ISBN: 978 - 88 - 96951-21-7

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The Gezi Park Movement: Forming of a New Political Opposition in Turkey?

Marija Krstic Drasko

Master of Arts MIREES
Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe

AWARDED MASTER THESIS

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Awarded Master thesis
in
A Film Journey Through Former Yugoslavia and its Demise

Supervisor Prof. Ana Devic

Academic Year 2012/2013
September session

FOREWORD

The International Master in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Easter Europe (MIREES) was launched in 2004 at the School of Political Sciences-Forlì Campus in cooperation with Europe and the Balkans International Network (EBIN). In 2008 it developed as a second cycle degree program, which currently delivers a joint MA awarded by the four full partner Universities of Bologna, Vytautas Magnus at Kaunas, Corvinus of Budapest and St. Petersburg State University, together with the universities of Ljubljana and Zagreb. The program is carried out with the additional support of the associate partners, as the MIREES International Alumni Association (MAiA), the Institute of East-Central and Balkan Europe (IECOB) in Forlì, the NATO Centre of Excellence for Energy Security in Vilnius, and the Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis'- IDSCS - in Skopje, and more recently enjoys the cooperation with the Visegrad Fund.

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Remarkable and diverse academic works, truly representative of MIREES' intrinsic interdisciplinary and multifaceted approach are made available through such cooperation. These innovative, in-depth and insightfully drafted analyses testify the authors' dedication and MIREES' competence in training outstanding researchers and analysts.

All members of the MIREES, MAiA and IECOB network congratulate the authors on their achievements.

Prof. Francesco Privitera
Programme Director,
MIREES International Degree Programme

Adriano Remiddi
President of the Executive Board,
MIREES Alumni International Association

Giovanni Cadioli
Editorial Coordinator,
MIREES Alumni International Association

Table of Contents

Introduction: Background and Structure

A tree dies, a nation wakes up
— Nâzım Hikmet

On May 28, 2013, a relatively small group of people, a few dozen of them, gathered in Gezi Park – a medium-sized park in the center of Istanbul adjacent to Taksim – the main city square. They were mainly young people, most of them environmentalists, who were concerned about the park's destiny since it was supposed to be demolished as a part of the new reconstruction project of Taksim Square and its surroundings. They organized spontaneously a sit-in protest and even set up the tents in order to prevent the bulldozers uprooting the trees. The protest was completely peaceful, hidden among the trees and thus imperceptible from the outside of the park. Moreover, it was not covered at all by the media, so people who would walk along Taksim Square – in the immediate vicinity to the park – would not notice that anything unusual was going on there. Gezi Park was treated to be demolished so to free the space for the construction of the replica of old Ottoman barracks built in the beginning of the 19th century by sultan Selim the Third. And also the shopping mall was supposed to be placed within the barracks. From the view of an outsider, there is nothing wrong with the reconstruction of Taksim. Generally speaking, it is a huge and quite ugly, crowded square overwhelmed by buses and taxicabs, surrounded by shops and fast-food restaurants. Even Gezi Park itself does not come to the fore, although it is located next to the square itself, given that it is hidden behind the stairs leading to its entrance. So, why then it should not be reconstructed as it was planned – as a pedestrian zone, with the new mosque, shopping mall, and tunnels to put the traffic underground? Well, there are several reasons why this project was controversial.

First of all, there is this symbolic importance of Taksim square since the Ottoman time. It is not just a city square or a public space, but also the space of power struggle and the struggle for meanings. It is the main spot for expressing the public discontent, where all previous protests and political conflicts took place. During Atatürk's Republican People's Party's (CHP) rule, old Ottoman barracks were demolished and Gezi Park was constructed instead as an urban symbol of a new Republican elite. Today, pro-religion[1] Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, wants to leave its own mark by rebuilding Oriental style Ottoman barracks and constructing a new mosque in the main city square of Istanbul, and thus replacing its secular identity with a more Islamic one.

1 Here, I am deliberately avoiding to use the term 'pro-Islamic', which is a commonly attributed to the AKP and its policy, given that it is politically and media too exploited and value-laden, resulting in understanding of 'pro-Islamic' as meaning something 'worse' than 'pro-Christian'. In addition, unlike for the term 'pro-Islamic', hardly anyone would even know what the term 'pro-Christian' might exactly imply.

