statesman – in one form or

2 For a more thorough history of Taksim Square in Turkish, see Gülersöy 1994.

another, he gazes in panoptical fashion over the entirety of the square. Of nearly equal importance to the Kemalist aesthetics of Taksim is a more recent structure, the Atatürk Cultural Centre (*Atatürk Kültür Merkezi*, AKM), which dominates the eastern side of the square. A state institution, the AKM features the most prominent opera hall and performance space in the district; on national holidays, its stark modernist façade is reliably draped with a gigantic banner depicting Atatürk, accompanied by the requisite phalanx of Turkish flags.

Given the centrality of the square as a site for the insignia of nation and state, debates over the transformation of built space in Taksim quickly become synecdochic of political fissures in Turkey more broadly. In the late 1970s, Taksim witnessed extensive political violence among both civilian right- and left-wing paramilitary groups and the military and security forces; most notoriously, the 1977 May Day demonstrations in the square resulted in the death of between 34 and 42 protestors and union members at the hands of the security forces, one of the key events that precipitated the military coup of 12 September 1980. More recently, Taksim has been at the epicentre of seismic political debates over the public visibility of Islam in contemporary Turkey. During his tenure as the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) Mayor of Istanbul in the 1990s, Erdoğan forwarded a controversial, ultimately unsuccessful plan to construct a massive mosque on Taksim Square. As Çınar (2005, 115) cogently argues, the mosque proposal directly contradicted the secularist dispensation of the Square in general, and the Republic Monument in particular:

> The secularist opposition (to the mosque) was not against the idea of a new mosque in itself. Several other mosques had been built in Istanbul, and none of these had become controversial. But Taksim Square is not just anyplace; it is the center of Istanbul, circumscribed by the monumental structures of official Turkish modernity and secular nationalism. For secularists, it was unthinkable for the Republic Monument, with the figure of Atatürk at the fore and standing right at the center of the square, to be overshadowed by a huge mosque.

Erdoğan's more recent proposal to overhaul the entirety of the Taksim Square – the flashpoint that ignited the Gezi Demonstrations – is merely the latest iteration of this sharp debate over the place of Islam in Taksim. It is difficult to imagine a more provocative redevelopment proposal than that forwarded by Erdoğan's coterie. This proposal revived the idea of a massive mosque on the square – Erdoğan commissioned a design from the

famous architect Ahmet Vefik Alp, although he later rejected the design as reportedly 'too modern.'[3] More importantly, the plan to overhaul Taksim called for the demolition of both Gezi Park – a small stand of crabgrass and sycamores on the north side of the square – and the aforementioned AKM.[4] In their place, Erdoğan's plan calls for the construction of a replica of an Ottoman-era military depot, the Halil Pasha Artillery Barracks (*Halil Paşa Topçu Kışlası*), which would house a shopping centre.[5] More so than the mosque itself, this proposed irruption of Neo-Ottoman aesthetic forms within the Republican-Kemalist space of Taksim constituted the transgression of a political Rubicon.

As I have argued at length elsewhere (Walton 2010), Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout Istanbul have reoriented the aesthetics of urban space along Neo-Ottoman lines in recent years. On the whole, however, these Neo-Ottoman transformations of urban space have remained cloistered in neighbourhoods such as Fatih and Eyüp, which are already known for their public Muslim piety; by contrast, the current proposal intervenes directly within the privileged secular space of Taksim. Furthermore, the agent of this transformation is not a relatively depoliticised civil society group (Walton 2013), but Erdoğan and the AKP. From his foreign policy to his bellicose public posturing, Erdoğan has echoed and embodied Ottoman precedents in various ways. Thus, his proposal to rebuild an Ottoman-era military institution in the definitively Republican space of Taksim Square might easily be read as an effort to turn back the clock of history and unseat the basic principles of the Republic itself. The fact that this Neo-Ottoman space will house a shopping centre – an emblem and beachhead of globalised consumer culture in Turkey (Ayata 2002)[6] – only underscores the dense relationship between the AKP and the neoliberal transformations of Turkey's society and economy broadly, a point that the Gezi protesters emphasised.

3 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/24/world/europe/mosque-dream-seen-at-heart-of-turkey-protests.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0. Notably, Erdoğan emphasised that he would prefer an 'Ottoman-style' mosque to Alp's postmodern confection.

4 http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan_erdogan_biz_birkac_capulcunun_yaptiklarini_yapmayiz-1136875.

5 According to the latest court decision on the matter, issued in March 2014, the legal challenge to revoke the previous approval of the proposal to build the replica Military Barracks was rejected – in other words, the plan to build the replica is, at time of writing, moving forward. http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/topcu_kislasi_onayi_uygundur-1180789.

6 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-317643-gezi-anatomy-of-public-square-movementby-nilufer-gole-.html.

The metastasisation of the Gezi Park protests from a small group of environmentalists to a heterogeneous crowd of tens of thousands over the course of a few days would have been unimaginable anywhere in Turkey other than Taksim Square. To understand this metastasisation, a perspective on the genealogy of public space and politics in Taksim is indispensable. That said, however, we should also take care not to reduce the Gezi demonstrations to a mere reaction to the potential incursion on the Kemalist secularity of Taksim Square. After all, the initial proposal to build a mosque on the square did not ignite a mass protest movement. Nor did the Gezi demonstrators constitute a mass Kemalist subject of the sort that Kabir Tambar describes in his analysis of the 2007 Republic demonstrations (Tambar 2009; see also Öktem 2011, 151-154). Much has been made of the participation of a group known as the Anti-Capitalist Muslims (*Antikapitalist Müslümanlar*) in the Gezi uprising;[7] as a member of an NGO affiliated to the Anti-Capitalist Muslims emphasised to me in an interview in March 2014, the definitive cleavage of Gezi was not that between Islam and secularism, but between justice and injustice (*adalet ve adaletsizlik/haksızlık*). Rather than reducing Gezi to the politics of secularism and Islam – rather than mistaking part of the elephant for the whole – we must endeavour to grasp the novel political subjectivities and practices of citizenship that Gezi witnessed and fostered. The following section, on the semiotic and political anatomy of the *çapulcu*, represents just such an endeavour.

The Carnivalesque Citizenship of the *Çapulcu*

In the days and weeks after the demonstrations against the proposed demolition of Gezi Park first broke out on 27 May 2013, it became clear that they marked a historically new formation and subject of the political in Turkey. As the protests swelled with the characteristic velocity of the networked, social media present (Castells 2012), observers quickly took note of the distinctive, novel heterogeneity of the protestors themselves. Sociologist Nilüfer Göle's assessment is exemplary:

> The Gezi movement has united people in a square and around a tree against the polarizing policies and rhetoric of the ruling party. It has brought together people, ideas, lifestyles and clubs that are hard to get to come together, including young and old people, students and bureaucrats,

7 http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2013/06/10/occupy-gezi-beyond-the-religious-secular-cleavage/.

> feminists and housewives, Muslims and leftists, Kurds and Alevis, Kemalists and communists, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş supporters. These people might have taken the stage perhaps only for a moment, but that moment has been engraved on the square and on the collective memory.[8]

What mode of unity might mediate this heterogeneity? Would such unity be merely negative? Clearly, a political *identity*, with its attendant homogeneity, singularity and coherence, would necessarily fail to capture the Gezi demonstrators – indeed, as Göle notes, Gezi was defined by the conglomeration of multiple political identities. What linked the protestors was not an identity, but a novel, emphatic practice of citizenship, a public performativity. Ironically, Prime Minister Erdoğan provided the rubric that ultimately united the protestors. On 2 June, during his first public response to the mounting protests, Erdoğan snidely dismissed the demonstrators as mere criminals and 'looters' (*çapulcular*).[9] With Twitter and Facebook as their tribunes, the protesters gleefully seized on the label *çapulcu* – a previously obscure Turkish noun – and appropriated it as their own.

Above all, the *çapulcu* is a subversive, carnivalesque figure (see also Şener 2013). Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1984, 7) famously theorised the carnivalesque as a time-space (or chronotope) of inversion:

> In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators [...] Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants.

The carnivalesque nature of the *çapulcu* is immediately evident in a brief Youtube video titled 'Everyday I'm Çapulling,' which compiles a series of video clips from the protests.[10] Among the images featured are:

8 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-317643-gezi-anatomy-of-public-square-movementby-nilufer-gole-.html.

9 http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan_erdogan_biz_birkac_capulcunun_yaptiklarini_yapmayiz-1136875.

10 The video is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVoNTUYoZls. Accessed 10 June 2014.

a sea of Turkish flags; teargas canisters flying through the air; a protestor pummelled by a water cannon in Taksim Square; a young man in a gas mask performing Michael Jackson's signature 'Moon Dance'; groups of demonstrators performing a folk dance (*halay çekmek*) in a circle; and, a cloaked protestor wearing a Guy Fawkes mask, the preeminent global icon of anarchic carnival. Despite the evident violence depicted – water cannons and teargas – the mood of the video is unambiguously one of celebration and jubilation, a fact that the drum-and-bass beat accompanying the visuals underscores.

As a figure of the carnivalesque, the *çapulcu* marshals and inaugurates a critical politics of fun (cf. Bayat 2007), one that had never before appeared on the stage of Turkish public life. This carnivalesque, public fun was the solvent that allowed for the absorption and transcendence of the many different political and social identities that gathered in Gezi Park and Taksim Square in the heady days of May and June. During a conversation in Istanbul a few weeks after the closing of Gezi Park, a friend who had participated daily in the demonstrations succinctly articulated this point to me: 'I had never felt that way before. For the first time, there in Gezi, it didn't matter who you were or where you were from. It was unique.' As my friend's reminiscence reveals, the aesthetics and sociality of the protests constituted a new moment of heterogeneity and multiplicity in Turkey. In the next section, I endeavour to contextualise the heterogeneity and multiplicity registered by the *çapulcu* in relation to the global horizons of contemporary protest at large.

Gezi and the Discontents of Neoliberal Globalisation

One of the most intractable questions raised by Gezi is that of the relationship between the Turkish demonstrations and the recent global protest movement as a whole. Many commentators, both within and beyond Turkey, have highlighted the myriad points of contact between Gezi and other protest movements such as the Arab Spring and Occupy – seizure of public, urban space; heterogeneity of participation; reliance on social media. Beyond this general identification of common tropes and means, however, a more trenchant analysis of the relationship between global flows and local frictions in Gezi is still urgently needed. In this section, I argue the figure of the *çapulcu*, with its distinctive mediation of global and local logics, offers a vantage on Gezi that encompasses both its specificities and continuities with other sites of protest.

Among the sharpest interpretations of Gezi yet to emerge are those that focus on the demonstration's relationship to the affective landscape of neoliberal globalisation. In his comparison between the Gezi Protests and anti-austerity demonstrations in Athens, Slavoj Žižek (2013) succinctly captures the power of the ambient unease that accompanies neoliberalism in its myriad loci:

> It is also important to recognize that the protesters aren't pursuing any identifiable 'real' goal. The protests are not 'really' against global capitalism, 'really' against religious fundamentalism, 'really' for civil freedoms and democracy, or 'really' about any one thing in particular. What the majority of those who have participated in the protests are aware of is a fluid feeling of unease and discontent that sustains and unites various specific demands.

Turkish sociologist Cihan Tuğal (2013, 167) makes a similar point about Gezi when he diagnoses a characteristic 'impoverishment of social life' on the part of the urban, white-collar professionals who made up a significant portion of the protesters as a dynamo of the uprising. As he puts it, 'free market capitalism has actually delivered [...] its promises: lucrative jobs, luxurious vacations, fancy cars, (at least the prospect of) comfortable homes, and many other forms of conspicuous consumption. Yet, none of this has resulted in fulfilling lives'. (Ibid.)

My own interpretation of the aetiology of Gezi parallels those forwarded by Žižek and Tuğal – like them, I also maintain that the subtle social and cultural transformations entailed by neoliberalism are fundamental to protest movements throughout the globe. To use a somewhat different theoretical lexicon, I propose that we consider the Gezi Protests as a direct response to an on-going transformation in the 'distribution of the sensible' (Rancière 2004; see also Dole 2012) in Turkish public life. This neoliberal restructuring of the distribution of the sensible and the novel politics and aesthetics that have accompanied it have entailed the substantial erosion of the statist *Weltanschauung* of Kemalism, even as they have ushered in new forms of alienation rooted in the 'impoverishment of social life.' It is against this backdrop that the figure of the *çapulcu* emerges with counter-hegemonic glee.

With its carnivalesque dissidence, the *çapulcu* parts ways with the rather dire, dour analyses forwarded by Žižek and Tuğal. Following Žižek, we can point to the *çapulcu's* constitutive distance from all goal- and end-oriented political action – the *çapulcu* is not 'really' making any specific

political argument or demand. Indeed, as Bakhtin's original analysis of the carnivalesque suggests, the very obfuscation of the distinction between audience and spectator that defines the social aesthetics of the carnival militates against end-oriented politics as such. Moving beyond Žižek and Tuğal, however, I argue that what draws us to the *çapulcu,* what makes the *çapulcu* so compelling, is precisely its ability to transduce and conduct the ambient unease of the neoliberal condition into the distinctive glee of postmodern carnival.

The politics of fun and the carnivalesque glee of the *çapulcu* also establish it squarely as a global political subject. When we look to Zuccotti Park, to Tahrir Square, to the intermittently seething streets of Kiev, Rio de Janeiro, Tel Aviv, Athens and Sarajevo, we can easily spot cousins of the *çapulcu*. If, as a number of theorists have argued, the contemporary global protest movement is a reaction of the global 'multitude' against the Empire of neoliberalism (Hardt and Negri 2000), the *çapulcu* may well be the most distinctive face of this global multitude. There is no reason why the verb 'to *çapul*' – another fertile Gezi neologism – should not apply beyond Turkey. That said, we should not rush to unmoor the *çapulcu* entirely from its local context – like all formations of the 'multitude,' the *çapulcu* necessarily synthesises global flows and local frictions in its performative density. While *çapulcus* across the world may wear Guy Fawkes masks, these masks will not uniformly articulate the same denigrations, discontents and demands.

Conclusion: Gezi and the Decoupling of Liberalism and Democracy in Turkey

In an influential volume, French political philosopher Chantal Mouffe inveighs against the conflation of liberalism and democracy characteristic of much contemporary political theory. She contends that

> with modern democracy, we are dealing with a new political form of society whose specificity comes from the articulation between two different traditions. On one side we have the liberal tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights, and the respect of individual liberty; on the other the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty. There is no necessary relation between those two distinct traditions but only a contingent historical articulation (Mouffe 2000, 2-3).

Mouffe's formulation here echoes the polarity with which I began this paper: advocates and sympathisers of the Gezi demonstrations have marshalled a broadly liberal critique of Erdoğan's demagogic democratic-populism, while defenders of the government have argued that democratic electoral legitimacy trumps liberal critique on the part of marginal or minority groups. In this respect, Gezi represents a crucial point of fracture between liberal and democratic political projects in Turkey, where the suturing of liberalism and democracy has always been more fraught than in the liberal democracies of the North Atlantic.

The decoupling of liberalism and democracy is thus a central narrative and facet of the Gezi demonstrations. This centrality, however, should not lead us to neglect the myriad other aspects of Gezi – like the men in Rumi's parable, we must attempt to comprehend Gezi through detailed analyses of its constituent parts, vigilantly avoiding the substitution of part for whole. This essay represents one contribution in this collaborative, collative project. I have fashioned my argument with reference to three distinct themes – the genealogy of public, urban space in Taksim Square, the politics of carnival and the global resonances of Gezi – united by the figure of the *çapulcu*. It is fitting, then, to conclude by revisiting the *çapulcu*. Seen from a certain angle, the *çapulcu* is undeniably a figure of liberal democracy – it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the *çapulcu* separate from liberal democratic values and projects. As I have argued, however, the *çapulcu* is also irreducible to the dynamics of liberalism and democracy – its carnivalesque, counter-hegemonic glee, and the practices of citizenship that accompany this glee, are neither a simple expression of individual liberty, nor a romance of popular sovereignty. Indeed, I suspect that the *çapulcu* has further lessons to offer us regarding the politics of public space both within Turkey and across the global landscapes of the protest movement. And for that reason, I intend to continue *çapulling*, every day.

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3 The Incentives and Actors of Protests in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2013

Ana Dević and Marija Krstić

Introduction

In analysing the processes and actors that would make for a meaningful comparison of the protests in Gezi Park and the demonstrations in Bosnia-Herzegovina pushing for uniform personal ID numbers, we aim to outline the political processes and venues of political discontent in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where, in both cases, the course of the elites' actions and the accompanying dominant ideology had been an orientation to democratisation reforms, economic and political modernisation and social mobility. Subsequently, this was perceived by a substantial number of people as a failed promise. We then illuminate the 'triggering perceptions' of the events – the decision to destroy Gezi Park in Istanbul and the inability of the Bosnian elites to agree on uniform ID card numbers – which led to protest mobilisation. In presenting interviews with the participants of the protest in the Gezi Park, we will highlight the consequences of the protest – the new forms of civic solidarity, with its moral and emotional elements.

This paper seeks to demonstrate that, although the protesters in both Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina addressed their pleas and claims to the state, their aim was not a radical political change at the top, but rather reforms in several spheres of the system – political, economic, cultural and social. In fact, we did not find antagonising single dimensions of the conflict in either case: it would be erroneous to characterise them as class or ethnic, nor could they be understood as direct responses to economic crises. They, instead, developed the features of the pressures for a 'different distribution of resources or for new rules' (Melucci 1994, 107) and for 'democratization of structures in everyday life' (Cohen 1985, 667).

Turkish Case: Political Change and Gezi Park Protests

In the Turkish case, in the fifty years before the AKP first came to power in November 2002, the Turkish military had intervened four times to banish

elected governments. Although it has become routine to attribute all of the flaws of the pre-AKP Turkish political system to the system of military supervision as an impediment to democratisation processes, reality is more complex. According to a number of studies, many Turks perceived the political role of the military as a counterbalance to the frequent chaos and crises produced by civilian governments. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative research on political attitudes in Turkey has shown that a stable trust in the military and support for democracy are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Gürsoy 2012). The surveys, which show that positive attitudes toward democratic processes and the military rule are held by the same large numbers of Turkish constituencies, may be indicators of the public discontent with the coalition governments that were in power throughout the 1990s, and whose period in office culminated, in February 2001, in Turkey's worst economic crisis in its modern history. While it has been frequently argued that Turkey's public sector, with its bureaucrats and politicians lobbying the government for 'favourable' taxing, spending and regulatory policies, created an ideal environment for corruption, leading to the 2001 crisis and enraging the public, Cizre and Yeldan (2011, 391) convincingly argue that Turkey's 'so-called rent seeking activities (of the bureaucracy) result not from excessive government intervention, but from the very processes of how private industrial and financial capital seeks to appropriate resources to sustain its livelihood.' In other words, in Turkey, as in all capitalist peripheral societies, the public's perception of the culprits of the economic crisis has been shifted away from the neoliberal economic policies and its global actors and resulted in 'a strong anti-state and anti-bureaucracy discourse expounded especially by proponents of the neoliberal consensus' (Ibid., 392). Hence, the victories of the AKP party are diagnosed as a combination of the reinvented use of the populist strategy and the anti-statist sentiment for furthering the neoliberal hegemony, and an introduction of 'Islamism into the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and World Bank-oriented secular neoliberalism' (Balta-Paker and Akça 2012, 78). According to these authors, those who believe that the AKP government made a revolutionary turn away from the anti-democratic policies of the military rule thus are tricked: 'right from the very beginning, simultaneously with its democratic discourse, the AKP has always embraced a unitarian state discourse mixed with militarist and non-pluralist positions.'[1]

1 http://www.opendemocracy.net/umit-cizre/understanding-erdo%C4%9Fan%E2%80%99s-toxic-recrimination-in-turkey.

In outlining the problems of the political structure and the alleged opposition between Islamism and secularism in the context of the Turkish neoliberal consensus, we should also mention the much admired path of Turkish economic growth since the beginning of the 2000s. Even as the rate of economic growth in Turkey has exceeded 7 per cent in the mid-2000s (in comparison to about 4 per cent a decade earlier), the indicators of rural poverty and unemployment (10 per cent), especially youth unemployment, the disappearance of formal jobs and expansion of informal ones, have been consistently disconcerting (Yeldan and Ercan 2011). In this context, as elsewhere in the de-industrialising world with fragmenting and shrinking workers' unions, and the phenomenon of the 'jobless growth,' one could expect that large sections of society would seek new forms of articulating their discontent.

In outlining the context and precursors of the Gezi Park protests that predate the AKP rule, we should finally mention that already by 1982 and the new Constitution, the military government introduced a 'new ideological construction' named 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' as part of the mandatory primary and secondary school curricula (Grigoriadis and Ansari 2005, 317). The spread of the communist ideology, along with its particular influence on Kurdish nationalism and the armed uprising of the PKK, were attributed to the secularist policies of the previous era. The new perspective on Islam as a homogenising 'glue' of the Turkish nation, which was to be taught to pupils as part of regular school curriculum, was also meant to curb and counterbalance the influence of Kurdish nationalism. It was accompanied by new restrictions on human rights and freedoms, and a refusal to recognise the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnicity in Turkey. Citizens of Alevi ethnicity, the second biggest Muslim minority group in Turkey, practicing a heterodox form of Islam, were also threatened by the new state homogenisation policies favouring Sunni Islam (Grigoriadis and Ansari 2005). In the late 1980s, the government of Prime Minister Turgut Özal made some initial steps toward the recognition of a separate Kurdish ethnic identity. In the early 2000s, the coming to power of the AKP coincided with the EU's acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for full membership. The latter required Turkey to introduce various reforms, including the abolition of capital punishment and special provisions for minority rights, which ended the prohibition of publications and broadcasting in Kurdish, and introduced various laws allowing teaching Kurdish as an elective subject in schools.

With this picture of the passage from the military to secular governments, and changes in the ruling parties' approaches toward social development

and minority rights, it is not so striking to observe that among the Gezi Park protesters one would find a large number of young people who were initially sympathetic to and voted for the AKP (in many cases, with parents who had never voted for conservative-Islamist parties). The explanation they give for their positive evaluation of the AKP programmes is that, in the early 2000s, it had sought to reinvigorate the values of democracy, human rights and rule of law, perceived as originating in the West but now universal. Back then, in the mainstream Western media, too, the AKP was presented as a pro-EU reformist movement within Turkish Islamism, as an antidote to the rise of religious fundamentalism and as a role model for the Islamic world. Other promising steps by the AKP included limiting the army's power by 'facilitating trials targeting top military officials for allegedly plotting coups'[2] and pacifying the 30-year-long conflict with the Kurdish minority by bringing the PKK leaders to peace negotiations.[3]

A 31-year old female LGBTI activist protesting in the Gezi Park acknowledges the AKP's efforts to carry out democratic reforms:

> I was very happy with the first years of AKP, you know, because they made some wonderful democratic attempts even though it was just, as we say in Turkish, a make-up. They are not changing the essence, but they are just, you know, coating it with candy. Well, I knew that but I still saw that as an opportunity for my society.

A 29-year old feminist activist and a volunteer in the 'Purple Roof' (*Mor Çatı*) organisation, concerned mostly with violence against women and children, comments in a similar fashion:

> Even some intellectual dissidents were supporters of the AKP just because of this army issue and people would think that, at least, they are not criminals. Because all previous governments, especially in the 1990s, were

2 http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0606/Turkey-s-tumultuous-week-does-little-to-rattle-bulldozer-Erdogan.

3 Marija Krstić conducted sixteen interviews with twelve protesters between the second half of June and end of July, 2013. The respondents came from the following movements and groups:
1. LambdaIstanbul (LGBTI)
2. Anti-capitalist Muslims (*Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar*)
3. Purple Roof (*Mor Çatı*)
4. Human Rights Association (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*)
5. SPOD (LGBTI)
6. Greens and the Left Party of the Future (*Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi*)

> both corrupt and connected with some inner state murders, especially of Kurdish people.

Indeed, in the past eleven years of AKP government, those who had previously benefitted from the modernisation process have had difficulties in grasping the ways in which Erdoğan's government has managed to improve the level of social welfare for the previously invisible majorities. Members of the privileged classes would not notice how people's lives have changed since the price of a simple medication dropped from 100 to 10 liras. Although the health system has not been changed radically, the reform was a serious one. This was followed by free textbooks for pupils in primary and high schools and then substantial stipends for university students.[4]

The activists interviewed in Gezi Park, while acknowledging the importance of the trigger events in 2013, also spoke about the measures that the AKP had started introducing since the mid-to-late-2000s, which they deem as alarming and contradicting its earlier pledges to work for democratic change. The ban on public assembly on Taksim Square came under the pretext of possible accidents that might occur due to the construction works on the square. Despite the ban, trades union groups vowed to mark May Day in Taksim. Subsequently, the subway, bus and ferry services across the Bosphorus were partially suspended and bridges were closed down to prevent large groups from gathering in Taksim. Some 20,000 police officers were deployed to the city centre, subsequently throwing tear gas on the demonstrators and using water cannons. The day after the May Day violence, the prime minister declared that no gatherings were to be allowed from that time on İstiklal Avenue – the shopping and promenade artery of Istanbul.

While the environmental activists who started the Gezi Park protest soon after its onset became a minority in the growing mass of activists and supporters, the reasons for coming to the protest have become increasingly diversified and articulated in broader political terms.

A 30-year old LGBTI activist and the volunteer of LambdaIstanbul notes how the ban on the May Day gathering was absurd:

> On May Day, it is traditional – everybody comes to protest. It is mainly for the workers, but it is a very meaningful thing. We wanted to gather in Taksim, but they [the government] told us that we cannot, because there

4 http://www.opendemocracy.net/alparslan-nas/reframing-agents-of-resistance-at-gezi-park.

> is construction and we might get hurt. But with the tear gas and water cannons they hurt more people than the construction sites.

Another activist of LambdaIstanbul, a 39-year old woman, observes that due to a number of violent clashes between the police and protestors throughout the month of May, a growing number of previously quiescent people stopped being afraid to take to the streets and clash with the police:

> During May, they [the police] attacked all kinds of activists, but also those who were not affiliated with them. So, people who would come to Taksim with their friends to have fun, they would all smell the tear gas. So, I believe they [people] started to get angry and they started to feel – ok, it's not a nice thing, but you can handle it [the tear gas]. It's not a nice thing to smell it or to cough. But you can bear it, it's not like you are dying. It's not that you have to be afraid of it. People started to learn this during May, I believe.

The by now notorious way in which the Turkish media failed to report on the events and police violence in the Gezi Park gave impetus to more people to become sympathetic to and join the protests:

> I started to question myself – if they [the media] do this in the Western part of Turkey, where people are more educated, more intellectual, more aware of what's going on, ok, what the hell was going on in the Eastern part [where there is a permanent war with Kurdish rebels]? I said to myself: Cem, you have to accept something now – the media are two-faced. I knew it before but I couldn't accept it. And it helped us actually. Without the media, we started to exchange our ideas through different channels. We started to ask questions to each other. That was actually incredible. We started to learn what is really going on in Turkey, in general, while gathering in Gezi Park.

A series of laws and debates, which specifically affect the private lives of women, were perceived by the protesters as both anti-democratic and infringements on the private sphere: the law that bans caesarean sections, except in cases where the woman's health is in danger, attempts to drastically restrict abortion rights and Erdoğan's infamous call to women to stay at home with the 'mandatory' three children, accompanied by his disapproval of childcare centres. One of the respondents (from the group against domestic violence):

> This is now [...] interfering in people's lives, especially women's lives [...] I think this is also linked to why lots of women attended the protests [...]. Telling women how many children to give birth to, interfering with their rights to give birth with C-Sections or to have an abortion, etc. People feel like the state is trying to get into their houses and this bothers them a lot.

A 23-year old graduate student, a religious covered woman, states:

> We, Turkish women, are fed up with others speaking for us and telling us that we can be just two things – women who are afraid that someone will put a headscarf on us, or women afraid that someone will take it off.

The rapid gentrification of the city and the accompanying expulsion of the poor residents from the city centre became issues that were highlighted in the interviews as linking the hypocrisy of the government's rhetoric of religious piousness to the authoritarian control of urban spaces and the free rein given to real estate investors:

> The money obtained from the selling of public property goes to the pockets of the small economic elite and power holders, and those who had to be relocated in this process are left on their own. They [the government] are selling everything and they are changing our daily lives and spaces we got used to into something else. It's like they are taking our memories from us [...]. They change your environment without asking you.

Finally, outrage at the increasing authoritarian stance of the prime minister brought to the protests those who are not commonly defined (in the Western mainstream discourse on 'new social movements') as 'leftist' or dedicated to the rights of individuals. A 30-year old member of the Anti-Capitalist Muslims from Ankara:

> We have a very hierarchical political system, so instead of people being heard from below to the top, all the decisions are taken from top to down. [...] We always hear some very small group, or in certain cases only one person – the prime minister – make all the decisions, and then he imposes them on the population.

Another member of the Anti-capitalist Muslims, a man in his mid-30s, tells how the Gezi Park experience of being against authoritarianism contributed to a new sense of tolerance and helped overcome partisan animosities:

> In the first week when we could go to the park, nationalists wanted to come there, and racists wanted to come there. These were very hard times for us. But God changed all of them. Racists became non-racist people. How can it be? I don't know. Seeing others, they changed their idea. They didn't come there to change their ideas, of course, but they changed … But as you saw, everywhere in the park there were [Turkish] flags, which are a nationalist symbol. And there was a picture of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] everywhere. But I think they changed their idea [referring to Kemalists/nationalists]. When they came there, young [Kemalist] people didn't know anything about protesting. They just knew some slogans like 'We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal.' The only march they knew was the nationalist march. But, in the second week, they became very friendly people. We were a commune […]. I know some people who drink a lot. Ok, I accepted them like that, and they knew that I was a Muslim, and they accepted me as well. And it was excellent, I think.

Here is how one of the respondents, again a member of Anti-capitalist Muslims, explains the sources of his generation's powerlessness by referring to the legacies of the military rule:

> We were considered by our parents as apolitical individuals, like they went through this, especially in 1970s. People killed each other on the streets because of the ideology, because of the political alignments, and they were manipulated by the real actors behind the scene. And we were always told: 'Don't go out to the streets, don't protest, go to the university, find a job with a good salary, and then get married, establish a family, live a peaceful life, don't worry about politics, leave it to them.' We were raised with these constant warnings. People were afraid of gathering in non-governmental organisations, they were afraid of protesting in the streets, of any kind of political activity, but on 31 May, all these warnings were left behind, all these advices were left behind, […] and nothing will be the same from now on. I think that this is the main thing that the Gezi Park movement achieved. I think that now, people will be more courageous, more willing to join organisations which more or less represent their own ideas, and if they do so, if this can be done massively, then I think that the protests will gain a different momentum, and it will be more difficult for the government to suppress and manipulate them.

While one could get the impression that the protests were overtly against the current government or anti-Erdoğan, calling him to resign, this, in fact,

never became a general idea or the main goal of the protest. It was perceived that the resignation of the government would not change anything. Instead, it was the political system that should undergo some changes.

An LGBTI activist and member of SPOD (Social Policies Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association or *Sosyal Politikalar Cinsiyet Kimliği ve Cinsel Yönelim Çalışmaları Derneği*, an NGO for 'equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people'), does not find it problematic if the AKP government stays in power since there seems to be no alternative:

> There is a popular slogan: 'Tayyip should quit!' I have never supported it, I have never shouted it. I can even say that Tayyip Erdoğan still has more potential to create more democracy in Turkey comparing to I don't know who. The problem is that there is no alternative to create that kind of balance. Of course, he is quite anti-democratic. Although Tayyip leads toward an almost authoritarian regime, he at least has the popular support of 50 per cent. Let's say, 40 per cent now. Probably the ideal would be to convince him to be more democratic.

Another LGBTI activist agrees that Erdoğan's legitimacy cannot be questioned, but he also wants the prime minister to be more democratic:

> I don't want him to be my prime minister, but so many people wanted him and that's ok with me. It is legitimate. But I want him to consider my opinion too. He is also my prime minister, but he doesn't want it. [...] He may stay there by exercising a real democracy. He was elected because he was using the word 'democracy' quite a lot.

To sum up, while the majority of protesters did not envision the goal of overthrowing the government (as most of them viewed the elections as fair and legitimate), AKP rule is increasingly perceived as abandoning its course of democratic reforms: democracy is seen as incompatible with the rampant subjugation of city spaces to profit interest, with the use of violence against peaceful demonstrators and the entrenchment of a militarist, patriarchal and paternalistic discourse and, in particular, with what is seen as a one-man rule.

In the segment that follows, we aim to compare the Gezi Park case to the protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina, i.e. the relationship between the failure of political and social reforms and the recent protests over the issuance of personal ID numbers.

The Common Denominator of the Protests in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina

In the decade that followed the signing of the Dayton agreement in 1995 and the constitutional arrangement that ended the war, the international actors succeeded, on several significant levels, in developing and enforcing a fundamental political structure in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Relying on the Bonn Powers, the Office of the High Representative ruled the use of common state symbols, a single currency, common car licence plates, a single army and state police force. However, as Jasmin Mujanović (2013) observes:

> Since 2006, reforms have stagnated and the international community has consistently shown unwillingness to confront local belligerents, even as chauvinist rhetoric and obstructionist tactics reach levels not seen since the war. [...] [W]e have witnessed only retrenchment and the hardening of the oligarchy's rule. No significant reforms have been enacted since then, while the EU's policy towards the country has dissolved into complete nonsense. Deadlines are repeatedly issued, never to be met or enforced, while the only 'local partners' the Union is willing to engage with remain the same political big men. Civil rights groups, NGOs and protest movements remain actively marginalized, by both local and international officials.

Research conducted in 2008 on ethnic distancing in Bosnia-Herzegovina shows that there is a deterioration of inter-ethnic accord and communication across ethnic lines, i.e. there was a greater acceptance of Bosniaks by Serbs and vice versa in 2002 than was the case in 2008! Top-down political agendas seem to be, once again, crucial movers of the sense of peaceful coexistence among the three ethnicities.

Ethno-collective rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina are cultivated at the expense of both individual rights and collective social rights: political representatives cannot act or identify themselves and their programmes outside of the ascribed and fixed national collective body and the homogenised national territory (Mujkić 2011, 26). In a recent survey conducted among 1500 respondents, this problem was implicitly highlighted by the fact that, while over 80 per cent of the respondents defined their main problems as being of an economic nature (unemployment and grim prospects of existing employment, lack of social rights and benefits), they also could not 'attach' these grievances to any existing political programmes of the parties *for which they vote* (Dević 2014). To conclude, in line with Asim

Mujkić, a political-administrative construct that is not engaged in defining and protecting individual rights of all of its citizens throughout its entire territory cannot define and protect any claims for collective rights – since it is not a citizens' state.

In the light of these characteristics of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a quasi-state, the ending of the ID card number protests is, in fact, less surprising than their mobilisation and (short) survival. On the path towards the EU, Bosnia was encouraged to make the necessary reforms by changing its constitution to allow minority representation in the political process as a condition for membership. This, however, remains the longest-lasting unfinished reform project since the signing of the Dayton Agreement. The Bosnian elites across the ethno-nationalist divides and the EU are unified in systematically dismissing the criticism and activities of local civil society. Bosnia-Herzegovina lacks a 'normal democratic dynamic' due to non-existing cooperation between the state and civil society organisations, which ought to be 'capable of filtering popular demands and making them "political".'[5]

The constant conflict of interest between political representatives of three ethnicities brought the whole country to the brink of dysfunction. Besides, the tripartite political system, which requires a complex administrative apparatus with huge numbers of public servants, 'costs this impoverished country around 66 per cent of its entire budget.'[6] Therefore, in this context, it is not surprising that a seemingly trivial administrative issue about ID numbers has given rise to a criticism and civic resistance that spread even across ethnic dividing lines. After all, 'Bebolucija' [the protest movement] had a simple goal – to obtain from the government the services the citizens have paid for.[7] Not only did the behaviour of the Bosnian politicians, who were continuously engaging in ethnic skirmishes, result in the blockade of the whole system (of which the absurd abolishment of ID numbers was just one aspect), but it even turned out to threaten the very lives of the citizens, as could be seen in the case of two newborns (Belmina and Berina) who needed urgent medical help abroad, yet could not cross the border without issued ID numbers. This showed that such irresponsibility by politicians could have grave consequences for Bosnian citizens whichever ethnicity

5 http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Bebolucija-spring-delayed-138840.

6 http://www.opendemocracy.net/igor-Štiks/'we-are-all-in-this-together'-civic-awakening-in-bosnia-herzegovina.

7 http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Bebolucija-spring-delayed-138840.

they belong to. It seems that the 'protesters finally found a lowest common denominator' and that is access to elementary citizen's rights be they economic, social or political and expressed their discontent with politicians who failed to pursue necessary reforms.[8] Moreover, by adopting a new law on identity numbers, which ought to identify each citizen by their ethnicity, they strived to undermine the common citizenship of Bosnian and Herzegovinians (Keil and Moore 2014, 58).

Not since the beginning of the civil war had such a large and heterogeneous group of protesters taken to the streets of the majority of Bosnian cities. The dysfunctional state, slow implementation of reforms and problematic access to basic citizenship rights concerned the majority of people no matter which ethnicity, political affiliation or class they belonged to. The protests in Turkey also mobilised people from all walks of life: Turkish nationalists (rightist and leftist), ethnic minorities (Kurds, Alevis, Armenians), religious people (predominantly Muslims) and non-religious people, anarchists, feminists, LGBTI, environmentalists, workers (blue collar and white collar) businessmen, students, unemployed, housewives, retired people and so forth. They all joined the protests to express their dissatisfaction with the government's increasingly authoritarian politics reflected in recently-passed laws which can greatly influence the private lives of Turkish citizens, dragging them into a more conservative society.

The protests both in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out and developed unexpectedly. The protesters used several non-institutional, yet peaceful, tactics to make their voices heard, such as civil disobedience, boycotting, 'occupying' public spaces, organising citizen forums, etc. They were led by citizen movements, organised and coordinated through social media (such as Facebook and Twitter) and openly rejected any sort of political, national/ethnic or ideological affiliation: 'Different opposition parties and groups tried to utilize the protests to push their own agenda, but failed to do so effectively in both countries' (Keil and Moore 2014, 58). If the protests had taken on the real political agenda, they would have probably turned away potential adherents. Their egalitarian character, political significance and effectiveness are, in fact, 'rooted in' their 'public performativity' (Göle 2013, 12), which could be the reason why they attracted so many previously apolitical actors. Yet, grievances could not have kept so many diverse people together for such a long time without a certain feeling of belonging being created in the meantime. Through their communication, actions and shared

8 http://www.opendemocracy.net/igor-Štiks/'we-are-all-in-this-together'-civic-awakening-in-bosnia-herzegovina.

experiences, people created new solidarity bonds because they are all in '"this" together.'[9]

The biggest problem lies in the misinterpretation of democracy by the political elites of both countries in question. While the Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, 'identifies democracy with the rule of the moral majority' (conservative Muslims) and the wide support for the AKP by almost 50 per cent of the electorate as an expression of 'national will' (Taşkın 2008, 66), in Bosnia-Herzegovina the 'tripartite hegemony of dominant ethnicities' (Sarajlić 2010, 19) – Muslims, Serbs and Croats – 'excludes anyone else who does not fit the ruling ethno-political mould' (Ibid.).[10] The populist rhetoric could be seen as an attempt to silence 'the real plurality of the people' (Taşkın 2008, 66) by disregarding those who oppose the government's decisions and even referring to them as marginal or deviants.

However, the protesters in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina proved once again that 'citizens and their acceptance of the political system are fundamental' (Keil and Moore 2014, 62) in true democracies. The people cannot be easily silenced through repressive laws, control of information, intimidation of the media, police violence, 'downplaying the significance of the protests'[11] by emphasising the deviant actions of the protesters, showing the protests as non-representative (Gitlin 2009, 301) as they are allegedly organised by the oppositional party, plotting together with the army against the government in the Turkish case, and by another ethnic camp plotting to split the country in the Bosnian case, etc. Moreover, such authoritarian, repressive and discriminatory policies of both Turkish and Bosnian elites resulted in public outrage, which mobilised citizens of different backgrounds to cross ethnic and societal divides and 'take their dissatisfaction to the streets' (Keil and Moore 2014, 62). Although it might seem that the Gezi Park protests and 'Bebolucija' are the signs of the failure of democracy in the respective countries, in fact, they express the maturing of a civil society and the creation of a new political space that may give a boost to more participatory democracy.[12]

9 http://www.opendemocracy.net/igor-Štiks/'we-are-all-in-this-together'-civic-awakening-in-bosnia-herzegovina.

10 In terms of Bosnian discriminatory laws the 'Finci-Sejdić' case is the most famous. The political rights of two political candidates – Mr. Finci and Mr. Sejdić – were virtually denied as they were banned from running for the state presidency and the House of Peoples (upper house) of the Bosnian Parliament due to their Jewish and Roma origins.

11 http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/16-the-turkish-protests-and-erdogans-disappearing-dreams.html.

12 www.nytimes.com/2013/06/14/opinion/global/turkeys-growing-pains.html.

Conclusion

What we may conclude is that these protests were 'organised' in quite similar ways and mainly by actors who cannot find their place in the current system of majoritarianism (the ethno-national one in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the religious-partisan one in Turkey). Those actors who cannot take part in the decision-making processes through an official/institutional framework tend to create, through civic struggle, a new political space in order to make their voices heard. What might also appear interesting is that those changes are not the result of Europeanisation or motivated by joining the EU, but rather the outcome of genuine striving for a functional state, direct democracy and respect for human rights.

After long-accumulated grievances, two trivial issues – the issuance of ID numbers and protection of a park – turned out to be the straws that broke the camel's back and mobilised people, whether through anger or solidarity, to overcome the old divides and disagreements and stand for a more humane and democratic society.

While the protests that occurred in Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina are, most manifestly, the embodiments of a power that acts within civil society, on the margins of the elite power circuits, they had also made demands on the state, signalling that they could influence political changes in the long run. However, these new political subjectivities do not represent anything concrete or materialised in the sense of organisations similar to political parties. They are rather fluid – stemming from the triggering perceptions and an awareness of the potential for acting together, amalgamating in common actions, which then turned to a new awareness of grievances and solidarities across the social field that grew bigger in comparison to the beginning of the protests. As long as the actors are able or willing to maintain their newly established solidarity bonds by coming together, disseminating their ideas, negotiating, collaborating – in a word, strengthening their collective identity – they will be empowered to stand against any authority, to criticise it and possibly pursue a change within the society.

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Section II
The Political Economy of Protests

4 AKP Rule in the Aftermath of the Gezi Protests

From Expanded to Limited Hegemony?

Umut Bozkurt

The Gezi protests were the most significant challenge yet to the rule of the AKP, which came to power in 2002. Since then, the party has progressively increased its vote share and won a landslide victory with 50 per cent of the vote in the latest parliamentary elections on 12 June 2011. Opinion polls and research reveal that the AKP's constituency consists of different class backgrounds and political orientations. A 2006 study revealed that AKP supporters have a lower socio-economic status, identify themselves as right-wing and religious, and reside in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir and in rural regions (Özkırımlı and Kırmanoğlu 2006). Another poll showed that the majority of the AKP's votes came from housewives, followed by farmers, blue-collar workers who work in the private sector and the unemployed. The AKP also received more than 50 per cent of the vote in suburbs and slums, whereas its weakest showing was in housing estates (23.8 per cent) (Odak Araştırma 2006, cited in Yıldırım 2009). What is novel about the party's success is that it managed to gain the support of both the organised and marginalised sections of the working class and the second generation (or Anatolian) bourgeoisie. The AKP also attracted the support of groups with different political orientations. A poll conducted by Anar and Pollmark, commissioned by the AKP, reveals the profile of the AKP electorate in the 2011 elections: 27 per cent define themselves as conservative; 24.4 per cent as Turkish Nationalist; 16.4 per cent as pro-Atatürk Kemalist (*Atatürkçü Kemalist*); 7.2 per cent as social democrat; 5.9 per cent as liberal democrat; 3 per cent as nationalist (*ulusalcı*); and 1.4 per cent as Kurdish nationalist (Bostan 2011).

With this electoral backdrop in mind, this paper focuses on two issues: the reasons for the hegemony of the AKP and the impact of the Gezi protests on this hegemony. In order to explain the broad support enjoyed by the party, this article will employ a framework referred to as 'neoliberal populism,' which is widely used in contemporary literature on political economy, especially in the Latin American context. Neoliberal populism should be understood in Gramscian terms: a hegemonic project whereby political

leadership appeals to the masses as the 'people' and plays a significant role in constituting the hegemony of the power bloc[1] over the subordinate classes, in particular the informal and disorganised sections of the working class (Yıldırım 2009, 82). Our analysis will reveal that the power bloc in Turkey includes the Istanbul bourgeoisie and the Anatolian bourgeoisie.

The neoliberal policies of the AKP became manifest in a gradual marketisation of public services, privatisations and the flexibilisation of labour. The AKP aimed to weaken welfare policies as a public obligation, which resulted in the state subcontracting its welfare provision duties to the private sector (Eder 2010, 181). Furthermore, charity groups and philanthropic associations have taken over some state functions. The neoliberal ideology of the party also became manifest in the so-called 'urban transformation' projects. As Cihan Tuğal writes, poor populations are displaced and public places, green areas and historical sites are demolished in order to rebuild the city in the image of capital.[2] Tuğal adds that '[a]ll these unwanted spaces (and people) are being replaced by malls, skyscrapers, office spaces, and glossy remakes of historical buildings.' The populist aspect of neoliberal populism, on the other hand, manifested itself in the explosion of social assistance programmes. A key feature is the increasing substitution of welfare state functions for social assistance programmes. This essentially means that services that should be carried out by the state to fulfil the 'rights' of citizens have been transformed into 'social assistance,' provided to unemployed masses through these projects (Bozkurt 2013, 390).