At the same time, the new shopping mall was to be built inside the replica of Ottoman barracks which actually reflects the ideological setup of AKP rule – neoliberal politics combined with Islamic values. Replacing Gezi Park – one of the few remaining green areas in Istanbul's downtown, one of the few public places in the center where ordinary citizens could spend time without spending money was to be turned into a shopping mall – a place of pure consumption where only tourists and wealthy ones would have access. This could have been translated into a message to the residents and other commons that they should leave the city center.

At the first glance, it was surprising when the small environmentalist protest grew into the nationwide movement, but there were lots of issues for ordinary citizens, especially for those residing in Istanbul, to be concerned about, and the meaning of the protection of Gezi Park could somehow encompass them all. First, there was an environmental issue – to protect a green area, which also reflects 'resistance to the extreme urban development of the past ten years' (Göle, 2013: 9). This includes the protests against the construction of Istanbul's third airport and the third bridge, and against the megalomaniac project of making Istanbul a "global city" and the "financial and cultural capital of Europe". These projects are not only expensive and ecologically damaging[2], but they appear to be wrong solutions to the problem of overpopulation. Instead, it would be better if the investments are directed to other cities in order to prevent migration to Istanbul which soon will find it difficult to cope with the population growth. Such huge projects were criticized by environmentalists, sociologists, architects, and other experts. However, the government objected to all the critics and continued with its projects that obviously serve only 'for the reasons of prestige' (Aksoy, 2012: 97).

Beside the environmental issue, the citizens are also concerned about the fact that their government intervenes enormously in the urban transformation plans. Politicians decide on everything, not city planners. 'Globalization is a central mission of the AKP government, and Istanbul is the privileged arena of operation' (Aksoy, 2012: 98). For making Istanbul a "global city", the government, which now controls the main public agency for city planning, has started the huge project of gentrification of the city. First phase consists of destroying shantytowns (*geçekondu*) at the outskirts of the city and relocating poor families to whom they offer the new units in mass housing neighborhoods at subsidized prices. In the second phase, the area is sold to investors who upgrade it by building shopping malls or new Olympic stadium and fancy housing so to sell it to upper classes. These projects lack the social and economic programs for the inhabitants living in the areas designated to be gentrified, thus causing 'displacement, dispossession and geographical relocation of poverty' (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1490). This results in undermining the social capital of communities and breaking up the social networks (Aksoy, 2012: 107), cutting the interaction among different classes and making neighborhoods 'mono-functional, and in fact, dead spaces' (Aksoy, 2012: 108). Hence, such a process could completely change the urban fabric of Istanbul di-

2 The third airport is supposed to cover the area of 90.000 square meters north of the city which is mostly covered by forests that are said to be the "lungs of Istanbul". The construction of the third bridge would relieve the traffic in a short-term period, but in the long-term it would attract new roads and so new housing, shopping malls, companies, etc. With the realization of those two grand projects, the natural area that lies on the last 1/3 of the band between the Marmara Sea and the Black Sea would disappear. In the 1980s it was measured that Istanbul's geography could sustain 5 million people. Today Istanbul has 15 million inhabitants and it is suffering from the lack of resources (especially water). If such a development continues, by 2023 Istanbul will be inhabited by 30 million people.

viding it along class lines, and not allowing the citizens of all kinds to coexist. In this way Istanbul might become merely a land for selling and renting and thus ceasing to be a real city.

All of these projects are already or are to be underway, but all of them are taking place at the outskirts of Istanbul. Nobody could have believed that Gezi Park in the city center was to be removed for real, but when the threat to the park eventually materialized, it additionally arouse the critical consciousness and people took the concrete action. The construction of the shopping mall in the place of the park symbolized the 'confiscation of the public space by private capital' (Göle, 2013: 9). This was not only the protest against neo-liberal capitalism but also the protest for what Lefebvre calls 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 2003), which is one of the fundamental collective human rights albeit neglected in the era where attention is mainly focused on protection of individualistic and property-based rights (Harvey, 2012: 3). Right to the city is the right to participate in creating city space according to one's needs and desires and to 'transform the processes that orchestrate the production and use of urban space' (Kuymulu, 2013: 274). Here the question is who actually has the right to the city – those who can plan and finance the city's transformation (city planners, developers, investors) or those who find city streets as the place to live in or the place to work for living (homeless, street vendors, sexual workers, people who enjoy having a break sitting in the park, strolling the streets, etc.). According to David Harvey, the right to the city is an empty signifier that has to be filled with the meaning (Harvey, 2012: xv). Hence, it is not only about the struggle to the right to the city but also about the power to define such a right.

Hence, the peaceful protest in Gezi Park began for at least three reasons – environmental (protection of the green area), struggle for the right to the city (right to participate in making and remaking city spaces), and anti-capitalist struggle (against neo-liberal economy that is based on infrastructure and construction which leads to creation of inequality). The Gezi Park protest is thus metaphor for the struggle for so called "post-material" values. It is a struggle against the commercialization of the public space that would serve to generate the income from the rent symbolized in the protest against the construction of the shopping mall; and the struggle for the green area and public space that would be open to all kinds of citizens (including those disadvantaged and marginal), where everybody would be equal embracing natural way of human interaction free from commercial capitalism.

All these concerns could be encompassed by one single demand - to allow citizens to participate and that is at least to be consulted when it comes to making decisions of general interest – such as reshaping the city center. Instead of hearing the demands and negotiating for finding the consensus in the issue of Gezi Park, the government chose another way to deal with this problem.

The protestors in Gezi Park were afraid of possible police action so they were inviting people via Twitter and Facebook to join them (Kuymulu, 2013: 275). Indeed, the protest grew day by day when eventually, on May 31, in early morning hours, the police attacked the protestors in a full force determined to take over the park. The police assault was quite brutal without previous warning. Since it happened around 5 am, most of the protestors were still sleeping. Suddenly, they were faced with the teargas bombs, water cannons and plastic bullets. All their stuff was burned – tents, flags, music instruments. The media did not cover the scene at all but broadcasted nature documentaries and cooking shows instead of showing

what was happening in the main square of Istanbul. Protestors started to post messages on social media such as Twitter and Facebook about what was going on in Taksim and Gezi Park so the news spread rapidly. After getting information on social media and after seeing on amateur live stream videos on the Internet something almost resembling a war scene in Taksim square, people took to the streets in a massive number. By the evening, there were several hundreds of mostly young people heading towards Taksim square ready to clash with the police and show solidarity with the people who were attacked for peacefully protesting in Gezi Park. Whenever they tried to get close to the square, the police forced them back by massive amount of tear gas and water cannons. By the early morning hours of June the 1st, the protestors were joined by around 40,000 people from the Asian side who managed to cross the Bosphorus Bridge. During the night, protests spread across the whole country, and over 60 cities took a part in now the nationwide unrest for solidarity to the common people who faced the disproportionate violence. This was the momentum when the small environmentalist protest grew into massive popular movement that will lead to raising the conscience about and criticism of some of the recent governmental decisions and its overall policies and opening new questions and concerns related to future democratization process within Turkish society.

The clashes between the protestors and the police lasted until the next day when the police decided to retreat in later afternoon. Protestors immediately began to make barricades in all the roads leading to Taksim Square and Gezi Park. These barricades were not only protection in the case of a new police attack, but also symbolized the borders of the space that was now occupied by public and thus belonged to the people who were now celebrating their victory over state forces. Soon they spontaneously started to clean up the area and began to establish the commune that took a place in Gezi Park for two weeks on. People indeed organized new way of living there, based on solidarity and endless variants of human interaction. There were people of different class, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, different ages, level of education and professions. Alevis, Kurds, LGBT groups, anarchists, nationalists, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, football fans, professors, white-collars, street vendors, sex workers, students, housewives – everybody equally participated in the organization and maintenance of the commune by setting up tents, makeshift hospital, open air library, providing food and medical supplies, organizing children workshops, yoga classes, concerts, performances, outdoor cinema, etc. In those two weeks, people barely spent any money within Gezi Park area. Everything was for free, and everything was provided by the protesters themselves and by the other citizens who joined them. Taksim had never been so colorful and constantly filled with tens of thousands of people. It became a totally free zone – free from police, traffic, and even tourists. It was a space that citizens themselves created in a few days according to their own desires. It was kind of utopia – stateless, without any agents of control but also without any kind of incidents; leaderless, non-stratified, non-hierarchical, but again perfectly organized. People were honestly surprised by all of these that they themselves have created. By experiencing this communal way of living and by seeing what they can achieve together no matter the differences between them, they changed a lot realizing that they possess the power to oppose any state decision that violates their own rights.