Understanding the AKP's hegemony necessitates going beyond its economic policies. We must also assess the symbolic/ideological sources of the party's hegemony. In order to do so, this paper will discuss how the AKP makes use of symbolic/religious codes such as Sunni Islam and conservatism, which are widely accepted in the Turkish society.

Analysis of the dynamics behind the AKP's hegemony also demands a reassessment of the Gezi protests and their aftermath. According to Gramsci, a successful hegemonic power has to ensure that great masses of people spontaneously and actively give their consent to the power bloc. Yet, the cultural, economic and political aspects of hegemony are, in the last instance, always underpinned by the threat of violence. Gramsci argues that

1 'Power bloc' is a concept used by Nicos Poulantzas to define the key feature of capitalist states. As opposed to precapitalist states, which were based on the exclusive domination of one class or fraction, a capitalist state is based on a plurality of dominant class fractions, one of which is hegemonic over the other (Poulantzas 1968).

2 http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/12009/occupy-gezi_the-limits-of-turkey%E2%80%99s-neoliberal-succ.

while a hegemonic bloc leads coalition groups, it dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to 'liquidate, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force' (Jones 2006, 49). However, if a ruling group has to resort to coercion and repression, this means, according to Gramsci, that it has not achieved an 'expansive' hegemony, in which great masses of people spontaneously and actively give their consent to the bloc. According to this expansive hegemony, a hegemonic group adopts the interests of its subaltern in full and those subalterns come to 'live' the worldview of the hegemonic class as their own. In this situation, 'a multiplicity of dispersed wills with heterogeneous aims are wielded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world' (Gramsci 1971). Failure to construct an expansive hegemony might happen because a massive group in society has passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity. This is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or the general crisis of the State (Gramsci 1971). How can we define the AKP's hegemony after the Gezi protests? Is it an expansive or limited hegemony? Is the AKP experiencing a crisis in its hegemony? The last section of the paper will seek answers to these questions.

Understanding the AKP's Hegemony

Neoliberal Populism and the AKP Rule

Neoliberal populism needs to be distinguished from classical populism. Classical populism is most often associated with leaders such as Juan Perón in Argentina, Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico and Getúlio Dornelles Vargas in Brazil (Cammack 2000, 151), whereas neoliberal populism is associated with leaders such as Alan Garcia in Peru and Fernando Collor in Brazil (Weyland 1996, 5). This list also includes Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (Petras 2005) and Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand (Yıldırım 2009, 78).

Regardless of whether it is classical or neoliberal, populism can be conceptualised in two different ways. In the first conceptualisation, populism is defined purely in political terms. Politics is identified as the core domain of populism and socioeconomic characteristics are seen as logically contingent (Weyland 2001, 4). The second conceptualisation emphasises the economic and social content of populist policies and the meaning of populism for relations among different classes in society (Yıldırım 2009).

According to Weyland (1996, 5), 'the term populism should not imply an automatic association with certain economic policies or socioeconomic

structures. A purely political notion of populism appears most appropriate and useful.' Weyland understands populism as a political strategy whereby a personal leader appeals to a heterogeneous mass of followers, many of whom have been excluded from the mainstream of development, yet are now available for mobilisation. What is specific about populism is that the leader reaches the followers in a seemingly direct, quasi-personal manner that largely bypasses established intermediary organisations, such as parties and interest associations.

Even if the leader builds new organisations or revives earlier populist organisations, they remain personal vehicles with low levels of institutionalisation (Weyland 1996, 5). In a similar vein, Robert Barr (2003, 1161) explains neopopulism as a 'political phenomenon in which a leader attempts to build personalistic ties to the impoverished masses while pursuing neoliberal economic policies.' Since this conceptualisation identifies politics as the core and socioeconomic characteristics as contingent features of populism, authors in this tradition see neoliberal populism as nothing but another wave of charismatic leaders using political strategies reminiscent of classical populism to reach and maintain power, but, this time, in the interest of neoliberal policies.

As Yıldırım highlights, what is problematic in this first conceptualisation is that populism is reduced to a technique of politics. This definition does not consider the class dimension; since building personalistic ties to the masses is the defining criterion, leaders like Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales are lumped together with Alberto Fujimori and Carlos Menem, in a process that completely overlooks the class basis of these leaders' policies. Yıldırım (2009, 77, 79) is also critical of Barr's explanation of neopopulism as a political phenomenon; he asserts that neoliberal populism cannot be reduced to a political phenomenon and that it should, instead, be understood in terms of a hegemonic project. Gramsci (2000, 206) defines a hegemonic project as a concrete programme developed in a particular historical moment through which a particular class/group maintains its hegemony through articulating its interests with the interests of subordinate classes/groups. Hence, the second conceptualisation of populism aims to unveil the connection between populism and class relations (Yıldırım 2009, 77).

Yıldırım defines AKP rule in Turkey as a period characterised by neoliberal populism. The defining feature of neoliberal populism is that the leadership aims to constitute the hegemony of the power bloc dominated by the big bourgeoisie over the subordinate classes by relating to the masses as the 'people' in an environment shaped by the increasing exploitation of labour, insecure working conditions and an attack on organised labour

(Yıldırım 2009, 78). Not surprisingly, the AKP's neoliberal economic policies have created difficult conditions for labour. For example, Labour Law No. 4857, adopted in 2003, aimed to introduce flexibility in industrial relations, on the basis of which atypical forms of employment, such as 'temporary employment relations,' 'partial work' and 'subcontracting' have been legalised (Onaran 2002, 184). This law clearly translates AKP's class politics. Hence, in order to alleviate the difficult conditions for labour, the AKP government resorted to neoliberal populism in this period by using populist distribution techniques.

The Explosion of Social Assistance Programmes

This section will assess the AKP's populist measures, such as social assistance funds and transfers, which are the key strategy that enables the party to respond to the short-term demands of the masses, thereby expanding its support base. In the context of the neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish economy in the last three decades, the Fund for the Encouragement of Social Cooperation and Solidarity (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışmayı Teşvik Fonu*, SYDTF), became a key vehicle for policies aiming to alleviate poverty *via* extension of social assistance mechanisms. Although the Fund was established in 1986 to provide means-tested social assistance to the poor, it was turned into a directorate by the AKP, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Genel Müdürlüğü*, SYDGM) in 2004 (Buğra and Candas 2011, 521).

Eder points out that the most remarkable aspect of this institutional transformation was the degree of autonomy that the directorate gained as it began drawing a significant part of its resources from extra-budgetary funds. With the exception of transfers to the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Health, SYDGM and its Fund Board were beyond public scrutiny and were only accountable to the office of the prime minister (Eder 2010, 174). It is possible to observe an increase between 2001 and 2004 in means-tested social expenditures by certain institutions directly involved in poverty alleviation, such as the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection (*Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*, SHÇEK) and the General Directorate of Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*) (Buğra and Adar 2008, 100). Yıldırım (2009, 98) points out that in 2003-2007, 54 per cent of the Fund's resources were spent on social assistance (in-kind assistance such as food, coal, etc.), whereas 23 per cent was spent on conditional cash transfers in the form of monthly payments to poor families to send their children to school. It should be emphasised

that means-tested social assistance measures are commonly regarded as incompatible with social citizenship rights, which should be realised through benefits in line with 'universalist' approaches (Buğra and Adar 2008, 91).

Meanwhile, municipalities have assumed greater responsibility in distributing social assistance since 2003 (Eder 2010, 178). In this period, municipalities exhibited a people-friendly attitude – organising soup kitchens for the poor, building giant food tents for *iftar* (fast-breaking) meals during the month of Ramadan and, most importantly, in-kind assistance to the poor. Yet, most of the funding for these services comes from those who contribute to the 'charity funds' of municipalities and not directly from the municipalities (Ibid.). The problem is that funding reliant on charity leads to inconsistency and unreliability in assistance programmes. Furthermore, following the subcontracting of certain services undertaken by local administrations to the private sector, municipality tenders have become a significant component of capital accumulation for the second-generation bourgeoisie (Yıldırım 2009, 100; Ercan and Oguz 2006). Eder (2010, 178) points out how charity can become a substitute for bribery: a typical arrangement would involve generous donations to the municipality charity fund in return for a lucrative infrastructure and a real-estate bid.

Another development that marks this era is the meteoric rise in the number of charity associations, philanthropic groups and NGOs, which aim to fill the social vacuum left by the absence of a functioning welfare state. The most important problem with community-based philanthropic groups is that there is usually some sort of conditionality attached to access to these services. More often than not, community affiliation and loyalty are expected in return. There is also growing evidence that such communities can create new patterns and layers of social exclusion.

As Eder (2010, 181) remarks, '[s]uch litmus tests in return for basic social assistance or social services are simply incompatible with the notion of all-inclusive, universal coverage.' The significance of these findings is that, increasingly, labour in the public sector, which demands social rights through organised political action, gives way to the unemployed masses, categorised under the heading 'unemployed and poor,' who benefit primarily from assistance in kind and cash transfers. Through such populist measures, the AKP ensures continuous support from the poorest layers of society, enabling neoliberal accumulation and the hegemonic project of the big bourgeoisie to continue uninterrupted (Yıldırım 2009, 99).

The Symbolic/Ideological Sources of the Party's Hegemony

Another variable that forms a crucial source of AKP hegemony is the symbolic/cultural sphere. This point is particularly important for a Gramscian analysis of hegemony. In order to establish moral, political and intellectual leadership in social life, it is necessary for the ruling coalition to take on at least some of the values of those it attempts to lead, thereby shaping its own ideals and imperatives (Jones 2006, 34). A key element of any hegemonic strategy is the formation of links with existing elements of culture. Gramsci refers to the concept of 'common sense,' which he believes is a complex formation partly drawn from 'official' conceptions of the world circulated by the ruling bloc and partly formed out of people's practical experiences of social life. 'Common sense' offers a deeply held guide to life, directing people to act in certain ways and ruling out other modes of behaviour as unthinkable (Jones 2006, 9). Thus, the question raised by Eagleton (1991, 114) is crucial:

> How is the working class to take power in a social formation where the dominant power is subtly, pervasively diffused throughout habitual daily practices, intimately interwoven with 'culture' itself, inscribed in the very texture of our experience from nursery school to funeral parlour? How do we combat a power which has become the 'common sense' of a whole social order, rather than one which is widely perceived as alien and oppressive?

In this respect, what needs to be underlined is that the AKP's hegemony is not only constituted through populist policies but also through ideological symbols and religious/cultural codes. As Ercan, Oguz and Guzelsarı (2008, 2) underline, the second-generation bourgeoisie (the Anatolian bourgeoisie) tends to 'use the symbolic/cultural sphere in every stage of their struggle for political power.' The AKP government successfully appealed to their world of meaning. As the organic intellectuals of this class, the AKP cadres built the hegemony of the party on a peculiar amalgam of conservatism, Islamism and nationalism (Saracoğlu 2011, 39). Their aim was to create a perception of congruence between the lifestyle of the society and those occupying political power (Ibid., 44). Tuğal (2011, 91-92) underlines how Erdoğan broke his fasts in slums or shanties together with the poor when he was the Mayor of Istanbul. Interestingly, although Erdoğan had openly shunned Islamism and adopted neoliberalism, his past activities as an Islamist, his shared everyday practices with the poor and his origins in an

urban poor neighbourhood enabled popular sectors to read non-neoliberal meanings into the party. This symbolic capital would come to play a key role in constituting the AKP's hegemony. The class difference between the AKP cadres in power and its poor constituency can only be overcome by this emphasis on common religious values (Bozkurt 2013, 384).

The AKP's Hegemony after the Gezi Protests

This section will elaborate on the impact of the Gezi protests on the hegemony of the AKP. The demolition of Gezi Park in Taksim Square was part and parcel of a bigger project of rapid transformation of Istanbul and much of Turkey. For a long time, a key policy of the AKP has been to turn public lands over to private developers (Hallinan 2013). Even though the immediate cause of the Gezi protests was a response to the governing neoliberal party's project of urban transformation, soon afterwards, urban questions quickly took a backseat as the protests grew massively as a result of police brutality.

As the protests spread beyond Istanbul, mobilising millions of people, other grievances against the government also became visible. Two criticisms were predominant. On the one hand, demonstrators protested the AKP's neoliberal policies, including privatisations, the flexibilisation of labour and urban 'transformation' and 'development' for the sake of profiting a small number of private developers. On the other hand, protestors rebelled against a lack of democracy and the government's conservative interventions. In the months leading up to the protests, the AKP-dominated parliament passed laws restricting the use of alcohol and tobacco, public kissing and abortion, and the prime minister called on mothers to have three children (Hallinan 2013). The AKP's authoritarianism also became explicit in the way media felt compelled to implement self-censorship in order not to attract Erdoğan's wrath, a tendency that became explicit during the Gezi protests, as Turkey's major news networks remained mute on the discontent, airing penguin documentaries and cooking shows instead.

What was the impact of the Gezi protests on the hegemony of the party? The key argument of this paper is that there has been a transformation in the AKP's hegemony and currently, for the various reasons that will be explained below, it is more appropriate to define the party's hegemony as a limited hegemony, rather than an expanded hegemony. The Gezi protests involved the mobilisation of millions of people and marked the beginning of the crisis of expanded hegemony. Furthermore, the AKP lost the support of the West, which had been a significant factor in the party's hegemony.

Turkey's pro-Islamist, yet 'secular, democratic, Western-friendly' government, which turned the nation into 'a regional powerhouse,' was projected as a model for the immature Arab Spring democracies.[3] This strong backing by the US and the EU also sent an important message to the party's constituency in Turkey. This support assured the secular electorate that the AKP was not against the Westernisation ideal of the Republic's founders. However, the government's handling of the Gezi protests was heavily criticised by the representatives of the EU and the US. In June 2013, the European Parliament (EP) approved the 'Gezi Park' motion, which criticised the government's actions.[4] The US repeatedly cautioned Turkish authorities against seeking to punish any demonstrators merely for exercising their right to free speech during the protests.[5] According to Henry Barkey, the attitude and the rhetoric employed by the government during the Gezi protests led to a serious uneasiness in Washington (Tanır 2013). *BBC Turkish* also reported, based on the account of an unnamed American specialist, that Turkey's relations with the US had become strained since Erdoğan's visit to the White House in May 2013 due to the AKP government's policy on Syria and Egypt (Tanır 2013).

The corruption allegations against the prime minister that surfaced in 17 December 2013 further undermined the party's hegemony. On that date, an anti-corruption operation was carried out, in which top businessmen, bankers, bureaucrats and politicians considered loyal to the government were arrested on corruption and bribery charges. Tape recordings that include the prime minister's private conversations with his family members as well as with other ministers have been released, one after another. One of them includes a recording of the prime minister warning his son to hide large sums of money before the police raids of the 17 December anti-corruption operation. Yet, Erdoğan denied the authenticity of these recordings, claiming that they are fabrications (Nakhoul and Tattersall 2014).

The AKP's hegemony largely rests on the party's ability to keep the economy running smoothly. However, Erdoğan faces a significant challenge in this respect. Even though the AKP managed to achieve economic growth, this growth relied on short-term capital inflows. The AKP's economic policies neither reduced unemployment, nor led to an increase in real wages. According to research conducted by the Organisation for Economic

3 'Erdoğan's Way.' *Times Magazine*, 28 November 2011.

4 http://www.dha.com.tr/european-parliament-approves-gezi-park-motion_485245.html.

5 'US Senate discusses Gezi Park protests.' *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 August 2013.

Co-operation and Development (OECD), Turkey is in the category of member countries with the highest income inequality. Currently, the growth rate has dropped and income levels are stagnant. *CNBC* reported that 'Turkey has slipped alarmingly quickly from emerging market darling to market danger zone' (Boyle 2014). Especially since the corruption charges that surfaced in December 2013, investor exodus is on the rise (Canlı Gaste 2014). Furthermore, the Turkish Lira has been devalued as local investors have been selling off their lira in favour of foreign currencies, and international investors have been staying away from the lira, pushing its value down to a record low of 2.3616 against the US dollar in January 2014 (Boyle 2014). The cost of Turkey's debt rose alarmingly quickly, with ten-year debt hitting 10.45 per cent, its highest level since 2010 (Ibid.).

Hence, it is clear that the AKP is experiencing a hegemonic crisis that manifests itself in different ways. However, as the 2014 local elections revealed, this hegemonic crisis did not give way to an immediate electoral defeat for the party. The AKP won about 45 per cent of the votes cast, while the rest was divided across three other major parties in parliament. A significant reason for this is the fact that the Turkish political opposition is hopelessly divided and largely incompetent. Despite its vibrancy, the Gezi protest movement showed little capacity to mobilise an effective political campaign that can challenge the AKP's political rule.

Conclusion

This paper had two main aims: to investigate the reasons behind the hegemony of the AKP and the impact of the Gezi protests on that hegemony. In order to achieve this aim, it made use of a theoretical framework referred to as 'neoliberal populism.' Throughout its rule, the AKP formulated economic policies that aimed to reward the first- and second-generation bourgeoisie, while, at the same time, adopting populist measures in order to ensure popular support.

However, it is impossible to understand the AKP's hegemony just by looking at populist policies. A Gramscian analysis would be incomplete without assessing the symbolic/ideological sources of the party's hegemony. AKP cadres established the party's hegemony by identifying themselves with what Gramsci refers to as 'common sense' in Turkey, by embracing conservatism, Islamism and nationalism, thereby linking with existing elements of culture.

The 2011 elections, in which the AKP gained the support of different groups in society, including Turkish Nationalists, pro-Atatürk Kemalists,

social democrats and liberal democrats, revealed that the party had managed to establish an expansive hegemony. Economic growth, symbolised by major infrastructure projects, massive construction, modern roads and huge shopping centres, also seems to have contributed to this hegemony.

This paper has argued that the Gezi protests led to a transformation in the AKP's hegemony and that the party's hegemony can no longer be defined as expansive. It is more appropriate to define it as a limited hegemony, in which a hegemonic power has to resort to coercive and authoritarian means for enforcing its rule.

However, despite the recent corruption allegations, leaks and the increasing authoritarianism of the prime minister, the AKP's voters did not penalise the party in the 2014 local elections. In dealing with its opponents, the AKP opted for a twofold response: on the one hand, it rallied its base, which it won over through neoliberal populism and through embracing conservatism, Islamism and nationalism; on the other, it cracked down on the opposition. Anti-democratic as it is, this method sufficed for the party to hold on to power, but whether it will continue to do so in the future remains to be seen.

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5 Rebelling against Neoliberal Populist Regimes

Barış Alp Özden and Ahmet Bekmen

During the summer of 2013, Turkey and Brazil, two countries that are alleged success stories under the aegis of international financial institutions, experienced massive popular protests that erupted simultaneously against the respective ruling parties. In both cases, the protests broke out over relatively minor issues. In Turkey, the protests started out as a response to the governing neoliberal party's project of urban transformation in Istanbul's Taksim Square, while a hike in public transport fares in Brazil sparked street protests. However, these urban issues were quickly overtaken in both countries as the protests became massive uprisings that involved diverse social groups with different agendas.

Comparing these two cases is not only productive because of the similarities of the motivations and social composition of the protestors. For over a decade, the ruling parties in these countries have proved to be very successful in depoliticising the longstanding social problems of the country and closing off the possibility of any meaningful transformation of social relations. Unlike previous governance programmes determined by structural adjustment, the political strategies of AKP in Turkey and *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party, PT) in Brazil have helped them manage social tensions in new ways that bypass and further undermine ideas of representation and those institutional structures that have historically been linked to collective action and organisation.

Framed in these terms, we argue that the policies and the programmes instituted by AKP and PT represent a new form of politics that combine disciplinary neoliberalism with populist forms of governing. Such neoliberal populism shares some features with the populism of previous decades: a personalised and paternalistic pattern of political leadership, a multiclass coalition, an amorphous and eclectic ideology and the distribution of material gifts to consolidate political support (Roberts 1995, 88). However, neoliberal populism also differs in important ways. Firstly, as one prominent scholar of Turkey's political economy suggests, it is a 'controlled populism' that steers the economy according to the neoliberal economic policy agenda set by international financial institutions (Öniş 2012). Secondly, while the analytical core of both 'historical populism' and neoliberal populism is

based on 'the constitution of the people as a political actor' (Panizza 2005, 3), neoliberal populism aims to create 'new non-class forms of identity and representation that attempt to disarticulate social conflict from material relations of power and re-embed social relations within increasingly moralized notions of community' (Jayasuriya and Hewison 2004, 574). As Francisco de Oliveira (2007, 102), a prominent sociologist and founder of PT, clarifies:

> Here, perhaps, we really do find ourselves face to face with a new populism, given the impossibility of any politics based on class organization [...] the new, actually existing populism represents the exclusion of class from politics. It is neither an exclusively Brazilian phenomenon nor is it of ideological origin – it stems from the disintegration of the working class, above all of its hard core, the industrial proletariat.

This feature of neoliberal populism, its forging of non-class forms of identity and representation, also explains its appeal to the most unorganised, dislocated segments of society; namely, the new urban poor and informal sector workers (cf. Weyland 2003).

The argument of the paper is developed in two parts. Part one briefly outlines the neoliberal transformation of these countries and then discusses the basic contours of AKP's and PT's neoliberal populism. The second part focuses on the social composition of the rebellions in Turkey and Brazil, with the intention of clarifying the social contradictions and limits of these regimes.

Neoliberal Populism, AKP and PT

AKP came to power in 2002 in the immediate aftermath of one of the most severe economic crises in Turkey's history. During the previous decade, macroeconomic management was extremely difficult due to large budget and current account deficits, high inflation and low international reserves. With its boom and bust cycles, the Turkish economy was not able to increase the private investment that could have provided a sustained stimulus to the overall economy. In 2001, per capita income stood at the same level as in 1991, leading many scholars of the Turkish economy to describe the 1990s as 'the lost decade.'[1] Furthermore, the 1990s proved to be unstable in political

1 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=290539.

terms. The nine successive fragile coalition governments between 1991 and 2001, none of which lasted in office more than two years, lacked the political power to undertake any drastic economic measures that would hurt large segments of society. For many observers of the Turkish economy during the period, the 'populist cycles' of intense distributional pressures were directly associated with those weak and unstable coalition governments, despite the country's need for structural reforms to curb the growing macroeconomic imbalances (see Öniş 2003; Cizre-Sakallıoğlu and Yeldan 2000).

Once in power, AKP mainly continued with the preceding coalition government's neoliberal macroeconomic strategy. In particular, the party adhered strictly to the prescriptions of the ongoing IMF programme, especially with regard to fiscal austerity and privatisation. While undoubtedly helped by a favourable global liquidity environment, the government was able to stabilise the economy, reduce inflation to single digit figures and fuel growth. This provided the opportunity for the party to generate deep-seated structural changes in Turkey's welfare regime, together with the construction and consolidation of neoliberal modes of governance and regulatory institutions.

In a similar conjuncture, PT came to power after the turbulent years of the 1990s, which witnessed the successive attempts of the Collor, Franco and, more significantly, Cardoso governments to achieve a neoliberal transition of the Brazilian economy, which had lagged behind the democratic transition of the mid-1980s. Liberalisation of trade, finance and capital flows dismantled the industrial base in many of the country's manufacturing centres and poor economic performance undermined domestic consumption, which, in turn, strangled investment and further exacerbated fiscal imbalances (see Amann and Baer 2000). Much like AKP, PT's first election victory was based on building a 'losers' alliance' unifying different sections of capital, the manufacturing sector above all, under the premises of sustainable economic growth, and providing a wider base of support among the subordinate classes, which had been penalised by job cuts, a decline in real wages and the contraction of public services that accompanied Brazil's neoliberal transition (Morais and Saad-Filho 2005). PT's reconstruction of the system of power was geared toward satisfying the needs of financial capital and export-oriented sectors, while remaining loyal to the IMF-agreed programme to reach, or even exceed, the fiscal plus target (Kliass 2011).

The most striking feature of both the AKP and PT governments, for the purpose of this paper, is their shared ability to establish close and unmediated relationships – through the persona of their leaders, Erdoğan and Lula – with the poor sections of the labouring classes, and to contain, redirect

and even co-opt trades unions and other social movements through various techniques of government that epitomise neoliberal populism. Indeed, the presidential-style charisma of these leaders would be useless if the forces of neoliberalism had not successfully disarticulated social class and the representational forms historically associated with class. The new working class in Turkey and Brazil is both structurally disorganised and distrustful of existing structures of representation, which have become increasingly ineffective. Thus, to understand the ability of these two neoliberal populist governments to contain the subordinated classes in their neoliberal project, we need to consider deep-seated changes that these parties made in political allegiances.

Depoliticising the Question of Poverty

While showing their commitment to rolling back neoliberal policies in public finance, industrial relations and the labour market, both AKP and PT implemented active state policies addressing the most basic needs of the working poor. A remarkable feature of the social policy environment in Turkey over the last decade has been the creation and effective use of a complex web of social assistance, involving public poverty reduction programmes, local municipalities, faith-based charitable organisations and other private initiatives (see Özden 2014). Welfare governance under AKP, in other words, has brought public, semi-public and private efforts together to alleviate the worst excesses of poverty in a new way that disarticulates social relations and conflicts within civil society (cf. Jayasuriya and Hewison 2004, 575). AKP-controlled local governments and Islamic-oriented charitable organisations channel millions of dollars in donations, thereby representing the state's subcontracting of some of its social responsibilities along with the reinforcement of local governance through decentralisation. Although such social assistance programmes have been inconsistent, unreliable and poorly coordinated, their populist reach and scope has enabled them to appeal directly to the poor and earn the consent of a wide cross-section of public opinion for neoliberal economic policies, including the privatisation of some social services and health care (Eder 2014).

The numerous private initiatives to alleviate poverty have been coupled with a growing number of public social assistance schemes, organised by a total of 973 Social Cooperation Foundations located at the city or provincial level. Among the most popular programmes run by these foundations are the provision of educational materials for children, food and coal allowances, widow benefits and housing support. However, since 2003, the flagship programme of these foundations has been the Conditional Cash

Transfers (CCTs) scheme, which was initially started within the framework of the World Bank's Social Risk Mitigation Project. The programme includes the provision of monetary subsidies to targeted households living in extreme poverty, provided that they ensure their children attend school and participate in periodic health-related activities. By 2011, it was reaching approximately 10 million people per year. Though these distributed stipends are low by any standards, its political impact has been huge, not only because it has helped, to a certain degree, to reduce poverty and stimulate demand in the most afflicted regions of the country (see Köse and Bahçe 2009; Akan 2011), but because it has also delivered the symbolic message that the government and the state actually care for the poor. Consequently, there is growing evidence that these poverty alleviation programmes have entrenched the image of Erdoğan as the fatherly guardian of the poor.[2]

A similar development can be seen in Brazil, where Lula took over the cash transfer programme established by the Cardoso government, but extended it broadly in order to modify the country's social geography. Especially, after the infamous *mensalão* corruption scandal in 2005, after which large segments of the middle classes turned their backs on PT, Lula manoeuvred to cultivate support from the poorest sectors of the population by extending the scope of the *Bolsa Família* (Family Allowance) programme. This contributed to a huge shift in electoral support in the 2006 elections, giving Lula and PT new voters who had eluded them before (Hall 2006; Hunter and Power 2007). By 2012, the *Bolsa Família* had become the world's largest CCT programme, reaching almost 13,5 million families and 45 million people (about one quarter of Brazil's population) (Lavinas 2013, 17).

Cash transfer programmes have been criticised by the left for undermining a universal rights-based approach by abandoning the concept of 'entitlements.' Instead, critics see them as promoting neoliberal values of efficiency and individualisation, in the sense of constructing the subjectivity of the poor as market subjects who are 'responsibilised' to rationally make investments in the education and health of their children in order to increase their 'human capital' (Luccisano 2004; Ferguson 2007). It must be acknowledged, however, that even though the programme was paradigmatically neoliberal, it has helped to reduce poverty. According to Brazilian government figures, 20 million people were lifted out of poverty while extreme poverty decreased from 12 per cent to 4.8 per cent between 2003 and 2008 (Ansell 2011, 23).

2 http://bianet.org/biamag/bianet/130856-akp-nin-secim-basarisinin-garipligi-ve-anlasilabilirligi.

As Francisco de Oliveira (2006, 22) suggests, by turning poverty and inequality into administrative problems, such novel poverty alleviation programmes are very effective in decentring social problems from the political debate and cleavages. This is in parallel with Andre Singer's analysis that the accomplishment of the social policies of neopopulist governments is that they render the poor 'without resentment of the rich, satisfied with modest and gradual alleviations of [their] conditions of existence' (Anderson 2011, 26). That is, AKP's and PT's approach to social policy represents a strategy of what James Ferguson (1994) astutely describes as 'anti-politics': it marginalises and obscures the spheres of political contestation.

Deradicalising Labour

The current success of this neoliberal populist strategy was not guaranteed, however, by the poverty reduction programmes alone. Rather, the fundamental factor that made it possible, and even successful, was the decades-long weakening and near-disappearance of many organised actors in society (especially the labour movement), due to both structural and political-ideological reasons.

Structurally, we may cite the neoliberal labour market reforms that have altered the class composition of these societies over the last three decades. The most visible effect of Turkey's orientation to neoliberalism in the last three decades has been the impact of adjustment on employment and labour market structures. Suppression of wage incomes in the 1980s and labour shedding policies in the early 1990s were the main strategies deployed to absorb the shocks of economic crises. These were accompanied by the intensification of marginalised labour through various tactics, such as outsourcing, job flexibility and deregulation of labour relations. By the mid-1990s, roughly half of Turkey's labour force in private manufacturing was informally employed, indicating the formation of a dual labour market with widening gaps between the earnings of workers in different labour categories (Boratav et al. 2000). Already a grave problem, unemployment reached record highs in the early 2000s, while the proportion of workers without social security reached a peak of 53 per cent in 2004.[3] In the face of these challenges, the government's major policy approach was promoting labour market reforms to expand flexible work forms, like temporary work, through private employment bureaus, tele-working, on-call work,

3 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/TURKEYEXTN/Resources/361711-1277211666558/bpg_SizeTrendsDeterminantsAndConsequences.pdf.

home-working and job sharing, and suggesting the replacement of job security with 'flexicurity' in Turkey's employment regime.

In Brazil, the same processes have significantly increased the heterogeneity of the working class. Throughout the 1990s, the deindustrialisation of the country prompted the disappearance of salaried posts while unemployment more than tripled. Meanwhile, four out of five jobs created during the 1990s were in the 'informal sector' (de Oliveira 2006, 11). This restructuring of the production process eroded the base of the labour movement, as well as the political influence of unions over society. This structural change also gave rise to a new form of subjectivity, corroding the prospect of class solidarity and collective self-identification and inculcating instead values of individual competition (Saad-Filho 2013). This is all the more true for Turkey, where the bulk of the working class is comprised of young, low-paid and poorly trained subcontracted workers who have little chance to access stable jobs in the formal sector. This class is more atomised than ever and is relatively inexperienced in collective action. Decades of neoliberal restructuring have undermined their power to organise through trades unions or left-wing parties and have reduced the transformative capacity of the labour movement. While trades unions organised 35 per cent of the labour force in 1980, today the figure is barely 6 per cent (Özuğurlu 2009, 347).

Along with this social transformation of the labour force, the demobilisation of labour in both Turkey and Brazil was also caused by changes in institutional interactions between trades unions and the state and the political and ideological environment in which the labour movement found itself.

The institutional framework of industrial relations, in which the trades unions operate under the conditions created by neoliberal restructuring, and the form of mentality and culture which is nourished by it, have undermined the unions' capacity to understand, strategise and mobilise. From their early years in the late 1940s, trades unions in Turkey were regarded as exclusively workers' institutions, hence involved only in affairs relating to their members, using primarily their lobbying power in Ankara as the main strategy for promoting their members' interests (Doğan 2014). The labour unions' longstanding concern for their own members and neglect of other underprivileged wage earners, have made their cause less popular, especially in the last two decades when the aforementioned transformations have increasingly fragmented the working class. The same tendency to concentrate entirely and narrowly on defending their membership can also be observed in the Brazilian trades union movement. In the 1980s, organised labour successfully established a 'welfare-state platform' to fight against the military regime and demand social citizenship for all workers, while

today they seem to have closed off the movement in 'micro-corporativism,' defending only workers connected with their base and ignoring the plight of other workers, such as the poor or the new 'precariat' (Boito 2007).

Similarities between the historical development of Turkey's and Brazil's welfare regimes also underpinned such sectionalism by the trades unions. Turkey's social security system epitomised the corporatist and elitist nature of the social security systems that developed in the aftermath of World War Two. Health and old age insurance schemes were established mainly as a privilege for workers in the formal sector, civil servants and Turkey's assorted middle class (Buğra 2007). However, a considerable portion of the labour force employed in the informal sector and agriculture was excluded from the system and, even for the small stratum of the labour market included in it, the social benefits provided varied considerably according to occupationally-defined status differentials. In a parallel trajectory, Brazilian social policy institutions have always marginalised large sectors of the working population. While some basic rights were entitled to extend the scope of social citizenship during the 'classical populist period,' rural workers, who made up the majority of the population, were not included in the package of social rights. Pension schemes and health care benefits differed according to one's employment status, depending on whether one was a civil servant or a wage earner, in the public or the private sector, an industrial or a commercial worker, and so on. The social security system excluded both the unemployed and those employed in the informal economy.

Neoliberal populist governments have been very proficient at politically manipulating these segmentations and inequalities between different sectors of workers. For example, AKP has presented its labour market reforms as targeting alleged labour 'rigidities' and the 'privileges' of the formal, organised segments of the labouring classes. A recurrent theme emphasised by Prime Minister Erdoğan and his policymakers has been that labour reforms work in favour of the disadvantaged segments of the population, especially unemployed youth and women, as the new programmes and policies ease labour market rigidities and increase the private employers' demand for labour. In effect, the government has successfully used the hierarchical and inegalitarian nature of the established social welfare regime in Turkey as a pretext to pit one sector, whose alleged privileges it is abolishing, against the other, which it continues to support through clientelism and social assistance programmes. In Brazil, PT followed two different tactics to paralyse the social movements. First, given his working-class background, Lula was more inclined to use the strategy of appealing to the disorganised by targeting the privileges of formal sector workers. He

also tried to split and marginalise the land reform movement by extending rural credits and technical assistance programmes to settled peasants and subsistence farmers while ignoring demands for a comprehensive land reform that would ensure a decent quantity of arable land for all farmers. Brazil's prominent landless rural workers movement, MST (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*), has been increasingly experiencing difficulties in maintaining its power since many poor peasants are reluctant to join the movement for fear of losing their benefits (Welch 2011; Reyes 2012). Second, thanks to the clientelist state, which enables the president to appoint thousands of civil servants at all levels of administration, Lula and Rousseff brought hundreds of trades union and social movement cadres into the state, leading to what was described as the 'capture' of Brazil's social movements (see de Oliveira 2006; Saad-Filho and Morais 2014).

These developments largely explain why organised social actors in both countries were unable to play an effective role in recent uprisings. Although trades unions in Brazil and social movements such as MST attempted to take the initiative, their impact remained limited. Similarly, the unions in Turkey were just one of a number of ordinary actors within the uprising. That is, in both countries, dominated by socio-political crises, the organised social and/or political actors either remained secondary or failed to take the initiative. This leads us to two simple questions: If they were not organised actors, who were the rebels? What is their social profile as they remained outside the borders of the organised opposition? The answers are of crucial importance in understanding the capacities and limits of neoliberal populism.

Preliminary Reflections on the Protests

It is easier to understand the issue in the case of Brazil. The table below, which presents the shifts in the distribution of wages in Brazil within the last forty years, may provide some clue:

Table 5.1: Brazil: Distribution of Wages (Percentage) (Saad-Filho and Morais 2014, 233)

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2009
> 5 minimum wages	4.7	9.6	14.5	16.7	7.5
3-5 minimum wages	4.3	10.0	11.4	12.0	8.9
1.5-3 minimum wages	13.8	21.1	21.3	25.5	24.9
< 1.5 minimum wages	64.3	51.9	45.3	34.3	47.8
Unwaged	12.8	7.4	7.5	11.5	10.9

As seen in the table, there have been two important shifts regarding employment during the Lula government. First, the growth in employment has been mainly provided through the increase of jobs with minimum or slightly higher wages. A significant part of poor *favela* dwellers during the previous term has gained formal employment, which has brought about a relative decrease in poverty. Though they still live in the *favelas*, this sector, commonly named 'Class C' in mainstream statistical categorisations, has already stepped into the world of consumption. Though the term 'middle class' is also used to identify this section, they are mostly wage labourers who have shifted from informal networks of poverty to formal employment. Second, the table shows that the number of jobs providing a wage of three or more times the minimum wage has declined remarkably. This means that a significant number of 'middle class' families have experienced social degradation during Lula's term in office.

This picture is quite compatible with what has been written about social mobilisation in the Brazilian uprising. First, masses of 'Class C' poured into the streets to demand more investment in public services like transportation, education and health, in order to increase the quality of employment and life. Then the 'declining middle classes,' who, in fact, after the 2006 elections gradually drifted away from PT, took to the streets in a series of anti-PT protests, with corruption being ranked higher than social demands. That is, the revolt in Brazil reflected two reactions: the new social needs of the ones climbing upwards and the reactions of those declining (see Saad-Filho 2013; Saad-Filho and Morais 2014).

In Turkey, the picture is not as clear. Those who participated in the uprising were mostly categorised by the mainstream media as 'middle class,' and certainly various observations and surveys hastily conducted during the events made it easy to adopt such a description. However, we still do not have much data about which sections of society joined the uprising. Instead of substantial data, observations, speculations and political appraisals prevail, and this paper is subject to similar limitations as well. Still, one study conducted after the Gezi Park uprising,[4] which sampled around 4000 people, gives a rough profile of the participants:

> 35.5% of *Gezi* protestors work in irregular activities such as industrial production and textiles, waste paper collection, restaurants, and transportation, and 60% of them have a monthly income below 1,600 YTL (~800 USD). 31.2% of the protesters work in fields such as advertising,

4 http://www.ssamer.com/Raporlar/218.

> finance, academia, insurance, education, public service sector, culture, literature, health, civil society organisations, or real estate. The average monthly income of this second section is 2,421 YTL (~1,200 USD), although 50% of them have salaries below 2,000 YTL (~1,000 USD).[5]

This profile is roughly similar to Brazil's in that one group with an income that is 1.5 to 2 times the minimum wage is accompanied by professionals whose social status has declined since 2000. However, one should bear in mind that the political character of the Gezi uprising was overwhelmingly dominant, in the sense that cultural-cum-political concerns, rather than the social and economic ones, brought different sectors of society together (see Akça et al. 2014).

For example, in contrast to the Brazilian case, the Gezi protesters have never put forward any economic or social demands. Given that the real wages of the Turkish Class C have remained almost static during the last decade, this becomes even more interesting. Although it is true that the high level of political polarisation in Turkey may have substituted all social demands, one should also bear in mind that, unlike PT, AKP has been a successful tactical player of public service policies by pursuing a dual strategy concerning services such as health and education. On the one hand, the government has implemented a determined marketisation policy; on the other, it has increased public expenditure extensively. Through this dual policy, AKP has gained consent from different popular sectors of Turkish society. The health reforms, for instance, had obvious appeal for the poorest segments of the population (namely, the unemployed and marginal sector workers), which helped AKP win wider credibility. According to the Turkey Life Satisfaction Survey, satisfaction with health services increased from 39.5 per cent to 73.1 per cent between 2003 and 2010,[6] while various surveys conducted over the last ten years indicate that AKP's health policies receive the greatest popular support. On the other hand, the number of private medical institutions has increased continuously so that, alongside top-quality hospitals, other private medical services affordable by significant segments of wage-earners have mushroomed as well. Thus, as the heir to the Turkish New Right, AKP has been a successful popular capitalist actor. And, surprisingly, compared to leftist PT, this is what has made it more successful in terms of meeting popular expectations.

5 http://t24.com.tr/yazi/*Gezi*ye-kimler-katildi-orta-siniflar-isciler-turkler-ve-kurtler-hakkinda-bazi-somut-bilgiler-ve-saptamalar/8391.

6 http://www.socialprotection.eu/files_db/1298/asisp_ANR12_TURKEY.pdf.

On the other hand, the mobilising motives of higher wage earners were primarily political. Economic and social concerns experienced through the specific cultural-cum-political polarisation have escalated throughout the AKP era. This is especially relevant for civil servants, whose participation in the uprising was considerable. Thanks to AKP's strategy of placing its own Islamic-conservative cadres in executive positions within public offices since coming to power in 2002, civil servants working in public schools, hospitals and other state offices have experienced a real threat concerning their jobs and status in their workplaces. Thus, the Gezi uprising raised critical questions for people who, day after day, have to deal and struggle with these 'mini Erdoğans.' Consequently, their feeling was one of 'If we lose, they will eliminate us.' Moreover, this threat/risk perception is not just limited to the public sector. For example, there is evidence that the rapidly increasing market share of Islamist-conservative enterprises among private hospitals and education institutions has reached such a level that secularly-inclined workers in these sectors feel a sense of professional risk.

This risk perception should also be placed within a wider context that extends far beyond the current political situation in Turkey. It is not a coincidence that in the current wave of uprisings a significant portion of those taking to the streets were young civil servants and professionals, or students trying to make a step into that world. The 'open-minded' liberal analysts appearing in Turkey's mainstream media labelled this highly visible section of the protestors as 'the new middle class' and/or 'Generation Y,' highlighting its individualist philosophy and life-style habits that supposedly make such individuals opposed to all kinds of authoritarianism. However, such interpretations have their roots in a simplistic understanding of modern society, implying that there is a strict relationship between the rise and prosperity of the so-called middle classes and liberal democracy. In fact, they miss the point that these young sectors of society represent not the rising and prospering, but the declining middle classes, who have experienced a kind of proletarianisation due to the structural transformation of neoliberal capitalism. The earlier phase of neoliberalism managed to offer open-ended careers and opportunities for white-collar professionals, at least for a considerable part of them. Today, on the contrary, they are increasingly exposed to jobs with declining wages and limited and predetermined career paths. These highly routinised jobs cause the loss of even relative control within the work process, with the oxymoronic category of 'unskilled professionals' becoming a prominent sector within the ranks of the white-collar middle classes. Only a narrow professional elite are currently able to continue their creative and promising career plans.

This means that today's newly graduated professional-candidates have much fewer expectations than their counterparts did in the 1980s and 1990s. That is, young people and their concerns are once again becoming prominent within the new conditions of neoliberalism. It was these young people, whose lives oscillate between being a student and being unemployed and/or a flexible/freelance worker, lacking much hope in the future, who first hit the streets in the wake of the crisis of global capitalism. As precariousness passes from being a status denoting a specific mode of employment to an intense description of the social modes of life of the masses, social unease also increases. As happened in the Gezi uprisings, this situation can blur the classical distinction between political and economic demands, increasing the permeability between them.

In fact, with regard to these sectors, the current uprisings signify a process of class-consciousness formation. During the Gezi revolt, professional wage earners did not abandon their normal working hours, and those that were able to participate in daytime clashes continuously looked at their watches, waiting for the after-work participants to arrive. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, after their harsh, stultifying and unsatisfying daytime work experiences, these professionals experienced the street protests and other 'subversive' practices as moments of emancipation. On the other hand, their avoidance of radicalisation in their workplaces, such as missing working time and articulating into street radicalism after work ('Clark Kent in the morning, Superman in the evening' as they say), revealed, so to speak, the current phase of their class formation process.

In sum, it seems that for neoliberal populist regimes, both in Turkey and Brazil, it is becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy the needs of young and dynamic sectors within the middle classes. Moreover, as the Brazilian case reveals, new demands coming from the ranks of the labouring classes may push the limits of neoliberal poverty management to create a new wave of claims for expanding social citizenship rights. One can assume that the organic crisis of these regimes will come when the demands of these two different sectors come closer to one another and converge politically in order to create an alternative hegemonic bloc.

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6 Enough is Enough

What do the Gezi Protestors Want to Tell Us? A Political Economy Perspective

İlke Civelekoğlu

In this chapter I will address the reasons behind the Gezi protests from a political economy perspective. Following Karl Polanyi, I will argue that protestors resist the commercialisation of land as well as commodification of labour. According to Polanyi, a market economy regards land and labour as having been produced for sale, i.e. each has a price, which interacts with demand and supply. By subjecting labour and land to the process of buying and selling, Polanyi argues, they have to be transformed into commodities.[1] In line with Polanyi, this chapter will contend that Gezi Park can be read as the last straw in a long process of accumulation of discontent against neoliberal policies, which increasingly created areas of rent for large corporations and eroded the economic security of a significant part of the labour force in Turkey.

The chapter is organised as follows: the first section addresses the neoliberal policies of the ruling AKP government to explain how commodification of land and labour has occurred in Turkey under the AKP rule. The second section discusses what caused the masses to flood into the streets with the outbreak of the Gezi Park Resistance, with reference to Polanyi's arguments on economic liberalism and societal counter-movement against liberalism's practices. The section also addresses who the protestors were and what they demanded from the government with reference to literature on Gezi Resistance and scholars such as Nicos Poulantzas and Guy Standing. The chapter concludes by arguing that neoliberalism accompanied by growing authoritarian tendencies, as displayed by the AKP government, contributes to decay of democracy in the country as it favours exclusion and marginalisation of the dissident.

Re-thinking Neoliberalism in Turkey under AKP Rule

Turkey has managed to swiftly recover from the 2001 economic crisis – the most devastating crisis in its history since its foundation in 1923 – by

1 As labour and land are not produced for sale on the market, they are not real but fictitious commodities for Polanyi (2001, 71-80).

adopting fiscal austerity and structural reforms. The reforms that were initiated by the then Minister of Finance, Kemal Derviş, moved forward when the AKP government came to power in 2002. Contrary to fears at the time, stemming from the AKP's pro-Islamic posture, the AKP government quickly signalled its approval of the IMF-led policies, declaring that, in principle, it was in no way antagonistic to the market economy or its necessities. In the words of the Prime Minister Erdoğan, the AKP government's objective was 'unleashing Turkey's potential by providing a stable macroeconomic environment and implementing fundamental structural reforms for recovery.'[2]

The AKP government's strict commitment to tightening fiscal discipline, demonstrated by its strong will to ensure control of budget deficit, enabled the government to lower inflation rates rapidly and to accompany the dramatic fall in inflation with robust economic growth rates, except for the year 2009 when the influence of the global crisis was strongly felt in the economy.[3]

The AKP's slogan for the 2011 general elections was 'Our target is 2023. Let the stability continue, let Turkey grow.' It was designed to capitalise on the double success of the party, i.e. accommodating stability with growth to win the national elections. As the OECD Better Life Index reveals, Turkey has made considerable progress in improving the quality of life of its citizens over the last two decades.[4] Before hailing the economic developments under the AKP government as a success story, however, the unique characteristics of this achievement should be carefully analysed.

The rapid increases in growth rates did not turn into jobs and employment opportunities in the post-2001 context, but rather led to what Yeldan (2007, 4) calls a *jobless-growth* pattern in Turkish economy. The government, however, was not particularly concerned about the unemployment problem; in an attempt to increase the competitiveness of the Turkish economy in global markets, the AKP government threw its support behind cheap and flexible labour. The new legislation on labour, enacted in 2003, exemplifies the particular position of the AKP government vis-à-vis labour. Basically, the Labour Law reduced coverage of job security (which prevented the dismissal of workers on the basis of trades union activities, pregnancy and

2 See https://www.imf.org/external/country/tur/index.htm?type=23.

3 For details on the political economy of Turkey under the AKP, refer to Öniş and Kutlay 2013; Öniş 2012; Yeldan 2007.

4 See http://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/OVERVIEW%20ENGLISH%20FINAL.pdf and http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/.

Table 6.1: Macroeconomic Indicators of Turkey

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Inflation (per cent)	54.9	54.4	44.9	25.3	10.6	8.2	9.6	8.78	10.43	6.28	8.58	6.45	8.94	7.49
Unemployment (per cent)	6.5	8.4	10.3	10.5	10.2	10.2	8.8	8.9	9.8	12.7	10.8	8.8	8.2	10
GDP growth	6.3	-9.5	7.9	5.9	9.9	7.6	7.8	4.7	0.7	-4/8	9.2	8.8	2.2	3.8
PPP (US$=1,00)*	0.28	0.43	0.61	0.77	0.81	0.83	0.85	0.86	0.89	0.91	0.94	0.99	1.03	1.08
GDP per capita ($)	9183	8623	8667	8796	10,159	11,394	12,911	13,884	15,021	14,550	16,003	17,781	18,315	-

* PPP= Purchasing power parity

Sources: www.turkstat.com; www.inflation.eu; and
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/turkey_2013.pdf

legal actions) to only those enterprises employing more than thirty workers. Given that small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) provide most of the jobs in the Turkish economy, the SMEs were simply given a greater flexibility in legal terms to dismiss their workers at will.[5] Although the law was detrimental to the interests of labour, it served two critical purposes for the government. First, by empowering small capitalists, namely the SMEs, against labour, the Labour Law allowed the AKP to bolster its alliance with its key electoral constituency. Secondly, as the law facilitated business attempts to resist wage increase demands, it helped the government's efforts at sustaining moderate wage growth in the economy.

To pursue the commodification of labour further, the law introduced flexible labour practices, such as part-time working and temporary employment schemes, and excluded part-time labour in establishments employing fewer than thirty workers from protective provisions such as unemployment benefits and severance pay (see Taymaz and Özler 2005, 234-235). A couple of years later, when the latest global crisis began to influence the country, the AKP government's efforts to manage increasing unemployment rates without increasing labour costs resulted in the enactment of an employment package in late 2008 that introduced 'hiring subsidies' to reduce employers' non-wage costs as well as market-friendly labour policies. The package included, but was not limited to, different types of flexible work contracts, such as vocational training programmes and temporary public employment.[6] Despite these policy instruments, however, high levels of informal employment in the economy did not reduce significantly, suggesting that informal employment has already become an important form of flexibility for the employers due to the incentives it offers, such as exemptions from social security contributions.[7] The 2003 Labour Law, accompanied by accelerated privatisation policies and active labour market policies during and after the 2008 global crisis, display how the AKP government's neoliberal policies turned labour into a commodity in the Turkish context.

The legalisation of flexible work during the AKP rule also contributed to the de-unionisation of workers, thus helping to consolidate the commodification process. According to the OECD statistics, Turkey held the lowest unionisation

5 For more on this law, see Yıldırım 2006.

6 For more information on labour market policies of the AKP government during and after the 2008 crisis, see Öniş and Güven 2011 and http://eyeldan.yasar.edu.tr/2009ILO_G20CountryBrief_Turkey.pdf.

7 Throughout the 2000s, the informal employment levels averaged at 49.84 per cent. See TURKSTAT, Labour Force Statistics at http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1007. Accessed 24 May 2014.

rates among the member states throughout the 2000s; indeed, the rates fell by 38 per cent in that decade.[8] Here, one needs to mention the new law on Trades Unions and Collective Bargaining enacted in 2012. The law failed to provide effective protection or job security against layoffs related to union membership as it abolished compensation for layoffs related to unionisation in enterprises employing less than thirty workers and for workers with less than six months of seniority, which overall correspond to roughly half of the entire workforce in the country (Çelik 2013, 46). In a country where the dismissal of union members is a widespread practice, the law further weakened labour.

In case labour showed any resistance to its commodification, the AKP did not refrain from resorting to coercive measures in office. During the mass protest of workers against the privatisation of TEKEL (former state Monopoly of Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages) in 2010, protesting workers were subject to police violence.[9] The AKP's strategy in removing dissent through force was not just confined to labour. Here, one can recall the protests against the Hydro Electric Power Plants, or the HES project to use its Turkish acronym. The HES project calls for the construction of dams in waterways and rivers by private companies, particularly but not exclusively on the northeast coast of Turkey, to cover the energy needs of the country. The costs, however, are the destruction of surrounding habitats, desertification and depopulation. Protests against the HES, which can be read as protests against the commercialisation of land by the private sector for profit, have gained popular attention. In this case, the government's response to protestors was harsh.[10] In the face of mounting criticism of the HES project, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated: 'All investments can have negative outcomes [...] but you can not simply give up because there can be some negative outcomes.'[11]

As Prime Minister Erdoğan's words reveal, the degradation of the environment has to be accepted as an inevitable price for economic progress. As Polanyi argues, the logic of the market economy asks for the separation

8 See the table on page 45 in Çelik 2013.

9 This TEKEL resistance, which lasted for about 78 days, was significant because it showed an organised effort on the part of labour to resist against neoliberal practices. The TEKEL workers refused to accept their new status (4/C), which required them to work on a short-term contract basis and give up job security in return for a wage lower than what they used to earn. As they would no longer be considered as workers or public servants under 4/C, they were banned from organising or joining labour unions. In short, 4/C deprived them of all their social rights.

10 Those involved in the protests against the HES are poor villagers themselves. On 31 May 2011, in a protest in Artvin, Hopa, a north coast municipality, a high school teacher, Metin Lokumcu, died due to a heart attack caused by a gas bomb thrown by the police over the protesters. No apology came from the government afterwards.

11 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/29/turkey-nuclear-hydro-power-development.

of the political from the economic. Consequently, the neoliberal AKP under Erdoğan tried to silence dissenting voices by underlining the requirements of economic success.[12]

In addition to the HES project, there have been other neoliberal attacks on land by the government. For example, the government-backed gold mining venture in the western town of Bergama encountered massive resistance from the rural population in the region due to their fears about environmentally hazardous cyanide.[13] More recently, the Karaköy, Tophane and Salıpazarı coastal lines were restricted to public access and put up for auction.[14] Last but not least, Erdoğan's mega-project 'Canal Istanbul' aims to dig a new canal through Istanbul, parallel to the Bosphorus Strait, at the expense of challenging the city's already delicate ecological balance, while generating profits for a small group of people.[15]

When we talk about commercialisation of land, a bracket should be opened for the construction industry. Construction has been a crucial element of economic growth in Turkey as it constituted a significant part of the gross domestic product (GDP) throughout the AKP rule.

Moreover, construction has strong linkages with other industries, such as manufacturing (cement and ceramics) and transportation, as well as finance through mortgages and credits. In political terms, the construction industry has been one of the leading fields of economic activity that benefited the Islamic bourgeoisie, which constitutes the backbone of the AKP's electoral coalition.[16] Among these groups are İhlas, Çalık, Killer and Kombassan, all of which were awarded generous contracts by public agencies during AKP rule.[17]

12 For a good analysis of separation of politics and economy in Polanyi and application of this argument to Turkey, see http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ayse-bugra/turkey-what-lies-behind-nationwide-protests.

13 For more on Bergama struggle, see Özen 2009 and Arsel 2012.

14 The government expects 702 million dollars from the auction. For an analysis on neoliberal attacks of government on land, see http://www.opendemocracy.net/cemal-burak-tansel/gezi-park-occupation-confronting-authoritarian-neoliberalism.

15 As David Harvey (2012, 78) reminds us, these neoliberal mega-projects, generating dubious profits for a small elite, are a common feature of the capitalist system in the context of so-called urban re-development.

16 For a theoretical discussion on the relationship between the AKP and Islamic bourgeoisie, see Gumuscu 2010.

17 On clientelistic ties between the Islamic bourgeoisie and the AKP in construction business and the enrichment of the former, see Karatepe 2013; Demir, Acar and Toprak 2004; http://mustafasonmez.net/?p=657.

Table 6.2: Indicators on the Construction Industry in Turkey

Year	Annual growth rate of construction	Share of construction in GDP
2002	13.9	5.4
2003	7.8	5.5
2004	14.1	5.8
2005	9.3	5.8
2006	18.5	6.4
2007	5.7	6.5
2008	-8.1	5.9
2009	-16.1	5.2
2010	18.3	5.7
2011	11.5	5.8
2012	0.6	5.7

Source: Karatepe 2013

In sum, as the current government in Turkey represents the interplay of religion and market economy in a decaying democratic regime, it is fair to argue that, given its close alliance with business groups and global market players, the government sees no problem in commodifying land in the name of profit, rent and consumerism, and commodifying labour in the name of economic liberalisation.

Re-thinking the Gezi Park Protests: What did the Protestors Actually Protest?

With the Gezi Park Resistance, Turkey witnessed a prime example of a protest against neoliberal authoritarianism. In response to the AKP's plans to demolish green areas in order to build shopping centres, skyscrapers and offices, the 'Occupy Gezi' protestors, according to Tuğal (2013, 151-172), actively oppose government policies that wipe out everything in the path of marketisation. Here one can recall Polanyi (2001, 75-76) and what he calls the 'three great 'fictions' upon which the illusion of the self-regulating market is based:

> The crucial point is this: land, labour, and money are essential elements of industry; they also must be organized in markets; in fact, these markets form an absolutely vital part of the economic system. But labour, land, and money are obviously *not* commodities; the postulate that anything

> that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale is emphatically untrue in regard to them. In other words, according to the empirical definition of a commodity they are not commodities. Labour is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally, is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them are produced for sale. The commodity description of labour, land, and money is entirely fictitious.

As Polanyi argues, since the market economy is a threat to the human and natural components of the social fabric, a great variety of people in a society are expected to press for some sort of protection against the peril. Accordingly, a counter-movement checking the expansion of the market for the protection of society is likely to arise in modern society. Although such a counter-movement is incompatible with the self-regulation of the market, it is vital in respect of the natural and human substance of society as well as to insulate the capitalist production from the destructive impact of a self-regulating market (Ibid., 136). This counter-movement can call for social laws to protect industrial man from commodification of its labour power or for land laws to conserve the nature. Here comes the critical question: Was the Gezi Resistance an act of, what Polanyi calls, 'double movement'?[18] In other words, was the Gezi Resistance a revolt against the peril (of profit-driven market economy)? If yes, were there really a variety of people there? Put differently, can we think of the Gezi Resistance as alliances across different segments of society?

Although we lack surveys that reveal the exact composition of the protestors, it seems the majority of protestors in Taksim were professionals. However, the protest quickly took on a heterogeneous character as the urban poor from Gaziosmanpaşa and Ümraniye flooded to Taksim, and different labour unions launched a strike in various cities to support the Gezi Resistance and to protest the disproportional use of force by police.[19]

18 Polanyi (2001, 136-140) names the process where market expansion is balanced by a societal counter-movement as 'double movement'.

19 The labour unions KESK and DİSK threw in their support to Gezi by launching a strike in early June. For details see http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/06/05/sendikalardan-gezi-grevi-doktorlar-isciler-ogretmenler-is-birakti.html.

When the security forces forceably evacuated Gezi Park and Taksim Square in mid-June, the Gezi movement changed track and focused on organising public assemblies. The most crowded assemblies took place in middle-class neighbourhoods of the city; namely, Beşiktaş and Kadıköy, rather than in upper-income or proletarian neighbourhoods (Tuğal 2013, 166). Moreover, the overwhelming majority in these assemblies were engineers, doctors, lawyers and finance professionals – put differently, the well-paid professionals. This fact allows some to label the Gezi Resistance as a predominantly middle-class movement.[20]

It should be stated that there is a debate about the categorisation of the protestors. For Boratav, for instance, well-paid professionals and university students that were active participants of the Resistance should be included in the ranks of 'white-collar working class,' as these groups create surplus value for their employers once they are employed.[21] Accordingly, the university students are well aware that, under current circumstances, they will either accept joining a reserve labour army – meaning that once they graduate, they will be employed in jobs that do not match their aspirations or their skills, if they are lucky enough to find work – or they will revolt. Following Boratav, one can argue that educated youth chose to revolt because they resist the increasing insecurity and joblessness in the labour market, apparent in the abundance of short-term contracts and part time jobs,[22] as well as the existing inequality.[23] Consequently, it is possible to claim that what the unemployed and the unemployable, who are negligible for the current neoliberal capitalist system in the country, demand from the government is not a specific right but the 'right to have rights' in social and economic spheres for the de-commodification of labour.[24]

20 Tuğal makes this argument. Accordingly, there were definitely socialist groups and workers who were also active in the protests. However, turning these protests into an all-out class war has never been a priority of the protests' political agenda (Tuğal 2013, 167). Similarly, Arat (2013) focuses on the role of the middle class.

21 See http://www.sendika.org/2013/06/her-yer-taksim-her-yer-direnis-bu-isci-sinifinin-tarihsel-ozlemi-olan-sinirsiz-dolaysiz-demokrasi-cagrisidir-korkut-boratav/.

22 As of March 2013, the Turkish Statistical Institution revealed that the unemployment rate for young urban men was 19.4% and 26.5% for young women (15-24 years old). Moreover, 18.7% of urban men and 30.2% of urban women have been unemployed for more than a year. According to Onaran, these rates are not sustainable: http://www.researchturkey.org/the-political-economy-of-inequality-redistribution-and-the-protests-in-turkey/.

23 The students also oppose the crony and populist distribution of wealth towards the poor that disregards taxing the profits of large capitalists. For details, see http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/authoritarian_neoliberalism_hits_a_wall_in_turkey.

24 I adopted the analysis put forward by Douzinas to Turkey: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/04/greece-ukraine-welcome-new-age-resistance.

Boratav sees the Gezi Resistance as a movement of educated young people who used to belong to the middle class, but who have become 'proletarianised' under neoliberal practices and institutional changes. Others shed light on the link between the protests and a new *class-in-the-making*; namely, the precariat (Standing 2011), and label the movement as the civic engagement of vulnerable groups.[25] In the words of Guy Standing, who coined the term *precariat*:

> [precariat] consists of a multitude of insecure people, in and out of short-term jobs, including millions of frustrated educated youth who do not like what they see before them, millions of women abused in oppressive labour, growing numbers of criminalized tagged for life, millions being categorized as 'disabled' and migrants in their hundreds of millions around the world.[26]

Accordingly, the precariat is not part of the 'working class' or the 'proletariat,' since these terms suggest a society consisting mostly of workers that possess long-term, stable, fixed-hour jobs with established routes of advancement, and that are subject to unionisation and collective agreements (Standing 2011, 6). They are also not 'middle class,' as they do not have a stable or predictable salary or the status and benefits that middle-class people are supposed to enjoy (Ibid.). Also, in neoliberal times, any employed person faces the risk of falling into the precariat, regardless of age and education. In the case of the Gezi Resistance, one can talk of the precariat since young professionals and students are subject to labour insecurity and hence, run the risk of not having the recourse to stable occupational careers or protective regulations relevant to them.[27] Moreover, the term precariat enables us to understand why socially existing but politically invisible groups participated in the Resistance, such as subcontracted workers, transgender

25 For a detailed analysis, see http://sarphanuzunoglu.com/post/60529631279/prekarya-gunesi-selamlarken and http://t24.com.tr/haber/gezi-hareketinin-ortak-paydalari-ve-yeni-orgutluluk-bicimleri/233416.

26 http://www.policy-network.net/pno_detail.aspx?ID=4004&title=+The+Precariat+%E2%80%93+The+new+dangerous+class.

27 According to Standing, labour security under industrial citizenship has several dimensions: labour-market security (adequate income earning opportunities), employment security (protection against arbitrary dismissal), job security (opportunities for upward mobility in terms of status and income), work security (protection against accidents and illness at work), income security (assurance of minimum wage, progressive taxation and supplementary programs for low-income groups) and finally representation security (unionisation and right to strike). For more on the forms of labour-related security, see Standing 2011, 10.

sex workers, children collecting scrap paper in the streets of Istanbul – all of whom share the common denominator of living and working precariously. It should be stated here that young professionals had revolted prior to Gezi by organising a platform, but at Gezi they received support from those in precarious jobs.[28]

It matters a great deal how we categorise the protestors if we are to assess the consequences of the Gezi Resistance properly and understand the prospects for change in Turkish politics. If Boratav is right, then one can claim that what happened at Gezi was a class-based social movement, where the professionals and educated youth that make up the white-collar workers joined forces against the dominance of capital holders, who are favoured by the AKP government over labour. But is this urban alliance likely to expand to include other groups in electoral terms in order to achieve any significant political gains? This is not as easy as it looks. Literature recognises the professionals, who are considered to have overwhelmingly dominated the Gezi Resistance movement together with the educated youth, as a specific class, distinct from the working class and with distinctive material interests.[29]

As Poulantzas tells us, although professionals are salaried-workers, they are not automatically or inevitably polarised towards the working class. This middle class – or what Poulantzas names the new petty bourgeoisie –[30] has benefited from the commodification of labour and nature for the last three decades in Turkey. It is this class that became prosperous under the government's neoliberal policies. And this is why we cannot be sure of the political solutions that this class will support in the future. As Poulantzas contends, they must be won over to an alliance with the working class. But as quickly as they have been won over, they can be lost again and become allies of the other side. This is not because they do not have specific class interests, but because they have dubious class specificity (Martin 2008, 326). In the context of the Gezi Resistance, the petty bourgeoisie, despite its

28 In 2008, a couple of young professionals and office clerks employed in banking, insurance, advertisement, telecommunication and media sectors established Plaza Action Platform (PEP) to defend the collective social rights of white-collar workers in the service sector. The PEP is a platform to battle against common problems of the white-collar workers such as mobbing, performance pressure and uninsured/flexible work. For more on this group, see their website at http://plazaeylemplatformu.wordpress.com. Accessed 26 May 2014.

29 On Poulantzas's conception of petty bourgeoisie as a distinct class, see Martin 2008, 323-334.

30 According to Poulantzas, except for manual workers that engage in production of physical commodities for private capital, all other categories of wage labourers (white-collar employees, technicians, supervisors, civil servants, etc.) should be included in a separate class; namely, the new petty bourgeoisie, as they lie outside the basic capitalist form of exploitation. See Martin 2008, 326.

anti-authoritarian tendencies, can choose to renew its coalition with the AKP government. After all, its core characteristics include 'reformism,' which regards the problems of capitalism as solvable through institutional reform, and 'individualism,' which aspires to an upward mobility (Poulantzas 1975, 294). It is too early to say that middle class segments of the society are willing to reach out to the lower classes, namely, the proletariat and the urban poor, and work towards a common solution. Unless we see an electoral coalition across different segments of society against the AKP rule, prospects for change seem dim, at least in the short-run in Turkey.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the Gezi Resistance from a political economy perspective. The explanation presented in this chapter does not aim to exclude political or any other sort of explanation for this particular incident. After all, there was great concern about the AKP government's interference in personal life and a growing resentment about the polarising discourse of the government members that marginalised dissidents who did not conform to the government's conservative statements or policies. Many protestors were already uncomfortable with the prime minister's statements on condemning abortion, the legislation that restricted the sale and use of alcohol and so forth. This chapter argues that the Gezi Resistance was a movement, or what Polanyi would call the 'self-protection of society,' against the government's dominance, which ignored the voices of dissent in every realm, including the economic, where widespread unemployment and income inequality surface. It is against this background that people gathered to protest against the degradation of environment.

Let this chapter conclude by drawing a link between the political economy perspective presented here and current politics in Turkey. What does the Gezi Resistance mean for democracy? What the Gezi Resistance revealed is that neoliberalism accompanied by growing authoritarian tendencies, as displayed by the AKP government, has no interest in neutralising resistance and dissent via concessions and compromise; on the contrary, it favours exclusion and marginalisation of the dissident, if necessary by force. Yet, the AKP and its allies are facing a crisis of legitimacy. The Gezi Resistance protestors posed a serious challenge to the government's policies. In response, the AKP is forcing the state to be less open and more coercive. We must remember that the Turkish economy will be vulnerable to fluctuations in the international markets, mainly because of its low savings rate

(one of the lowest across emerging markets) and its high dependence on foreign capital.[31] As things go from bad to worse economically, at a time of record high youth unemployment, can new protests outbreak and challenge neoliberalism to its roots, as Polanyi would argue?[32] This remains to be seen in the Turkish context.

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31 For a comparison of the Turkish economy to those of BRICs, see Öniş and Kutlay 2013, 1420.

32 Polanyi (2001, 79) argued that mobilisation against the commodification of land, labour and money helped bring down classical liberalism, which strictly shares similar assumptions with neoliberalism.

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Section III
Protesters and Repertoires of Protests

7 ‘We are more than Alliances between Groups’

A Social Psychological Perspective on the Gezi Park Protesters and Negotiating Levels of Identity

Özden Melis Uluğ and Yasemin Gülsüm Acar

> ‘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

The Gezi Park protests brought together people from a variety of walks of life. Though nearly half of the protesters claimed they had not previously participated in any kind of social action, protests were largely started and maintained through extant activists, NGOs and political organisations. Some members of these groups had previously protested together, but many were coming together for the first time. With the poorly-chosen words of Prime Minister Erdoğan, protesters were able to find a new identity under the guise of *çapulcu*, which allowed them to see themselves as part of a greater whole while still maintaining their original allegiances.

This chapter will examine constructs of social activism and identity from a social psychological perspective in order to better understand the structure of the Gezi Park protests, the participants and the way they negotiated identities. A background to the protests and the participants will be provided, followed by a brief review of the social psychological perspective and its relevance in understanding the interplay of identities at Gezi. Finally, research conducted with activists from the protests describing their reasons for participating and relationships across groups will be presented.

Background to the Gezi Park Protests

In order to understand who the protestors were, why they were there and what they wanted, KONDA researchers conducted a study with 4411

participants in Gezi Park during the first week of June.[1] Of those participants, 93.6 per cent stated that they had come to Gezi Park as a 'simple citizen,' whereas only 6.4 per cent of the participants said they were part of an organisation or political party. Citing KONDA, it can be seen that a majority of those who attended the protests did so as individuals, and that close to half had never participated in a protest before. As will be discussed later, many activists stated their initial participation in the protest was as an individual rather than as a representative of a group. This could account for the difference between the numbers participating as individuals and the percentage of previous participation.[2]

When asked why they attended the protests, participants cited such reasons as restrictions on freedom, opposition to the policies of the AKP government, reaction against the words of Prime Minister Erdoğan and opposing the destruction of Gezi Park. Issues of freedom and police brutality were the principle motivations for the protestors across the board, though considering the differing ideologies represented at the park, more group-specific reasons for participation were also expected.[3] In the following sections, we will examine social psychological perspectives for participation in collective action.

Social Psychological Perspectives on Collective Action

The birth of the industrial revolution in Europe and North America placed the concept of the crowd (or the masses) at the forefront of society. Understanding the crowd as a representative of the masses at large made it all the more important for the elite to demonise it, in part as an effort to prevent the lower classes from gaining power and disrupting traditional hierarchies. For many, crowds represented an end to perceived stability and the birth of a reign of anarchy, and quickly became a fascinating new area of research.

Gustave Le Bon remains one of the most influential researchers of crowd dynamics to date. His seminal work was published in 1895 and has managed to sway the understanding of mass politics throughout the twentieth century. Le Bon saw the crowd as submerging the rationality

1 http://www.genar.com.tr/files/GEZIPARKI_PROFIL-SON.pdf.

2 Another study by Istanbul Bilgi University was conducted the same week and showed similar results: http://t24.com.tr/haber/gezi-parki-direniscileriyle-yapilan-anketten-cikan-ilginc-sonuclar/231335.

3 For more social psychological research on identification at Gezi Park, see Uluğ and Solak 2013 and for groups at Gezi Park, see Dalğar et al. 2013.

and self-consciousness of its members, turning it into a primitive, base and ghastly group of people. According to Le Bon, individuals lose all sense of self when they become part of a crowd. They are unable to 'resist any passing idea or emotion,' as they have lost their intellect.

Later theorists did not assume such abnormality in crowd behaviour, but rather imagined that some existing group process functioned to generate purpose and order within the crowd. They claimed that crowd behaviour should not be understood as a lack of personal sense of self but as a shift in understanding of the self from the individual to the group level.

If the crowd is defined as a social group, it follows that the same processes of social categorisation and identification will determine crowd action. Crowd members, while identifying with the crowd, infer not just what is normal for an ideal and typical group member but also what the limits of group behaviour are. This is why, in some instances, though violence may occur, it is directed toward specific targets (e.g. the police) and is selective and patterned (Feagin and Hahn 1973; Stephenson 1979).[4]

Social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987; also see Abrams and Hogg 2010) posits the concept of social identity, which can be understood as the part of the self-concept derived from our membership in social groups. Social identity is multiple and part of a complex system, rather than a single unit. Social identity defines in terms of 'we' rather than 'I' (personal identity), as members of a social category in relation to other social categories (Turner 1991, 1999; Turner et al. 1987).

Contrary to deindividuation and the Le Bon tradition, social identity theory proposes that group behaviour will occur irrespective of anonymity and identifiability when social identity is salient (Reicher 1987; see also Abrams 1985). Within the confines of this approach, social identity, rather than personal identity, is salient. That is, rather than a loss of identity in the group, there is a switch of identity in the group from personal to social.

When it comes to group behaviour, we define ourselves along the lines of the behaviour of other group members. That is, we engage in self-stereotyping based on the relevant identity in a particular context and perform the behaviour that is expected for those group members in that situation. With regard to Gezi, if that behaviour is building barricades or dancing the tango, we build barricades or dance the tango. Which category is relevant at which time is flexible and, oftentimes, what is relevant or salient at the moment is the identity that comes to the forefront and through which we tend to behave in that given moment. The question is not just 'what do we

4 See http://roarmag.org/2014/01/women-gezi-park-protests/.

do in this situation?,' but rather 'what is appropriate as a group member in this particular situation?'

Antecedents to Collective Action

Having established an identity and group-based understanding to collective action, it is worthwhile taking a moment to examine what precedes participation. Simon and Klandermans (2001) point to the need for group members to be aware of their shared group membership, their common enemy or opponent, as well as the wider societal conflict of the power struggle. They state that feeling aggrieved, an awareness that it is a shared grievance (with other group members) and the designation of an external enemy are necessary first steps in engaging in a power struggle on behalf of their group. It is then important to feel that engaging in protest will be efficacious in redressing grievances (Klandermans 1984, 1997).

A meta-analysis of 180 studies of collective action conducted by van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears (2008) attempted to integrate perspectives of antecedents for collective action. The proposed Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA) describes identity, perceived injustice and perceived efficacy as the important conditions and predictive elements of collective action, showing that perceptions of illegitimacy (injustice) indeed function to create a sense of need for collective action. In this model, identity has a very important role, as it is both a direct predictor of collective action as well as an indirect predictor, which might follow the injustice and efficacy pathways (Thomas et al. 2011). However, there is also another possibility in collective action that identity might play a less important role than perceived injustice.

Creating a Group from the Crowd

Overall, psycho-social perspectives function based on constructs of social identity and related elements. Thomas et al. (2011) proposed an Encapsulated Model of Social Identity in Collective Action (EMSICA) as an alternative to the SIMCA model mentioned above. In this model, as in the SIMCA model, social identity is still important. However, Thomas et al. (2011) claim that social identity can be a mediator for injustice and efficacy in predicting collective action. The situation in Gezi Park explains this phenomenon. People participated in the Gezi Park protests across Turkey based first on the perception of injustice rather than on a shared identity. However, later, when Prime Minister Erdoğan called all the protestors – who were from very diverse groups – *çapulcu* (looter), protestors defined themselves as such as well. As

in the model, group formation comes later, based on shared perceptions of injustice and efficacy. Different people who share the same perception of injustice felt as one under the guise of the *çapulcu*, or *resister*, identity.

In trying to understand how a sense of 'oneness' can emerge from the crowd, it is clear that issues of identity and the group are highly important. A sense of shared identity with other protesters allows the individual to see her/his fate as connected to the fate of those around her/him. The stronger the belief that what happens to all happens to the individual, the more likely the individual is to feel an attachment to the group and to perceive injustice against other members as injustice against the self.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Gaertner et al. 1993) advocates eliminating intergroup boundaries by either increasing the salience of an existing common ingroup identity or creating a new, more inclusive identity for subgroups. Research has yielded positive findings for the effectiveness of this perspective, though questions of equal status and shared threat are important to note (Dovidio et al. 2004). Especially in the face of a common outgroup threat (e.g. the police), multiple groups functioning under a single superordinate identity can be highly effective.

There is an important caveat, however. Social identity theory argues that group members have a motivation to maintain distinctiveness for their ingroup from the outgroup. According to the social identity perspective, self-esteem is partially attained from the social groups (e.g. friend groups, political parties, football fans, national citizens) individuals belong to. It is important, therefore, that the attainment of a positive self-evaluation relies on the individual's ability to positively differentiate between their ingroup and relevant outgroups.

Based on these perspectives, we argue that there are two main reasons why the Gezi Park protests were able to bring people together so effectively: the existence of a salient outgroup (i.e. the police) and the existence of a superordinate category (i.e. *çapulcu*, protester, resister) that did *not* impinge on pre-existing subgroup categories (i.e. Anti-capitalist Muslims, Kemalists). In the frame of the Gezi Park protests, a member of any group present there should be able to maintain her or his identity as a party member while also considering her- or himself a protester in the park. When the police make their presence felt, the protester (superordinate) identity should become more salient, and when the police retreat, the party member (subordinate) identity should become more salient. In the following, the dynamics of the protesters both within and between groups will be discussed with a case study from the Gezi Park activists.

'We Are More than Alliances between Groups': An Identity-based Analysis of the Gezi Park Protest Activists

Crowd dynamics are quite complex to understand. However, in line with the literature, we also argue that in today's world, crowd identity plays an important role in collective action participation. In order to understand the ingroup, outgroup and superordinate group dynamics and to explore participants' position in relation to self and being part of a particular group, the relationship between ingroup(s) and outgroup(s), and how participants position themselves in terms of reasons for participation at Gezi Park, in-depth interviews were conducted with activists who participated in the protests.[5]

Participants' groups were chosen based on their visibility in the protests. They included: 1) Alevi activists; 2) Anti-capitalist Muslims/Revolutionary Muslims; 3) members of the football fan group *Çarşı*; 4) women's rights activists; 5) Kemalists (ADD, TGB, İP [İşçi Partisi]); 6) Kurdish activists; 7) LGBTI activists; 8) trades union members; 9) members of the TKP; and 10) *Ülkücüler* (Nationalist Movement Party or *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP; *Ülkü Ocakları*). Participants were activists who participated frequently in the Gezi Park protests in different cities across Turkey. In total, 24 participants were interviewed. Participants were asked whether they attended the protests as a member of their group or alone, how important their activist identity is for them and why their own group attended the protests. Participants were also asked to name any groups they felt close to (or not close to) in order to understand the relationships across different groups in the protests. Thematic analysis was applied to the transcriptions of the interviews. In the following, the perspectives of participants from each group will be represented.

1) *Alevi Activists* (*Ankara and Hatay*): Alevi participants noted specific reasons for their participation in the protests, referring to ethnic and religious discrimination as well as regional issues (especially in Hatay). Participants discussed perceptions of assimilationist policies on the part of the government towards Alevis. Participants also noted the role of the AKP in the conflict in Syria, believing the AKP to be working in conjunction with Al-Qaeda and Al Nusra and using Hatay as a logistics centre.

5 For full interviews, see Uluğ and Acar 2014.

Especially for the participant living in Hatay, Alevi identity was very salient both as a religious and as a cultural identity. On the other hand, the participant from Tuzluçayır said that his socialist identity was more important than his Alevi identity. Both felt close to *Çarşı*, a group of supporters of the Beşiktaş football club, and members of the People's House (*Halkevleri*). They did not feel close to the İP, TGB and some leftist parties who they felt discredited the Gezi movement.

2) *Anti-capitalist Muslims/Revolutionary Muslims* (*Ankara and Istanbul*): Anti-capitalist Muslims and Revolutionary Muslims stated that they believe property belongs to God ('a park belonging to the public, given away to the "capitalist followers" of the AKP, is not something the people can tolerate'). They saw the AKP government as endangering the environment by continually building shopping centres around the country, and they stated that Muslims should rather live in peace with nature. According to participants, Gezi Park is the only place in Taksim where people can sit for free and they did not want to see that change. Importantly, they also wanted to show that the protesters are not enemies of religion, as implied by members of the 'Islamist' AKP government, and which they thought was incorrectly expressed through the AKP.

   The Anti-capitalist and Revolutionary Muslim identity was important for the participants while they were attending the protests, and more so for the participant who attended in Istanbul than the participant from Ankara. As part of the occupation, many groups, including the Anti-capitalist and Revolutionary Muslims, pitched tents in Gezi Park, implying a more concrete and permanent identity-based presence. They felt close to *Kaldıraç* (an LGBTI organisation), *Çarşı* and socialist and communist groups in the protests. The only group they did not feel close to was TGB, but stated 'if we are bothered [by the presence of] any other group, this would be against the Gezi spirit.'

3) *Çarşı* (*Istanbul*)*:* A fan group of Beşiktaş supporters, *Çarşı* is a group highly involved with social issues. Participants made a point of stating that *Çarşı* has a conscience; in their own words, 'where there is injustice, Çarşı is there, too.' *Çarşı* members were active both in Gezi Park and in their own district of Beşiktaş, where there were particularly harsh clashes between protesters and police. One reason they cited for their participation was the proximity of the protests to what they considered their 'home turf.' With police encroachment in Beşiktaş, *Çarşı* members

felt an obligation to 'protect' their neighbourhood. According to *Çarşı* members, the AKP has taken hold of all institutions (even the football league) and blocked all other existing ways of seeking democracy.
Participants indicated that they attended the protests with their *Çarşı* identity, with their personal identity and with their leftist identity (though not all members of *Çarşı* are leftists). They also mentioned that these identities intertwined during the protests. They felt close to other fan groups such as *Tek Yumruk* (Galatasaray), *Karakızıl* (*Gençlerbirliği*), *Halkın Takımı, Beleştepe, Fenerbahçe Sol Açık, Vamos Bien* and *Öteki 1907*. They also felt close to *Taksim Solidarity* and the TKP. They said they did not feel close to TGB, the CHP and the Kurdish movement. Ultimately, all participants from *Çarşı* emphasised that being a part of the protests was a privilege, irrespective of identity and ideology.

4) *Women's rights activists* (*Ankara and Istanbul*): The visibility of women in general during the protests was quite high.[6] Women's rights activists discussed many reasons for that visibility, including attacks on women, women feeling their place is restricted in the public sphere and feeling they have no right to speak. In general, participants discussed their reasons for protest as being related to the AKP's aggressive policies against women and their rhetoric of control over women. They specifically mentioned bans on abortion and the morning after pill, pressure on women by the government to have three children, the murder of women and feeling that they have no safe haven when they are exposed to violence.
Participants indicated that they were in the streets as women because this identity had become increasingly important during the AKP rule. They emphasised that there is no place for women in the AKP's government. Participants felt close to the LGBTI movement, the Kurdish movement, anarchists and the Anti-capitalist Muslims. They also said that they could stand together with TGB and İP, though they criticised Kemalists in general.

5) *Kemalists* (*ADD – Rize, TGB – Hatay and Istanbul, İP – Mersin*): Under the Kemalist umbrella, participants were members of two NGOs: the ADD and the TGB, as well as one political party (İP). Participants stated that Kemalists had joined the protests to object to the bans on the celebration of national holidays, the 'disappearance of secularism' and

6 See http://roarmag.org/2014/01/women-gezi-park-protests/.

the AKP's interventions that effectively tied the hands of the military. In addition, they were protesting to protect the Republic of Turkey, founded by Atatürk, and to protect the unity and integrity of the nation. Participants from TGB indicated that they were in the protests with their TGB identity. On the other hand, there were times when the participants were present with their personal, rather than their activist identity. Participants from the İP in Mersin and ADD in Rize stated that they did not participate with their activist identity because the protests in these cities were more like community gatherings, rather than gatherings of organisations, as in Istanbul.
All of the Kemalist participants felt close to the LGBTI movement, CHP, TGB, TKP and some environmentalist platforms, such as the Fellowship of Rivers Platform (*Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu*). However, the Kemalists did not feel close to the Kurdish movement.

6) *Kurdish Activists* (*Istanbul*): The reasons mentioned by Kurdish activists were more general compared to the other groups. They mentioned the importance of protecting the green spaces in the city centre, which, during times of disaster, are meant to be used as meeting places. They expressed a desire to prevent urban renewal projects and they objected to police violence and to the media's deliberate negligence in appropriately covering police brutality during the protests. Participants stated that the violence they observed during the protests reminded them of the treatment of Kurds in the 1990s.[7] The Kurdish participants discussed the AKP's attempts to impose on all areas of life through 'oppression, prohibition, insult and humiliation.' However, the foremost reason for participants was Sırrı Süreyya Önder's (parliamentarian of the pro-Kurdish BDP) presence in the park and his support for the protests since their inception.
Two participants indicated that their Kurdish identity was less important during the protests. Rather, their socialist, environmentalist and/or labourer identity was more important. One participant commented on this issue, stating, 'if you live in Turkey, you have many identities. In the Gezi protests, we brought all of these identities together.'
Kurds felt close to the Anti-capitalist Muslims, Revolutionary Muslims, LGBTI movement, feminists, *Çarşı*, *Tek Yumruk* and *Sol Açık*, sex workers, voluntary health care workers and some socialist political parties,

7 Throughout the 1990s, a great deal of violence and oppression was inflicted on the Kurds due to the state of emergency legislation; it remains a bitter memory in the minds of many.

such as the Socialist Democracy Party (*Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi*), the Labour Party (*Emek Partisi*), the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (*Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi*), the Socialist Solidarity Platform (*Sosyalist Dayanışma Platformu*) and the Socialist Party of Refoundation (*Sosyalist Yeniden Kuruluş Partisi*). On the other hand, Kurds did not feel close to the İP and TGB.

7) *LGBTI groups* (*Istanbul*): LGBTI participants were in the protests to indicate that the park and Taksim are an especially important meeting space for their community. Participants stated that the LGBTI community could never get along well with the police, law enforcement agencies and other authority figures, because they have a problem with the 'patriarchal, male-dominated, authoritarian, fascist, heteronormative system.' They participated in the protests to respond to the state's violent, brutal and fascist attitude, and also mentioned specific incidents of attacks on friends. Participants from the LGBTI movement indicated that they were in the protests not only with their LGBTI identity, but also with other identities. One participant stated, 'identity was of no importance anymore during the protests.' They felt close to the Anti-capitalist Muslims, vegans, feminists, *Çarşı*, anarchists, activists against armament (*Silahlanma Karşıtları*) and the Kurdish movement. However, some of the LGBTI participants criticised the Taksim Solidarity platform, leftist men from the '1968 generation' and CHP.

8) *Trades unions* (*Istanbul*): Trades unions, such as TMMOB and the Union of Health and Social Service Workers (SES), participated in the protests against the persecution of the environment and environmentalism, the persecution of 'the people' and to prevent the AKP's Taksim project. Especially in the second term of the AKP government, massive changes were conducted across Turkey in the name of urban renewal without first consulting with TMMOB, despite its role in appraising urban development proposals. Participants stated very firmly: there are certain living spaces in the city that just should not be touched. They were, therefore, against these urban renewal projects and became a barrier to the AKP government's projects.[8]

8 In July 2013, the AKP rushed a bill through parliament that removed TMMOB from any planning and approval processes for urban development, interpreted as a response to TMMOB's support for the Gezi Park protests.

Trades union members participated in the protests both as individuals and with union identities. They felt close to Taksim Solidarity, *Çarşı* and the Anti-capitalist Muslims and other unions, but not to the CHP.

9) *TKP* (*Ankara and Istanbul*): Participants from the TKP were in the protests because '[their] problem is with the AKP as a whole – [they] are looking for total liberation.' From their perspective, the AKP is destroying the values of the first Turkish Republic and creating a second one based on 'everything that is an affront to humanity, such as capitalism, bigotry, backwardness. All come together under the AKP rule.' Objecting to urban renewal was one of the biggest reasons for participation. In addition, participants from TKP stated that the people poured into the streets of their own accord and that it was the duty of the TKP to support and protect them. They cited this as an important reason for their participation.
Participants from TKP said that they were in the protests both with their personal identity and their political party identity. Their political party identity was quite important for them and, unlike most participants, they stated that they were always with other party members during the protests. They felt close to *Çarşı* and the LGBTI movement, but they did not feel close to İP, MHP, TGB and the Kurdish movement.

10) *Ülkücüler*[9] (*MHP and Ülkü Ocakları – Ankara and Istanbul*): The *Ülkücü* participants stated that they were in the protests to object to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 'the most ignorant prime minister thus far, who went so far as to say the founders of the Republic are drunks.' They said that Erdoğan sees things as black or white and does not see anything as grey. There were also more general objections to the leadership style of the prime minister, such as 'never taking a step back, always interfering in all levels of government' and 'getting joy out of pouring salt in people's wounds.' Another important reason for participation was related to *Ülkücü*'s perception that there had been serious persecution against them over the last ten years, especially in the public sector. *Ülkücüler* also greatly objected to the participation of the AKP in the Oslo and İmralı meetings.[10]

9 *Ülkücüler* is a group of MHP. They refer to themselves as 'Turkish nationalists.'

10 The AKP conducted meetings with the PKK in Oslo and the imprisoned leader of the party in İmralı in order to negotiate peace for the Kurdish conflict.

The situation of the *Ülkücüler* in the protests was different from other participants, because of the criticism coming from MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli. At the beginning of the protests, the participants said they attended with their *Ülkücü* identity. However, after Devlet Bahçeli stated that those who wanted to attend the protests should resign from the party, some *Ülkücüler* continued to participate in the protests individually, rather than with a party or group identity. These participants indicated that they did not feel close to any groups – especially to the Kurdish movement – in the Gezi Park protests except for the Anti-capitalist Muslims and Revolutionary Muslims.

Conclusion

Even though every group interviewed had different motivations and reasons for participating in the Gezi Park protests, it is still possible to find some commonalities between each group. These similarities include dissatisfaction with the AKP, the struggle for rights such as democracy, freedom and equality, and objecting to excessive police force. Participants also discussed standing against injustice, especially in cases where a friend was injured, the AKP ignoring the public (or being against the prime minister's 'I'll do what I want' attitude), recent events related to AKP policy (e.g. prohibitions against alcohol, internet censorship, increased restrictions on women's rights) and not protecting the green space in the cities. In addition, when talking about the protestors in the Gezi resistance, participants used words such as 'we (all),' 'each of us,' 'all of us,' 'none of us' and 'everyone.' These similarities point to the bigger or superordinate identity rather than separate activist identities of those who attended the protests for different reasons.

There were other similarities between different groups in the protests. For example, many groups in the protests felt close to Anti-capitalist and Revolutionary Muslims, *Çarşı* and the LGBTI movement, while most criticised Kemalist groups such as TGB and İP. There was an ambivalent attitude towards the Kurdish movement by several groups in the protests. While some felt they would have liked to see increased support from the Kurdish movement, a divide between *Ülkücüler* and *Kemalists* and the Kurdish movement can be felt quite clearly in the discourse of the participants.

Another important factor was the city in which participants attended protests. Region affected their involvement and identification with their own groups in the context of the Gezi Park protests. In Istanbul, there were many tents for the groups where activists could go and spend their

time with other ingroup members, whereas in other cities this was not the case. According to participants, groups were less important in other cities. This does not necessarily mean that the activist identity was not important; simply that it depended on the context where the identity(s) becomes salient.

Following the initial events in Gezi Park, protests sprang up in all but two cities across Turkey. They became a forum for airing grievances related to numerous issues; but, in one way or another, all indicated a reaction to AKP policies. Unlike other protests or the public airing of grievances seen previously in Turkey, individuals and groups from very different political and social backgrounds found themselves united against the police and the AKP government. In order to be able to stand together, the protesters had to find ways to negotiate not only how to respond to outgroup threat, but also the history of their own intergroup relationships.