While the protestors in Istanbul enjoyed, for the time being, their "summer of peace and love", the protestors in other Turkish cities had hard times with the police forces. Espe-

cially Ankara, the capital, and some cities in southern Turkey like Antakya and Hatay suffered a lot from police violence in those days when some of the protestors even lost their lives. The great majority of these people probably have never been to Gezi Park before and they certainly didn't risk their lives to support the protests for its preservation. In fact, they called for the different kinds of discontent that were sort of localized. The brutality over the Gezi Park protesters was just the initial capsule that galvanized all the grievances and produced anger that mobilized people to take to the streets. Now, when the costs are increased with the police brutality, four deaths and several thousands of injured people, the issue is not anymore about the protection of the park or solidarity with the protesters in Istanbul, but about the struggle against the violation of the rights that are normally guaranteed by the state (right to protest, right to assemble, right to be fully informed, right to express opinion, right to participate in decision-making, and so on).

The Gezi Park Movement was compared to several movements that took place in last 50 years, such as student and youth protests of 1968, "*Los Indignados*", "Occupy Wall Street" and other "occupy" movements, as well as "Arab Spring". The Gezi Park Movement has some aspects in common with all of these movements, however, it is distinct form them if not even unique. The protests of 1968 were protests of young generation, primarily students. The main actors of Gezi Park Movement are also young people, but compared to 1968 movement, Gezi young protestors did not turn against the values of the generation of their parents. Moreover, their parents joined them in the protest fully supporting their claims.

The Gezi Park Movement was compared to "*Los Indignados*" Movement that took place in Spain in 2011. It was a peaceful protest against global economic powers, current political system, corruption, and it was mainly provoked by Spanish financial crises and high unemployment rate, especially among the young people (with 43.5% - the highest in the EU). The Gezi Park Movement was also peaceful and had anti-capitalist character, but it was not provoked by any financial crises. Moreover, Turkey is heralded as a "success story" and example among Muslim countries and even a model for development that they should follow. However, her economic conditions are far from being as successful in a long-term, but still not that bad to have a serious impact on the lives of her citizens. In the Gezi Park Movement all kinds of people took a part, not only those economically disadvantaged like in Spain (unemployed, poorly paid, housewives, immigrants, and so on).

There are lots of similarities between the Occupy Wall Street Movement, that took a place in Zuccotti Park in New York City in 2011, and Gezi Park Movement, especially in the way how citizens "occupy" the public city space and establish sort of commune, and in activities they carry out within such a commune like discussion forums, workshops, and bringing necessary supplies. They also had similar motives to start the protest. In the case of Occupy Wall Street Movement the main motive was to draw attention to the poor resolution of the financial crisis, and to demand participation of the whole population and not only 1% of leading ones. In Gezi Park Movement one of the main issues was also the problem of unequal participation in decision-making. The difference, however, is in organization. The idea to occupy Wall Street was initiated by several organizations few months before it was realized and all activities were planned in details, while in the Gezi Park Movement everything happened spontaneously yet probably inspired at the moment by "occupy" tactics.

The Occupy Wall Street Movement had a huge global impact. Everywhere in the world the movements with the prefix "occupy" started to appear. Nevertheless, it seems it did not have long-term consequences in its home country. The Gezi Park Movement also inspired protests in several countries like Brazil, Bulgaria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides, even two months after the Gezi commune was smashed by the police, the so-called "Gezi spirit" is still vivid. It seems that the Gezi Park protest continues a huge impact on Turkish citizens and might have long-term consequences which I am going to explore in details later on in the following sections of this paper.

Western media has been quick to declare these protests as another "spring" in Muslim world. However, Turkish case does not share lots of aspects in common (or at least not the crucial ones) with the protests emerging in Arab countries since 2011. Turkey seemed like another Middle-Eastern country that has mass demands for democracy (Fuller, 13 June 2013). Taksim was "occupied" as was Tahrir in Cairo, all sorts of people participated in both movements, and they were mobilized mainly through social media networks such as twitter and Facebook. However, there is a crucial difference and it is related to the political and the economic context as well as the triggers. Firstly, in contrast to Arab countries (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Syria), Turkey is doing well economically and is the largest national economy in Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, Turkey is not an authoritarian state or dictatorship. While the majority of Arab countries are governed by authoritarian regimes, Turkey's political system is democratic holding free elections since 1946 (with several military coups in between), yet certainly an imperfect one. Turkey holds an infamous first place in the world for the highest number of imprisoned journalists, while there is a high level of corruption, minority rights, those of the Kurds and Alevis, are often violated, and "the media [are] intimidated or manipulated by the government" (Ash, 12 June 2013). Here, the demonstrations were not against the dictatorship, but against neoliberal politics and an increasingly authoritarian method of rule of the Prime Minister who has won three successive elections. Besides, another difference is the smaller influence of political Islam and the diversity of demands in the Gezi Park Movement.