A social psychological perspective allows us to examine these dynamics more analytically. As discussed above, identity has an important role in today's collective action. Yet, we cannot speak of any single identity; beyond personal identity, a person has as many social identities as groups exist in the world. Rather, it is the case-specific ingroup, outgroup and superordinate group identities that have more of an explanatory power for collective action, especially for the Gezi Park protests. Participants still kept their central activist identity as a feminist, member of *Çarşı* or anything else, while being a *Çapulcu* or resister when positioning themselves against an outgroup such as the police. Unlike Le Bon's argument that protestors lose all sense of self in the crowd, the activist identity of Gezi participants remained intact. It influenced their behaviour through group norms and functioned within the superordinate identity formed at the park under the *Çapulcu* identity. The importance of the social context and identity relations helps put into perspective the relationships between the individual and the group, the groups themselves, how they all relate to a superordinate category and how that category functions against a salient outgroup such as the police.

These dynamics were made especially clear through interviews with participants, who discussed the importance of their activist identities during the protests; even influencing where, why and how they protested. They also demonstrated the degree to which those identities coloured their interactions with other activists and perspectives on other participants, who, despite profound disagreements in position, were still able to see each other as ingroups within the larger category. In the Gezi Park context, we can also argue that when there was no police – in other words, no

outgroup – the differences within superordinate identity were clearer and active. However, when the police was visible or police brutality was high, the differences within ingroup(s) were less important (see also Drury and Reicher 2000; Reicher 2004).

The Gezi Park protests sparked interest in numerous areas of study and are likely to continue to do so. The protests allow for the examination of policy, politics, social status, human relationships and many other issues. A social psychological perspective on group participation is just one piece of a growing puzzle of a case study that will continue to influence work to come.

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8 Istanbul United

Football Fans Entering the 'Political Field'

Dağhan Irak

Introduction

Although studies on how Turkish football fandom has been affected by hyper-commodification are few in number, it is fair to say that the economic transformation of the football sector in Turkey has rendered this sport a less affordable form of leisure for the lower economic classes. Frequently attending games or watching them on television requires a certain amount of disposable income, which has created two types of football fans: those who have access to games and those who do not. This distinction was created decades ago by the lack of fandom on the local level and the over-centralised character of Turkish football. Therefore, it can be said that while the three major football clubs have millions of fans, those who can attend games frequently constitute a privileged layer. This layer is, in fact, one of the objectives of hyper-commodification, as season tickets and ID cards are used to gather information about these fans in order to develop marketing and security strategies.

In our example, football fans able to attend games are usually from urban, middle and upper-middle economic classes, presumably with higher education. This profile relates to a relatively high level of cultural capital among fans. Also, their fandom experience in the stadiums complies with the European standards defined by UEFA; therefore, they are expected to behave according to contemporary criteria. Modern football requires that the football fandom experiences in the TT Arena of Galatasaray or Şükrü Saracoğlu Stadium of Fenerbahçe should not differ dramatically from those in the Amsterdam Arena or Stade de France. This depends not only on facilities, but also on fan behaviour. What needs to be analysed is whether this transformation of fandom and the accumulating cultural capital in stadia manifest as a wave of politicisation, notably in a period in which the young, middle classes of Europe and the Middle East have taken to the streets to reclaim their rights.

Turkish football was born in a political and modern context, and thus is a part of Turkish modernisation. The effects of this phenomenon were less obvious in the period 1960-1990 as professional football spread throughout

the nation with the introduction of professional national leagues. The 'Three Giants' (Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş and Galatasaray), followed by 90 per cent of the fans, acquired a rather homogeneous identity. However, after 1990, the aforementioned transformation created a distinction between the different layers of fans and redefined stadia as modern social places, reserved for people of certain socio-economic status. Stadia gradually began to represent the urban elite with higher economic, social and cultural capital. Meanwhile, the same period devaluated the middle classes to precariat due to neoliberal policies, which triggered a global politicisation among these people.

In Turkey, these policies have been represented mainly by the AKP government since 2002. Turkey's integration into the global economy and the European community was completed in the early 2000s by means of economic reforms and candidacy to the EU. AKP came to power in a setting in which the ever-present military intervention to Turkish democracy had lost its impact. However, after this process was completed by a constitutional referendum in 2010, the AKP increasingly pushed its own conservative, pro-Islamic agenda and sought to substitute the former military-backed domination with its own hegemony. The transformation of the middle classes through the economic and democratic reforms therefore shifted to a lifestyle-based modern, urban and secular counter-hegemonic resistance. This reunited the different groups threatened by the set of rules imposed by the AKP government, such as the LGBTI community, the Kemalists and the Anti-capitalist Muslims. Football fans shared similar concerns, such as electronic ID cards, a regulation against crowd violence, restrictions on away game trips and bans on alcohol that diminished their fandom practice. All these groups, including football fans from the 'Three Giants,' manifested themselves in the Gezi protests in June 2013, under the banner of 'Istanbul United.'

As football fans previously had had experience of physical confrontation with the police, they played a major role in the protests. It should also be noted that their effect on the discourse of the protests could be seen in the many football chants that were adapted by the protesters, such as '*Biber Gazı Oley*' ('Pepper Gas Olé!') or '*Sık Bakalım, Sık Bakalım, Biber Gazı, Sık Bakalım*' ('Oh yeah, go ahead and spray your pepper gas, let's see what happens'). This adaptation was similar to the adaptation of Beatle songs to football chants by the fans of Liverpool in the 1970s and combined football fandom with the cultural climate of the era. Without the cultural capital football fans acquired over years, this smooth integration would not have been possible.

In the 1970s, when youth political movements in Turkey were very active, football was dismissed as the 'opium of the masses' by the political

movements and football fans were completely excluded from protests. But in 2013, political movements and football fans merged almost seamlessly and even cooperated with feminist and LGBTI movements during the Gezi Park occupation, exchanging knowledge about non-sexist chants and self-defence tactics.

Another important aspect of fan cultural capital during the Gezi protests was their use of social media, notably Twitter, which was crucial for the organisation of the protests. In fact, social media had been dominated by sports fans long before the protests started. Particularly after the 3 July 2011 match-fixing operation, Twitter had become a semi-politicised sphere for football fans, many of whom started to express discontent with the AKP government. However, these messages had mainly been based on the interests of their own clubs and rivalries with other clubs. During the Gezi protests, football fans were unified for the most part by lifestyle concerns. Also, after the protests, reconciliation on other issues, such as the introduction of electronic ID cards, failed as the strong rivalries among clubs kept fans apart. The spontaneous Istanbul United organisation during the protests was not transformed into a nationwide organisation to protect fans' interests, such as the Football Supporters' Federation of England and Wales. Indeed, the absence of political organisation experience in Turkish society, in comparison with that in Britain, should be taken into consideration when assessing this situation.

Methodology

As the Gezi Protests erupted spontaneously and spread throughout the country, even though its antecedents can be detected now retrospectively, the number of concrete field studies about the events is small. Also, the intensity of the events and the extreme police violence against the protesters rendered it difficult to gather sound data about the protests and their actors. Therefore, all of the sociological work carried out on the Gezi protests either predominantly depends on theory or on post-event surveys. In these conditions, the fieldwork conducted by Bilgiç and Kafkaslı (2013) with protesters stands out. However, a recent critique by Yavuz (2014, 100-106) raises important questions about the methodology of the survey. Yavuz claims that the authors made some methodological and analytical mistakes in collecting and classifying the data, and conclusively made an 'explanatory' study (as Bilgiç and Kafkaslı suggested [2013, 5]), rather than an 'exploratory' one. We agree with this point of view.

Yavuz (2014, 111-112) dismisses the research as 'unusable' and 'academically worthless.' Nevertheless, as the only field study carried out during Gezi, the unrepeatable nature of the events forces us to be more tolerant of some of Bilgiç and Kafkaslı's mistakes, and to employ some of their data. However, we use only one part of the study that is considered crucial and list all the possible concerns that could be brought up about it beforehand. The hasty approach employed by the scholars during the events requires a critical eye on their analysis, and their results should be verified by as many field studies as possible before jumping to rapid conclusions. Yet, any data recovered from those intense days of June 2013 should be regarded as valuable and cannot be dismissed as invalid unless they are proven wrong by other studies.

In order to explain the motives of football fans for participating in the protests, we compare the major concerns of football fans today with the general motives of protesters at Gezi. Bilgiç and Kafkaslı (2013, 7-8) asked 3008 protesters to assess thirteen possible reasons for participating in the protests according to the Likert scale. Yavuz (2014, 107) disqualifies this technique, claiming that 'the reasons were arbitrarily formulated by the authors and the data were therefore manipulated.' While Yavuz's criticism about the protesters not being asked open questions rather than formulated choices is valid, the inclinations defined by the answers are clear (only in this part of the research) and they overlap with most of the other research carried out after the events. Therefore, we find it important to convey the validity of Yavuz's critique; however, we maintain that the results of this section of the research provide valuable data.

In this chapter, we will trace the politicisation of football fans and how it overlapped with the Gezi events. Again, the results of our analysis need to be supported by fieldwork and cannot be regarded as definite conclusions otherwise. Nevertheless, a socio-historical analysis of football fans' politicisation may be useful in developing the fieldwork on this area and give the researcher a head start, providing hypotheses to prove or falsify. Hence, we present the historical and political context of Turkish football, followed by an analysis of football's three-decade long wave of hyper-commodification in line with the neoliberal political trends in Turkey and worldwide. We will also look at the transformation of football fans into middle-class consumers, and the middle-class consumers into protesters from a socio-political perspective. Finally, these trends will be related to the AKP's football policies; the recent, politically-motivated events in Turkish football; and the fans' concerns before the Gezi protests about the political atmosphere in the country.

The Political Context of Turkish Football

Football, as we know it, was transformed from a rural pastime activity into a modern sport in eighteenth-century Britain, when it was brought to industrialising cities by migrating peasants who formed the first working classes. Its codification and institutionalisation were conducted by the emerging elite of the public schools, who took over working-class activities and turned them into physical education drills and leisure activities. The game quickly spread throughout the world via merchants, expatriates and foreign students who had lived in Britain. Therefore, apart from Britain and Ireland, especially in the port cities of the world, football was imported by either members of the bourgeoisie or aristocrats who had contacts with the British.

In the late years of the Ottoman Empire, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, football was introduced to Turkey in the same way. The game was popularised by the higher educated elite (Emrence 2010, 242-243), first by non-Muslim Ottomans and later by Ottoman Muslim Turks. The latter's late initiation to the game was due to the rule of Abdülhamid II, who forbade most social activities to Muslim Ottomans out of security concerns. Because it had been imported by modernist intellectuals and developed in a rather ethnically-segregated way, football rapidly became an arena for ethnic rivalries. Especially in Izmir, football, as was true for most athletic activities, was embraced by local Greeks, who had been influenced by Europe's rediscovery of Antiquity and supported the emergence of the Hellenic State. Football offered the local Orthodox clergy, bourgeoisie and intellectuals a common agenda (Irak 2013, 30-33).

The Turkish clubs founded after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period in 1908 shared a similar approach and, especially in the capital (Istanbul), most clubs were founded with nationalistic agendas. For instance, Galatasaray founder Ali Sami Yen's statement illustrates perfectly how nationalism and modernism dominated the football scene at the beginning: 'Our objective is to play together like the English, have a name and colours, and beat non-Turkish teams.'[1]

After World War One, with the occupation of Istanbul, the nationalistic agenda of the Turkish sports clubs gained importance. Clubs like Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and, later, Beşiktaş played several games against the teams of the occupation forces. Even today, these games are regarded as 'national games which contributed to the Turkish cause' (Gökaçtı 2008, 75). Thanks to these games, each club acquired a considerable fan base and

1 http://www.galatasaray.org/tarih/. Accessed 13 April 2014.

used its popularity to establish strong bonds with the political, bureaucratic and, later, economic elite, who were already close to the club board members because of class similarities. Therefore, Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş stood out, not only as the most popular teams, but also as teams with strong social networks that helped them in difficult times and prevented them from disappearing, like many other neighbourhood clubs in Istanbul. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, these clubs became the protégés of powerful politicians, some of whom, like Prime Ministers Şükrü Saracoğlu and Recep Peker, acted as presidents of Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş, respectively, at the same time as they held national office.

Hence, long before football was nationalised and professionalised in the late 1950s, the 'Three Giants' of Istanbul had established a massive advantage over other Istanbul clubs, which were plagued by economic problems, and provincial clubs, unaccustomed to professionalism. Only two other clubs, Trabzonspor and Bursaspor, have won the Turkish league title. Starting from the 1970s, as the football scene gradually became commodified, these teams also attracted the attention of businessmen and began to accumulate economic capital. Today, it is estimated that 90 per cent of the football fans in Turkey support the 'Three Giants.'

The privileged positions of Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş and their ties with the elite also created dependency and left them open to political intervention. While their popularity has given them power, during difficult times politicians sought to control this power, notably during coup d'état periods. Also, the clubs were expected to take a stance on national issues, such as the Cyprus question or the Kurdish issue, which made them inseparable from the official state ideology.[2] It should also be noted that the vast majority of provincial professional clubs were founded by the state authorities in the late 1960s by merging the amateur clubs; therefore, the other football teams are also involved in this dependency relationship. Notably, after the 1980 coup, this dependency became the modus operandi of Turkish football. The game became integrated with the core of the nationalistic official ideology of the last three decades.

The Hyper-Commodification of Turkish Football

The hyper-commodification era in football started on a global level in the 1970s, with the widespread introduction of TV broadcasts. In Britain, as early

2 For a detailed article on Turkish football clubs being used as a diplomatic tool, see Irak 2013.

as in 1967, the English Football League received the biggest bid (£781,000) the BBC had ever made to a single sports organisation up to that date.[3] Other countries followed as live broadcast technology became more available. TV broadcasts created not only a major source of income for the sports clubs, but also made football fandom visible, in the form of singing and dancing in the stands (Long et al. 2001, 102-103). The more enjoyable football stadiums became, the more the investments in football accelerated. However, just as football started to be considered a business, the global economic crisis of 1973 brought it to a halt until the end of the Cold War.

As the neoliberal economy started to dominate the world in the 1980s and early 1990s, football's marketability became a major issue and modernisation projects, such as the English Premier League, were put into effect in order to appeal to an audience with greater purchasing power. With the fall of the Warsaw Pact, players from former communist nations were able to sign with Western clubs freely, and while the quality of the European top leagues (England, Spain, France, Germany and Italy) increased, the other leagues could no longer compete against them economically. Also, with the introduction of encrypted satellite TV platforms, which further increased clubs' revenues, the more successful and popular clubs also took the lion's share of this newly introduced capital. UEFA also contributed to a monopolised and unbalanced football market by transforming the European Champion Clubs' Cup into the Champions' League and allowing top leagues to compete with several teams, while forcing others to play preliminary matches and distributing revenues per success. Finally, the 1995 Bosman Ruling allowed players' free movement of labour and the smaller clubs lost their main source of income – selling players to the top clubs.

In Turkey, the modernisation of football did not start until the 1980s, as the country suffered from a major foreign currency deficit in the 1970s, and a ban on foreign players between 1979 and 1984. After the 1980 coup, the Junta prioritised football as a harmless social gathering, as a substitute to the political mass movements of the 1970s, and actively supported its modernisation. After the 1983 elections, the government formed by the junta-backed Turgut Özal established a neoliberal scheme for the economy, of which football became a part. The new Turkish Football Federation (TFF) board, appointed by Özal and presided over by Kemal Zorlu (a member of Özal's Motherland Party), lifted the restrictions on foreign players, brought taxation privileges, supported the big clubs' modernisation attempts and

3 '£781,000 Bid for TV Football.' *The Times*, 14 March 1967.

let the clubs sell and price their own season tickets, which enabled bigger clubs to accumulate more capital than others. In 1991, the first private TV station, Magic Box, founded by Ahmet Özal, the son of Turgut Özal (by then President of the Republic), took over the broadcasting rights of the major clubs from the state-run TRT. In 1993, encrypted TV broadcasts were introduced.

Meanwhile, the TFF became autonomous. This fast commodification process attracted many expensive foreign players and coaches to Turkey and Turkish clubs started to excel in international competitions. This wave of successes (such as Galatasaray playing in the semi-finals of the European Cup in 1989 and Turkey qualifying for the European Championships in 1996 for the first time) overlapped with a period in which Turkey was largely ignored by the European community, due to the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and the 1980 coup. Therefore, football became a source of national prestige, openly supported by the state, and created political value that triggered a wave of popular nationalism in the 1990s. Meanwhile, a political and economic dependency was established between football and the state.

Politicisation of Football Fans in Turkey

In the 1990s, with the rise of popular nationalism triggered by the worsening of the Kurdish issue and isolation from Europe, football appeared to be a suitable field for conveying nationalistic messages and nationalist organisations such as the MHP sought ways to enter the terraces to reclaim the popularity they had had before the 1980 coup. With the election of former MHP militant Güven Sazak to the Fenerbahçe presidency in 1993, nationalists started to appear in stadiums in an organised manner. The rise of nationalists also caused a limited but powerful reaction from the left-wing and Beşiktaş's fan group *Çarşı*, led by Turkish-Armenian Alen Markaryan, stepped up as an unusual political alternative in the stands. However, the lack of political experience on the part of fans and the distance of the Turkish people from active politics after the coup did not allow for the creation of an engaged political fan group. Finally, the official ideology in football continued to function as cultural hegemony over alternative discourses.

This changed with the AKP's rise to power in 2002. With the economic crisis in 2001, the nationalists were weakened and reintegration into the European community eased the tension between Turkey and Europe. Therefore, on the terraces, the nationalistic narrative was transformed into

rivalries and instead of contesting Kurds or Europeans, the fans picked on each other. After the referendum in 2010, which gave the AKP sound support and the authority to make important changes in the constitution, the AKP took advantage of the political détente in the stands and tried to form its own hegemony in football, as it did in many other domains.

The party first tried to enter the football field through AKP-run municipalities such as Ankara and Istanbul. After these attempts failed, the business elite in conservative cities such as Bursa, Sivas and Kayseri cooperated with the municipalities and the government. The teams of these cities appeared as title contenders and Bursaspor became the fifth club ever to win the Turkish League title in 2010. The rise of a pro-government elite in provincial clubs also affected the TFF, and pro-government candidates like Hasan Doğan, Mehmet Ali Aydınlar and Yıldırım Demirören became TFF presidents. Also, Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbaş's son, Hüseyin Topbaş, and former Interior Minister Abdülkadir Aksu's son, Murat Aksu, became board members at Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş, respectively. In 2010, the Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration of Turkey (*Toplu Konut İdaresi*, TOKİ) helped Galatasaray finish its new stadium.

On 15 January 2011, the AKP's domination of football received its first negative reaction. Before the opening game of Galatasaray's TT Arena Stadium, TOKİ chairman Erdoğan Bayraktar delivered a speech and accused the late Galatasaray president Özhan Canaydın of incompetence. After the speech, Galatasaray fans booed Bayraktar as well as Prime Minister Erdoğan. Three months later, a new regulation punishing fans heavily for stadium disorder came into effect. In addition, match fixing came under court jurisdiction as well as in the TFF's internal law.

In May 2011, in the neighbourhood of Beşiktaş (where Erdoğan's Istanbul office is located), fans clashed with the police several times. On 3 July 2011, a massive operation against match fixing at the clubs of Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş was launched, resulting in months of detention for several club officials, including Fenerbahçe president, Aziz Yıldırım. In May 2012, after the league title game against Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe fans clashed with the police in the streets of Kadıköy. Eleven days later, a group of pro-government businessmen took over the football club of Kasımpaşa, Erdoğan's birthplace, and the team became an instant title contender after a huge injection of cash. Fenerbahçe fans particularly complained about the lack of media coverage of these events and started using fan blogs, forums and Twitter to organise mass protests against the government, the justice system, the police and the media. Beşiktaş fans used similar practices.

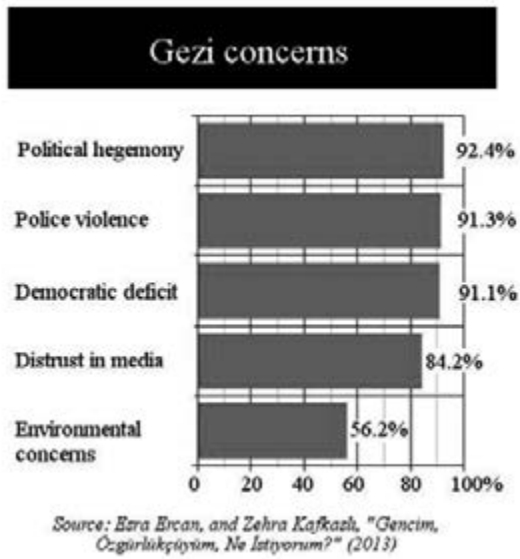

Figure 8.1

Fans' Reasons for Joining the Gezi Protests

In order to understand football fans' spontaneous and massive participation in the Gezi protests, it is necessary to compare the issues that pushed them onto the streets. According to Bilgiç and Kafkaslı (2013, 7-8), the Gezi protesters conveyed four main motives to explain their participation in the events: political hegemony, police violence, the democratic deficit and distrust of the media. These reasons were cited by more than 80 per cent of the protesters, while environmental concerns were the initial motive shared by half of them.

A sentiment analysis conducted on the content of pages of Fenerbahçe's fan blog, *Papazın Çayırı*, published between July 2011 and August 2012 about the match-fixing operation, showed their concerns about the football world. According to the breakdown of the articles, a majority of the content on the blog is negative about the media, other clubs, the justice system, the police and the government. The only difference between these concerns and the Gezi protesters' reasons for participating in the events was the negative stance towards other clubs. Also, environmental concerns were not listed. It should be noted, however, that in May 2013, Fenerbahçe fans also participated in a protest against a shopping centre project adjacent to their stadium. Therefore, it can be said that what Gezi changed about

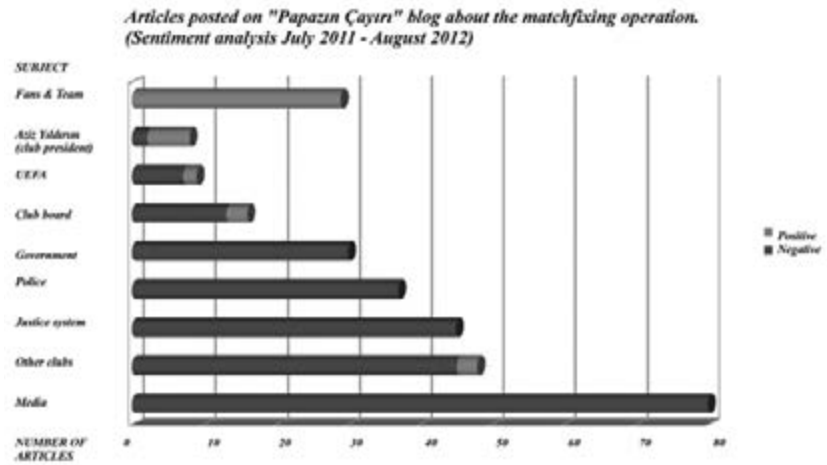

Figure 8.2

fans was that it created a supra-identity among fans of different clubs, spontaneously nicknamed 'Istanbul United.' This identity emerged due to the urgent nature of the events, as all of the aforementioned concerns reached a climax during the protests. Had this cooperation been the result of an ongoing process of reconciliation between the fans of rival clubs, it would have turned into a well-established local or national structure. To date, no such organisation has emerged.

Discussion

The transformation of football fans in stadiums takes place in a dynamic relationship with the socio-political conjuncture. The hyper-commodification of football aims to create football fans who are middle-class consumers, who employ football as a substitute for leisure and lust in a civilised manner, therefore regulating their extreme emotions and also replacing the former 'extreme' of football stadiums, defined by hardcore lower class fans. However, due to the global crisis of capitalism from the 2000s on, during this transformation, the socio-economic status of the new group of fans, who have been promoted from being '*flaneurs*' as the stadiums offer less violence and more comfort, has changed. This new target audience has become precarious; therefore, not only can their tensions be regulated by the system, but they have also been politicised in order to reclaim their former comfort.

This new 'precariat' class, questioning the failure presented by capitalism to them instead of the promised wealth, also started to empathise with the lower classes, whose suffering they had not been aware of before. Also, they took on some of the tactics of these groups and combined and improved them with their own cultural capital, developing new weapons and fields of counter-hegemony, such as the social media, concerts and football matches. Karadağ (2014, 187-188) emphasises that this new class, the 'intellectual' wing of the middle class according to Bourdieu, not only were the leaders of the Gezi protests, but also defined the strategies of the counter-propaganda, such as posters, slogans, graffiti and the content produced by advanced use of computers and foreign languages. Loader et al. (2014, 148) also point out that this is a global phenomenon and different political protests, such as Occupy Wall Street in the US, *indignados* in Spain, the German Pirate Party and the Italian Five-Star Movement, were also predominantly carried out by this class. The widespread use of football slogans and other fandom practices during the Gezi events indicate that football fans joining the protests are a part of this new class.

The football fans who participated in the Gezi protests consisted mainly of this new, qualified, disappointed generation, who had begun to display their discontent at elite sports events such as the World Basketball Championships and the WTA Tennis Championships in Istanbul in previous years. These fans freely and almost instantly managed to develop their own habitus to reclaim those areas and use them to show the world their discontent with the AKP, live, on hundreds of global TV channels that the AKP government previously had considered to be means of self-promotion.

The protests against Prime Minister Erdoğan and the TOKİ head, Erdoğan Bayraktar, on the opening day of Galatasaray's luxurious TT Arena Stadium, marked another example of this discontent. This event has particular value supporting our hypotheses, as the opening game had been reserved for fans who held special fan cards, a sort of priority ticket. Hence, this political protest in the stadium was staged predominantly by fans who had been selected to replace the hardcore, lower-class fans.

During the Gezi events, protesters of a similar nature appeared in front of pro-government TV network buildings, business centres and shopping centres. It should be noted that all these places had been transformed during the AKP reign by its massive economic and social capital. Thus, the appearance of the young middle class at such protests happened in order to reclaim their former habitats. The government largely failed to suppress these protests, as their agents in these places such as club presidents, media bosses and middlemen appointed by the regime fell into a collective

'allodoxia' (in the Bourdesian sense of the term) – not being culturally accustomed to the places they economically dominated. As you will read in other chapters of this book, the AKP regime suffered a major symbolic defeat against the Gezi protesters because of the cultural gap and tried to compensate for this with widespread physical violence, which further damaged the government's already faltering international prestige.

As discussed above, these arguments about the Gezi protesters, precariat and transformed football fans require solid fieldwork to be proven. However, the course of events in the football world globally and in Turkey, the socio-political conjuncture of our times and recent scholarly works confirm that the presence of football fans at the Gezi protests depended on the transformation of football fandom by hyper-commodification and the emergence of football fans equipped with higher cultural capital, as well as the politicisation of the urban middle class (from which the new generation of football fans emerged) amid losing economic-social capital and falling into precarity, which pushed them to develop a habitus to reclaim their losses.

In our example, the AKP regime, imposing hegemony without sufficient cultural capital, openly threatening the modern lifestyles of these classes and exerting extreme physical and psychological violence against them, acted as a catalyst and accelerated the process that reached a climax during the Gezi events. It also enabled football fans to take their concerns out of their reserved space (stadiums) to the streets at an unprecedented level. As in an accurate description by Doğuç (2014, 158-159) of how different groups contributed to Gezi spontaneously and simultaneously, the protests acted as a 'prison riot' against a totalitarian structure, unifying groups otherwise distinct from each other, through the deprivation of their freedoms and the lack of a public sphere. However, it should be stressed that these groups revolting at the same time was not the result of a coincidence, or of an international plot as the regime spokespeople repeatedly claimed, but rather because of a transitivity between different prison cells that made individuals feel persecuted for several reasons of different magnitudes (for instance, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy and Beyoğlu, the headquarters of the 'Three Giants', have also been the sites of major urban gentrification projects). Football fans may have felt oppressed because they lost their jobs or were forced to work flexibly, or resented the electronic ID system, and other football-related issues, or the ban on alcohol.

Bourdieu (1993) links the production of sports as a supply for a social demand and claims that choosing to follow or practice one or another sporting activity depends on rationalisation and a political philosophy. Therefore,

football fans participate in football-related events to fulfil specific demands. Those attending games are in constant interaction with the commodified, transformed football environment, and every conflict they have with this environment also relates to the socio-political transformations that reshape football. Hence, their problems with the football world, in Turkey and globally, are not only football-related, but inevitably political and merge with the general wave of politicisation.

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'£781,000 Bid for TV Football.' *The Times*, 14 March 1967.

9 Humour as Resistance?

A Brief Analysis of the Gezi Park Protest Graffiti

Lerna K. Yanık

Background

I first came across the Gezi Park graffiti while strolling up İstiklal Avenue after the first round of Gezi Park protests. When I saw these graffiti, I thought that I should work more like a chronicler than a political scientist, chronicling the graffiti that emerged during one of the most important anti-government protests in the history of modern Turkey. Working like a chronicler was important, because some of the graffiti (especially the ones that contained very foul or sexually explicit language) were being cleared, hourly, from the walls, disappearing, literally and figuratively, without a trace. At the time of writing, none of the graffiti that will be discussed in this chapter exist. They have all been cleared up.

The ephemeral nature of the graffiti renders a systematic study of Gezi Park graffiti difficult. Yet, this lack of possibility for systematic analysis still makes the study of graffiti in Turkey, especially humorous graffiti, important for three reasons. First is to document and record the graffiti that appeared (and then subsequently disappeared) during the protests in and around Gezi Park. Second is to examine how graffiti became part of the performative dissent, acting as a communicative tool delivering messages to various authority figures and thus challenging them at the same time. The third goal is to call for a research agenda based on graffiti and political humour in the Turkish context. Hopefully, this chapter sets or, at least, prepares the ground for this kind of research. Having highlighted the goals of this chapter, and because the paper carries elements of humour, let me also underline the fact that the goal of this paper is neither to romanticise, nor ridicule the Gezi Park events or various authority figures for that matter. So what I have in the following pages are the pictures of these graffiti collected in and around Gezi Park on various days in June 2013. The pictures of the graffiti that you will see here were photographed by me and Serhat Güvenç – a colleague who graciously agreed to let me to use the pictures that he took. Obviously, various different Gezi Park-related graffiti were circulated in social media during the protests and many more are still

on various websites.[1] In addition to avoiding copyright issues, as I stated above, my goal is to bring a more academic perspective to the study of graffiti and political humour – especially in Turkey. As a result, the pictures photographed by me and Serhat Güvenç provide the main basis of this small step towards this endeavour. Needless to say, while I have borrowed some of the pictures, all the analyses in the following pages belong to me.

What is a Graffito? The Features of the Graffiti Collected around Gezi Park

A graffito, according to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, is a 'form of visual communication, usually illegal, involving the unauthorized marking of public space by an individual or group. Technically the term applies to designs scratched through a layer of paint or plaster, but its meaning has been extended to other markings.'[2]

Although the term graffiti is new – Merriam Webster says that it was invented around 1945 and comes from Italian – graffiti writing is an ancient act that even existed on the walls of Pompeii (Clarke 2007). Yet, the walls were not the only venues where Gezi Park graffiti showed up. As will be shown, in addition to various walls around the Taksim area, Gezi Park-related graffiti were drawn on the vehicles that were damaged during the protests, on signposts, even on mattresses hanging from windows. They were also glued on various objects (trees, signposts, trashcans, etc.) in Gezi Park.

While some of these Gezi Park protest graffiti contained humour, other graffiti contained foul and sexist language. In this chapter, my focus will mostly be on the humorous graffiti and will debate the functions and messages of these graffiti in potentially forming a challenge to authority. It should also be noted that during Gezi Park events, humour was not limited to graffiti. Humour, as coined by the protestors, was called '*orantısız zeka*' ('disproportionate intelligence') – an intertextual reference to the term 'excessive use' of force (by the security forces), which is roughly translated to Turkish as 'disproportionate use of force' – and it was on Facebook and

1 See http://listelist.com/gezi-parki-direnisini-anlatan-83-duvar-yazisi/ and http://gezipark-graffiti.blogspot.com.tr/.

2 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/graffiti.

Figure 9.1: A 'Wall' as a Venue for Graffiti

Figure 9.2: A 'Mattress' as a Venue for a Graffiti

Twitter and could also be traced to the way some of the acts of disobedience, such as 'the Standing Man,'[3] were organised.

The Role and the Function of Graffiti and Humour: A Short Conceptual Overview

Scholars have assigned different functions, respectively, to graffiti and humour. The research done in the 1970s, for example, has argued that graffiti exposed 'patterns of customs and attitudes of a society' (Stocker et al. 1972; Gonos et al. 1976; Green 2003) and, more importantly, because graffiti are 'anonymous,' it gave graffiti writers freedom to express things that they usually would not or may not be able to (Gonos et al. 1976). Accordingly, not only the content of each graffito, but also the sheer act of writing the graffiti on the wall is an attempt to challenge the political authority (Peteet 1996). Yet, at times, it might also be possible that graffiti may carry the messages that perpetuate the existing social structures. For example, some scholars who have worked on gang-related graffiti have argued that gang graffiti mark both territory and existing social hierarchies among and between the gangs (Adams and Winter 1997). While resisting authority, the act of writing graffiti carries different messages that contains 'competing visions, possible futures' and also can be 'self-reflective and critical' (Peteet 1996).

Similarly, humour, especially humour in politics, or political humour, is argued to be both a 'sword and a shield' (Helmy and Frerichs 2013, 450). Also known as the 'paradox of humour' (Sorensen 2008), humour is considered a way not only to deal with authority but also a tool that determines the in-group/out-group dynamics (Oring 2004; Watts 2007), as there is always the danger of ostracising a certain group while ridiculing it (Sorensen 2008, 170). In the past few years, several scholars have examined the role of humour in various types of resistance movements. Sorensen (2008), for instance, has studied the Serbian *Otpor* movement and concluded that the movement had used humour as a 'strategy for non-violent resistance.' According to Sorensen (Ibid., 180), humour has a three-pronged impact during times of upheaval: '(1) it provokes, mocks, or ridicules, which escalates the conflict and puts pressure on the oppressor, (2) it reduces the fear within the resistance movement, (3) humour reduces the oppressors' options for reacting.' Mersal, on the other hand, by examining the use of humour in Egypt during the 2011 uprisings, has argued that humour had the capability 'to present a

3 http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/06/130618_duranadam_kim.shtml.

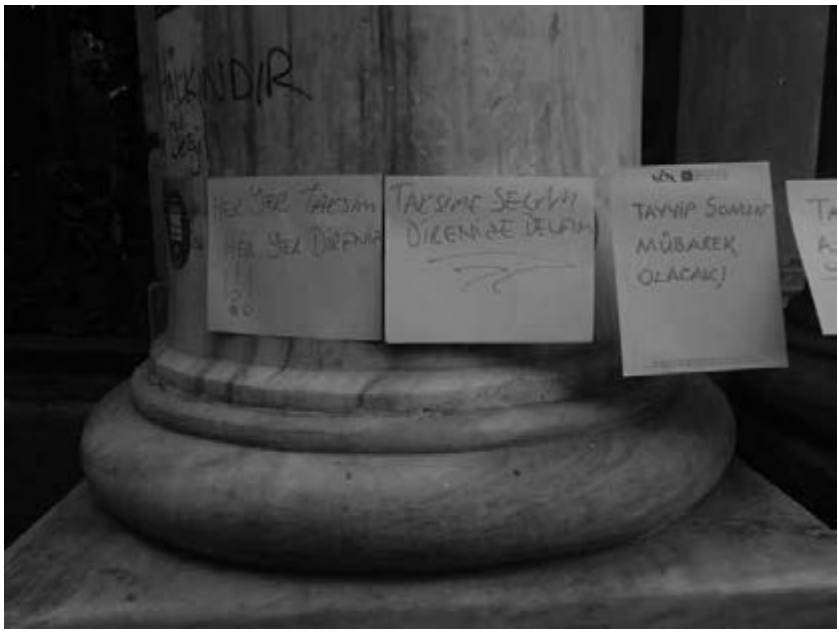

Figure 9.3: Graffiti as a Note Attached to a Column

Figure 9.4: Graffiti as a Note Attached to a Car

new sense of community and solidarity, providing a means of connecting' (Mersal 2011). Hassan (2013) attributed a similar role to humour during both Occupy Wall Street protests and the protests in Egypt in 2011, arguing that humour provided superiority and a relief to the resistance. As a result, when combined with humour, taking a cue from Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, where he argues that making jokes is a way to revolt and question authority and power, graffiti have been argued to have the role of resistance (Stein 1989). Overall, both the act of writing graffiti and humour, or the combination of both, is related to the act of resisting authority. Yet, Klumbyte (2011) has argued that there is a limit to the role of humour being considered as resistance to authority. By examining the cartoons that were published in Lithuania in the late 1980s, she concluded that these cartoons and thus humour were officially sanctioned and thus counted 'neither as a resistance nor for a support for the regime.'

The Graffiti in Gezi Park: Humour or Resistance, or Humour as Resistance?

The literature briefly summarised above works mostly with the assumption that equates humour with resistance. However, without a proper audience/reception study, it is difficult to come to that conclusion and we are just left with assumptions. But, as an observer who photographed these graffiti around Gezi Park in the Taksim area, I can safely conclude that the graffiti, regardless of whether or not they contained humour, had three common threads. First, they challenged, or at least tried to challenge, the authority and the current neoliberal order by ridiculing it and making a mockery of it, and delivered messages to the government. Second, the graffiti strongly aired demands from and advice to the government. Third, they marked the presence of different segments of society and praised the 'resistance.' This paper, for the purposes of brevity and manageability, will concentrate on the first thread.

The graffiti collected are a mixture of texts and visuals and, due to space restriction, only a selection of them is presented in this chapter. As stated above, just like most humour, humour in the Gezi Park graffiti was a consequence of contradiction, exaggeration, metaphor and incongruity, but the Gezi Park graffiti also contained lots of intertextual references. These intertextual references emerged as a result of what might be called 'iconic' statements made by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and various other cabinet members, or their relatives. So below is a selection of

the most typical graffiti. Most of them are in Turkish and, unfortunately, as a result, some might be difficult to render into English. As mentioned above, I left out the graffiti that contained slurs, foul language and sexually explicit material.

Delivering Messages through Humour

The graffiti collected in June 2013 show that several authority figures were the target of graffiti writers: Prime Minister Erdoğan, the AKP, the government, the police, the state and the media. There were also graffiti protesting the current neoliberal order and the government's intense neoliberalisation, but when looking at the totality of the graffiti pictures, these were smaller in number. Among all these authority figures or positions, Prime Minister Erdoğan-related graffiti were the most frequently encountered and also came in a variety of formats. Obviously some of these contained insults and resignation demands, but humorous Erdoğan graffiti which will be presented in this chapter showed up in several different ways. The first way involved Erdoğan's first name being twisted. Second was what might be called 'counter statement graffiti' or 'intertextual graffiti,' made to challenge or to answer the Prime

Figure 9.5: 'Gayyip'

Figure 9.6: 'Ricip Teyyib İrdöğen'

Figure 9.7: 'Recop Tayzik Gazdoğan'

Minister's, or other government members' or their relatives' symbolic and well known verbal, 'iconic' outbursts before and during the Gezi Park protests.

Erdoğan in Graffiti

The rehashing of Prime Minister Erdoğan's name came in several different formats. First, his middle name, Tayyip, was (deliberately) misspelled. For example, '*Tayip*' instead of '*Tayyip,*' with one 'y' missing. Tayyip was also

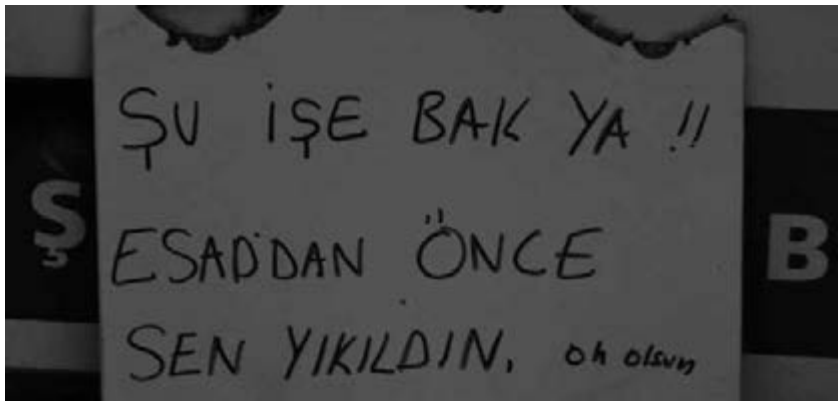

Figure 9.8: 'Look at the Situation: You Were Toppled before Assad'

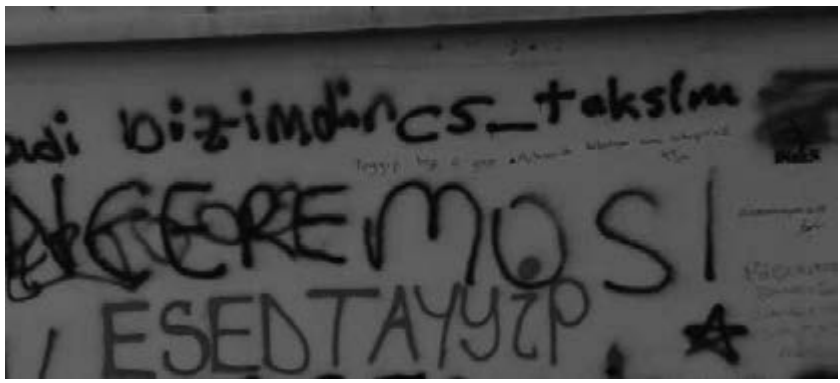

Figure 9.9: 'Esed Tayyip'

spelled in different forms, such as '*Tayyoş*,' '*Teyip*,' '*Tayyo*' or '*Tayit*' and *Gayyip* – sounding quite similar to the word 'lost' (*kayıp* in Turkish), most likely a reference to Erdoğan's Morocco trip and to his absence as the Gezi events were initially unfolding.

Second, it was not only the prime minister's middle name that was the subject of rehashing; indeed, his whole name, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was deliberately misspelled to be related to events at Gezi Park. For example, Erdoğan's full name was respelled to become '*Recop Tayzik Gazdoğan*' (a rough translation into English would be 'Recop Pressure Gazdoğan'). This connected it to the excessive use of police force – 'cops' and tear gas – during the Gezi Park protests. Other forms, such as '*Redop Tazzik Etboğan*' and '*Ricip Teyyib İrdöğen*,' also appeared.

Graffiti linking Erdoğan to troubled, authoritarian or not-so-liked leaders or to fallen political figures in the Middle East were also common. Erdoğan

was compared and contrasted to leaders such as Bashar Al-Assad of Syria, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Benjamin Netanyahu and the infamous Chemical Weapons Chief of Saddam Hussein – Chemical Ali –, an obvious interlinking of the government and the excessive use of tear gas during the protests.

While one graffiti, for example, said '*Sonun Mübarek Olsun*' ('May your end be like Mubarak's'), another one said '*Şu işe bak ya, Esad'dan Önce Sen*

Figure 9.10: 'May You End Like Mubarak'

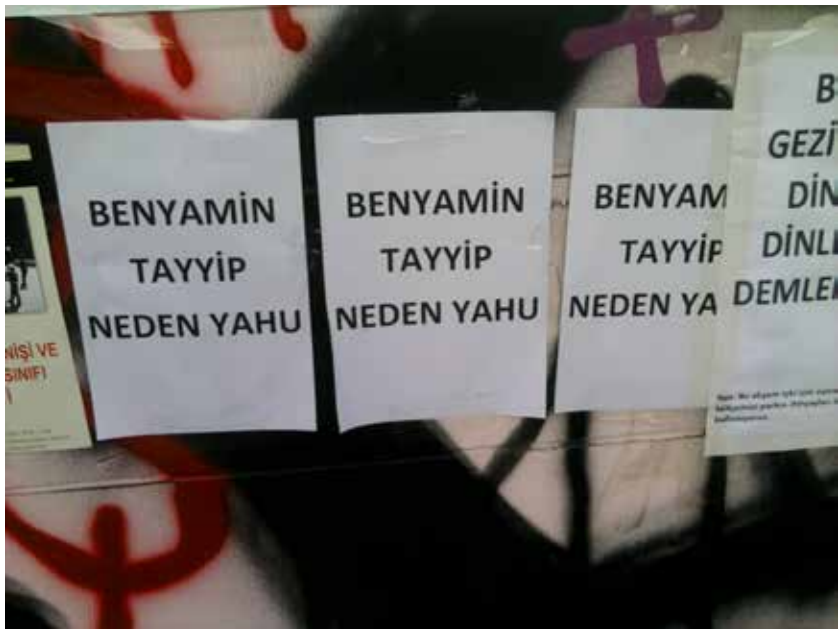

Figure 9.11: 'Benjamin Netanyahu *vs.* Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'

Figure 9.12: 'Chemical Tayyip'

Yıkıldın, Oh Olsun' ('You Were Toppled Before Assad'). Assad was also used as a prefix '*Esed*' in front of the Prime Minister's first name.

Erdoğan was likened to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The graffiti shown in Figure 9.11 says '*Benyamin Tayyip Neden Yahu*' ('Benjamin Tayyip, but Why Dear God?'), as a result of linguistic plays that replace Netanyahu with '*Neden Yahu*' ('But Why Dear God?'). The visual graffiti that likened the prime minister to Chemical Ali of Iraq called him '*Kimyasal Tayyip*' and this visual was accompanied by penguins and portrait pictures of the prime minister with a 'wanted' caption.

Counterstatement or Intertextual Graffiti

The second type of graffiti can be grouped as the 'counter-statement' or 'intertextual' graffiti where humorous graffiti were written as counter-statements of sorts against various verbal outbursts or what might be called the 'iconic' statements of Erdoğan, various cabinet members and also relatives of the cabinet members prior to and during the Gezi Park events. Among this type of graffiti, the most well-known may be the graffiti that were produced in response to the prime minister's outbursts such as '*Ananı da al git*' ('Take your mother and go'). The prime minister pronounced these words in 2006, during a visit to Mersin, where a farmer criticised the government's agricultural policy, stating that 'the decreasing and delayed payments in government subsidies made their mother cry' – an expression in Turkish that means that the government policies made the farmers suffer. Erdoğan's iconic response to the criticism was 'take your mother and go,'[4] while the prime minister's bodyguards immediately removed the farmer from the scene. Figures 9.13, 9.14 and 9.15 show a series of tongue-in-cheek graffiti that can be regarded as a reaction to Erdoğan's treatment of the farmer: '*anamı da aldım geldim*' ('I brought my mother too'), '*anan da bugün barikattaydı*' ('your mother was at the barricade today too'), '*anası da biberli severdi*' ('his/her mother liked it with pepper as well') – a reference that combined Erdoğan's outbursts with the excessive use of tear and pepper gas during the protests.

In a similar manner, just before the Gezi Park protests and as the Law Regulating the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco was being initiated, Erdoğan infamously said that *ayran* (a yoghurt drink) not *rakı* (an alcoholic drink)

4 The video of the dialogue between Erdoğan and the farmer can be found at http://www.izlesene.com/video/tayyip-erdogan-ve-citci-tartismasi-anani-da-al-git/2068243. Accessed 1 June 2014.

Figure 9.13: 'I Brought my Mother Too'

Figure 9.14: 'Mother Liked it with Pepper as Well'

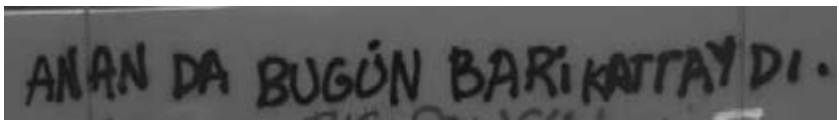

Figure 9.15: 'Your Mother Was also at the Barricade'

was the 'national beverage.' The protestors responded to this outburst with graffiti that declared: '*milli içeceğimiz biber gazı*' ('pepper gas is our national beverage'), '*o son birayı yasaklamayacaktın*' ('you should not have banned that last beer'), '*bu ayran bir harika adamım*' ('this ayran is fantastic, my man'), highlighting their disagreement regarding the national beverage in a humorous way.

Figure 9.16: 'Pepper Spray is the National Drink!'

Figure 9.17: 'You Should Not Have Banned that Last Beer.'

Figure 9.18: 'This Ayran is Fantastic my Man.'

Figure 9.19: 'You Gather One Million, We Are One Anyway.'

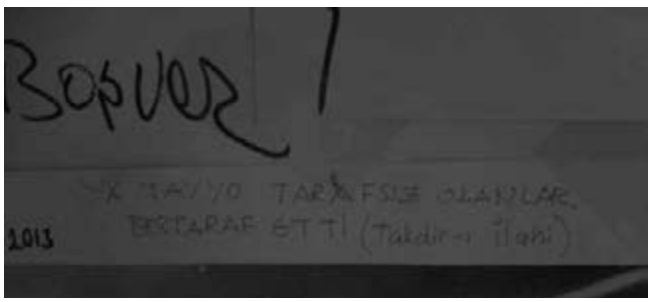

Figure 9.20: 'So Tayyo, Those Who Did Not Take Sides Pushed You to the Sidelines.'

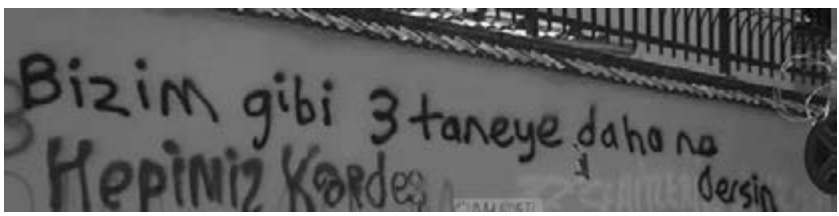

Figure 9.21: 'How about Three More (Kids) Like Us.'

Figure 9.22: 'Tayyip-Free Airspace'

Another remarkable outburst by Erdoğan took place just before the September 2010 referendum. Criticising the members of TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association, *Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*) and urging them to take a side in the upcoming referendum, Erdoğan declared '*taraf olmayan, bertaraf olur*' (roughly translated as 'those who do not take sides will be pushed to the sidelines').[5] This 'iconic' statement had repercussions during the Gezi Park events and was translated into a graffiti that said '*ya Tayyo tarafsız olanlar, bertaraf etti* (*Takdir-i İlahi*)' ('so Tayyo, those who did not take sides, pushed you to the sidelines – God's Judgement'). The prime minister's insistence, uttered frequently and at different times, that Turkish people should have 'three kids' and not less,[6] became a graffiti: '*bizim gibi 3 taneye daha ne dersin?*' ('How about three more kids like us?'). Similarly, Erdoğan's statement during Gezi Park events that, if he wanted to do so, he too could give the orders to gather his own

5 http://www.borsagundem.com/siyaset-ekonomi-gundemi/erdogan-_taraf-olmayan-bertaraf-olur-472323.htm.

6 See http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25008774/ and http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/8401981.asp. Recently Erdoğan has increased that number to four children: http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/155050.aspx.

supporters and that he was barely able to hold the 50 per cent that had voted for him at home[7] was translated into a graffiti that said '*sen bir milyon topla biz biriz*' ('You gather one million people, we are one').

The slogan of the national anti-smoking campaign '*dumansız hava sahası*' ('smoke-free air space'), on the other hand, was also turned into a sticker graffiti glued to a signpost near Taksim Square that said '*Tayyipsiz hava sahası*' ('Tayyip-free air space').

Obviously, in more than eleven years of tenure, Erdoğan was not the only cabinet member making these iconic statements. One such other statement belonged to Ahsen Unakıtan, Minister Kemal Unakıtan's wife, who, during an interview in 2009 'confessed' that she had asked God where they should have her husband's heart surgery and God advised them to have it in Cleveland, in the US[8] – of course at the expense of Turkish taxpayers. This dream of hers was reported by the media as '*Rabbim Cleveland dedi*' ('God said Cleveland') and was translated into graffiti as '*Rabbime sordum diren Gezi dedi*' ('I asked God and he said "resist Gezi"') and '*Rabbime sordum direniş dedi*' ('I asked God and he said "resistance"') by the protestors.

Prime Minister Erdoğan and other members of the cabinet were not the only targets of humorous graffiti. The ruling AKP was also targeted. The protests were made through the party's insignia: the light bulb. '*Edison bin pişman*' ('Edison [the inventor of the light bulb] severely regrets it', i.e. inventing the light bulb), '*Luzümsüzdu söndürdük*' ('It was useless, so we turned it off'), '*Ampül Patladı*' ('The bulb has blown up') were three of the graffiti that this author discovered around Gezi Park.

The graffiti writers were also extremely critical of the police for excessive use of force and gas. This was obvious in several different types of graffiti in varying degrees that contained slurs and humour – the humour displaying itself in several different ways. Great inspiration was found in the Grand Auto Theft video game and, consequently, a command from this game '*Sis Atma*' ('Don't Throw Fog') was frequently seen on the walls. Linguistic plays were very common in the rest of the graffiti describing the excessive use of police of force. For example, there were several graffiti that called the riot police (*Çevik Kuvvet* in Turkish – which can roughly be translated into English as 'fast force') '*çevik köpek*' ('fast dog'). Another graffiti tried to

7 For a video record of this statement, see http://www.bik.gov.tr/yuzde-50-yi-evde-zor-tutuyoruz-videosu-39193/. Accessed 1 June 2014. See also http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23429709.asp.

8 Video available at http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8nvnp_ahsen-unakitan-in-rabbi-cleveland-d_new. Accessed 2 June 2014.

Figure 9.23: 'I asked God. He Said "Resist Gezi."'

Figure 9.24: 'I asked God. He Said "Resistance."'

Figure 9.25: 'Edison Is Regretful.'

Figure 9.26: 'It was Useless, So We Turned it off.'

Figure 9.27: 'The Bulb Has Blown Up.'

highlight the excessive use of police force with Constantinople – '*ConstantinoPOLIS?*' – using Istanbul's Byzantine era name, but writing the 'POLIS' ('police') part of the word in capital letters.

The extreme use of gas by the security forces during the protests, on the other hand, was treated as if it had not/would not hurt anyone. There were graffiti linking the biological breaking of wind to the extreme use of tear gas: '*osurmayın!!! Bibergazı bağımlıları*' ('don't fart!!! Gas addicts'), '*gazdan korksak osurmazdık*' ('if we were afraid of gas, we would not fart').

Figure 9.28: 'Fast Dog'

Figure 9.29: 'Constantino-polis.'

Figure 9.30: 'If We Were Affraid of Gas, We Would Not Fart'

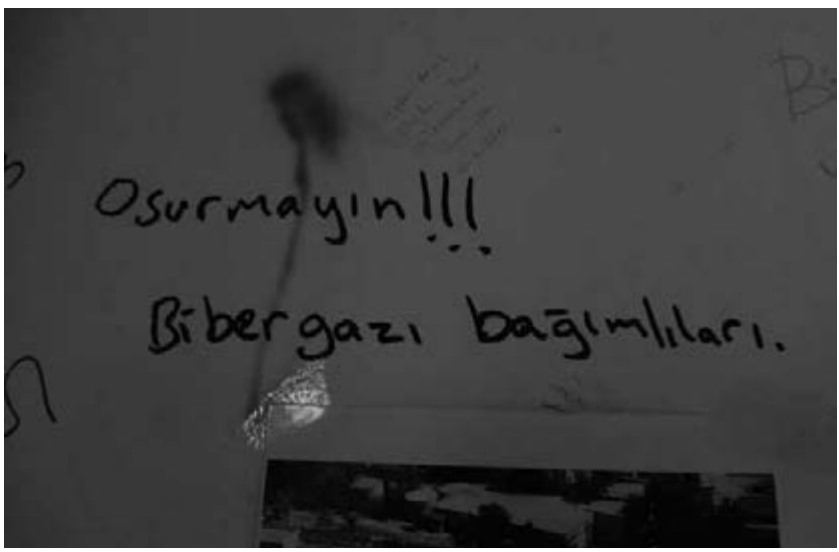

Figure 9.31: 'Do Not Fart!!! Tear Gas Addicts'

Figure 9.32: 'Police(men) You Are Making me Cry'

Figure 9.33: 'There Is No Need for Pepper Spray'. 'Tayyip, You Are Afraid, Aren't You.'

Additionally, the graffiti writers wanted to remind the police that the protesters were 'simply good guys and that the police should not be using tear gas,' expressing this as graffiti that said '*polis gözümü yaşartıyorsun*' ('Police you are making me cry') and '*Biber gazına gerek yok, biz duygusal çocuklarız*' ('There is no need for pepper gas, we are emotional guys').

The French Queen, Marie Antoinette, was the inspiration for another graffiti shown in Figure 9.34, which said: 'If they can't find bread, let them eat gas' – '*Recep Tayyip Antoinette*,' making it yet another tongue-in-cheek reference to the excessive use of tear gas during the Gezi Park protests.

Interestingly, graffiti challenging the neoliberal order and corruption did exist, but were not seen as frequently as graffiti on the authoritarian manners of the government, state and the police. The graffiti drawn on the ATM machines of a state bank included statements that accused the AKP and the prime minister of being thieves and asking the AKP to resign. The picture shown in Figure 9.36 says '*Sermaye Tayyoş*' ('Capitalist Tayyoş'), not only targeting the prime minister by using a diminutive after his name, but also calling him a capitalist – directly criticising the neoliberal policies of the AKP. The protestors frequently brought up the fact that a shopping centre would be built in lieu of Gezi Park. The protestors also 'wished' that

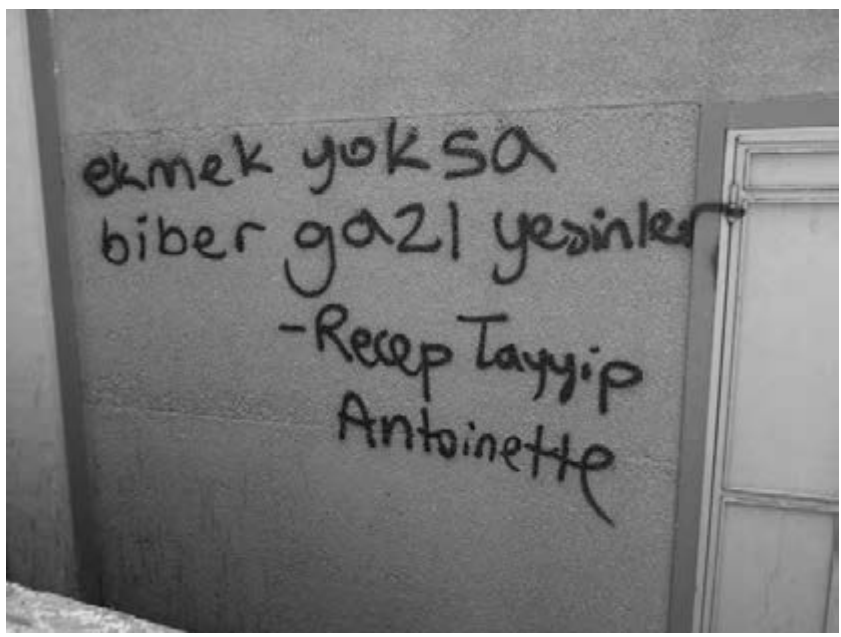

Figure 9.34: 'If They Can't Find Bread, Let Them Eat Gas – Recep Tayyip Antoinette.'

'*AKP yıkılsın yerine AVM yapılsın*' ('Demolish the AKP and build a shopping centre instead') or '*AVM'yi Al Git*' ('Take the Shopping Centre and Go'), an intertextual reference to Erdoğan's 'take your mother and go' statement delivered in Mersin.

Figure 9.35: 'Thief Bank, Thief Tayyip, Get Lost AKP.'

Figure 9.36: 'Capitalist Tayyoş.'

Figure 9.37: 'Take Your Shopping Centre and Go.'

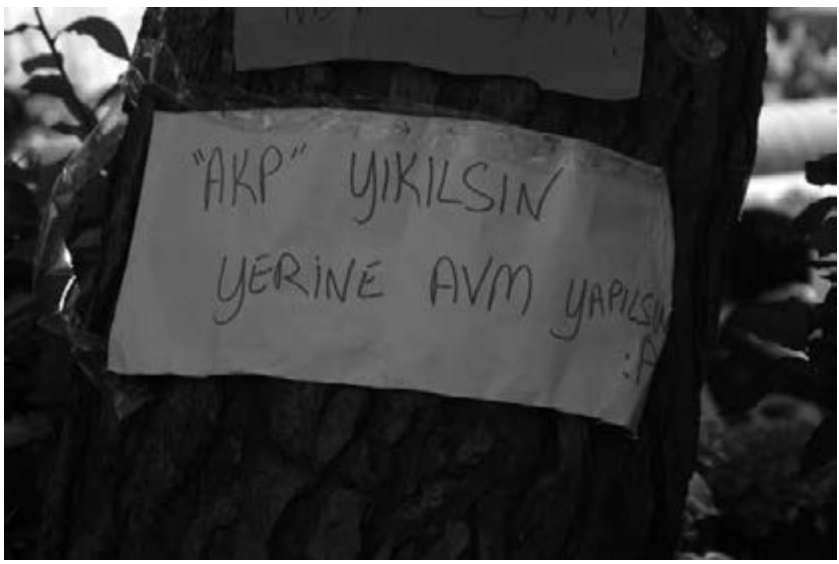

Figure 9.38: 'Demolish the AKP and Build a Shopping Centre Instead.'

The media got their fair share of criticism through graffiti. Because of the blackout exercised by the mainstream media during the protests, they were regarded as collaborators. The graffiti contained the usual slurs, but also, as neatly put in several of the graffiti, media were described as '*satılmış medya*', i.e. totally bought out by the government. The graffiti also called the

media '*yandaş*' ('one who takes sides') and '*korkak*' ('coward'). Interestingly, as far as the media-related graffiti collected for this research are concerned, they contained almost no humour – possibly, an interesting analogy that underlines the fact that the protestors could not find anything humorous about the sorry state of the self-censored media, especially during the Gezi Park events. The only humour that existed were penguin visual graffiti, as seen in Figure 9.12, scattered here and there, in reference to one of the TV channels that preferred to show a documentary on penguins while the Gezi Park protests were taking place.

Conclusion

The Gezi Park protests were regarded as one of the most out of the ordinary upheavals challenging the state, the government and authority in recent Turkish history. Challenging any authority is a matter of crossing a certain fear threshold. Overall, the two graffiti pictures '*Tayyip Korkuyorsun Değil mi*?' ('Tayyip You Are Afraid, Aren't You?') and '*Korku İmparatorluğu Yıkıldı*' ('The Empire of Fear Has Collapsed') in Figures 9.39 and 9.40 below neatly summarise not only the Gezi Park protests but also the graffiti that emerged during the protests.

This chapter has tried to draw attention to a lesser-analysed aspect of the Gezi Park events – the humorous graffiti. While the sheer act of writing graffiti is a challenge to the authority, writing humorous graffiti multiplies the effect of this challenge, as humour is an act of challenge in and of itself. In addition to challenging the authority and the order, Gezi Park graffiti also had the mission of delivering a message to authorities. Obviously, the graffiti presented here is a short selection of the numerous graffiti collected in and around Gezi Park on different days in June 2013.

Yet, although these messages were delivered through humour and through graffiti, they were crystal clear. The protestors were unhappy with the policies and the attitudes of the AKP government, and especially with the ways in which Prime Minister Erdoğan formulated them. Overall, the Gezi Park events were not just a reaction against the municipality's decision to turn Gezi Park into a shopping centre and a residential complex in the form of an old Ottoman military barracks. They were primarily against the paternalistic 'I know what is best for you' attitude and the outbursts of mostly Erdoğan and his cabinet members before and during the Gezi Park events. That being said, in the final analysis, the chapter calls for a more systematic analysis of graffiti popping up around the cities in Turkey. As the

Figure 9.39: 'Tayyip, You Are Afraid, Aren't You?'

Figure 9.40: 'The Empire of Fear Has Collapsed.'

Figure 9.41: 'Berkin Elvan Is Immortal.' 'The Oligarchical State Will Surely Collapse.'

Figure 9.42: 'Reset the Money, Bilal.'

ways and the means of ordinary people to voice their criticism are becoming limited (i.e. recent Twitter and Youtube bans), the walls might be the way out to voice their opinion. The final set of graffiti, pictured in Figures 9.41 and 9.42, refers to Gezi Park[9] and the 17 December 2013 Operation.[10] The pictures, taken in Istanbul in the spring of 2014, '*Berkin Elvan Ölümsüzdür*' ('Berkin Elvan is Immortal') and '*Paraları Sıfırla Bilal*' ('Reset the Money Bilal'), might herald the fact that it is about time that we start considering the walls a unit of analysis in performative dissent.

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10 Where did Gezi Come from?

Exploring the Links between Youth Political Activism before and during the Gezi Protests

Pınar Gümüş and Volkan Yılmaz

Introduction

Turkey's younger generation had long been portrayed as 'apolitical' in the literature. One nationally representative survey conducted in 2007 concluded that only 9 per cent of young people were concerned with politics (Kılıç 2009, 31-68). Another study indicated the share of young people who were members of political parties remained around 10 per cent between 1999 and 2008 (Erdoğan 2009, 71-96). Given the low rate of membership of political parties and self-reported interest in politics among young people, academics searched for the reasons why younger Turkish generations have been 'apolitical.' One study suggested that young people are unwilling to spend their time and energy on making Turkey a better place, as they do not trust institutions and are not optimistic about their future (ARI, Düşünce ve Toplumsal Gelişim Derneği 2001, 6). An alternative account argued that young people do not participate in politics mainly due to the economic insecurities they face and the legacy of military juntas (Çarkoğlu 2013).

The notion of 'apolitical youth' has been widely discussed today in various contexts and geographies, especially by researchers within the field of youth studies. Young people's disinterest in politics mostly refers to their unwillingness to participate in conventional political organisations; namely, the political parties and other mechanisms of parliamentary politics. Recent research conducted on youth participation in Turkey indicates that only 9 per cent of young people are members of, or actively engage in the activities of political parties. While the research proves young people's disinterest in conventional politics, it questioned the assumed link between aversion from participating in the conventional political system and being apolitical (KONDA 2014). Focusing on the post-1980 generation in Turkey, Lüküslü (2013) went beyond the dichotomy of interest/disinterest and depoliticised youth stigmatisation and proposed the notion of 'necessary conformism' as a life strategy of young people, revealing the underlying discontent and a hidden agony. The need for ethnographic studies on youth in Turkey has been pointed out previously as an important step to understanding the

ways young people express themselves and their cultural, religious, class and ethnic positions as the subjects of their lives (Neyzi 2001).

Against this background, the spark of Gezi protests came as a surprise, not only to the government, but also to most social scientists working on youth and politics. Previously portrayed as an apathetic generation, young people massively participated in the Gezi protests, especially in the metropolitan cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. While this unexpected participation can be understood merely as a spontaneous outburst, we argue that this fails to explain the resilience of the protests for more than two weeks under pressure from police violence or the new political actors that became symbols of the Gezi protests, such as LGBTI rights groups, ecological groups,[1] football fans and feminists.

Here are two questions that we think are important to answer in order to understand youth political activism in the Gezi protests: How could young people, who were portrayed as 'apolitical,' organise such protest movement? How is it possible that LGBTI rights groups, ecological groups, football fans and feminists, who were considered negligible groups before, became the symbolic groups of the Gezi protests? In order to explore its origins and its peculiarities, we argue that we have to study the history of different youth activist groups and explore how they have contributed to the Gezi protests.

Social Movement Communities and Social Movement Spillover

Resource mobilisation (McCarthy and Zald 1977) has long been the dominant approach in the study of social movements. This approach centralised 'the interaction between resource availability, the pre-existing organisation of preference structures, and entrepreneurial attempts (of social movements) to meet preference demand (of its constituency)' (Ibid., 1236). While this approach helps us to examine the competition between different social movements, it fails to investigate '*how* different social movements affect one another' (Meyer and Whittier 1994, 277). Alternatively, Meyer and Whittier (Ibid., 278) demonstrated in a case study that the women's movement had a significant impact on the ideological frames, tactics, leadership and organisational structure of the nuclear freeze movement in the early 1980s in the US. Unless the impact of the women's movement is acknowledged,

1 The activists we interviewed described themselves as 'ecologists' instead of 'environmentalists,' whom they criticise for pursuing mere reformist solutions that can hardly solve structural ecological problems. Hence, our usage of the term 'ecologists' throughout our chapter.

full account of the nuclear freeze movement cannot be understood. The authors argued that the nuclear freeze movement inherited the women's movement's emphasis upon the politics of process that defies hierarchical decision-making structures in favour of consensus decision-making methods (Ibid., 289).

The concept of social movement communities is useful in understanding the impact of LGBTI rights groups, ecological groups, football fans and feminists on the Gezi protests. Staggenborg (1998, 199) suggested that the origins of collective action cannot be explained merely on the basis of calculation about political opportunities. She added, 'While some participants notice political opportunities, others are encouraged to act collectively by the culture and solidarity of the movement community.' Here, we argue that LGBTI rights groups, ecological groups, football fans and feminists have been successfully linking members of other political groups, which normally would not come together easily (i.e. Kemalists, socialists, members of the Kurdish movement and Anti-capitalist Muslims). In other words, discursive and practical strategies they employed long before the Gezi protests contributed to the consolidation of a social movement community.

In addition, Meyer and Whittier (1994, 282) coin the concept of 'social movement spillover' to explain the fact that 'one movement can influence subsequent movements both from outside and from within: by altering the political and cultural conditions it confronts in the external environment, and by changing the individuals, groups and norms within the movement itself.' This concept might be useful in understanding how social movements preceding Gezi protests could transfer their ways of organising, producing a political discourse and creating as well as sustaining solidarity networks into the larger protest movements like Gezi.

New Social Movements in Turkey

The emergence of new social movements in Turkey was possible during the 1990s after the severe political oppression resulting from the 1980 coup had started to dissolve. Following the process through which traditional left organisations significantly lost their impact on society, new social movements such as feminism, the ecological movement, LGBTI activism, ethnic or religious rights activism have become important lines of expression and opposition for people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Research indicated that one could speak of continuity between traditional left organisations and new social movements in terms of their organisational

cultures, goals and aims in Turkey (Coşkun 2006). Even if their concerns might seem different from one another, new social movements in Turkey still carry important characteristics of the political legacy upon which they have been built.

Regarding the two major theories employed in analysing new social movements within the social sciences literature – resource mobilisation theory and new social movements theory –, Şimşek (2004) argues that new social movements in Turkey could be better understood through the lenses of the latter. While resource mobilisation theory offers insight into the rational choices of the movements and resources they make use of in order to achieve their goals, the new social movements theory is guided by cultural analysis focusing on cultural norms, symbols and forms of authority as well as the self-reflexive practices of movements. Underlining the main characteristic of the Turkish nation state-building process as increasing pressure on cultural, ethnic and language based diversity within the society, it is argued that new social movements in Turkey have been mostly built on grievances resulting from this process. The rapid urbanisation process and new social complexity that this process created accelerated the strengthening of new social movements in the Turkish political scene.

The most important tool that the new social movements theory provides us with is the emphasis on the ways that people in these movements participate in politics. Bringing the cultural perspective back into the analysis, this theory invites us to focus more on how participants perceive politics, experience political processes and organise accordingly. In this sense, alternative anti-hierarchical ways of doing politics, close friendship and solidarity links within the groups, and new tools such as creative activities and art practices also become important contours of investigation in analysing politics. Following these insights, we think the Gezi protests stand as a substantial field of research in terms of discussing how the notions of political and organisation styles, ways of cooperation and protest skills, which the new social movements have been developing since the 1990s, have been effective in shaping the content and the form of a greater protest movement.

Methodology

This article is based on the qualitative data collected within two separate field researches conducted before and after the Gezi protests in 2009[2] and

2 Focus group discussions conducted by Demet Lüküslü and Volkan Yılmaz.

in 2013,[3] respectively. The initial field research is composed of focus group discussions with young people (aged between 18 and 25) who are engaged in the activities of new social movements in Istanbul (feminists, ecological activists, LGBTI activists, etc.) (Boyraz 2010). The second part of the data was collected through in-depth interviews with young people (aged 18-25) who participated in the Gezi protests in Istanbul and who are also members of new social movements.

These two separate field researches were not originally designed to provide a basis for a comparative historical analysis nor do they form two parts of a single longitudinal study. However, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews had a common focus on young people's notions of the political, their experiences in political activism and protest. Therefore, combining these two separately collected data gave us the opportunity to follow the continuities concerning the ways young people relate themselves to politics and political activism before and after the Gezi protests. Since both of the fieldworks included young people who actively participated in new social movements, reading these two data together might provide a reliable basis for exploring the links between youth political activism in new social movements and youth political activism throughout the Gezi protests.

Our data analysis will be presented under five cross-cutting themes: 1) aversive attitude towards conventional political organisations; 2) ability to organise horizontally and to accommodate individual differences; 3) ability to work with diverse political groups and cooperate with strangers; 4) ability to transfer protest skills; 5) the Gezi protests as a paradigm-shifting event with respect to the older generation's perception of the relationship between youth and politics.

Five Cross-cutting Themes

Aversive Attitude towards Conventional Political Organisations

The data we have collected before and after the Gezi protests reveals that aversion to conventional political organisations is still a significant tendency within young people.

A feminist activist described her perception of conventional politics by using the concept of hegemony. As she could not position herself within any

3 Field research conducted by Pınar Gümüş.

kind of hegemonic project and she was pessimistic about the possibility of a hegemony-free political organisation, she did not consider herself actively participating within the existing political structure:

> For me, being in a political party in this political atmosphere means being a part of that hegemony from the start. It seems to me that another political system (my knowledge of politics is limited but) is not possible. (2009)

One of our respondents expressed his hesitation with respect to the restrictive atmosphere of conventional politics, to which one has to conform:

> Politicisation, I do not consider myself politicised because I think in order to be politicised I have to be part of an organisational culture, I have to be a part of a political organisation, but it is not easy to be part of political organisations or acquire political consciousness, because this is a very rigid thing and I think you have to fit in these patterns and, as they say, you have to devote your life to it. You really have to be like that. That's why I think it is really hard to be politicised. (LGBTI activist, 2013)

On-going disinterest in conventional politics among young activists reinforces for us a need to think about the assumed direct relationship between being distant from conventional politics and being apolitical. Interest in political problems and public matters does not go hand in hand with interest and willingness to participate in conventional politics. However, continued aversion to conventional political organisations still deserves further discussion in order to understand the alternative values and notions of young people who are activists.

Ability to Organise Horizontally and to Accommodate Individual Differences

A second cross-cutting theme revealed by our analysis of youth activists' narratives before and after the Gezi protests is youth activists' criticism of hierarchical political organisations.

One of our respondents interviewed before the Gezi protests told us that the main features of political organisations that she took part in are:

> Non hierarchical, open to sharing experiences, open to new innovations, where there is a process of learning from each other. No one is at the bottom or top, everyone learns from each other through their differences.

> Empowers. The process of creating a solidarity network is so important. You can apply this to everything. (Feminist activist, 2009)

As the narrative suggests, she created a dichotomy between hierarchical and horizontal political organisations. Hierarchical political organisations here refer mainly to conventional political organisations such as political parties, trades unions and professional organisations. As a feminist activist, she underlined that hierarchical organisational structures do not empower their members. In her view, by contrast, the feminist organisation she took part in allowed its members to get to know each other, create together and support each other; all of which leads to empowerment.

A similar criticism of hierarchical political organisations, which has been popularised through feminist initiatives since the early 1980s, could be found in Gezi protestors' narratives. For instance, one of our respondents who identified himself as an independent activist suggested:

> Now, to feel responsible, to voice your concerns and talk about these things with your family and loved ones, I do these things, but I am not becoming a member of something, I have not been one and I am not thinking of doing it [...] In these groups, I feel like all those internal rules or internal administration, all relationships within these groups, all their principles and all their thoughts will not be in accordance with mine. (2013)

As the quote above suggests, while this young person participated in the Gezi protests, he was still not in favour of becoming a member of a political organisation. His main reason was that he would not feel comfortable with the internal rules that had been set prior to his participation. In other words, it could be argued that his perception of political organisations is that they are rigid structures that do not allow room for dissenting views within the group. Therefore, he preferred to voice his concerns and talk about politics with his family members and loved ones. His aversion to hierarchical political organisations does not imply that he does not feel any political responsibility.

Ability to Work with Diverse Political Groups and Cooperate with Strangers

The third cross-cutting theme in the interviews conducted with youth activists before and after the Gezi protests is that young activists are open to forms of political activism that bring together diverse political groups.

One of our respondents from the LGBTI rights movement told us that:

> Many people in this organisation learn about the problems that a Kurdish, a disabled, a trans-woman face, the problems that are experienced by people who are not like me. I think this is incredible. (2009)

As the quote implies, this young activist was enthusiastic about the opportunities of learning about other people's concerns provided by his organisation. While political organisations that are considered part of new social movements have been generally criticised for pursuing a 'narcissistic' political agenda that focuses narrowly on the problems of identity groups, this activist told us a different story. It was being an LGBTI rights activist that introduced him to the problems of the Kurdish, disabled and trans-women.

This quote also suggests to us that youth activists' openness to learning about other groups' concerns and political activism that brings together diverse political groups was not an entirely new phenomenon that came into being during the Gezi protests. Many groups, including but not limited to ecologists, feminists and LGBTI activists, had already been spending time learning about other groups' agendas and trying to find ways to integrate diverse concerns into a common political agenda.

Another novelty that has been attributed to the Gezi protests was the practice of political activism that brought together not only different identity groups, but also people of different social classes. Our interviews with youth activists before Gezi suggest that this was also not unique to Gezi, but existed within football fan groups long before. For instance, one of our respondents, a member of a football fan club, told us:

> There it rains, and you all get wet, police attacks, and all of you get beaten, all of you get subjected to tear gas, there are many people who are from upper classes and lower classes, you experience it together. (2009)

As our respondent suggests, football fans consisting of people from different social classes had already been gaining a common experience of police violence.

This quotation also shows us that football fan groups had already met with tear gas long before the Gezi protests. Without doubt, the Gezi events increased the visibility of the police use of tear gas against the public. But the football fan groups' former experience with this issue might have facilitated the transfer of know-how in terms of dealing with tear gas from these groups to other protestors.

While we have argued that youth activists' knowledge of other groups' concerns and political activism that brought together diverse political groups emerged long before the spark of Gezi, interviews conducted with youth activists who participated in the Gezi protests indicate that this trend gained a new momentum during the demonstrations. An ecological activist told us:

> For example, we have a student club called 'Lubunya' in the university; that is the club for lesbians, gays and bisexuals; I didn't know them before. However, I saw these people there (in the park), they came and put their tents in an orderly way, we had a chat. Specifically I have some friends from my department in this club, my communication with them got better; that is to say I had the chance to get to know these people. Most probably, if we did not have Gezi, I would not have known these people. (2013)

The quotation above is especially telling: it suggests that the Gezi protests enabled different groups to interact with one another. Despite the fact that the LGBTI activists our interviewee refers to are students at the same university he is enrolled in, they had not interacted with one another before the Gezi protests. However, the political atmosphere in Gezi Park facilitated that interaction. This might have created a sense of solidarity between these young people and between the political groups they belong to.

Ability to Transfer Protest Skills

Solidarity in times of protest and cooperation among strangers was not exactly a new experience for the young people who were already engaged in social movements before Gezi. An ecological activist narrated how 'protest friendships' developed before the Gezi protests:

> For example, one of my friends only calls me to ask 'where are you?' I tell her that 'I am there.' Then she responds, 'I called you as I thought you were participating in the protest in Kadıköy.' Some of my friends only call me when there is a protest on that day. (2009)

Moreover, young people shared previously gained protest skills with others during the Gezi protests. One of our respondents gave the example of preparing water solutions with Talcid as an antidote to tear gas:

> These people did not suddenly discover the water with Talcid. This was what we had used in the protests. We had prepared a five-litre gallon for the 1 May march the previous year. It would have been really hard for the group to learn from scratch if there was no prior know-how. (LGBTI activist, 2013)

Therefore, we argue that there is continuity before and after the Gezi protests concerning the development of solidarity ties between young people. However, the variety of solidarity practices experienced throughout the Gezi protests seems to have a significant impact on how young people perceive the importance of solidarity in fighting together for their values and demands. Different oppositional groups who had not previously struggled together for a unified purpose got to know each other throughout the protests.

The Gezi Protests as a Paradigm-Shifting Event with Respect to the Older Generation's Perception of the Relationship between Youth and Politics

Various studies argued that the older generations in Turkey who had witnessed the military coups d'état do not take contemporary youth political activism seriously, especially those taking place alongside the new social movements. In the eyes of the older generations, young people in Turkey are disinterested in politics, ignorant about political developments and have been co-opted by a consumerist and individualistic global culture.

One of our 2009 respondents explained how he experienced the gerontological structure of politics:

> On the one hand, OK, in a place where religion, etc. is not really taken seriously, you can wear whatever you want, you can go to clubs, you can go out at night, you are told that 'you are young, do whatever you want to do;' I think we are still subjected to age hierarchy when we talk about politics. I think we are – as children of the 1980s – unfortunate, because we could not see those hard years; so, people think we are not mature enough and something is beyond our ken. (LGBTI activist)

As the quote suggests, our interviewee did not feel that his political opinions were valued. While his parents were not restrictive with respect to his everyday lifestyle, they did not take his political opinions seriously. He thought the main reason for this was that he belongs to the 1980s generation, who

did not experience military coups d'état. Therefore, older generations that experienced those events think that they acquired a significant knowledge of politics, which the younger generation lacks. Our interviewee describes this as being unfortunate, as their 'lack' of knowledge and experience disempowers them in politics.

The Gezi protests can be conceptualised as 'a rite of passage' for the younger generations in order to be perceived as political 'enough' in the eyes of the older generations who witnessed the military coups. Our respondent told us:

> These parents have raised their children as too individualistic and career-oriented individuals, and I know many young people feel oppressed because of this [...] That is why I think my generation is under severe pressure. What happened in Gezi was not only against the state but also against family. People from our generation had real difficulty proving themselves; however, Gezi was the event in which these people have proved themselves. (Ecological activist, 22)

As the quote suggests, our respondent noticed that the Gezi protests radically changed the older generations' perception of young people's relationship with politics. Given that young activists remained on the streets despite police violence, they 'proved' themselves. Our respondent saw this older generation's paradigm shift with respect to the relationship between young people and politics as emancipation from family. In that respect, young people opened up a discursive space for themselves within politics during the Gezi protests.

Conclusion

Here, we argue that the Gezi protests – as a case event – provide insights about how young people engaged in new social movements contributed to the success of Gezi protests by enabling horizontal organisation with diverse groups, transfer of protest skills and formation of networks of solidarity between strangers. By devoting time and energy to forming social movement communities long before the Gezi protests, and by working to introduce their ways of organising, producing political discourses and forming solidarity networks, we suggest that youth activists in new social movements contributed greatly to the formation of this collective culture of protest and solidarity.

Young people in feminist, ecological, LGBTI movements and football fan groups were active participants in the Gezi protests and, in collaboration with many other groups, they contributed to a historic socio-political protest experience in Turkey. The ability to collaborate and the collectively expressed will also encourage us to think about how new social movements can find innovative ways to influence and change conventional politics, rather than merely employing a cynical rejection strategy. We believe that this historical perspective enriches the analysis of the Gezi protests, as it displays the social movement spillover originating from feminist, ecological, LGBTI movements and football fan groups that gave the Gezi protests their peculiar character.

Lastly, our analysis indicates that being interested in politics does not necessarily mean taking part in conventional political organisations. Academic discourse that portrayed the younger generation as 'apolitical' has to be rethought in the aftermath of the Gezi protests. The image of youth we have witnessed in the Gezi protests is one of young people not only interested in but also struggling to influence public matters. This is not unrelated to what was already developing before Gezi in terms of youth political participation in new social movements. In this sense, Gezi was a product of this earlier trend and could not have been possible without this history.

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Section IV
The Politics of Space and Identity at Gezi

11 ‘We May Be Lessees, but the Neighbourhood is Ours’[1]

Gezi Resistances and Spatial Claims

Ahu Karasulu

While this paper was being written, the first anniversary of Gezi was being ‘celebrated’ in Taksim in the company of 25,000 policemen, 50 TOMAs (*Toplumsal Olaylara Müdahale Aracı*, ‘Vehicle for Intervention at Social Events’), teargas, plastic bullets and police brutality.[2] The uniformed policemen and the ‘civilian’ officers with uniform caps, black bags and nightsticks were ‘obeying the given orders, from A to Z.’[3] The government’s persistence on closing Taksim Square to demonstrations led to a declaration by the Istanbul Governorate on 4 June 2014. According to it, and based on the Law of Meetings and Demonstrations and the relevant by-laws, meetings and demonstrations will only be allowed to take place in Kazlıçeşme (on the European coast) and Maltepe (on the Asian coast).[4] Both are far away from city centres.

Since the protest, Gezi Park, while closed by the police at every rumour of a meeting or demonstration in the Square, has remained as a park. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality’s Taksim Pedestrianisation Project plans, as well as those for the Artillery Barracks, were cancelled by the Council of State in May 2014. Yet, the tunnels underneath the Square, built according to the

1 *Ev Kira ama Semt Bizim* (‘We may be lessees, but the neighbourhood is ours’) is a graffito from Kadıköy, seen in the demonstrations of September 2013. See http://galeri.uludagsozluk.com/g/ev-kira-ama-semt-bizim/. Accessed 15 October 2013.

2 According to Taksim Solidarity, in Istanbul alone, 203 people were taken into custody and nearly 100 people were injured: http://taksimdayanisma.org/basina. Accessed 31 May 2014.

3 In Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s own words: ‘See, they are making declarations. They are calling people to Taksim. […] I am calling here for all my people. Do not fall for this game. This is not a naive act of environmentalism. There is no sincerity here, there is no honesty. There are only ways to stop us from taking the necessary steps to monumentalise Taksim. […] If you insist on coming here, we are sorry but our law enforcement officers have taken the necessary orders, the necessary measures will be taken from A to Z. You will not be able to come there as you did in the Taksim events and Gezi events of last year. Because you have to obey the laws. If a demonstration is not permitted in a certain place, you have to obey it. If you do not, the state will take the necessary measures for security. Then, you cannot say “this happened, and that happened” (http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/gezi_parkina__gelene_polis_geregini_yapar-1194949).

4 http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/iste_istanbulun_yasal_miting_alanlari-1195577.

Pedestrianisation Project, have been completed and are now operational. Mayor Kadir Topbaş claimed that the cancellation is not important: 'Of course we are entitled to make new plans in place of the cancelled ones.'[5]

A year ago, the activists' resistance to the unlawful demolition of trees in Istanbul's Gezi Park and to the project to rebuild the historic Artillery Barracks as a shopping centre on the site of the park was met with extreme police brutality at dawn on 31 May 2013. In the days that followed, this spatial claim gave way to protests spreading to 79 (out of 81) cities in Turkey (İnsan Hakları Derneği 2013, 4). As a result of clashes with the police, the police left Taksim Square on 1 June 2013 and the park remained occupied, until it was brutally evacuated by the police on 15 June 2013. The main platform of opposition is *Taksim Dayanışması* ('Taksim Solidarity'), an umbrella organisation of 128 different professional chambers, labour unions, political parties and various networks and organisations. Regarding the park and the square, in the widespread protests, claims were not limited to those of Taksim Solidarity or limited to the park and the square or environmental claims. 'Intervening' to save a few trees served as a means to vocalise the grievances of many who believe that their livelihood, identity or lifestyle is under threat. *Tayyip İstifa* ('Tayyip Resign') and/or *Hükümet İstifa* ('Government Resign') was one of the widely heard slogans. In many other cities, the party buildings of the ruling AKP became the target of the protesters.[6] As a popular uprising, this was unexpected and unprecedented; it was multilayered and multifaceted and was further triggered by police violence (Karasulu 2014).

Indeed, it seems to me that the word 'resistance'[7] should be used in the plural, to address different events, different actors, different claims and different actions.[8] Given that the motivation behind the protests was not just a few trees, and despite recent events, it can hardly be said that the resistances have come to a halt, or that the collective action has been entirely demobilised. In an attempt to name and frame this, I will refer to this episode using the broader concept of contentious politics, and I will

5 http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/155574-danistay-in-taksim-karari-engel-degil.

6 For a chronology of protests in various cities, see Bölükbaşı 2013, 12-329.

7 Resistance is defined as 'a response to power [...] a practice that challenges and negotiates, and which might undermine power' (Vinthagen and Lilja 2007), and is often used interchangeably with protests throughout the text. It is not wrong to say that resistance falls within the repertoires of contention within the DOC programme.

8 For reasons behind Gezi resistances, see http://sibelozbudun.blogspot.com/2013/06/turkey-beauty-when-angry.html, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/12907/brand-turkey-and-the-gezi-protests_authoritarianis, http://everywheretaksim.net/jadaliyya-brand-turkey-and-the-gezi-protests-authoritarianism-law-and-neoliberalism-part-two-asli-igsiz/ and http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ayse-bugra/turkey-what-lies-behind-nationwide-protests.

borrow from Doug McAdam's, Charles Tilly's and Sidney Tarrow's Dynamics of Contention (DOC) programme,[9] focusing on its spatial dimension,[10] and underline the significance of spatial claims.[11]

'Essentials Are Thus Cast Up':[12] Space and Contention

As Tilly (2000, 138) sees it, all contention takes place in 'humanly occupied space' and, while space is not totally ignored in contentious politics literature, it is not wrong to say that it enters DOC analysis with reference, by and large, to the 'ecology' of contentious politics and the strategies it employs.

In a similar vein, for Tilly, 'the changing locations, activities, and spatial configurations of people themselves constitute a significant part of contention' (Ibid., 146). Tilly underlines that 'everyday spatial distributions, proximities, and routines of potential participants in contention significantly affect their patterns of mobilisation' (Ibid., 138). His emphasis is on the variations between spatial connections among them: in a two dimensional view, in terms of proximity, they are either local or large scale, and in terms of mobility, they are either fixed or mobile. A more fixed spatial scale and a higher mobility would increase the modularisation of

9 In the DOC framework, contentious politics is defined as 'episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or party to the claims and b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001, 5) As they put it, 'roughly translated, the definition refers to collective political struggle' (Ibid.).

10 By and large, to provide an analysis of common points from different historical episodes and social conditions, and to integrate different schools of thought in the field of social movements, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly draw a programme based on events, episodes, mechanisms and processes of contentious politics, where the form and content of contention is analysed referring to types of regimes, political opportunity structures and repertoires of contention. Within the debate this programme has given rise to, it is the geographers that provide the criticism with respect to the conceptualisations of spatiality (Leitner et al. 2008; Martin and Miller 2003).

11 Spatial claims can be seen as a type of 'program claims' in the DOC framework. In Tilly and Tarrow's words, '*Program claims* call for the objects of claims to act in a certain way: to do something, to stop doing something, to make someone else do something, and so on.' (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 190).

12 In Lefebvre's words, 'Forecasts and calculations are inevitably based on partial analyses and records, and cannot match the totality of events. In upsetting these forecasts, events reunite those analyses and conclusions which had become diffused. Movement flares up where it was least expected; it completely changes the situation, which now emerges from the mass of fact and evaluations under which it had been hidden. Essentials are thus cast up, especially those that are known and recognizable. Against this background are projected new elements of social life; these now become briefly visible in luminous transparency.' (Lefebvre 1969 [1968], 7).

contentious repertoires and detachment of political identities, as spatial scale and mobility affect various mechanisms of DOC; namely, category formation, brokerage, object shift and certification.[13] In other words, scale and mobility affect how claims are articulated, how coalitions are formed between actors vocalising these claims and how these coalitions are related to each other, not to mention how these claims, actors and performances are validated (Tilly 2003).

In an attempt to underline the significance of space, William H. Sewell (2001, 55) posits that:

> in studying the role of space in contentious politics, we should be especially attentive to what might be called spatial agency – the ways that spatial constraints are turned to advantage in political struggles and the ways that such struggles can restructure the meanings, uses, and strategic valence of space.

Not only is contentious politics constrained and shaped by space, but also, new spatial structures and relations can be created by contentious politics: 'insurgents produce space above all by changing the meanings and strategic uses of their environments' (Ibid., 56).

In his extensive essay, Sewell emphasises the significance of space with respect to its various dimensions: social life is spatially differentiated and spatial location, the scale of spatial processes, time-distance dimension of space, built environment and spatial routines of daily life both enable and constrain co-presence of people engaged in a common cause. Also, spaces have socially constructed meanings that might serve contentious politics as both contexts and stakes, the most important of which is: 'sacralisation as sites of transcendent significance. In sacred spaces, actions take on an enhanced significance, in the eyes of the participants and witnesses alike' (Ibid., 65). Space is an object and a matrix of power as well, mapped and marked by the administrative apparatuses of the states and controlled by policing (Ibid., 54-71). In such a framework, following Sewell (Ibid., 88):

> contentious politics is a complex phenomenon: at once an exercise of political strategy, a mobilisation of resources, an overcoming of collective action problems, a seizing of political opportunities, and an enactment of collective action frames. But it is also an exercise of spatial agency, an

13 For definitions of the concepts, see Tilly 2003, 222-223.

> ensemble of work within and upon spatial structures that produces new spatial structures, meanings, and routines.

Such an 'ecology' highlights a few issues following the fact that Gezi Park and especially Taksim Square were at the centre of the Gezi resistances. Taksim Square is significant in terms of spatial agency: it is one of the public spaces in Istanbul that bear the mark of socio-political transformations in Republican Turkey. Designed as a secular public space, it has gained a symbolic importance in vocalising demands in the period of political mobilisation throughout the 1970s, and has also become a main tourist attraction in the 1980s (Baykan and Hatuka 2010).

It is the secular nature of the square that comes into play when plans to construct a mosque are spoken of. Moreover, the banning of all demonstrations in the square, including 1 May celebrations, is understood with reference to the symbolic importance of the square in political struggle. Especially in the context of resistances, Taksim square operates as a sacred space, in the sense that Sewell mentions above: demands articulated there have an enhanced significance, both for participants and witnesses. As such, closing the square to public gatherings with police force and blocking all means of transportation becomes a display of government power.

In the face of recent developments cited in the introduction, insisting on holding a meeting in Taksim square is not a futile act, but an act of resistance against the government's intransigent efforts to close the square to public gatherings, exiling all sorts of expressions of dissent from the city centre and erasing the political memory of such a space. Indeed, as Tilly (2000, 138) puts it, the governments 'organize at least some of their power around places and spatial routines. Hence, contentious politics often challenges or disrupts governmental activity, and thereby incites governmental intervention.'

Furthermore, resistance to the gentrification of Tarlabaşı and İstiklal Street, the pedestrianisation of Taksim square and the rebuilding of the Artillery Barracks as a shopping centre can also be thought of as a response to reshaping the area as a 'purified' commercial and residential space. Efforts are also being made to render such a 'purified' space more conservative. As Ayşe Çavdar says:

> Those in power want to intervene in a space where secular life is symbolically constructed and, as such, they want to take over the commercial networks constituted by this space and win the race, symbolically. Only

> by taking over Beyoğlu would they say, 'OK, I have taken over this city.' It is not Beşiktaş or Kadıköy, but it must be Beyoğlu.[14]

Finally, following DOC terminology, it can also be said that, throughout early June 2013, closing the square, which is one of the transportation hubs of Istanbul, helped to certify the demands of the *Taksim Dayanışması*. Also, by vocalising spatial claims in Gezi Park and Taksim Square during occupation, the protestors have built a struggle in the lived space against the way it was conceived by the concerns of capital and authoritarian governance, and imagined a communal life. As such, the park and the square have also served as a broker to align different sites of protest and different claims. *Her yer Taksim, her yer direniş* ('Everywhere Taksim, everywhere resistance') is still one of the most popular slogans of this period of contention, shouted in almost every copresence of people, from football matches and graduation ceremonies to protests and demonstrations. It served as a point of reference even for the government, in denying the legitimacy of the protests, in an attempt to keep up with the majoritarianist rhetoric. For example, former Minister of Health Ziya Müezzinoğlu, in response to a question regarding the slogan chanted at football matches, declared that 'Everywhere is not Taksim, and resistance is not everywhere. Everybody should hand their resistance and Taksim Square over to the national will's rights and legality, which is here.'[15]

'(New Elements) Become Briefly Visible in Luminous Transparency':[16] Spatial Claims

Tilly mentions, with reference to Henri Lefebvre,[17] that 'social sites always incorporate conceived and perceived space into lived space. Conceptions, perceptions, and practices then shape political contention' (Tilly 2003, 222). This line of thinking can be further explored as space, especially urban space, can be thought of as the subject of claims, beyond (but not excluding) locations, proximities, mobilities and means of surveillance. Deborah G. Martin and Byron Miller (2003, 146) posit that:

14 Cited in http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/taksimde-masa-hala-yasak.

15 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/24810094.asp.

16 See note 12.

17 For definitions of perceived-conceived-lived triad (in other words, spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces), see Lefebvre 1991 [1974], 32, 38-39.

> Lefebvre's conceptual triad of conceived, perceived, and lived space can be a useful lens for the analysis of contentious politics as it recognizes the material spatial dimensions of social life, the symbolic meanings of space and the imposition of, and resistance to dominant socio-spatial orders.

It can be said that neoliberal economic transformation has changed the material spatial dimensions of social life (i.e. spatial practices or perceived spaces), the symbolic meanings of space (i.e. representations of space or conceived spaces) and the imposition of and resistance to socio-spatial orders (i.e. representational spaces or lived spaces).

Following David Harvey (2001 and 2012), the accumulation of capital is realised over urbanisation and, in today's world, surplus is absorbed through urban restructuring. City spaces are mobilised as a 'purified arena of capitalist growth, commodification, and market discipline remained the dominant political project for municipal governments throughout the world' (Brenner and Theodore 2000, 374). As for perceived spaces, planning and urban restructuring decisions are increasingly based on maximisation of private gain; surveillance is increased in public spaces to maintain law and order; punitive institution building, social surveillance and authoritarian governance are seen as a means of silencing dissent arising from economic contradictions; lived spaces become more polarised, with the destruction of working-class neighbourhoods for speculative land development and gentrification as well as the creation of 'purified' spaces, as gated communities and enclaves and places of consumption reserved for the elite (Brenner and Theodore 2000; Peck and Tickell 2002; Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000). As Harvey (2012, 16) puts it, 'this nearly always has a class dimension, since it is usually the poor, underprivileged, and those marginalized from political power that suffer first and foremost from this progress.' Such an urban order is what is experienced, imagined and struggled against in terms of lived space. This struggle against the current socio-spatial order can be thought of as a multifaceted and multilayered anti-capitalist struggle (Ibid.).

The above-mentioned effects of neoliberal economic transformation on urban space and socio-spatial order are likely to become an increasingly significant issue in Turkey in the years to come. As the economic growth of Turkey relies on construction, 'urban restructuring'[18] and 'pharaonic projects' such as the third bridge on the Bosphorus, the third airport in Istanbul or a Panama-like channel to the north of Istanbul (the so-called 'Kanal Istanbul') have become catchphrases to stimulate the construction sector

18 For a history of 'urban restructuring' in Turkey after 1980, see Türkün et al. 2014.

(Balaban 2011 and 2013). In the same vein, projects similar to that of Taksim Square are being developed for the regeneration of symbolically important spaces, such as Haliç Arsenal or Haydarpaşa Train Station, turning them into 'purified' touristic and commercial venues. The helping hand of TOKİ, an institution endowed with exceptional privileges (Pérouse 2013), is more visible in opening up new lands to construction and changing limitations to municipal zoning plans. A new page will be opened when the new 'Law on Transformation of Areas under the Risk of Disaster' becomes widely used. The new law basically gives the central government (the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation in particular) the right to label any urban space an 'area under the risk of disaster' and, without the need to consult or negotiate with the residents, it can demolish and rebuild the neighbourhood as it sees profitable. Obviously, it will have devastating effects on the urban poor[19] or the working-class neighbourhoods built on valuable land, and it will result in dispossession, whether the residents are owners or lessees.

Regarding the episode of contention spreading to different Turkish cities since 31 May 2013, along with main squares, the protests also occurred in neighbourhoods under threat of 'urban restructuring' and where there is an established tradition of political struggle, as in the cases of Dikmen (Ankara), Gazi (Istanbul), Okmeydanı (Istanbul) or Gülsuyu (Istanbul). One can expect more protests, widespread or not, as more neighbourhoods fall under the scope of the so-called 'Disaster Law.'[20]

For example, Okmeydanı has been a squatter settlement in Istanbul since the late 1960s; today it has 80,000 residents. It is a densely populated area with houses, apartments, workplaces and many informal textile workshops. Although it was declared a historic protection site in 1976, the land, which mostly belongs to the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation, was unlawfully sold to the new migrants. With the Zoning Amnesty Law of 1984, 'Deed Allotment Certificates' were distributed to some of the residents. The amount of land belonging to the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation was first exchanged with the same amount of land belonging to the Treasury in 2001 and, in 2010, the decisions on historic protection were reversed and limited to fourteen districts; subsequently, the rest of the area was sold to Beyoğlu and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipalities. In 2012, Beyoğlu Municipality, announcing a renovation plan, started to sell smaller areas of land to residents at a higher

19 For previous examples of urban restructuring projects, for example, see Özdemir 2003; Pérouse 2011; Kuyucu and Ünsal 2011.

20 For an evaluation of the law by the Chamber of Urban Planners, see http://www.spo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=3941&tipi=4&sube=0#.UkpTAxAavjc.

price (Uşaklıgil 2014, 125-135). While the Mayor of Beyoğlu claimed that they will create the newest area of urban life in Istanbul in Okmeydanı, with commercial and touristic centres and a 'Champs-Élysées of Istanbul'[21] (a plan legitimised solely by a video produced by the municipality[22]), questions regarding the price of land and where the residents in newly declared protection sites will be moved and with how big a share of land remain unanswered. As such, it is likely that the current residents of the area, who are unable to afford houses in their own neighbourhoods, will be exiled. The zoning plans were taken to court and Beyoğlu Municipal Council declared Okmeydanı an 'area under the risk of disaster' on 6 June 2014, based on 'observations' rather than 'scientific reports,' i.e. without any reference to geological research or an assessment of the current building stock.[23]

In terms of the meaning of Okmeydanı as a place, there are two sides to the coin. Firstly, the neighbourhood is associated with the words 'tension' or 'clashes with the police.' In the 1990s,[24] Okmeydanı became one of the places that faced a heavy police blockade; it has thus been stigmatised and criminalised as a 'terrorists' neighbourhood,' although the presence of armed groups is a matter of self-defence for most of the residents.[25]

The incorporation of conceived and perceived space into a lived space is not straightforward in Okmeydanı; the neighbourhood is still identified with 'clashes,' which are likely to take an upward spiral with more bloodshed. As Alevis have been continuously discriminated against and targeted by the government, the religious dividing lines will again aggravate the tension in the neighbourhood. During the Gezi resistances, fifteen-year old Berkin Elvan was shot with a gas canister and died on 11 March 2014, after spending nine months in a coma. Tens of thousands of people attended his funeral.[26] On the same evening, in a clash between those waiting around Elvan's house and the *cemevi* and people called out by the AKP-allied 'Kasımpaşa 1453' football fan group, 22

21 http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/okmeydani_sanzelize_olacak-1176973.

22 'Vatandaşın Okmeydanı Tanıtım Videosu.' http://www.vatandasinokmeydani.com/okmeydani/planlama-detay/Okmeydani/60/201/0#video_box. Accessed 1 June 2014.

23 http://www.evrensel.net/haber/85759/asil-risk-budur.html#.U5SDBChOJLB.

24 Such neighbourhoods are not only criminalised in the face of rising leftist movements, in the daily parlance. *Gecekondu* ('squatter settlement') has been replaced with *varoş* ('slum' with an absolutely negative connotation). While the former stands for self-constructed houses to satisfy the need for shelter, the latter implies violent and 'dangerous masses' living on the outskirts of the city. Those masses include Alevis and Kurds who have come to the city through forced migration (Bozkulak 2003).

25 http://birdirbir.org/devlet-siddeti-ve-mimli-mahalleler/. See also Yonucu 2014, 29-36.

26 http://t24.com.tr/haber/berkin-bugun-ugurlaniyor-kalabalik-okmeydaninda-toplanmaya-basladi,253202.

year-old Burakcan Karamanoğlu was shot and killed.[27] On 22 May 2014, police intervention in a high-school student protest resulted in the death of Uğur Kurt. Kurt was shot and killed by the police in the garden of the *cemevi*, where he was attending a funeral.[28] During the protests of the following day, another resident was shot and killed by the police.[29] Although the leftist upper-side and AKP-allied, more rightist lower-side of the neighbourhood were united against 'urban restructuring,' the spiral of violence is said to disrupt this alliance.[30]

Although it is said that the Gezi resistances have made the processes in Okmeydanı more visible, changing the image of Okmeydanı in the eyes of the middle classes and perhaps giving way to new political imaginaries,[31] as activist lawyer Erbay Yücak implies, stigmatisation and criminalisation of the neighbourhood make it less likely that 'urban restructuring' and the problems of ownership or the planning processes will be discussed. Yet, as Yücak underlines, the only means of struggle is by the residents of the neighbourhood, and one that takes the past relations of the neighbourhood with the Municipality and the residents' expectations into consideration.[32]

'Events Belie Forecasts':[33] Concluding Remarks

The foundations of the third Istanbul airport were laid on 7 June 2014. While *Kuzey Ormanları Savunması*[34] was protesting against the airport[35] on İstiklal

27 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/25998760.asp.

28 http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/74513/Polis_kana_doymadi.html#.

29 http://www.diken.com.tr/aktuel/okmeydaninda-24-saat-icinde-ikinci-olum/.

30 http://birgun.net/haber/okmeydani-12521.html and http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/okmeydani_kimseye_mezar_olmasin-1182818.

31 http://birgun.net/haber/berkinin-cenazesi-akp-hukumeti-icin-oldukca-tehditkardi-13704.html.

32 http://kentteadaletblog.wordpress.com/2014/06/07/okmeydaninda-neler-oluyor-erbay-yucak-ile-soylesi/.

33 In Lefebvre's words: 'Events belie forecasts; to the extent that events are historic, they upset calculations. They may even overturn strategies that provided for their possible occurrence. Because of their conjunctural nature, events upset the structures which made them possible.' (Lefebvre 1969 [1968], 7).

34 *Kuzey Ormanları Savunması* ('Northern Forests' Defence') is a self-governing movement aimed at defending the existence of the northern forests of Istanbul as well as struggling against any urban-rural project that would result in natural disasters. See http://www.kuzeyormanlari.org/hakkinda/. Accessed 1 June 2014.

35 For the Defence's report on the natural disaster the airport would create, as well as the corrupt practices in its planning and construction, see http://www.kuzeyormanlari.org/2014/03/21/

Street,[36] Prime Minister Erdoğan, in his speech at the ceremony, blamed the protesters against the third airport for being *Gezizekalı* ('Gezi-minded'), a possible and quite unwitty wordplay for *gerizekalı* ('idiot'):

> Last year in May, some *Gezizekalı* people sprang up. Those *Gezizekalıs* could not bear this airport. For it is impossible for them to imagine such a gigantic airport. They still want to see Turkey as it was twelve years ago. Turkey has reached a point where it can build the biggest airport in the world. The schools we have built, the divided roads. We are proud of you. Your unity makes some people crazy.[37]

Although this article has focused narrowly on urban struggles (and those in Istanbul), there has been local collective action in rural Turkey against hydroelectric, thermal and nuclear plants as well as new mines. This allows us to say that space is not only a stage for contentious politics but a solid ground for vocalising dissent, in the form of spatial claims. Often, self-organising people defending their livelihood and environment are faced with a government that claims the ultimate right to define the use of urban and rural space, legitimising this right with majoritarianism. The use of urban and rural space aims at profit maximisation: construction is said to represent 'development' and 'welfare' for the public, if not for the construction groups close to the government.

It is hard to foresee the turn this episode of contention could take in the face of widespread dispossession or a crisis in the construction sector. With reference to space, there is still room for discussion, dissent, alternative imaginaries, struggle and resistance. *Gezizekalı*ness in this sense would suggest new alliances and new means for challenging the current socio-spatial order. As the graffito in the title of this article suggests, such struggles are given life primarily by the residents.

kuzey-ormanlari-savunmasi-3-havalimani-raporu-nereden-baksan-katliam-yagma-saibe-guncellendi-3-2-2014/.

36 Their march along the İstiklal Street (from the Tunnel to Taksim Square) was blocked, as usual, mid-way to Galatasaray by the police: http://www.sendika.org/2014/06/3-havalimanina-karsi-yuruduler-temel-atma-bosuna-yikacagiz-basina/.

37 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/26570163.asp.

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12 Negotiating Religion at the Gezi Park Protests

Emrah Çelik

Introduction

When the Gezi Park protests took place, Turkish society generally, and religious people in particular, were uncertain as to their exact nature. Observing developments in various media, including social media, much of the population was unsure whether the protesters were engaged in democratic action against the government and some of its policies, or whether they were objecting to the religious identity of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the religious people he represents in particular.

By the time I arrived at the park, one week after the beginning of the protests, I found it difficult to move freely owing to the many thousands of protestors in the park and square. There were a great number of stands of various organisations, mostly secular and leftist, handing out leaflets and discussing their demands, the policies of the government and the aims of the protest.

I went to Istanbul for two weeks to do fieldwork. During the day and at night, I stayed in the park, visiting every tent, talking to protesters about their ideas, their criticisms. I took hundreds of pictures and wrote down every slogan I encountered. I also carried out twenty in-depth interviews, both with protestors and with those who opposed them.

My aim was to find answers to the following questions: What were the activists protesting against? What government policies and practices were they criticising? Did religious people also criticise the prime minister or the government? If so, why were they dissatisfied? Although some religious people supported the protests by either going to the park or expressing sympathy on social media, why did most religious people withhold support? Was the huge protest movement actually about religion, religious people and the religious identity of the prime minister? What kind of impact did the Gezi Park protests have on the views of Turkish people, particularly university students, concerning religion and secularity? Is there a conflict between secular and religious Muslims in Turkey and, if there is, what has been the impact of the Gezi Park protests on this?

The Objects of the Protests

When I asked the objectives of the protests, interviewees gave a variety of answers, common complaints being the political rhetoric of the prime minister, his contemptuous attitude towards those who had not supported him in elections and some of his policies.

One of the most commonly heard expressions in the park was '*Hayat tarzına müdahale*' ('interfering in people's lifestyle'). Particularly, secular informants accused the prime minister of interfering in the secular lifestyle of citizens of the country, via his speeches and his policies. There was a strong suspicion that their secular lifestyle was under threat.

There has been anxiety among secular Muslims in Turkey about this issue ever since the AKP came to power in 2002. Until the protests, the relatively few secular intellectuals who expressed anxiety about the conservative government were sometimes referred to as 'anxious moderns.' These people were not at the fore of the Gezi Park protests; rather it has been the generality of secular people. I asked secular people about the apprehension of threat to their secular lives.

The new regulations on alcohol were intended to ban off-licence sales between 10 pm and 6 am. The law also forbids the sale of alcohol near schools and places of worship.[1] It seems that secular citizens generally view any government move on issues like alcohol with suspicion. Nejat explains what the new regulations mean for him:

> Of course, I do not want people to be drunk and disturb people on the street. But I think the government, by imposing this restriction, is using it as a control mechanism to limit the living space of people. They also dispossess the people who drink on the street of their freedom. (3rd year electrical engineering student, 11 June 2013)

The question of the place of women in society is a divisive issue among religious and secular people in Turkey. The place of women in the business, political and social spheres and their roles in the family have long been discussed in the country. Although the AKP established a women's branch of the party this, they assert, does not imply any restriction on women in politics, economy and business. The party was primarily criticised over policymakers' rhetoric and especially over the new draft of an abortion law.

1 http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/yeni_alkol_duzenlemesi_neler_getiriyor-1137075.

All the women I spoke to in the park objected to the views expressed by the prime minister on abortion. All saw the law as a violation of women's rights:

> We women do not feel safe. When they discuss abortion, they imply that abortion is used as a birth control method. How does something like that happen? Which woman can decide lightly to have an abortion? (Ceyda, 4th year history student, 10 June 2013)

The words 'authoritarian' and 'dictator' were much heard among protestors in the park, mainly criticising the prime minister, rather than the government in general. According to the protestors, Erdoğan, having been elected three times and having been in power for eleven years, has been an authoritarian leader who fails to show respect for his opponents. The reaction of the prime minister to the protesters at the outset of the demonstrations was perceived as insulting. On 2 June, during an opening ceremony, he said, 'We will also build a mosque in Taksim Square. Of course I will not get permission from the CHP [the main secularist opposition party]. I will also not get it from a few looters [*çapulcu*]!'[2]

İhsan Eliaçık is a theologian and Islamist activist. People were surprised when they saw him and his friends, the Anti-capitalist Muslims Society, some of them women wearing headscarves and some bearded religious young men. The group was there to protest against the government and wealthy religious business people, particularly because of their close relationship with the capitalist economic system. Eliaçık calls the economic policies of the government '*Abdestli kapitalizm*' ('ritually cleansed capitalism'):

> I have been criticising the religious for being addicted to money and property and having desire for prohibited ill-gotten gains ('*haram*'), and also criticising the government for misappropriating the capital, and being very greedy and money-grabbing. We have come here for this reason. (9 June 2013)

Love of Atatürk and defending the father of the nation was another motivation for some protestors. In Turkey this can be another way of expressing support for secularism. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) founded the Turkish Republic. He was determined to secularise and westernise the country. Debate about Islamism and secularism in Turkey generally centres

2 http://haber.sol.org.tr/devlet-ve-siyaset/erdogan-onbinleri-birkac-capulcu-ilan-etti-diktatorluk-kanimda-yok-dedi-haberi-739.

on esteem of and opposition to him. His image symbolises secularism and the secular lifestyle (White 2010). There were a great number of flags with his face in Gezi Park and Taksim Square. These seemed to express secular anxiety and a secular reaction to conservative government policies.[3]

The clearest reason for these reactions was a statement by the prime minister, just before the protests, on 28 May 2013. Criticised over the alcohol regulations, he asserted that he acted with religious justification, saying, 'When two drunkards make a law, it is respected, but why must a law ordered by religion be rejected?'[4] A member of parliament from the CHP, Muharrem İnce, claimed that Erdoğan, in referring to 'two drunkards,' meant Atatürk and the prime minister of the time, İsmet İnönü.[5] People generally accepted this interpretation. This heightened the anxiety of secular Turks and provoked reactions in the country. One concern was this slighting reference to Atatürk and İnönü; another was the reference to religion when making law in a secular state.

Another reason for the Gezi protests would seem to be the lack of effective opposition parties. The protesters saw the CHP as uninspiring and unsuccessful.

The Place of Religion in the Protests

According to my informants, the protests were not apparently about religion and religious people. Although some committed secularists in the park believed that the government aimed to turn the country into an Islamic state – and there is evident anxiety among secular people about indications of Islamism by the government – they were not against religion and religiosity itself. To understand the place of religion in the protests, it is necessary to have a clear conception of political Islamism, religiosity, secularism and secular Muslimism. The secular Muslims of Turkey are worried about political Islamism, rather than religiosity. They are not troubled by having a religious prime minister, but they are troubled by a political Islamist prime minister who aims to Islamise the country as a whole, from the legal system to education.

3 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/08/turkey-protesters-proclaim-heirs-ataturk.

4 http://www.cnnturk.com/2013/turkiye/05/28/basbakan.iki.ayyasin.yaptigi.muteber.de/709778.0/.

5 http://www.aksam.com.tr/siyaset/chpli-ince-iki-ayyas-diye-ataturk-ve-inonuyu-kasttetti/haber-210508.

Are the religious identities of Erdoğan and the AKP important for you?

> In my view, it is up to people themselves. He might be religious, but religion should be lived in private. His religiosity is not a bad thing, but in my view, it should not be that much, like interfering with everyone's lives. (Aylin, female, 1st year medical student, 9 June 2013)

An Alevi informant, İlyas, emphasised that the Gezi protest was not about religion, much less about any particular sect. He remarked that Sunni and Alevi people lived together in the park peacefully and that Erdoğan incites his supporters using religion and by discriminating against the protesters.

I visited the ADD, which was founded in 1989 with the aim of preserving the revolution and the principles of Atatürk, and committed to the necessity of being the guardians of those principles.[6] Tizcan is a university student and a member of the association who was in the park. He criticised the prime minister for referring to religion when making laws. He saw this as contrary to Atatürk's secularism:

> Actually, there is a significant difference between what the government tries to do and which method they use. For example, making alcohol regulations is acceptable in a social law state. Nevertheless, if you refer to religion when you do it, it means that you are doing something against the principles of a social law and secularist state. (3rd year journalism student, 10 June 2013)

I asked him if he had a problem with the prime minister's religious identity. He said that people cannot object to him praying and carrying out religious rituals; everybody should respect his worldview. However, he must practise religion personally, as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, not as the prime minister forcing people to practise religion. Government decisions should be made from a world viewpoint, not a religious one.

On 2 June, when the police and the protesters clashed in the Beşiktaş neighbourhood, protestors running from the tear gas and water cannons sought sanctuary in the Bezm-i Alem Valide Sultan Mosque in Kabataş. Most of the protesters went in without taking off their shoes, using the mosque as both shelter and first aid post. Later a few beer cans appeared in photos apparently taken into the mosque, seeming to indicate that some protesters

6 http://www.add.org.tr/kurulus-nedeni.html.

may have drunk alcohol there.[7] The media and others sympathetic to the government used these pictures and reports for a long time afterwards to claim the protesters were disrespectful of religion. Much was made of the incident: some claimed the muezzin allowed protesters into the mosque and no disrespect was shown, while others claimed they threatened the muezzin and entered by force.[8]

When I enquired about this incident, protesters in the park denied the allegations of drinking of alcohol in the mosque and said entering with shoes in such haste, distress and commotion should be considered with understanding and tolerance. They disagreed with the claim that this proved that the protests were against religion and religious people.

Eliaçık and other members of the Anti-capitalist Muslims Society played a key role in the debate on the place of religion in the protests. This society was identifiably religious: the female members wearing headscarves, the male members having characteristically Islamic beards, while on their tent there were slogans such as '*Mülk Allah'ındır*' ('Property belongs to Allah'). They organised Friday prayers in the park twice during the protests. While some protesters attended, others stood guard around them in order to show respect for religion and religious people.

The *Mi'raj* are the parts of a night journey of the Prophet Muhammad in 621. According to Islamic belief, he went from Mecca to Jerusalem and then he ascended to heaven where he spoke to God. This journey is celebrated in Turkey every year by reciting verses from the Qur'an, praying and distributing special pastry rings consumed on holy days. The anniversary of this journey is called *Miraç Kandili* in Turkish. The Anti-capitalist Muslims Society organised a *Miraç Kandili* in the park and almost all the protesters joined the celebration. Most of my informants mentioned these events as evidence that the Gezi Park protests were definitely not against religion, religious people or religious principles; on the contrary, they were against the prime minister and particular government policies.

> We, in the middle of Taksim Square, amidst a lot of (left-wing) factions and neo-nationalists, celebrated the *Mi'raj*, recited the Qur'an and prayed. I prayed, and then thousands of citizens responded with '*amin*' ('amen'). The following day, we recited the *azan* to invite folks to the

7 http://www.stargundem.com/gundem/1322952-eylemciler-camiye-ayakkabiyla-ve-birayla-girdiler.html.

8 http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/851180-basbakanin-birayla-girdiler-dedigi-camide-o-gece-neler-yasandi and http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/48942.aspx.

> Friday prayer. People responded enthusiastically and came. They are still coming, embracing each other and crying (with joy). These two scenes destroyed the claim of 'anti-religious hostilities.' People think that those who went to the airport (to welcome Erdoğan) are the (representatives of the) religious populations of the country, and those who came to the park are the ones with no religion, disrespectful to religion and willing to live a modern lifestyle (without religion). (Eliaçık, 9 June 2013)

There were reports of harassment of headscarf-wearing women by protesters. Activists I spoke to about this in Gezi Park, including women protestors wearing the headscarf, rejected reports of this kind, while some of my informants who did not support the protests said that they and some of their friends were subjected to harassment away from the park, and even in Taksim Square, on account of their headscarf. Almost all of them blamed the neo-nationalists (*Ulusalcılar*) for these harassments. Zeliha was a female protester wearing a headscarf:

> A lot of people think that the park is the place of neo-nationalists. Since it seems like that from the outset, they (the religious people) are worried about coming here. Neo-nationalists also have a similar problem. Most of them identify themselves with the protests even though they have not been here yet. Therefore there are some over confident neo-nationalists who attack women wearing the headscarf outside the park. (4th year environmental engineering student, 10 June 2013)

Zeliha gave some examples, which she had heard from friends, of attacks on religious women wearing the headscarf. They ranged from teasing and swinging the Atatürk flag in their faces, to pushing and shoving and knocking them about, or banging a stick on their car. During the interview, she remarked that a friend sitting with us was the most recent example she had heard of. I asked her friend about this and she told me of being in the capital city the previous weekend, walking on one of the main thoroughfares. There were many protesters in the street. Some shouted as they passed '*Başlarını kapatanların başlarını yolmaya gidiyoruz!*' ('We are going to cut off the heads of the people who cover their heads!').

Most of my informants who spoke of harassment of women wearing the headscarf accused the neo-nationalists or the Atatürkists, particularly Atatürkist women over 50 years of age. I put these charges to two of my informants who identified themselves as neo-nationalists and Atatürkists or Kemalists. They did not accept the accusations. They indicated that,

although there was some hostility between secularists and religious people during the protests, the new secularist generation is more respectful of their religious peers who embrace a different lifestyle.

> It is not right to identify an organisation by its members' personal remarks unless they are representatives of that institution. Such remarks are individuals' own responsibility. (Tizcan, male, 3rd year journalism student, 10 June 2013)

For Turkish secularists, religiosity and political Islamism are different concepts. While they defend the right to practise religion, they are against political Islamism. Berkay says the government must not have any religion and that religion exists for people. He says that Turkish secular youth believe that every person, in the individual sense, whichever religion he or she believes in, must have the freedom to practise his or her religion.

Tizcan, like Berkay, rejected the perception of Atatürkists as irreligious. 'Those who lump Atatürkism and irreligiousness together, I believe, lack science, culture and even religion!' He sought to demonstrate that Atatürk was respectful, personally and as a politician, towards Islam.

The Position of Religious People in the Protests

Based on my observations, in the first days of the Gezi Park protests, there were a great number of religious people who supported the protest, either through social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, or by going to the park in person. Among them were writers, university academics, Islamist activists and university students. Initially, they were criticising the government about some parts of the new Taksim project, which included removing the park, rebuilding an Ottoman-era military barracks and constructing a shopping centre. Later, they protested against the police brutality towards the protestors in the park. This was seen as a reflection of the style of the prime minister. There had been criticism on social media by some religious people, especially about his authoritarian way of speaking and acting. Later on, most religious people withdrew their support for the protests. Only the Anti-capitalist Muslims Society and a few religious individuals remained active in supporting the protests.

In Istanbul, I also met with some religious university students away from the park. These informants criticised the prime minister for a variety of reasons, but also criticised some of the protestors' methods and some of

the things they were saying. Certainly, support for them was becoming more muted. Sevil, as a headscarf-wearing university student, was among my religious informants who supported the protests although she never went to the park:

> I still support the protest. I am one of the people who do not support the Taksim project, building the barracks on the place of the park. According to the last research I have seen, 75 per cent of people do not want it. In fact, I was going to go to the park on 31 May. I was busy and could not go there. When I went home, I saw the news that the police attacked the protesters who did not do anything wrong. It provoked the protesters. I am thinking now, if I were there I would have become very angry after the attack with tear gas. (4th year sociology student, 8 June 2013).

Sevil gave some examples of criticisms levelled by religious people at the government. According to her, there had been anger among the religious or conservative community towards the so-called 'tenderers,' who got rich rapidly by corruptly tendering for government contracts. Secondly, she said that religious people fumed over the prime minister's authoritarian attitude, accusing him of acting 'like a sultan.' Another cause of anger, according to Sevil, was that the headscarf problem had still not been solved.

Faruk was a university student and a member of a religious group. When we talked about the complaints of the protesters concerning the authoritarian manner of the prime minister, he said he was in agreement with them about it, and that the power of the prime minister should come to an end. 'But our only problem is that there is no one else in Turkey like Tayyip Erdoğan. That's why he's becoming more and more authoritarian.'

Despite their support for the protests in the first few days, and despite the criticisms of the government and the prime minister, religious people withdrew their support as time went on. The foremost reason for this change, according to all my religious informants, was the fact that the protesters did not keep their distance from violence during the protests. In their eyes, the protests, although they started 'innocently,' lost their legitimacy when the protestors resorted to violence. It was unacceptable to them:

> Of course I did not support the attack of the police. But I also do not support the people who reacted to the attack using violence and still resist. They should have seen the situation and withdrawn from there. It was their choice. (Beril, female, 1st year psychology student, 10 July 2013)

These events strengthened the perceptions of religious people that the protestors were anti-religious. More importantly, these kinds of events reminded religious people of the period starting on 28 February 1997, during which religious Turks found themselves restricted in several ways. Thousands of female university students had to leave their schools or, as an interim solution, wore wigs at university. In addition to the government pressure, some secularists organised harassments, such as banging pots and pans and putting the lights off at a certain time in the evening. Some of my female informants look back on this as a traumatic experience:

> Because of the headscarf bans, I had to wear a wig in the last year of high school and at university. I experienced many difficulties, had very big troubles. I mean, really very big troubles! It is still affecting me. Therefore, I still go through a trauma when I hear the sounds of pots and pans, and my tweets change immediately. All my thoughts, views, attitudes, keeping my balance, change! That period, 28 February, was also a trauma for a lot of friends of mine. We are a generation that experienced these difficulties. Consequently, we must not be reminded of these traumas. (Sevil, 4th year sociology student, 8 June 2013)

Erdoğan came to power after the 28 February 1997 period, largely as a result of these events. Memory of that time still inclines many religious people to back Erdoğan against the secularists, despite his faults. Some religious groups and individuals, although critical of the government privately, see public criticism of Erdoğan as dangerous for religious people.

Another factor causing religious people to withdraw support for the protesters was some of the complaints and demands made during the Gezi Park protests. According to some informants, Erdoğan urging people to have three children, for instance, should be seen simply as offering advice and not an encroachment on freedom. Alcohol regulation was also not about lifestyle, but was necessary for social order. Some of them did not accept the claim that Erdoğan has become authoritarian; they think that it is just his personality and that this was one of the reasons he was elected. Slogans like 'Resign Tayyip!' and 'Government out!' because of his style and his way of speaking were perceived by religious people as unfair to the prime minister. For them, there was no serious reason for the prime minister and the government to resign. They generally criticised the protesters for a lack of constructive criticism and only using negative arguments. According to them, there is no other politician as powerful and charismatic as Erdoğan. There is no alternative.

Lastly, one of the most important reasons given for not supporting the protests, and even for being against them, was the belief that the protests were organised by 'external powers.'[9] Extended coverage by the foreign media, especially the BBC and CNN, the appearance at the protests by a German politician, Claudia Roth, and demands by some protesters to, for example, prevent the building of the third Bosphorus bridge and third Istanbul airport, were seized on as evidence by people claiming that the main target of the protests was the overthrow of the prime minister and government for economic and political reasons.

Democratisation vs. Polarisation

Although there were a confusing variety of issues during the Gezi Park protests, in my view, these protests have developed a social consciousness especially among secular people in Turkey. Based on my observations and interviews, the new generation, the university students in particular, are much more aware of the necessity to defend the rights and freedom of all segments of society. The internet, social media and the social environment at universities play a very significant role in this democratic consciousness-raising. When socialising at university, students become familiar with other worldviews, political views and lifestyles. Berkay accepts that secular people have changed in terms of social awareness in the last decade, especially through the universities.

Do you accept that secular people were not so sensitive about the difficulties of the women wearing headscarves?

Definitely I do, because we, as the folk, learn some things slowly. We learn not to be afraid of one another. I am 21 years old. I do not know what exactly went on in the period you mentioned, but people learn in time. It might have been prevalent 10-15 years ago, but nowadays, we are university students and we have female friends in our classrooms. So it would not be suitable to have such an anxiety, because we live together now. We are going to be together everywhere evermore. They are my classmates and after the university, they may be my colleagues in the future. (Berkay, male, 3rd year chemical engineering student, 10 June 2013)

9 http://haber.stargazete.com/politika/gezi-eylemi-erdogani-hedef-aldi-olaylarin-arkasinda-dis-gucler-var/haber-778475.

Communication in Gezi Park gave young people a greater depth of understanding. They spent days and weeks eating together, helping each other, discussing and observing worldviews and lifestyles, entertaining together, even praying together and striving together for freedom for all of society. Ela, a religious female university student wearing a headscarf, spent at least ten days in the park. Despite a number of shortcomings she encountered, she said that she continued going because of the importance of the protest for the future of Turkey:

> Although there are some problems and shortcomings in the park, I think Gezi Park is a very positive thing. There has never been anything like this before in Turkey. So many people with different views in a park, and nobody harms each other! I think this is definitely a positive development for both Turkey and us. I learn a lot of things listening to other people here. Others also learn a lot of things listening to others. We are going to move towards peace listening to the unpleasant experiences of the others and communicating. (1st year film studies student, 10 June 2013)

The protests raised people's awareness of the distinction between majoritarian democracy and pluralistic democracy. Ceyda saw a difference between the previous secular generation and the new generation. She criticised as '*sakat*' ('invalid') the understanding of democracy of the previous generation. For her, the previous generation only defended their own rights and freedom, while the new generation defends the rights of all members of society:

> I think that the most important duty for us, as the youth, is to persuade the previous generation about the necessity of objecting to all kinds of oppression. It is not limited to my parents. I should attend to different platforms and give the message that you should reject the oppression of everyone, not only yourself. Because oppression of a section of society is an oppression of all of us; if we all object we can live happier, more freely and comfortably. (4th year history student, 10 June 2013)

I asked Nejat's opinion on the anxiety felt by religious people about a possible return to the situation of the 28 February period. He understood their fears, but was sure that Turkey would never return to that situation. According to him, nobody in the park wanted that: even the people shouting 'We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal.' He explained 'The freedom of one segment of the society is also my freedom. I think we understand this now.'

Religious students who did not go to the park and did not distinguish between the protest in the park and other, supporting protests elsewhere, tended to view the protests as the reaction of secular people unable to overthrow the AKP democratically through the ballot box. They saw the Gezi Park period as a decisive moment for the new generation regarding the future of Turkey, and supported equal rights for all in society: freedom of expression; freedom of religion; freedom of lifestyle; the right to education, etc. Emphasis was given to the importance of a pluralistic democracy, respecting the other's worldview and lifestyle and to justice in the country. Notably absent was any mention by religious students of a desire to Islamise the legal and educational system or any other areas of public life in the country. Common points in their statements were justice, freedom and respect. Bedri was among the religious students interviewed:

> We need to decide first. Are we going to will to live together accepting the existence of different views and beliefs? The people who answer 'no' to this question are going to be regarded as the people who desire polarisation in the country. (male, 4th year management student, 28 July 2013)

Although it seems that few religious people would vote for the secular CHP, and secular people would not easily vote for the conservative AKP, the university students I interviewed were strikingly limited in their partisanship. They readily offered criticism of the political party they had voted for at the election and seemed ready to consider switching support:

> I voted for the AKP but I am not a partisan person. I voted for them, because I believed they were going to do a good job. If there is an election now, I will vote for them again. But if there were alternatives working much better, realising good projects in terms of the development of Turkey, my vote would change then. I mean, I am not a fanatic. I am not a person who will be the partisan of the AKP or the CHP for life. (Mehmet, male, 4th year science teaching student, 13 June 2013)

Conclusion

Based on my observations and interviews, the protests in Gezi Park had certain objectives. People went in limited numbers to the park at first in order to stop its destruction and replacement with a shopping centre dressed-up in the guise of historic barracks. After the attack by the police

on the protesters, thousands of people went to the park to support the protesters and to protest police brutality. Later, the protests spread all over the country and developed into protests targeting government policies and the attitude and rhetoric of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The main points of criticism were interference in people's chosen lifestyle; women's rights; authoritarian attitudes and policies; anxiety regarding the possibility of the transformation of the country into an Islamic state; freedom of expression, especially the freedom of journalists and the media; oppressive alcohol regulation; abortion law; the Atatürk personality cult; the capitalist economy; and the lack of a satisfactory opposition in parliament.

When I asked people whether the protests were about religion and religious people, they were surprised and said that they were also believers and respectful of religion, adducing evidence such as the presence of female protesters wearing headscarves at the protests, observance of Friday prayers in the park without problem, the celebration of the *Mi'raj* religious festival and sharing meals together in the park. While they had no problem with religion and religious people and defended their right to believe and practise, they were sensitive about political Islam. They defended the idea of a secular country and were against Turkey becoming a religious state or the government referring to religion when making its laws. Religious protesters defended the same set of ideas. They also wanted a secular state giving equal rights to all religions and sects.

Many religious people withdrew their support after the first few days of the protest, and I asked them about this. I was given the following reasons: hate speech heard from some protesters; the failure of protesters to maintain a suitable distance from violence and extremist left-wing people; harassment of women wearing headscarves in other places where protests were held; memories of the 28 February period stirred up by the pots and pans protests of secular people in other neighbourhoods of Istanbul and in other cities; reports in the media that led religious people to suspect protesters were anti-religious, with the actual target of the protests being Islam and religious Muslims. Some religious people compared the country now to the situation of a decade or more ago, and were eager not to return to the problems with the economy and the lack of freedom of past times. They thought the protesters, although right in some of their criticisms, did the prime minister an injustice with their demands for his resignation and that of the government. Doubts were expressed about the wisdom of stopping building work on the third Bosphorus Bridge and the third Istanbul airport. Most did not see an acceptable alternative for the position of prime minister or an acceptable alternative to the AKP. And then there

were the ideas put about that foreign countries were interfering in Turkey's domestic affairs. With the exception of the Anti-capitalist Muslims Society and a number of individuals, religious people withdrew their support from the Gezi Park protests and then the protests transformed into a secular reaction movement.

Both secular and religious university student informants were optimistic about the future of the country in terms of democratic consciousness. They were against a polarisation of the country, oppressive government, the limiting of freedom of expression and they wanted freedom for all lifestyles. The main problem for all segments of society, especially for university students, is rule by oppressive and authoritarian governments, whether secular or religious.

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13 Gezi Park

A Revindication of Public Space

Clara Rivas Alonso

> 'Perhaps, after all, Lefebvre was right, more than forty years ago, to insist that the revolution in our times has to be urban-or nothing.' (Harvey 2012, 25)

Introduction

Gezi Park became the subject of worldwide headlines in June 2013. What had initially started as a small sit-in to protect the last piece of green space in central Istanbul went on to develop as a nationwide uprising of sorts.[1] Turkey had rarely seen this level of inter-group camaraderie in contemporary history. It seemed that, at last, something was happening that would start to seriously question the policies that had destroyed (and continue to do so) large chunks of the social fabric, environment, the tangible and intangible heritages of Istanbul, alongside the possibilities of more egalitarian and truly heterogeneous urban spaces. This paper attempts to conceptualise the background events that led to the occupation of Gezi Park and how Gezi Park itself materialised the hopes of the 'right to the city' movement, as it stood as a moment in a process, rather than a one-off event.

In the latest cases of citizen struggles, the return to the commons and the reclaiming of public space seem to be the most effective exercises of social participation and grassroots alliances. Thus, the way urban space has been produced to control citizens and has been reproduced by Gezi Park is of particular importance. Specifically, I seek to answer the following question: How did the AKP project of urban restructuring feed the protests in and about Gezi Park? In order to do so, this paper will identify the different processes of institutional positioning in relation to urban spaces, demonstrating the links between exclusion and social unrest. I will approach AKP's project from a number of perspectives; namely its reliance on the construction sector as the basis of its economic programme, the commodification of culture and its role in rewriting history.

1 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22753752.

Seeking responses to the points raised in the first section, I will then go on to analyse the stateless autonomous space reclaimed in the midst of the protests. Mirroring the initial contextualisation, a description of how Gezi was a response to institutional efforts will follow. This exercise will allow the paper to demonstrate that truly public spaces are indeed achievable and are the product of the performing of citizens' collective urban identity. I will highlight Gezi's position as a response to the militarisation of urban spaces by focusing on the identity produced within its boundaries. Cartographic readings of the park will aid the aim of the paper.

I will draw on Doreen Massey's (2005) work on the reclaiming of spaces as 'the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions;' 'the sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality' and 'space as the necessary constituent of the Social' (Massey 2005). In addition, David Harvey (2004) has been able to capture the nature of capitalist urban development by coining the term 'accumulation by dispossession;' he is also instrumental in the conceptualisation of the 'right to the city' movement defined as 'the struggle [...] against the powers of capital that ruthlessly feed upon and extract rents from the common life that others have produced' (Harvey 2012). Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992) provide a useful analysis of the anthropology of place in relation to identity and sense of belonging. Throughout the paper, I will identify unregulated urban spaces with spaces of possibility (Lees 2004), as they are the prime geographical location of social interaction. The spirit of the *mahalle* ('neighbourhood') will be a recurrent theme invoked throughout the paper and it will help illustrate the success of Gezi as a space of solidarity and tolerance.[2]

The Turkish Institutional Approach to Intervention in the Urban Environment

In this first section of the paper I will describe how the Turkish city is institutionally produced. This will support the argument that Gezi was a direct consequence of the different hegemonic practices taking over

2 It draws from the collective imaginations of an urban space where dwellers not only know each other but can also count on each others' help in times of hardship. A recurrent theme in popular culture, the reality of neighbourhoods is not perfect but nevertheless provides urbanites with the possibilities of unregulated interaction, thus aiding the construction of an essential part of an urban sense of belonging.

urban spaces, Istanbul in particular: 'Instead of stopping with the notion of deterritorialization, the pulverisation of the space of high modernity, we need to theorize how space is being reterritorialized in the contemporary world' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 20). If Gezi feeds a cross-border struggle for citizen's rights similar to class struggles in other places, the way those in power apply tools of social control and adapt them to fit the needs of their own enterprise need to be addressed.

AKP's Neoliberal Project: Taming the Commons by Taming the City

Since AKP was voted into government in 2002, the implementation of their own neoliberal project has advanced at high speed as all manner of (apparent) economic growth and urban changes exemplify. It is necessary, nevertheless, to clarify here the term *neoliberalism* when used in the context of Istanbul and Turkey. AKP was initially seen as a moderate conservative Islamic party but as the core of its policies has been challenged, its real nature has surfaced. On the one hand, they have actively supported privatisation processes. On the other, they have intervened in the promotion of foreign investment on previously public land, thus setting the stage for what we have seen as a regulation of public space into something else: a space disciplined into creating relationships based on capital exchange.[3]

AKP's take on advanced capitalism suggests a combination of liberal economic policies and conservative ideology. The role of urbanisation has gained central importance as 'The whole neoliberal project over the last 30 years has been oriented towards privatisation of control over the surplus' and 'cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product' (Harvey 2012, 5). Seemingly, citizens' conditions are better, as they are able to access more goods in more places. At the same time, working hours are longer, job security remains precarious and the best services are accessed by those who can afford them.

Inasmuch as the neoliberal model thrives in a landscape of class division, the ruling elites of any socio-economic structure, in this case Turkey, have taken advantage of already existing cultural divisions. Adding to Engin Isin's (2007, 221) description of the city as a difference-making machine, Anna Secor (2004, 357) points out, 'class is not the only variant of discrimination,' as subaltern groups are defined and redefined by an elite that continues to benefit from a society based on the discrimination of the Other. Secor

3 The official discourse is available at http://investment-in-turkey.com/page7.html. Accessed 29 May 2014.

demonstrates how women discovered they were labelled with *Kurdishness* as they came into contact with state sponsored discrimination at school. Following Gupta and Ferguson, traditional identity politics per se does not resolve the issue, but the addressing of the hierarchical nature of social relations helps define it. Therefore, Secor's (Ibid., 361) accounts on the 'spatiality of identity in the city and performance' become relevant inasmuch as official narratives instrumentalize difference to redefine who the city is for.

AKP's Reliance on the Construction Sector

Urban spaces have been at the forefront of the analysis of contemporary social uprisings. The possibilities of unregulated association and equal interaction between different sectors of society have been curbed by attempts from the Turkish government to restructure (tame) the very nature of social spaces through mechanisms of urban exclusion. David Harvey's theorisation of how streets are the new battleground of democratic rights as the state functions as the guard of the rights of the minority is convincing: 'Cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product. Urbanisation has always been, therefore, a class phenomenon of some sort, since surpluses have been extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while control over the use of the surplus typically lies in the hands of a few.' Furthermore, 'Capitalism needs urbanisation to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces' (Harvey 2012, 5). Istanbul stands as one of the best examples of his exploration of advanced urban capitalism:

> What is new in recent developments is that, while spatial policies used to be a method to *strengthen* hegemony, the AKP's neoliberal hegemony is *constituted* through their use of space. Since the 2000s, the AKP has invented governance models to commodify spaces that, on the one hand, allow them to allocate surpluses to their own budgets and networks while also supporting the enormous growth of a government-allied construction sector on the other (Çavusoğlu and Strutz 2014, 143).

The elite, in this case a party in government with the majority of votes and links to a new emerging class of entrepreneurs, has sought a monopoly over rentable spaces. It has also created the conditions to rule over that monopoly uncontested (Özcan and Turunç 2011).

The *gecekondu* (literally 'built overnight:' informal housing) amnesty in 1983 was struck as a deal between the political elite and powerful factory

owners whereby they did not have to provide services to dwellers and workers of their factories.[4] This had an effect on the urban fabric, in the sense that it provided the urban poor with social mobility as they became responsible for their housing. Economic neoliberalisation started to take place in the 1980s (Keyder 1999). The potential for profit in lands occupied by poorer dwellers was too good an opportunity. TOKİ was created and it went on to become the essential agent in the expropriation and privatisation of lands and allowed since 2003 the building of housing consortiums with private firms.[5] Furthermore, interventions in the built environment of cities are no longer sufficient to feed the machinery at play. Threatening further ecological and social catastrophe, AKP has also embarked on huge infrastructure projects all over the country: a third airport, the 'crazy' canal and extensive dam building, to name a few.

The legal framework enabling this rapid intervention in the urban context has been developed to fit government interests. Two laws were passed that were instrumental in the process: Law 5366 (2005) and Law 6306 (2012). The first one went on to become the Urban Renewal Law as it allowed intervention and expropriation by the municipalities within the historical boundaries of the city. Since it was passed, more than forty areas have been designated as urban renewal projects and around 12,000 people have been evicted from their houses.[6] If Law 6306 initially responded to the urgent need to address the real threat of an imminent earthquake, its possible consequences have alarmed different sectors of Turkish civil society and academia, among others. Alongside these laws, other fiscal measures have been put in place to ease speculation, e.g. Law No. 6302, which opens the land to foreign purchase.[7] There have been instances where judges ruled against the destruction, privatisation or 'regeneration' of an urban space (the last floor of *Demirören* shopping centre in İstiklal Avenue being one of them)[8] but projects have not been halted accordingly.[9] These examples support the idea that Turkish law is essentially relative, rather than a citizen's tool to access justice. Indeed, changes to Istanbul have caused havoc to egalitarian understandings of public spaces. Asu Aksoy highlights the extent of the urban transformation. When tackling the possible outcomes,

4 http://lsecities.net/media/objects/articles/istanbuls-gecekondus/en-gb/.

5 http://www.toki.gov.tr/english/hda.asp. Accessed 18 May 2014.

6 http://reclaimistanbul.com/2011/04/04/hello-world/.

7 http://www.mfa.gov.tr/guidance-for-foreigners.en.mfa.

8 http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/2011/05/istiklal-demiroren/.

9 The recent Zeytinburnu project, to name a few: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/construction-disfigures-istanbul-skyline.html.

Aksoy describes the possibility of Istanbul becoming a city based on 'spaces of consumption' and the 'gentrification of living spaces;' landscapes that 'we are seeing' now. She goes on to offer the second possible outcome: 'the possibility of a social and cultural openness predicated on inclusive and egalitarian principles – a politically inspired, alternative vision of openness.'[10] She clearly exposes the need to contest the neoliberalisation of space. Entire neighbourhoods have been evicted or deprived of infrastructure in order to be rebuilt and brandised for middle/upper-class capital. Gated communities have created a fear of the outside and others that did not exist in the first place. The ever-growing construction of shopping centres aims to respond to consumerist lifestyles imposed by a tightly-controlled media. The possibility of a neighbourly *mahalle* is increasingly disappearing to give way to secured individual spatial consumption. All these systems of strategic rule over citizens' lives were brought to a halt, or interrupted in one way or another, by the Gezi Park protests.

Commodification of Culture and Monopolization of Narratives: Branding the City

As Doreen Massey (2005, 24) argues, 'space implies the possibility of relations.' The new regime of capital has been imposed, making use of different tools of social persuasion to limit those possibilities of relations. In order to turn space into the opposite of the political and the social, the opposite of the unregulated interactions found in the *mahalles*, it becomes imperative not only to construct accordingly, but also to make sure the narratives are internalised. It is thus that the project can continue uncontested. How to fill these new AKP-branded urban spaces? 17,000 new mosques have been built since AKP came to power.[11] Anything that stays out of the equation ought to be marginalised or even criminalised: hence, the importance of renewed efforts in the struggle for women's rights (as the prime minister tells women they should have at least three children and abortion should be illegal), alcohol consumption (new laws restricting consumption have recently been passed), internet use (as a new internet law has just been approved and will jeopardise users' privacy), and so on.

10 http://www.europanostra-tr.org/files/file/Asu%20Aksoy_Istanbul_Dilemma%20of%20Direction.pdf, 6.

11 http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/generalnews/2013/02/19/Turkey-17-000-new-mosques-built-Erdogan_8274135.html.

As Harvey (2012, 14) notes, '[s]hopping malls, multiplexes, and box stores proliferate (the production of each has become big business), as do fast-food and artisanal market places, boutique cultures, and, as Sharon Zukin slyly notes, "pacification by cappuccino".' All these spaces of consumption have been secured to maximise the experience and do away with any possibilities of dissent. When the streets erupt against yet another shopping centre, the links between social unrest and excluding urbanism are clear. These narratives available in mass media describe better lives in gated communities and privileged islands of exclusivity:[12] the city, Istanbul, has been torn apart and branded as a site of investment and opportunity in order for the taming to be more acceptable, or at least undisputed. Exercises of 'cultural engineering' produce an Istanbul hollow of its character, safe for its consumption and devoid of the necessary element of surprise essential in thriving urban spaces (Huyssen 2008, 3). From the construction of luxury villas on top of invaluable heritage in *Sulukule* to the marketing of shiny new business districts, the city has been rebranded.[13] This exercise has actively packaged urban spaces and lifestyles as another product to be sold.[14] As '[t]he successful branding of a city might require the expulsion or eradication of everyone or everything else that doesn't fit the brand' (Harvey 2012, 108), those urban dwellers that are not profitable or marketable are relegated to another category in the social pyramid. Thus, popular neighbourhoods or *mahalles* located in profitable lands are torn down both physically and socially. The underprivileged, unable to afford the prices, are rendered invisible. They are literally moved somewhere else, normally to the outskirts of the city or TOKİ housing, thus making the process complete: these new TOKİ homeowners would still be part of the economic machinery as new contracts are signed. Those that enriched the city's culture and diversity, effectively being an essential part of the process that makes Istanbul Istanbul, are finally discarded. Following historical lines of social and cultural exclusion, these groups tend to be the marginalised minorities; namely, Roma, Kurdish, African, Alevi, transsexual, gay, lesbians and, above all, the urban poor.

12 Any advert in a Turkish Airlines magazine exemplifies this: http://www.skylife.com/en/. Accessed 30 March 2014.

13 http://www.zaha-hadid.com/masterplans/kartal-pendik-masterplan/. Accessed 12 February 2014.

14 Their success remains unattainable if we are to go by the results the Spanish and UK governments have achieved with regard to any significant economic gains. Both *Marca España* and *Branding Britain* projects have failed as poverty and unemployment continue to rise.

Rewriting History

AKP's project of urban exclusion has been supported by the manipulation of official narratives of cultural belonging. In order to destroy both tangible and intangible heritages, AKP has actively engaged in the rewriting of a history that suits their neoliberal project: 'The price of belonging, in Turkey, comes at a cost – the forgetting of particular histories at the expense of the frequent retelling of others and the silencing of particular memories that cannot entirely be repressed' (Mills 2010). Amy Mills (Ibid.) exposes the use of the versions of the past in order to prompt a particular narrative of identity. A 600-year-old Roma settlement (*Sulukule*), the oldest on record, does not belong to the institutional understanding of history (as it inconveniently stands in the way of profit making schemes and land speculation). Still, the past of Hagia Sofia as a mosque should now be discussed as a matter of importance, making it seem a result of collective will, though undoubtedly engineered.[15] But where in the mainstream media was the systematic destruction of Greek and Armenian heritage in Tarlabaşı? Or reports about the history and the livelihoods that will be lost with the construction of dams all over Turkey?

One of the myriad new urban projects is the Yedikule gardens, an urban farming tradition going back 1500 years. The gardening activities that have taken place for centuries and give employment to dozens of domestic migrants are threatened by the municipality's plans. The historical Byzantine walls have already been damaged by the excavations. A solidarity platform has been trying in recent months to raise awareness between neighbours and the public, but Fatih Municipality backed the project that would eventually see the construction of further luxury housing:[16] '"The soil does not have history" – uttered the leader of the AKP council members at a meeting in the City Hall of Fatih municipality' (Sopov 2013). Indeed, the historical value of cultural and social exchange as exemplified by Yedikule is of no interest to AKP in the face of a profitable, future privatisation contract of the land.

15 A cover of the Turkish Airlines magazine showed the museum embedded in a narrative of Ottomanism enhancement: http://www.skylife.com/en/2013-08/hagia-sophia-mosque-of-sultans.
16 http://yedikulebostanlari.tumblr.com. Accessed 25 April 2014.

Gezi: Mapping the Space Reclaimed and the Victory of the Commons

> What kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. (Harvey 2012, 4)

Who is the city for? This question is asked repeatedly as it becomes obvious that contemporary social alliances and uprisings take place around a new idea of citizenship directly related to how bodies become political in the set up of the urban environment. As explained above, the institutional approach adopted by AKP with regard to shaping Istanbul benefits the already privileged minority. Inasmuch as the system itself is unsustainable (ecologically, socially, economically) there is only so much social fracturing a government can practice without encountering mass urban resistance, even when the hegemonic system of governance has relied and promoted historical constructions of identities.

As Harvey (2012, 14) argues, 'the fissures within the system are also all too evident.' What happens when cities are shaped through exclusionary practices? There have been different stories of urban struggle that, if largely ignored by the mainstream media, have helped build strong links between neighbourhood associations, civil society groups, academics and other citizens. The Sulukule Solidarity Platform managed to bring to the negotiating table instrumental agents such as TOKİ and Fatih Municipality. The Tarlabaşı Tenants and Homeowners Association was able to put the Tarlabaşı project on hold for years. More recently, the Yedikule platform has been engaging with local dwellers to raise awareness and has promoted a media campaign that has raised the issue internationally. All these different moments in the struggle of the 'right to the city' have contributed to new understandings of urban citizenship and solidarity that do away with those imposed borders defined by the combination of a neoliberal agenda with identity politics.

If the links between international privileged elites are strong, there is no reason not to understand urban citizenship as an open identity based on solidarity and on the idea of public spaces as the places of possibility. 'The process of the production of cultural difference [...] occurs in continuous, connected space, traversed by economic and political relations of inequality. [...] the more radical operation of interrogating the "otherness" of the other, situating the production of cultural difference within the historical processes of a socially and spatially interconnected world' (Gupta and Ferguson

1992, 16) is what needs to be tackled. The relevance of the occupation (and further construction) of the Gezi Park commune stems from the ability of the urban mass to do away with the historical construction of otherness that has been a constituent element of Turkish politics.

Gezi Protests as a Reaction against AKP Policies

The system fostered by AKP has not only tried to tame the urban in order to produce a certain kind of citizen, but it has also curtailed the possibilities of social engagement between people by different means, from antagonising prime ministerial speeches to the criminalisation of the urban poor via the destruction of social networks of support based on unregulated uses of space. The protests became a platform where no affiliation was needed, and where the general discontent against a prime minister hungry for uncontested power could be expressed freely. His refusal to accept criticism has often fed the authoritarian description of his style of politics. But there is a need to go beyond his persona. When Gezi Park protesters were taking to the streets showing their position against state policies and police violence, they were effectively reclaiming that space from the sphere of influence of the institution, AKP in this case.

Furthermore, the fact that all exchanges and interactions had nothing to do with monetary transactions (from free food to neighbours' donations) stands as the materialisation of an opposition to the economic policies that AKP had become so popular for. Indeed, a different city is possible, as was in fact achieved at the park, producing a much more interesting platform of connections and trajectories based on the premise that everyone can and does have a place in the project of a fairer society.

The Value of Resistance in and for a Park: Creating New Senses of Belonging

When drawing distinctive parallels between the different tools used by the social actors involved in the construction (or destruction) of cities in Turkey, the results are charged with symbolism. AKP's project could be represented by the extensive urbanisation and environment intervention that relies on undemocratic decision-making processes for the benefit of the few. The reclaimed space of Gezi Park stood as an example of how relationships of difference can be the basis of a struggle against the senseless destruction of nature and heritage, offering a snapshot of how the complex social and cultural components of society in cities can be activated to build solidarity.

Furthermore, the possibility of aligning with a cause that has, until now, remained, to a certain extent, outside of the rigid structures of political identity formation imposed from above, has much to do with the success in numbers at the Gezi Park protests. Thus, new kinds of identity are being built around the idea of protection of public spaces, providing a new way of political engagement that does not have to conform with historical (and opposing) sides. Gezi stands as the proof that fighting hegemonic social divisions promotes a kind of solidarity that not only far more reflects the heterogeneity of societies but is also able to articulate a much more effective political position. In this sense, it could be argued that all sorts of bottom-up networks of everyday interaction, which normally build links between dwellers sharing streets, neighbourhoods and public transports, were activated and propelled into the political realm, demonstrating the potential when new kinds of identity based on the idea of contiguous plurality are performed.

Gezi became part of contemporary cross-border attempts at real representative democracy by opening space as the realm of the political. The commons defied violent crackdowns in order to liberate the park from the rule of capital and capital-accumulation processes. The tactics deployed to protect and define that space required acts of solidarity and consensus essential in the nature of true public spaces. The level of self-organisation was outstanding: from the setting up of the spaces to the cleaning up of the park, via the protection of the right to pray and the celebration of civil *iftars* (the fast-breaking meal during the month of Ramadan) as socially cohesive events that helped uncover the false sense of piety promoted by AKP. A clear set of demands were drafted and widely shared.[17]

Everyone had an opportunity to express themselves freely without offending others. Freedom of expression, with a constant regard for others, is probably what better defines the narrative of Gezi: a self-regulated space that was able to make tolerance its basic moral principle in order not to antagonise anyone. Taking this into account, the following question remains unanswered: after the violent crackdowns, the obvious disdain towards its citizenry and the climate of fear and censorship promoted, what will be the long-term impact on the AKP government?

When most institutional systems had aimed to create a class of docile citizens, the last thing the AKP needed was an awakening of this kind; a realisation of the possibilities of public spaces when creating egalitarian platforms and understanding difference as a cohesive, rather than divisive,

17 http://reclaimistanbul.com/2013/06/07/demands-of-occupygezi-movement/.

force. The internalisation of the space reclaimed in the park has taken place, even now that the park is a private space, rigidly regulated and policed. Citizens are already aware that public space can become the product of interactions and reciprocally influence a sense of belonging. Furthermore, a new sense of identity can be created and can be activated inasmuch as it has already been performed. This stands as the victory of the commons over the privatising efforts of an elite, far more interested in securing gains than the welfare of the majority.

Those who constituted Gezi Park have a lot in common with the struggle in and for other public spaces in other cities: they are agents of a new culture of resistance, in the way that there is a collective recognition of the possibilities that was not there before. They have also collectively rewritten the social and political rules of engagement and identified new positions with regard to citizenship and power. Gezi offered a glimpse to what the possibilities of public spaces are and could be, and that is already a victory inasmuch as several generations can now identify with this achievement.

Responses to the Militarisation of Space: The Return of the Commons

How did Gezi reflect the collective wish of a different city? Overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of protesters and pushed back by their resistance, the police eventually retreated. The Gezi Park commune was thus established on 1 June 2013. Many agreed it was the safest they had felt, highlighting in no uncertain terms the indiscriminate violent character of the police force. What followed was an exercise in self-organisation that demonstrated the possibilities of bottom-up citizen engagement. All the services of a fully-working autonomous zone were provided: from medical assistance to veterinary services, from a children's area to a vegetable garden, from a library to a mosque, from free food to yoga lessons, to a memorial space, to explicitly political spaces.

If the use of space remained somehow fluid, there were some corners of the constructed space that were identified with specific groups, as per the figure below. Whilst these attempts at counter-cartography described a very fluid situation difficult to capture, they also offer us a great opportunity to assess the nature of Gezi. The protesters openly aligned with a political group constituted less than 20 per cent of those coming out to Gezi. The question in this case would be whether to attribute more constitutive importance to those political groups over the individuals coming out without previous political background. In what I believe is an accurate reflection of society in Turkey, these maps show the complexity of the make-up of

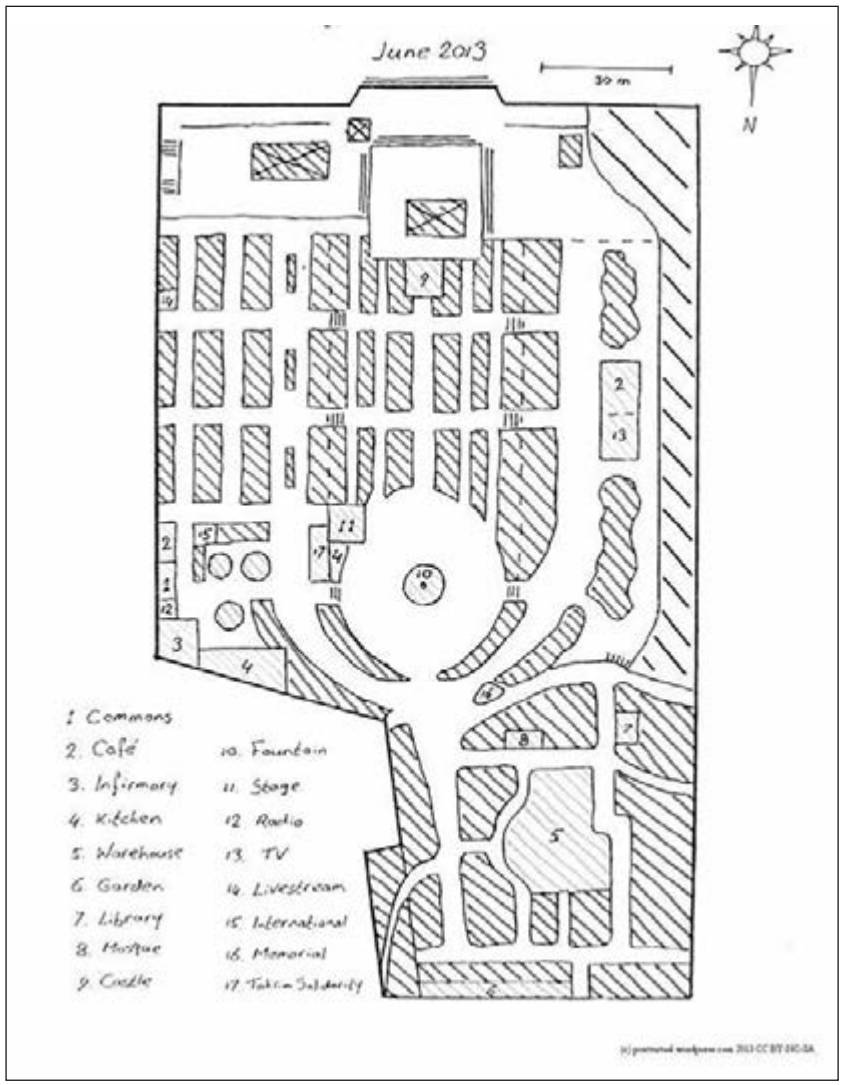

Figure 13.1 Functional Map of the Occupation of Gezi Park
'Gezi Republic' Image courtesy of Oscar ten Houten #OccupyGezi Digital Edition v1.130725

urban citizenry. If some describe the protests as mainly secular, images of Anti-capitalist Muslims and the earth *iftar* come to mind. If some want to label it middle-class, the role of the unions calling for the demonstrations is also central. It is known that people who voted for AKP were there too. All this implies that the self-organised, stateless, autonomous zone was a reclaiming of space in Massey's sense: a space full of possibilities and

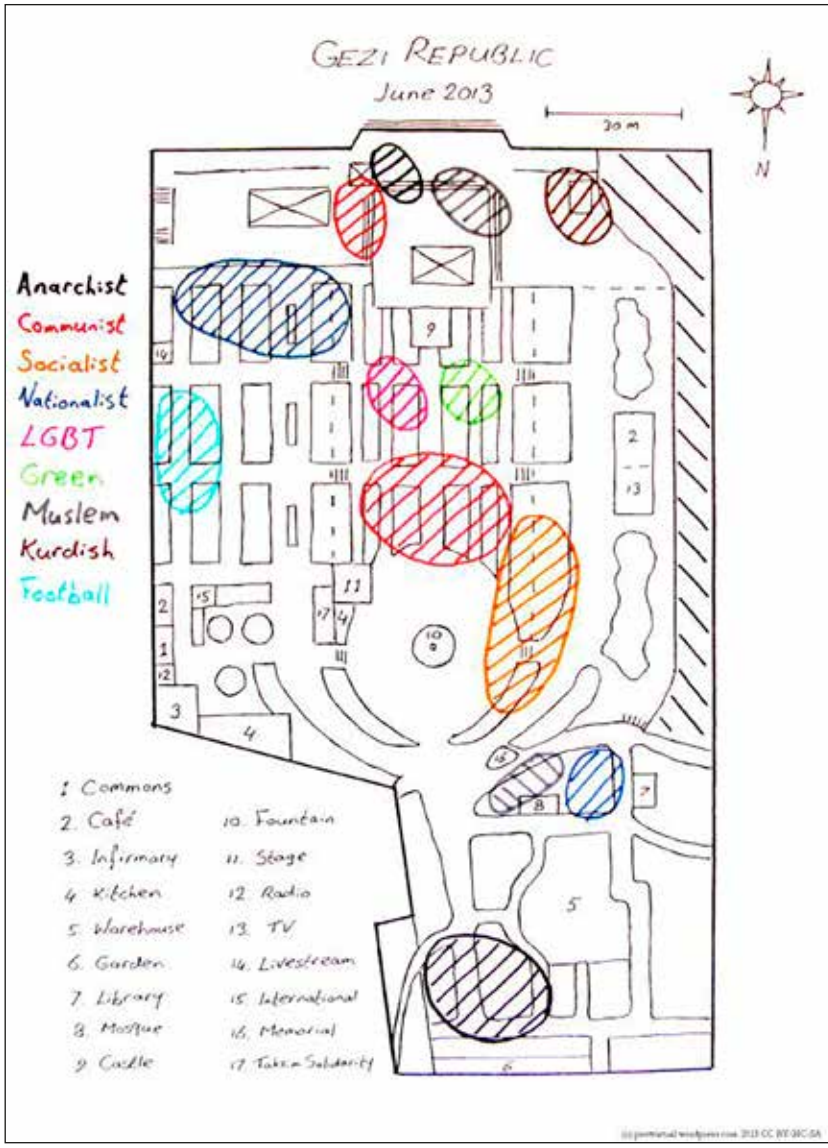

Figure 13.2: Map of Occupied Gezi Park Demonstrating Group-specific Use of Space
'Gezi Neighbourhoods' Image courtesy of Oscar ten Houten #OccupyGezi Digital Edition v1.130725

trajectories involved in processes without hierarchy. Furthermore, as a space born out of the struggle and solidarity between all different peoples, it truly embodied a political awareness that has long been the subject of suppression by political and economic elites.

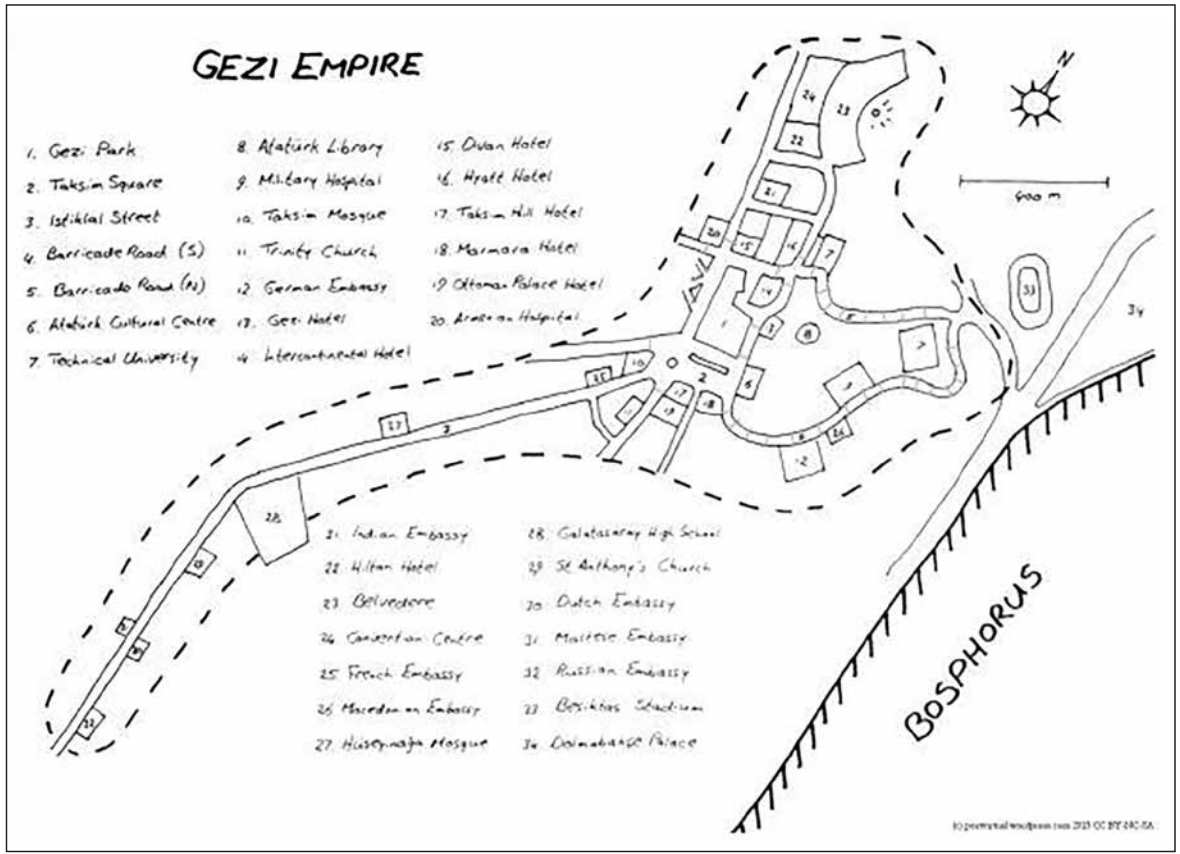

Figure 13.3: Map of the Area in Beyoğlu Occupied by the Protesters. 'Gezi Empire' Image courtesy of Oscar ten Houten #OccupyGezi Digital Edition v1.130725

Another helpful representation is the map on page 245 of the spaces that the Gezi resistance gained. If the park became a much more visible centre, the spirit was also transmitted to the barricades being built in Gümüşsuyu and beyond. In this sense, the space was being reclaimed in different parts of Istanbul and Turkey, as the institutional response did nothing to seek a consensus and increasingly tried to polarise the population. As much as the media focused on one square in order to make the event easy to mediatise, the streets around the park and in other cities were also the battleground against the police crackdown and for Gezi. At the end of the day, those standing together in Ankara, Rize, Izmir, Mersin and so on, were there to reclaim their own positions as constitutive members of an urban citizenry that needs to be consulted, respected and taken into account.

Conclusion

If what happened in Gezi Park was extraordinary in terms of social cohesion and solidarity between seemingly different groups, focusing on spacio-temporal boundaries would only limit the phenomenon as a singular moment in a specific place. This has already been practiced by mainstream media in their efforts to give more visibility to the event, whilst the implications on a more meaningful level are left unattended. It has already been articulated by the critical mass itself: Gezi Park was also in the streets of Ankara or Lice, inasmuch as Lice and Ankara were also in Gezi. The neighbourhood assemblies that followed reflected a mature level of political self-awareness. Furthermore, the permanent management of spaces as is happening in Kadıköy's *Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması* (a self-regulated occupied social space in Kadıköy, Istanbul) reflects the longer impact of the phenomenon that we are trying so hard to describe and understand. Once again, the possibilities within spaces of association and solidarity are endless inasmuch as different kinds of sense of belonging are activated; this calls for a more open and fluid idea of identity and politics that will enable us to construct more connections, rather than barriers. Of course, there are difficulties to overcome: a renewed crackdown on freedom of expression, corruption allegations, environmental destruction and privileged-based urbanism continue to take place. Furthermore, questions need to be asked with regard to those who did not want to engage in the struggle: how could a conversation involve all and opposing sectors of society?

Still, the inclusive character of the 'right to the city' movement as practiced in Gezi Park has the ability to represent many more urban dwellers

than any other movement or struggle. More importantly, it has the ability to give space to those normally discriminated against, the minorities, the subalterns and the victimized. The 'right to the city' thus combines the struggle against the hierarchy of the powerful and the further exclusion of different heterogeneous groups based on a new kind of citizenship, built on the premise that public spaces are the product of difference. The occupation of Gezi Park put in practice the character of the *mahalle*, where space is constructed by the juxtaposition of trajectories of difference. Thus, the practice of everyday life became and becomes the realm of contemporary political struggle.

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Section V
Gezi in an International Context

14 Gezi Spirit in the Diaspora

Diffusion of Turkish Politics to Europe

Bahar Baser

The Gezi events constituted a ground-breaking moment in Turkish political history. Immediately after the protests sparked in the Gezi Park, they spontaneously disseminated and many people from different walks of life found themselves trying to influence policymaking procedures in Turkey by using civil disobedience and non-violent protest strategies. This momentum also crossed the Turkish borders and diffused to the transnational space. Indeed, there were solidarity protests in many countries from the US to the Netherlands, from Iraq to Russia. Diasporas from Turkey played an important role in disseminating what was happening in Turkey to the world by informing media institutions as well as hostland politicians and civil society organisations about police brutality, censorship and oppression as well as the goals of the uprisings in general. They continue to be an integral part of the 'opposition(s)' that aims to contest AKP rule in Turkey.

Many diaspora groups organised events to commemorate the first anniversary of the Gezi protests at the beginning of June 2014. Workers' associations from Turkey organised a commemoration march in Duisburg to remember the 'martyrs of Gezi.'[1] In Switzerland, various leftist organisations and workers' associations organised an event in front of the parliament in Zurich and made declarations regarding the current situation in Turkey.[2] In the Netherlands, the Taksim Solidarity Group organised protests to commemorate the young people who lost their lives as a result of police brutality.[3] These solidarity events clearly showed that diaspora groups from Turkey also appropriated the so-called 'Gezi Spirit' and their reactions were not a one-off activity; on the contrary, they have a sustained interest in keeping up this spirit abroad. Gezi became an over-arching transnational metaphor of an expression of dissent about AKP's policies in Turkey. However, the main reason for this sustained activism cannot be

1 http://www.atik-online.net/2014/06/04/taksim-direnisinin-1-yilinda-tekrar-alanlardayiz/#.U5Vs8F9wYdU.

2 http://www.atik-online.net/2014/06/08/isvicrede-gezi-direnisi-ruhuyla-tum-sehitler-anildi/#.U5Vtt19wYdU.

3 http://avegkon.org/avrupada-gezi-direnisi-sehitleri-anildi/.

explained by the sudden impact of Gezi events; instead, one should look at the prior existing mechanisms in order to understand what the Gezi spirit is building on.

My aim in this chapter is to analyse how the Gezi events were experienced in the diaspora, especially in Sweden, Germany, France and the Netherlands, and to illustrate how diaspora groups from different ethnic, religious and ideological backgrounds came together in solidarity with the Gezi protestors in Turkey. I show that the alliance-building mechanisms took on a different form in each country depending on the political environment, already existing cooperation mechanisms among diaspora groups, or the lack thereof, and the dominant diaspora groups who led the protests in different contexts. I particularly focus on alliance-building between Turkish and Kurdish diaspora groups in order to contribute to the discussions about the Kurdish stance towards Gezi. I also illustrate that the repertoires of protests in Turkey inspired the diaspora activists and simulations of Gezi were constructed in the diasporic spaces.

The findings of this chapter are based on semi-structured interviews and fieldwork observations derived from my longitudinal study on both Turkish and Kurdish diaspora groups in Europe during my doctoral and post-doctoral studies.[4] Since the beginning of the Gezi protests in Turkey in May-June 2013, I have also been conducting follow-up interviews (face-to-face or via skype, email or telephone) and following the social media discussion groups founded by various diaspora groups in Europe in order to keep up to date with the discussions.

Diffusion of Gezi Spirit to the Transnational Space

Diasporas mobilise in a similar way to advocacy groups or other types of transnational solidarity networks and they use similar repertoires of action. They lobby hostland policymakers in order to achieve their goals as well as to raise awareness about their cause. Their existence depends on mobilising resources, recruiting new members and disseminating their agenda into the public spheres of their home and host countries (Sökefeld 2006; Shain and Barth 2003; Adamson 2008; Baser and Swain 2008). In a global setting, diasporas play the role of 'cultural brokerage,' which translates

4 I was a post-doctoral researcher in a project called 'Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty,' which has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013ERC, grant agreement number 284198.

the local messages to a global audience when seminal moments occur in the homeland (Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti 2013). Especially due to the new communication technologies, the messages from the homeland can be transmitted to the diasporas and through the diasporas to a wider audience within seconds. For instance, Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti (2013) argue that the 'Syrian diaspora helped to publicize the protests across national borders and media platforms' by playing the broker between local activists and the mainstream media. During the uprisings in their homelands, Arab diaspora showed a great deal of activism, which some authors called the 'diaspora spring'[5] due to the rise in diasporic activism throughout the critical junctures in the Middle East. Graziano (2012, 18) also illustrates that in the case of the Tunisian diaspora: its web-activism created an 'information highway' where the censorship of the homeland is eluded during the domestic political turmoil. In the case of the Gezi protests, we detect a similar fashion but one can also see that the protests were performed spatially by using actual protests as well as creative art which is highly visible and solid in the transnational space and which has a more enduring impact. Although online networks constituted an integral part of the Gezi movement at home and abroad, in this article I solely focus on the offline activism in the diaspora, which I believe shows the core mechanisms that explain the diffusion of the Gezi spirit to the transnational space.

Diasporas are political actors generated as a result of political projects, have their own political ambitions and agendas and they try to influence home and hostland political mechanisms to achieve these goals. Diasporas are not homogenous entities and there might be different ideological, religious, ethnic or sectarian divergence within a diaspora group from the same homeland (Lyons and Mandaville 2010, 126; Feron 2013, 65). There is heterogeneity in terms of loyalties to an ethnic, religious or ideological project but there is also variation in terms of the level of activism among members of the same diaspora group. Shain and Barth (2003, 452) divide the members into three categories: core, passive and silent members. There is mobility among different levels of activism and mobilisation and this depends on both developments in the homeland and the hostland. Silent members can become passive, while dormant members can become active because diaspora mobilisations are fluid and complex. Critical events in the homeland might kindle interest in homeland politics and turn passive and silent members into active members as a result of an impetus to become

5 http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/the-arab-diaspora-finds-its-voice/article4243545/.

mobilised to make their voice heard. The Gezi events in Turkey were a case in point in this regard.

Interestingly enough, the protest mechanisms diffused without delay to the diaspora and there were simultaneous protests all around Europe, which synchronised their discourses with the main actors of the Gezi protests from the TGB to the leftist fractions, from Kurdish diaspora groups to the Alevi federations. It should be underlined that the diasporas from Turkey had already been engaged in Turkish politics for many years and this was not the first time that they have organised protests. Gezi was not a miracle and it did not create a political activism or awareness from scratch. Kurdish diaspora has been politically active and successfully transnationalised its agenda since the first flow of Kurdish migrants to Europe during the last four decades (Baser 2011). Kemalist associations were established since the first migration flows, the Alevi movement has been one of the strongest diasporas from Turkey and leftist movements from Turkey have found refuge in Europe through exiled members since the 1970s (Sökefeld and Schwalgin 2000). Therefore, there was already an organised form of dissent or opposition in the diaspora, which was not just contesting the AKP rule but also the Turkish state, its hegemony and its failure to create a democratic environment for its minorities and groups in opposition in general.

Despite building on the already existing diaspora mobilisation, Gezi can still be considered as a pivotal moment for the mobilisation of diasporas from Turkey for various reasons. Firstly, it created new solidarity networks and managed to gather different generations and groups under an overarching aim with an extraordinary spirit of solidarity, which revealed itself in artistic forms and humour. Secondly, it strengthened the already existing alliances between different diaspora groups by adding a crucial aspect to their agenda. The 'grievances in common,' which brought various actors together, also had an impact on the groups in the diaspora, softened their differences and highlighted their common goals in a new context. Thirdly, many diaspora groups used this moment as an opportunity to recruit new members and a great deal of the passive members became core members and dormant members became passive members throughout this process. It was the first time these groups, who have competing agendas, together or separately, protested in the name of the 'Gezi Spirit.' Therefore, it had an impact on the mobilisation patterns, which can either be momentary or continual, the result of which will only be discovered in time.

While we should acknowledge the path-dependency that they have towards the homeland's political frames, the transnationalisation patterns in each host country take on different forms. Feron argues that diaspora

activism in each host country goes through a process of autonomisation where mobilisation takes on different features and dimensions than it does in the country of origin. In the hostland, diaspora discourses usually add their own agenda to the ones that are imported from the homeland and emphasis is put on different issues, themes, stakes and events, different types of actors are involved, the maintenance of group boundaries and culture changes (Feron 2013, 71). In the following pages, I demonstrate that a great deal of diasporic actions were imported from the homeland such as repertoires of protest, agenda-setting mechanisms, issues at stake, 'grievances in common' as well as the discourses of political movements in Turkey. However, a certain 'autonomisation' process has occurred and in each country different actors were leading the 'Gezi Spirit' and the political environment within which the activism was taking place also affected their agenda-setting.

Sweden is not the first country that comes to mind when we think about Turkish political activism abroad. The majority of Turkish migrants in Sweden are from a small town in Konya called Kulu and the community is rather politically passive compared to Turkish diasporas in the Netherlands or in Germany. There are no established Turkish leftist associations with mass support. Although there are diaspora members with leftist tendencies, they usually cooperate with the Swedish leftist circles rather than forming diasporic alliances. The Alevi federation is mobilised, but it is small in size with almost no leverage. Kemalist associations bourgeoned after the AKP came to power in Turkey and they were visible in a couple of protests against the Kurdish movement in Turkey or against the passing of the Armenian Genocide Bill in the Swedish Parliament (Baser 2014; Akis and Kalaylioglu 2010). In contrast, Kurdish diaspora in Sweden is very active and has an influence on policymakers. They are densely organised and they separated their diasporic spaces from the Turkish community from the 1970s onwards. As I argued elsewhere (Baser 2013), there is almost no cooperation between Turkish and Kurdish diaspora organisations, either on Turkish politics or on Swedish politics. This isolation also revealed itself during the Gezi protests, where no Kurdish associations were present and the Turkish groups protested in solidarity.

The main actors of the protests in Sweden were the TGB, ADD and Mukavemet Group. It is likely that many people who have no attachment to any of these groups also participated in the protests. 'Mukavemet' was founded by predominantly first-generation young immigrants from Turkey right after the Gezi protests. Many of them were individually active or were members of Swedish political organisations and parties but the Gezi

events constituted a diasporic change for them and they joined forces to make the protestors' voice heard. The group has around 200 members on Facebook and it uses social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook to gather members and to organise events. This group brought together diaspora individuals who sporadically engaged in diasporic activities and showed leftist tendencies. After a year, it is still active and is becoming more embedded into the Turkish diasporic community in Sweden.

During the Gezi events, the TGB and ADD in Sweden took advantage of the window of opportunity and made themselves visible in the public sphere. They managed to recruit many second-generation members during the protests and many young people started showing an interest in taking part in events related to Turkish politics. TGB is organised separately from the Mukavemet group but on certain occasions provides support to their events. They have been trying to keep the Gezi spirit alive over the past year by constantly organising panels and seminars in various cities in Sweden. For instance, in March 2014, they showed a documentary related to Gezi events, which gathered considerable attention from the second-generation.[6]

Kurdish diaspora organisations were not present at the Gezi protests in Sweden and there were discussions on social media forums which revolved around the idea that 'This is not the Kurds' problem, this is the Turks' problem.' However, interviewees who participated in the protests of the Mukavemet group mentioned that they saw some Kurdish diaspora members who individually joined the protests and they tried to be as inclusive as possible by playing down ideological discourses. The only protest event that brought TGB, ADD, Mukavemet and the PKK sympathising Kurdish associations together was Prime Minister Erdoğan's official visit to Sweden on 7 November 2013. These groups protested against this visit separately, not in a co-joint manner, but they episodically used the same slogan 'Everywhere Taksim! Everywhere resistance!'[7]

In France, we see a different picture. There are more Turkish and Kurdish immigrants with a heterogeneous background and they formed strong diaspora organisations in the 1970s. Leftist organisations from Turkey (with many different fractions), Alevi associations (although weaker than in Germany and the Netherlands), Kurdish diaspora organisations (mostly

6 See http://www.isvecpostasi.com/haber/623/gezi-parki-olaylarini-anlatan-baslangic-belgeseli-ilgiyle-izlendi.html.

7 http://www.posta.com.tr/siyaset/HaberDetay/Isvec-te-Erdogan-a-PKK-lilardan-protesto.htm?ArticleID=203674.

sympathising with the PKK) and Kemalist associations (both ADD and TGB) were highly active during the Gezi protests in France. There was collaboration among many groups from divergent backgrounds.[8] The essence of the Gezi movement in Turkey was the fact that it also brought many people together who were not members of any political party or civil society organisation before. This was also reflected in the transnational space. In France, many individuals who were not politically active prior to Gezi protested the government and police brutality in the main squares of big cities.[9]

The Kurdish associations were very active during protests in solidarity with the Gezi movement back in Turkey. For instance, the Ahmet Kaya Cultural Association played a leading role in opening the branch of *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* (People's Democratic Party) in Paris and they prepared a declaration regarding the importance of the Gezi protests in Turkey. The leftist organisation *Fédération des Associations de Travailleurs et de Jeunes*, the French branch of the Federation of Democratic Workers' Organisations (*Demokratik İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu*, DİDF), also participated actively and gave their full support to initiatives related to Gezi. The Taksim Solidarity Platform was founded co-jointly by various leftist and workers' associations[10] as well as Alevi associations.[11] ADD and TGB in France protested separately and did not join forces with the leftist and Kurdish associations.[12]

Similar to France, in the Netherlands one can observe densely organised diaspora nodes of Turkish, Kurdish and Alevi groups. Networks of leftist and workers' associations, for instance, branches of DİDF, were omnipresent at the protests. Members of FEDKOM, a Kurdish organisation sympathising with the PKK, also showed their full support. Some Kurdish diaspora members were hesitating because of the intense participation of the neonationalists, who were clearly using an anti-Kurdish discourse in their party propaganda. Not all the Kurdish organisations supported the Gezi protests and many were sceptical due to the large presence of Kemalist associations such as the ADD and the TGB.

8 http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_gezi-parki-insaati-fransada-protesto-edildi_2096182.html.

9 http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/42799.aspx.

10 http://www.etha.com.tr/Haber/2014/06/02/guncel/fransada-gezi-sehitleri-anildi/.

11 http://www.ozgurgelecek.net/duenya/5636-fransada-taksim-gezi-direniiyle-dayanma.html.

12 For further details regarding the groups who participated see http://www.fransaaddbirlik.com/admin/tgb-ve-haute-savoie-addden-gezi-parki-eylemlerine-destek.html.

Especially in June 2013, there had been a considerable number of protests in Amsterdam, which brought leftist organisations and TGB together at protests as they concurrently chanted 'Everywhere Taksim! Everywhere resistance!' and 'Erdoğan Resign!'[13] Websites such as 'Dutch Support for Taksim Occupy,' with more than a thousand supporters, were used to announce gatherings, share information related to political developments in Turkey and for members to get to know each other. In the Netherlands, a new group emerged among the first-generation young Turks and Kurds who are professionals or students in various cities. Together with the first- and second-generation migrants from Turkey in the Netherlands, they formed the Amsterdam Gezi Forum. The participants negotiated their solidarity to political parties and movements and agreed not to bring 'party politics' into their forums with the aim of having fruitful discussions on urgent matters related to Gezi. The participants of the forums managed to keep activism incessant and organised regular meetings with solid agendas and discussion points. They prepared professional websites, which were frequently updated.[14] Issues such as urban transformation, LGBTI matters, minority rights, discrimination, ecology and conscientious objection were among the many topics discussed by forum participants.

The heart of Turkish-Kurdish diaspora politics is in Germany due to the size of both groups as well as their very neatly organised diasporic engagement with homeland politics. In German diasporic spaces, one can also observe the importation of predictable alliances from Turkey. Especially among the first-generation, there are dense networks of solidarity between the PKK-affiliated groups and the Turkish left. Kurdish umbrella organisations and DİDF, which have separate agendas in Turkey as well as in Germany, often unite their powers to raise their voice against discrimination in Germany and oppression in Turkey. They organise joint protests and seminars with Alevi associations and other Kurdish and workers' associations. For instance, the Democratic Solidarity Platform (*Demokratik Güç Birliği Platformu*) brings together various organisations from different walks of life and makes a call for individuals to join forces against discrimination and oppression both at home and in the diaspora. They clearly merge homeland-hostland issues in the same melting pot in order to position themselves in a broader framework. During the Gezi protests, they were increasingly active and they mobilised masses in Berlin, Cologne

13 For an example see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4xKSTkIe8A. Accessed 15 June 2014.

14 For instance see http://amsterdamforum.org/forum/. Accessed 16 June 2014.

and elsewhere to protest the official visit of Prime Minister Erdoğan to Germany, the police brutality and murders during the Gezi protests in Turkey as well as the subsequent seminal political developments in Turkey. An Alevi federation called *Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu* was at the core of the Gezi protests in Germany and they were highly active both individually and within the Democratic Solidarity Platform.

TGB has a considerable number of supporters in Germany and they were very visible during the Gezi events. They frequently organised events, seminars and protest marches over the past year in order to gather media attention, to protest against Erdoğan's visit to Germany and to contest AKP's rule in Turkey. It can be said that they used Gezi as a window of opportunity to recruit new members and to make an appearance in the political spheres of the German diasporic space. According to an interviewee from DİDF Berlin, organisations such as ADD, TGB, leftist fractions and workers' associations protested together during the first couple of days of the Gezi events, gathering more than 10,000 people. She also confirmed that among the protestors there were many participants who were not members of any organisation but who randomly showed up at these mass protests to show solidarity with the Gezi resistance. According to another interviewee from Germany, it was the first time these groups had come together to protest against the Turkish government. He compared the Gezi events and the police brutality with the neo-Nazi murders in Germany and stated that the racist attacks in Germany did not even bring this many diaspora members together to protest in the name of democracy and human rights. He said this was the first time leftist symbols and flags had been seen waving concomitantly with Kurdish and Turkish flags and nationalist symbols. Although this momentum did not last after the first wave of protests and each group retired into their own extant solidarity webs, many see it as an important moment, one which showed divisions but simultaneously highlighted potential collaborations among different diaspora groups.

Observations on the main actors of the Gezi protests in the diaspora show that, apart from those in Sweden, Kurdish diaspora organisations were very much present at the Gezi protests and they gave their full support to the transnationalisation of this resistance movement. This clearly shows that even if there were fragmentations between the diaspora groups from Turkey, they were more ideological in character than ethnic. Secondly, we observe that in each country one group was more dominant than the other, depending on the characteristics of the diaspora groups in a given context. However, when we look at the bigger picture we see two camps who forged contingent alliances during the first spark of events and then

retired to their corners: TGB, ADD and other Kemalist organisations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, leftist-Kurdish-Alevi movements joining forces despite their differences. Thirdly, in these four countries there were many participants who joined these protests without having any prior connection to a diaspora organisation.

Creating 'Gezi Parks' in Europe

The Gezi protests were a great illustration of the transformative power of creative art.[15] Especially during the protests in Istanbul, various kinds of artistic performances accompanied protest events. They complemented the non-violent resistance strategy of the Gezi protestors and a spectrum of dance performances, piano recitals, folk songs and hip-hop music were used as an instrument of expression of dissent.

The 'standing man' was among the protest repertoires that became a symbol of the Gezi movement. As Snyder argues,[16] 'the standing man displaced the violence articulated by the government. The same set of political, religious and cultural background assumptions were in play, but the contemplating figure displaced the force thrown at the resistance.' This iconic protest diffused to the transnational spaces and was adopted by various actors in the diaspora. From Caracas to Toronto, there were 'standing man' imitations by diaspora members from Turkey as well as civil society associations in front of Turkish consulates and in the main squares in metropolises.[17] The protestors carried banners that had the names of 'martyrs' of the Gezi events on them. In France, this protest form was mostly adopted by the ADD and TGB supporters and it gained a significant share of media attention. In Germany, only a few people in Hamburg adopted it but they managed to draw media attention.[18]

In the Netherlands and Germany, participants created Gezi park simulations or tents, which brought many diaspora members together without questioning their background or political party loyalties. Each movement opened up its own tent after a while when the first wave of protests was over. These initiatives gathered attention from media outlets as well as

15 http://roarmag.org/2014/01/nietzsche-gezi-power-art/.

16 http://roarmag.org/2014/01/nietzsche-gezi-power-art/.

17 For details see http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/bianet-gezi-direnisi-icin-7-ulke-7-duran-insan-7-dakika/.

18 http://www.haber7.com/avrupa/haber/1045351-almanya-duran-adama-bile-tahammul-edemedi.

the locals and helped to disseminate the Gezi messages. The slogans that are used in Turkey, which use humour as a way of expressing dissent, were imported by diaspora members and they were also translated into the hostland's language, which clearly made the diaspora groups a bridge that binds the protestors in the homeland to the outside world with their own words. In Berlin, protestors wore T-shirts that read '*Çapulcu* 36,' which combined the postcode of Kreuzberg in Berlin with the discourses of the homeland resistance. In Amsterdam, protesters met at a park and wrote small notes on pieces of paper and hung them from trees in order to make their park resemble the Gezi Park. They also used creative art performances in order to attract the attention of the Dutch public. For instance, a leftist group brought brooms and carried banners that read 'Only Revolution Will Clean This Mess!' Other groups brought empty shoeboxes which became the symbol of the corruption cases in Turkey. In The Hague, a group from Taksim Solidarity organised an interesting protest event where protestors brought popcorn and chairs and placed a projector in front of the Turkish embassy at night, and projected a penguin documentary on its walls. This was a very sharp political statement that was intertwined with Gezi spirit humour. These initiatives clearly demonstrated that the protest mechanisms in Turkey were closely followed by diaspora activists and it was not only dissent but also humour and creativity that diffused to the diaspora and constituted the 'Gezi Spirit' abroad.

In Sweden, diaspora members used music as common ground to gather people in solidarity with the protestors in Turkey. One of the leading members of the Mukavemet group is a Turkish singer called Hakan Vreskala, who took part in the Gezi protests in Turkey and organised several artistic performances in the Taksim and Beyoğlu areas.[19] He coordinated a flash mob in Stockholm using various instruments such as drums and *darbuka* in order to gather attention from migrants from Turkey and elsewhere, as well as the native Swedish public and policymakers.[20] These events are highly important as artistic performances and music events are more likely to bring diaspora members from different backgrounds together and encourage them to share a moment of commonality without delving deeper into ethnic, religious and ideological cleavages.

In France, a photo exhibition was organised by Eren Araman called '# On y va "Gezi"!' and it was advertised by the Taksim Solidarity Platform, DİDF, Ahmet Kaya Cultural Association and many others. Also, a diaspora

19 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjfoX0z69sw. Accessed 16 June 2014.

20 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbL39vu4FD8. Accessed 16 June 2014.

member and a scriptwriter for theatre plays and cinema called Sedef Ecer prepared a play for the popular radio station France Culture. It was called 'Three Trees in Istanbul' and was divided into ten episodes, which will not only air in France but also in Belgium and Germany. This is a clear example that shows the diaspora members are playing the role of cultural brokers and translating the Gezi movement's codes to a broader audience in Europe.

In the Netherlands, a group called the 'International Gezi Ensemble' was formed immediately after the Gezi protests and it consists of amateur and professional singers, musicians, filmmakers, dancers, theatre actors, painters and other artists. On their Facebook page, they describe their group as comprising participants who 'carry the Gezi spirit and try to support human rights, nature and democracy which we lose day-by-day in almost all countries around the world. It is a fully volunteer-led and independent organisation.'[21] This amateur group has given numerous concerts in solidarity with the Gezi protestors and it also served a bigger purpose as it brought together various diaspora groups with competing agendas under one roof and in their terms united them 'under the Gezi spirit.' A Turkish interviewee from the Netherlands acknowledged that only protests that included art such as music or exhibitions gather people from different backgrounds together, as they do not contest but instead unite everyone who 'feels for' Gezi.

When I observed the discussion forums online as well as the events organised by the diaspora groups, it was clear that the Alevi, Kurdish and leftist as well as liberal groups focused on various themes that far transcended the limited agenda that the AKP politicians are trying to impose on the Gezi protestors, such as: the protests are provoked by foreign countries, these people are extremists, or the protestors do not have a clear agenda. From day one, protestors in the diaspora started focusing on issues such as the murder of Hrant Dink, the earthquake in Van and what they could do for the victims, the Roboski massacre and the lack of justice in this case, Kurdish rights and LGBTI rights in Turkey. The developments in Turkey after the Gezi Park events were also gradually carried into the discussions on diaspora forums, such as the corruption cases which came to the fore before the local elections and the Soma incident, where hundreds of miners died because of the negligence of the government and the mine owning companies. TGB and ADD supporters instead followed a distinct path in this regard and they were much more cautious about the issues related to the Kurdish Question. They rather used the Gezi resistance as a way to

21 For more information on the International Gezi Ensemble see https://www.facebook.com/pages/International-GEZ%C4%B0-Ensemble/1383916755176534?sk=info. Accessed 16 June 2014.

rekindle their own interpretation of Turkish nationalism and focused more on anti-AKP propaganda and secular values.

Gezi protests in the diaspora have an ever-changing agenda that evolves daily according to the influence of political developments in Turkey. It is not static; instead, it is expanding its scope to the future and the past by addressing many problematic issues, the lack of democracy and the violation of human rights in a broader perspective. Diasporic agendas are also selective. For instance, the local elections in Turkey were not covered in diasporic discourses as much as they were in Turkey, but diasporas also had their own local agendas depending on where they reside, which indicated the autonomisation of diaspora activism in the hostland setting.

Germany constitutes the most important country for Turkish and Kurdish diaspora groups. It has significant leverage in Turkish politics, which is why diaspora groups opposing AKP rule want to have an influence on the policymakers in Germany. It can also be said that, especially during the last decade, AKP rule particularly polarised Turkish communities at home and abroad and the tension between them is considered to be a domestic security problem for Germany, although it is not as dominant as the Turkish-Kurdish tensions. Erdoğan's visits to Germany usually create anxiety among German policymakers as well as the diaspora communities. For instance, his latest visit to Germany in May 2014 created dismay among many German politicians as well as Turkish leftist, Kemalist, Alevi and Kurdish groups. More than 100,000 people gathered to protest against him in Cologne (Democratic Solidarity Platform including Alevi and Kurdish organisations, DİDF and its youth organisation and other workers' associations), while thousands of other people lay rose petals in his path in a protest supporting Erdoğan. Ideological cleavages are very sharp and they are becoming much more visible as a result of the political situation in Turkey.

In Sweden, the protestors added elements of Swedish politics to their agenda. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt tweeted the following message during the Gezi protests: 'Talked with @EgemenBagis about need to cool down rhetoric, maintain dialogue and try to move forward together. Alternative dangerous.' Gezi supporters in Sweden were angry since the Foreign Minister did not say anything about police brutality in Turkey. As a response, they started campaigns on Twitter and Facebook called '#wewantanswersCarlBildt' and sent him messages asking him to react to state violence and the killing of protestors by the police in Turkey. This campaign started in Sweden but thanks to social media gathered support from other people all around the world.

In the Netherlands, there was another important matter of debate, as Rotterdam Islam University Rector Ahmet Akgündüz's declaration on the

Gezi protests caused irritation. He described the protestors as 'Godless, hooligan enemies of Islam' and said that the Gezi events resembled the 31 March events of the Ottoman Empire. He blamed foreign countries such as the US and Israel and the EU for supporting the hooligans and celebrating while Turkey was dealing with them.[22] He also made declarations related to Alevism and he was accused by Alevi as well as other communities of hate-speech against Alevis. The Gezi Solidarity Forum published declarations condemning his actions and protested against him. These protests managed to gather media attention and many Dutch politicians commented on this issue. For a long time, the Dutch diasporic space kept busy with a debate on resisting anti-Alevi discourse and Gezi protests were suddenly intertwined with Alevi activism and other groups showing solidarity for their cause.[23]

In France, protests were organised jointly with the leftist and Kurdish organisations and always included the issue of the murder of three Kurdish activists in Paris in their slogans and demands. Asking for justice for this case from French authorities was merged with the slogans from Gezi. A Turkish interviewee from a workers' association stated that she regularly joins protests regarding the murders and they also include Gezi events in their discussions. In sum, there was a common goal of the call for justice by the diaspora groups but every diaspora also had its local agenda.

Conclusion

The Gezi Park events and the spirit that they have inspired has diffused to transnational space and affected many diaspora groups from Turkey with diverging interests and agendas. Throughout the protests and thereafter, diasporas played a big role in terms of translating the messages of Gezi protestors and brokering its cultural and political codes to the outside world. The mass reaction to the Gezi events was also a sign for the hostland governments that the diasporas from the same homeland should not be perceived as a monolithic body but that there are considerable fragmentations within them. The response that the diaspora groups have shown to Gezi is not static but took on a sustained form, which constantly nourishes its discourse and agenda from the developments in Turkey as well as in

22 http://gazeteyenigun.com.tr/gundem/120839/gezi;-dinsizlerin-sarhoslarin-alevilerin-ermenilerin-isi.

23 For details see http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/hollanda-gezi-dayanismasi-rotterdam-islam-universitesi-rektoru-prof-ahmet-akgunduzu-protesto-ediyoruz/.

the host country. In the diaspora, the 'Gezi Spirit' strengthened already mobilised groups, caused an awakening in dormant members and created or strengthened already existing alliances between different diaspora groups. As in Turkey, not all the protestors could unite under collective aims, however different webs of solidarity on 'common grievances' were formed that engendered alternative or sometimes competing discourses. What the ADD and TGB take from the Gezi Spirit is not the same as the Leftist and Kurdish coalition and their expectations from this process. The diffusion of Gezi events created venues of opposition in the transnational space, which caused a merger of debate matters related to Turkish politics under a more comprehensive network. Similar to Gezi events in Turkey, 'it was never about three trees.' These venues became platforms for discussing issues that are related to coming to terms with the past – for instance by discussing the Sivas Massacre, giving support to 'ODTÜ Resistance,'[24] reacting to corruption in Turkey and discussing a possible resolution to the Kurdish Question. As in Turkey, Gezi resistance in the diaspora is also building on a long-term struggle for democratisation in Turkey.

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15 Turkey's EU Membership Process in the Aftermath of the Gezi Protests

Beken Saatçioğlu

Introduction

The Gezi Park protests represent an unprecedented wave of social resistance in the history of the modern Turkish Republic. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that Gezi had repercussions not only for Turkey's domestic politics but also for foreign relations, in particular, relations with the EU. This chapter discusses Gezi's implications for Turkey's EU accession process. The EU has interpreted the violations of political freedoms surrounding Gezi as signalling Turkey's shift away from Europe's liberal democratic norms. Indeed, the perceived 'normative distance' between Turkey and the EU over fundamental democratic values made apparent by Gezi led the EU to postpone the opening of the next membership negotiation chapter with Turkey (Chapter 22) until after the publication of the European Commission's 2013 Progress Report in October 2013. Although the chapter was opened in November 2013, this came amid the EU's increased democratising pressure on Turkey as well as its declared intention to use the opening of individual negotiation chapters as an instrument for anchoring the country's further democratisation.

This chapter's main contention is that, in the post-Gezi period, Turkey's relations with the EU have primarily been guided by normative – as opposed to intergovernmental and political preference-based – evaluations on the EU's part and will likely remain so in the near future. Two empirical observations follow. First, the EU's perceptions about Turkish democracy and how distant Turkey is from the Union in terms of commitment to democratic norms are likely to be sufficient causes for the EU's decisions about vetoing, postponing or suspending the membership negotiations process. The principal evidence for this is amply provided by the process leading to the EU's delaying of negotiations on Chapter 22. Second, and as a result of this elevation of democratic norms to the centre of EU-Turkey membership negotiations, so long as Turkey stays normatively detached from the EU, the Union will keep the negotiations open as a policy instrument intended to anchor and encourage Turkey's further democratisation. This claim is supported by developments following the start of negotiations

over Chapter 22. Both the European Commission (EC) and individual Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have endorsed the opening of further chapters (Chapters 23, 'Judiciary and Fundamental Rights,' and 24, 'Justice, Freedom and Security') out of normative concerns to boost Turkish reforms needed to address problems regarding judicial independence and fundamental political rights and freedoms, as illustrated by Gezi.

The broader conclusion demonstrated by these developments is that Gezi has unleashed and strengthened normative causal dynamics in Turkey's process of EU accession talks. Historically, this norm-based progression of the negotiations process is unprecedented in Turkey-EU relations. The EU's past decisions regarding the various stages of Turkey's accession as well as the opening, closing and suspension of individual negotiation chapters have all been principally motivated by member-states' political preferences and assessments (e.g. estimated implications of potential Turkish accession) advanced and formulated in an intergovernmental context. It would be fair to argue that, prior to Gezi, the extent of Turkey's democratic commitment was not a sufficient factor *in and of itself* in shaping the EU's decisions regarding Turkey. The key policy implication of this transformation is that, so long as Turkey's democratic deficiencies persist, such norm-based evaluations will likely have primacy over rationalist EU calculations in defining the future progression of Turkey's relations with the EU.

The chapter proceeds as follows. After discussing Gezi's normative significance, the first part will analyse the EU's reaction to Gezi in order to demonstrate its value-based character and how it directly affected the postponing of Chapter 22's negotiation. The second section will reflect on political developments in Turkey following the opening of Chapter 22, and demonstrate their impacts on the EU's approach to Turkey's on-going membership negotiations process. The chapter ends by discussing the overall significance of Gezi for EU-Turkey relations.

The Normative Meaning of Gezi

The Gezi resistance unleashed a new critical social consciousness against the anti-democratic extremes of those in power (Göle 2013). Significant domestic political developments surrounding Gezi led to the growth of the protest movement throughout the summer of 2013. As Yeşim Arat (2013, 808) puts it, 'subtle government violence' in various domains, which has been in the making since the AKP's second term in power, ignited a social reaction, which was channelled into the Gezi demonstrations. The

government's majoritarian conception of democracy had reached a degree of authoritarianism, as evident in key developments such as the AKP's insufficient regard for the principle of separation of powers and the rule of law, attacks on the independent press and freedoms of expression and assembly and, more generally, anti-democratic pressures on the opposition and civil society. In the days leading up to Gezi, the gravity of these issues was reinforced by the AKP's moralising intrusions into individual lifestyles and attempts to reorganise public life in line with Islamic values (Göle 2013, 10). Restrictions on the sale, advertisement and public consumption of alcohol were imposed in June 2013, followed by Prime Minister Erdoğan's public calls to prohibit coed student dorms and housing as the leader of a 'conservative government' with the responsibility to intervene.[1] In addition, legal initiatives to restrict women's choices by banning abortion and Erdoğan's personal call to women to have at least three children, as well as his declared intention to 'raise a religious generation' (going back to 2012), reinforced public fears that secular ways of life were being threatened as a result of the AKP's disregard for the rights of those who do not share the party's ideology (those in the minority, in Erdoğan's view, based upon the assumption that the majority of the Turkish electorate supports the AKP).

This authoritarian and moralising background, combined with the government's uncompromising approach to the Gezi protests, turned the demonstrations into a mass democratic uprising. In particular, AKP officials' and Istanbul Mayor's one-sided insistence on the demolition of the park and condoning of police violence (which left eight people dead and over 8000 people injured) against the protestors (whom Erdoğan labelled as 'marginal,' 'terrorists,' 'looters' [*çapulcu*] and 'drunkards' [*ayyaş*]) offended the masses, which added fuel to the protests.

Implications for Turkey-EU Relations

Postponing Negotiations on Chapter 22

Turkey's shift away from democracy, as symbolised by Gezi, had critical repercussions for Turkey-EU relations. As Gezi became the voice of millions all over Turkey against governmental authoritarianism, the EU increasingly evaluated its ties with Turkey from a normative, democratic angle. Although

1 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-erdogan-doctrine-i-am-conservative-so-i-can-intervene.aspx?pageID=449&nID=57550&NewsCatID=428.

the weak state of Turkish democracy has always been a central problem for Turkey's EU accession, after Gezi, democratic considerations reached an unprecedented level of influence over the latter. This is understandable since the EU is a democratic community and it would be fair to say that Turkey had not drifted this far away from European political values since it became a formal EU candidate state in 1999. The Turkish public's long-standing democratic frustrations unleashed by Gezi and the government's uncompromising and polarising stance towards the protestors brought to the fore the normative mismatch between Turkey and the EU over fundamental democratic freedoms to such an extent that these factors on their own promised to guide the EU's subsequent decisions about accession negotiations with Turkey.

In order to assess how Gezi specifically influenced Turkey-EU relations, it is important to analyse the EU's response to Gezi, in particular, the reactions of the EC and the EP. The first EU responses were given by the European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Füle. Füle criticised the Turkish government during a conference on Turkey-EU relations organised by Turkey's Ministry for EU Affairs in Istanbul in June 2013. Following European Council President Herman Van Rompuy's calls for 'building new and stronger bridges between Europe and Turkey' (expressed during a visit to Ankara in May 2013), Füle argued for the continuation of accession talks with Turkey in line with the spirit of the EU-Turkey 'Positive Agenda' announced in 2012. At the same time, however, he placed renewed emphasis on democratic norms as the propeller of Turkish accession (in light of the government's efforts to stifle the Gezi protests) and on the Turkish media's freedom to document and report the latter. Arguing that EU member-states' and candidates' task is to follow 'the highest possible democratic standards and practices;' namely, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and 'freedom of media to report on what is happening as it is happening,' Füle delivered a critical message for Turkey: 'Energising the EU accession process and strengthening democracy by respecting rights and freedoms are two sides of the same coin' (Füle 2013, 2).

Füle's comments were followed by similar messages by MEPs at a special Turkey debate held in response to Gezi on 12 June 2013. The debate was marked by parliamentarians' condemnation of the disproportionate use of force by the Turkish police against the protestors and calls on the Turkish government to show full respect for democratic rights and freedoms. For example, EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton protested: 'We have seen too many examples of excessive police force over the past two weeks – close range use of tear gas, water cannons, pepper spray, plastic bullets – against

protestors who have been overwhelmingly peaceful [...] Those responsible [must be] held accountable."[2] Similarly, in a separate press statement, EP President Martin Schulz argued: 'The protests of Taksim Square [...] are not a threat against the Turkish State [...]. [Yet], [d]emonstrators have been taken aback by the ruthlessness with which the authorities responded, by the wave of detentions which ensued and by the crackdown on social media and the press' (European Parliament/The President 2013). At the same time, however, Schulz stressed the importance of 'keeping the accession process alive' (Ibid.). Even those EP groups known for their support for Turkey's EU membership shared Schulz's criticisms. As Guy Verhofstadt, the leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE), stated: 'My Group is a strong supporter of a European choice for Turkey. But let me be clear, not a Turkey that turns its back on European principles and values.'[3]

The spirit of these criticisms was reflected in an EP resolution issued on 13 June 2013. The resolution was one of the harshest the EP has delivered on Turkey and it clearly documented the 'normative gap' between Turkey and the EU as far as adherence to democracy is concerned. The EP strongly criticised not only the political rights violations made evident by Gezi but also the government's way of handling the protests: 'The EP deplores the reactions of the Turkish Government and of Prime Minister Erdoğan, whose unwillingness to take steps towards reconciliation, to apologise or to understand the reactions of a segment of the Turkish population have only contributed to further polarisation' (European Parliament 2013, paragraph 5). Furthermore, the resolution 'call[ed] on the government to respect the plurality and richness of Turkish society and to protect secular lifestyles' (Ibid., paragraph 12) and 'recall[ed] that [true] freedom of expression and media pluralism are at the heart of European values' and are essential for a truly democratic society (Ibid., paragraph 14).

The EP's critical messages found little sympathy among the members of the Turkish government. Erdoğan denounced the EU as 'anti-democratic' and stated that his government would no longer recognise the EP following its resolution.[4] Similarly, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu argued that the Turkish government would not let an international body like the EU interfere with its relations with the Turkish people and claimed that the

2 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318138-gezi-park-protests-spark-crisis-in-beleaguered-eu-ties.html.

3 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318138-gezi-park-protests-spark-crisis-in-beleaguered-eu-ties.html.

4 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/25/opinion/turkeys-eu-bid.html?_r=0.

EP's resolution would be 'sent back to them once they submit it to us.'[5] Furthermore, he rejected the EP's charges that Turkey is a 'chaotic state' which shows little respect for democratic freedoms.[6]

Tension between Turkey and the EU increased following Gezi Park's forced evacuation and closure to the public by the police on 15 June. Upon the park's closure, in line with the government's view of the Gezi protests, the former Minister for EU Affairs and Turkey's Chief EU Negotiator, Egemen Bağış, argued that all those attempting to access the Taksim area for further demonstrations would henceforth be considered 'terrorists.'

Among EU member states, Germany in particular criticised the government's and local Istanbul authorities' stance on Gezi. German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the AKP's approach to Gezi as 'very tough,' which led to her government's eventual veto on the opening of Chapter 22. Supported by Austria and the Netherlands, Germany took the lead in preventing the chapter's opening on the originally scheduled date of 26 June. However, ahead of the EU General Affairs Council (GAC) on 25 June (which was bound to reach a final, official decision on Chapter 22), Merkel agreed to a compromise solution reached at a last-minute meeting held by the foreign ministers of Germany and Turkey. As Rupert Polenz, the head of the federal German Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, explained, Germany withdrew its veto in order to 'send an open message to Turkey for changing its stance towards civil society and peaceful demonstrators.'[7] Consequently, Germany acquiesced to the postponing of negotiations on Chapter 22 instead of blocking them indefinitely.

With Germany's veto out of the way, the GAC gave the official go-ahead for Chapter 22's negotiation, yet it delayed the talks until after the publication of the EC's progress report on Turkey in autumn 2013:

> The Council [...] underscores that the Inter-Governmental Conference with Turkey will take place after the presentation of the Commission's annual progress report and following a discussion of the GAC which will confirm the common position of the Council for the opening of Chapter 22 and determine the date for the accession conference (Council of the European Union 2013, 9).

5 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318138-gezi-park-protests-spark-crisis-in-beleaguered-eu-ties.html.

6 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318138-gezi-park-protests-spark-crisis-in-beleaguered-eu-ties.html.

7 http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/avrupa-ilerleme-raporu-nu-bekliyor/gundem/ydetay/1733313/default.htm.

As such, although the Council agreed in principle to open talks on Chapter 22, in practice, it still applied political conditionality since the negotiations were effectively linked to the democratic content of the EC's Progress Report. Indeed, on 27 June, the conditional linkage between the state of Turkish democracy and Turkey's EU negotiation process was openly stated by Merkel herself on the floor of the German Parliament. While welcoming the reopening of talks with Turkey, Merkel argued that the EU was 'not acting as if nothing had happened [in Turkey]:' 'This outcome makes it clear that Turkey is an important partner, but that our European values [...] – freedom to protest, freedom of opinion, the rule of law and religious freedom –, are always valid and are not negotiable.'[8] More critically, Schulz stated that the AKP's increasing disrespect for secular lifestyles is raising suspicion about Turkey's pro-EU orientation and threatening the possibility of its obtaining eventual EU accession, notwithstanding the European Council's favourable decision concerning Chapter 22.[9] Similarly, ALDE parliamentarian Andrew Duff argued that '[Erdoğan] does not understand [that the EU] is in fact a system of government that is federal, pluralistic, secular and far reaching' and that 'for the next five to ten years [...] Turkey and the core of the EU, excluding the UK, are diverging rather than converging."[10]

The EP and EU member-states were not the only EU actors that had Gezi in their spotlight. The EC also had normative criticisms of its own, which were primarily reflected in the content of its 2013 Progress Report on Turkey. Indeed, months before the publication of the report, the EC reacted rapidly to Gezi and amended the first draft of the report in light of the developments surrounding the protests. The final version of the report (which was published on 16 October) stated that 'a divisive political climate prevailed' after Gezi, as 'the government [...] adopted overall an uncompromising stance during the protest late May and early June, including a polarizing tone towards citizens, civil society organization[s] and businesses' (European Commission 2013a, 8). In addition, on the whole, the report was extremely critical about the state of political freedoms in Turkey, in particular, the status of civil society which, 'as illustrated [by] Gezi [...], is still not widely considered by those traditionally involved in politics as a legitimate stakeholder in democracy' (Ibid., 11).

8 http://www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/angela-merkel-warns-turkey-european-democratic-values-nonnegotiable-for-eu-entry-29377204.html.

9 'Türkiye üye olamayabilir.' *Milliyet*, 28 June 2013.

10 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-ruling-akp-simply-replaced-kemalism-with-islamism-ep-member-says.aspx?PageID=238&NID=49313&NewsCatID=338.

Notwithstanding these negative evaluations, the EC praised the positive steps undertaken by the Turkish government. Among these were: (1) the implementation of the Third Judicial Reform Package (July 2012), which legalised and broadened the use of the judicial control mechanism as an alternative to detention; (2) the adoption of the Fourth Judicial Reform Package (April 2013) intending to improve freedom of expression by distinguishing peaceful expressions of opinion from those involving an element of violence, coercion and/or presenting 'clear and imminent danger to public order'; and (3) the September 2013 democratisation package, which included, inter alia, measures improving Kurdish rights and the exercise of freedom of religion.[11]

The EC, much like the EP and the Council, thus encouraged the democratic developments undertaken by the AKP while keeping pressure on it to end the rights violations surrounding Gezi and to address the core of Turkey's persistent democratic deficiencies. A few days after the publication of the Progress Report, the Luxembourg GAC confirmed the EU's common position for beginning negotiations on Chapter 22. Consequently, negotiations on the chapter were launched at the ministerial level at the accession conference with Turkey, which gathered in Brussels on 5 November.

Negotiations on Chapter 22 and beyond

The opening of Chapter 22 was significant not only because it suggested that the initial crisis in Turkey-EU relations triggered by Gezi had now relatively subsided (without, however, coming to a definitive end, as will be explained below) but also because it marked the resumption of the negotiations process after several years of deadlock. Indeed, before Chapter 22, the last chapter to be negotiated was Chapter 12 ('Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy'), which was opened on 30 June 2010. Thus, membership talks were effectively suspended between 2010 and November 2013 when the chapter on regional policy was finally opened. The launching of the so-called 'Positive Agenda' in May 2012 came as a sweetener during this period as it promised to revitalise the long-strained EU-Turkey membership talks by highlighting the importance of cooperation between the two sides in various areas of mutual interest. However, as elaborated above, the socio-political repercussions of Gezi were so overwhelming for

11 For a detailed discussion of the content of these legal packages, see European Commission 2013a, 6, 12, 45-46, 51.

the EU that they outweighed the Positive Agenda's potential promise and resulted in the postponing of talks over Chapter 22.

The EU's decision to launch negotiations on Chapter 22 should not be taken as a sign that its concerns about Turkish democracy had ended or as a reward for Turkey's democratic performance. To the contrary, the move was motivated precisely by the persistent normative rift over the commitment to democracy, which distanced Turkey from the EU after Gezi. Just like the delaying of Chapter 22's negotiations in June 2013, the chapter's eventual November opening, too, was guided by the EU's normative impulse to push Turkey in a pro-democratic direction. Indeed, in a memorandum summarising the key findings of Turkey's 2013 Progress Report, the EC cited '[Turkey's] pressing need to develop a truly participatory democracy' and recalled that full respect for fundamental freedoms must be ensured both in terms of improving democratic legislation and implementation (European Commission 2013b). As the EC explained:

> These issues [lack of participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms problems] underline the importance for the EU to enhance its engagement with Turkey, especially on fundamental rights, so that it remains the benchmark for reforms in the country [...] The accession process remains the most suitable framework for promoting EU-related reforms in Turkey. Therefore, accession negotiations need to regain momentum [...] In this regard, the opening of Chapter 22 [...] will be an important step (Ibid.).

Thus, the EC – along with the EP and the Council – has shown commitment to keeping the negotiations open in order to have Turkey closely 'under its watch' and to use the process as a benchmark for much-needed democratic reforms in Turkey. This pro-democratic aspiration has been pursued even more strongly by the EU in the aftermath of 17 December 2013, when a sudden corruption probe – implicating members of the cabinet and Erdoğan's own family – broke. The corruption probe was followed by the AKP's tactical moves on the legislative front aimed at further restricting judicial independence and freedom of expression in order to avoid scrutiny. The probe led to the resignation of four ministers, and threatened to ensnare Erdoğan's son and other family members based upon charges of unlawful enrichment.

The graft allegations were dismissed by Erdoğan as a 'coup attempt' launched by members of the 'parallel state' (within the police force and the

judiciary) directed by the Islamist Gülen movement,[12] and simultaneously serving the interests of 'foreign powers' like Israel and the US. Erdoğan argued that the '17 December process' was a plot orchestrated by the AKP government's domestic and foreign enemies, which were intent on bringing it down as a step geared towards undermining its successes on the political and economic fronts. Consequently, the AKP government purged thousands of police officers and hundreds of prosecutors who led the corruption investigation in order to clear the state bureaucracy from the 'parallel state' and win the 'second war of independence' (the first being the 1919-1923 war which was fought against foreign powers, leading to the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic) against 'traitors' challenging the 'national will' represented by the AKP.

The purges were followed in January by a government-introduced draft law designed to subjugate the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hâkimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*, HSYK) to the Ministry of Justice, thus effectively serving to establish governmental control over the judiciary and end judicial independence as defined in Article 138 of the Constitution. These initiatives were paralleled by other proposed amendments to Turkey's internet law granting the Transport and Telecommunications Minister and regulating agencies the authority to block websites (deemed to infringe privacy) without a court order as well as to push internet providers to store information concerning their customers' online activities. It was speculated that the legislative move was motivated by Erdoğan's desire to prevent the online sharing of any potentially implicating information/evidence directed at his family and associates since documents and videos about the corruption scandal were being widely publicised via social media.

Against this background, Erdoğan visited Brussels for the first time in five years in January 2014, where he was confronted with an EU that had now become much harsher vis-à-vis the government following the post-17 December developments, which, in the wake of Gezi, had further distanced

12 The Gülen movement is an Islamist network led by the imam and preacher Fethullah Gülen, who is a Turkish national residing in the US. It consists of a vast web of followers and advocates brought together by ideological commitment to religious conservatism propagated via Gülen's personal teachings as well as instruction offered at schools owned by the network in Turkey and all over the world. Gülen and Erdoğan's AKP have worked together since 2002 (when the AKP first assumed power) as close allies against the traditionally powerful secular-nationalist establishment in Turkey. However, the alliance has increasingly unraveled and led to a power struggle since 2010, reaching the point of mutual hostility between the two sides after the 17 December 2013 corruption probe (which was launched against the AKP by Gülenists within the judiciary and the police).

Turkey from the EU's democratic values. Thus, the EU's pro-democracy, normative emphasis on its relations with Turkey took on a more prominent role. This was made evident to the members of the Turkish government at an 'animated' closed-door meeting attended by European lawmakers in Brussels.[13] Faced with EU criticisms about the lack of judicial independence in Turkey, Erdoğan explained: 'If we consider the judiciary as a separate power, this would lead to a country of judicial rule and not democracy. We believe in democracy.'[14] Unconvinced by Erdoğan's arguments, EU officials and politicians adopted an increasingly critical tone. As EU President Herman Van Rompuy explained after the meeting: 'It's important not to backtrack on achievements. Progress in accession negotiations and progress in political reforms in Turkey are two sides of the same coin.'[15] Similarly, Marietje Schaake, a Dutch MEP from the EP's Liberal faction, argued: 'The problems [concerning the AKP's interference with the judiciary] are now so immense that they need to be investigated independently.'[16] German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier was even more explicit in his criticisms: 'There are numerous questions to which the Europeans have not received any replies. Demanding that *Turkey returns to the rule of law* [emphasis added] is not just something that can be done, but it's something that has to be done.'[17]

The EU's normative emphasis on the issue of Turkey's democracy was reiterated by French President François Hollande during a visit to Turkey in late January. Instead of removing his veto on any of the four chapters blocked by France under Sarkozy, Hollande argued that Cyprus should lift its veto on chapters related to law and fundamental rights (Chapters 23 and 24) so as to urgently address Turkey's most pressing democracy problems: 'The chapters which I think should be under discussion are precisely those which concern the subjects which currently pose questions for Turkey – the separation of powers, fundamental rights, rule of law, justice.'[18]

13 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-21/eu-presses-turkey-on-rights-and-justice-as-entry-bid-languishes.html.

14 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-21/eu-presses-turkey-on-rights-and-justice-as-entry-bid-languishes.html.

15 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-21/eu-presses-turkey-on-rights-and-justice-as-entry-bid-languishes.html.

16 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-21/eu-presses-turkey-on-rights-and-justice-as-entry-bid-languishes.html.

17 http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/22/world/europe/turkey.html?_r=0.

18 http://euobserver.com/foreign/122889.

These messages were followed by similar calls by Steinmeier and Merkel when Erdoğan visited Berlin in February 2014. As one of the harshest opponents of Turkey's EU accession (along with France), Germany underlined the need to open Chapters 23 and 24 'and then enter into a serious and viable discussion on what the situation in Turkey is like at the moment' (*Agence Europe* 2014). Furthermore, Merkel stated that she is 'sceptical as to the full accession of Turkey:' 'Personally, I say that we are in a process of negotiation which has a certain result and no fixed timing' (Ibid.).

Turning to the EP, following the spirit of a March resolution on the progress of Turkey (issued by the EP Foreign Affairs Committee), MEPs once again underlined the EU's need to promote democracy and rule of law in Turkey through 'close dialogue and cooperation,' i.e. efforts geared towards the launching of negotiations on Chapters 23 and 24 (*EurActiv* 2014). As Marietje Schaake put it bluntly: 'The crisis in Turkey [in the context of the 17 December corruption probe] destabilizes the core of the rule of law and is only getting worse. The separation of powers, freedom of expression and the independence of the judiciary are under great pressure' (Ibid.).

This initial resolution was followed by an EP resolution (issued on 12 March) on the EC's 2013 Progress Report on Turkey. While acknowledging that Turkey is an important strategic partner for the EU, the resolution was deeply critical about recent political developments in the country, notably charges of high-level corruption (launched on 17 December) and the purge of prosecutors and police officers involved with the corruption investigations (European Parliament 2014, paragraph 4); the new law on the HSYK, 'which is not in line with the principle of an independent judiciary' (Ibid., paragraph 10); the impunity enjoyed by officials and police officers responsible for excessive use of force against the Gezi protestors (Ibid., paragraph 13) as well as the internet law, which contradicts 'European standards on media freedom and freedom of expression' (Ibid., paragraph 15). Hence, the EP stressed that 'delivering to Turkey the official benchmarks for the opening of Chapters 23 and 24 would [...] provide a clear anchor for the reform process in Turkey, on the basis of European standards, with particular reference to the judiciary' (Ibid., paragraph 25).

The EP's emphasis on Turkish democracy and the opening of Chapters 23 and 24 as an instrument to help promote it was emphasised by Füle in critical statements delivered to the EP on 11 March (at the plenary debate on the EP resolution) as well as to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee at their Brussels meeting on 10 April 2014. Füle suggested that the EU needs to cooperate more closely with Turkey, especially before critical Turkish legislation (i.e. concerning democratic issues, such as the internet

law and the law on HSYK outlined above) is envisaged and drafted, as '[t]his is the only way for the European Union to remain an anchor of reforms in Turkey and support all those in this country who call for more freedom and democracy' (European Commission 2014a). Arguing that rule of law and fundamental rights are 'at the very center of the accession process [...] [and] must be treated as an absolute priority' (European Commission 2014b), he further called on the Council to formulate a roadmap/opening benchmarks for the launching of accession talks on Chapter 23.

Conclusion

Turkey's Gezi Park protests constituted a turning point in Turkey-EU relations. As explained above, Gezi signalled a normative gap between the EU and Turkey in terms of attachment to European liberal democratic values embedded in the Copenhagen membership criteria. After Gezi, the more Turkey drifted away from democracy, the more the EU pressured it about democratic norms, which were now firmly placed at the centre of Turkey's EU membership negotiations and accession process. Issues concerning rule of law and fundamental political rights and freedoms (especially, freedom of assembly, as illustrated by Gezi) have been at the forefront of the EU's dealings with Turkey since Gezi. The extent of the EU's post-Gezi, pro-democracy, normative pressure on Turkey has been so intense that it is now fair to argue for the primary role of democratic norms in determining the various stages of Turkey's EU relations, i.e. the EU's opening of individual acquis chapters to negotiation.

This chapter has analysed the progression of EU-Turkey ties in light of Gezi and has reached two empirical conclusions. First, Turkey's deviation from democracy, signified by Gezi, led the EU to react strongly by postponing the opening of Chapter 22 to negotiation, which was originally scheduled for June 2013. The chapter was opened only after the publication of the EC's Progress Report on Turkey in November 2013 as an attempt on the EU's part to use the negotiations process as an anchor for Turkey's democratic reforms. Second, the EU's normative impulse to push Turkey in a pro-democracy direction, triggered by Gezi, led to the formulation of arguments in favour of opening further chapters down the line – Chapters 23 and 24 – by the EC and the EP, as well as individual member-states. While a date for opening these chapters has not yet been agreed upon, there exists a determination within most of the EU for continuing negotiations, especially over Chapter 23 since it deals directly with Turkey's most crucial democracy problems (judiciary and fundamental freedoms).

The overall significance of post-Gezi developments is that, for the foreseeable future, democratic norms will guide Turkey's accession process. It seems that the extent to which Turkey is committed to democracy will by itself determine the progression of its ties with the EU, when it comes to the EU's opening, delaying or suspending negotiations over individual chapters, as well as shaping Turkey's chances of eventual membership. The importance of this norm-driven process becomes especially evident when contrasted with the EU's earlier decisions on Turkey. Hence, future research will benefit from studying the implications of Gezi for Turkey's EU accession in a comparative historical perspective.

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