Although it might seem that the Gezi Park protests are the sign of the failure of democracy in Turkey, they, in fact, express the maturing of the Turkish politics and may give a boost to more participatory democracy (Fuller, 13 June 2013). Therefore, in my work I focus on the process of democratization that is represented and induced by the Gezi Park Movement. I try to put this movement in an appropriate theoretical frame and analyze it through the interviews with people who actively took a part in this protest, and are at the same time members of civil society organizations. My aim is to answer to the following research questions: Why the protest has started in this particular moment (what preceded it); what were the main motives of the people to take to the streets and to become a part of the Gezi Park Movement; to which extent the Gezi Park Movement influenced the people, and, to this related, if they were apolitical before, did they become now politicized? I am interested in answering these questions in order to understand how big was the impact of the Gezi Park Movement on the democratization process in Turkey. I assume that the Gezi Park Protest, and all events related to it, raised some new questions (e.g. to which extent can people really influence the decisions concerning their own daily life?), revitalized some old ones (e.g. is

this government really reformist/less authoritarian?), and intensified previous concerns (e.g. the government is really faith-based and Ottoman nostalgic -which is seen as a threat to the secular parts of Turkish society) which all might result in forming of a new (form of) political opposition, less as a concrete political party and more as a political power.

Here by political power I understand Hannah Arendt's concept of power (Arendt, 1972) as a product of the people's collective action in a public realm for public purposes (social or/ and political). This power can be created only in the circumstances when people come together or live together and thus communicate and carry out mutual actions. Once the people get dispersed, the power disappears. The power also has a potential to keep people together once the actions pass. In the case of the Gezi Park Movement, so-called "Gezi spirit" (the collective identity of the Gezi Park Movement) could be defined as a sort of power in Arendt's sense.

My findings demonstrate that the protests broke out as a consequence of a relatively long time accumulated grievances. The discontent which culminated during May 2013 due to a series of incidents and growing political pressure on freedom of choice and lifestyle, eventually exploded when the police brutally attacked ordinary citizens who were peacefully protesting for the preservation of Gezi Park in the center of Istanbul. The results also show that the Gezi Park Movement influenced to a large extent both individuals who became "politicized" and civil society organizations regarding changing of their tactics, introducing new issues in their programs, and collaborating among each other. This obviously shows the big impact of the Gezi Park Movement on deepening of democratic processes in Turkish society. My findings also proved that the formation of a concrete oppositional organization such as new political party is not a desirable solution for the protesters at this moment, but that they are rather satisfied with what they have so far achieved– and that is potential of coming together, acting in concert, and thus representing a power that can, if not to pursue concrete political changes, than at least being able to oppose and influence the government's future decisions.

In the next chapter I will present most important theoretical concepts on social movements and try to apply some of those concepts to the case of the Gezi Park Movement. In the third chapter I will present in details the methodology that I used in my empirical research and that is in-depth, semi-structured interview, and the reasons why I have chosen the respective method. In the fourth chapter I will analyze through the answers of my informants some of the main aspects of the Gezi Park Movement and thereby try to answer to research questions raised above. The fourth chapter will be divided in three sections. In the first section I will focus on main initial reasons why protesters took to the streets and causes of the protestors' discontent that still motivates them to remain active. Here I will deal particularly with the concepts of authority and violence. In the second section I will explore more in details the nature of the Gezi Park Movement focusing on the organization, the tactics of mobilization, main activities, language, symbols, and overall atmosphere of the protest. In the third section I will be focused on the goals and achievements of the movement, and its consequences on Turkish (civil) society. I will try to examine to which extent this movement influenced the individuals as well as the work, tactics and goals of the organizations that took a part in this protest. In this section, I will also present some conclusions regarding my hypothesis. In the fifth chapter I will give concluding remarks and some implications.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frames

When it comes to defining the concept of social movements it is somehow easier to say what they are not than what they actually encompass. A social movement is different from social/political protest.[3] While 'protest refers to a behavior' (Opp, 2009: 34), the social movement is more complex phenomena. However, it is not a proper organization such as political parties, trade unions, interest groups, sport clubs, firms, professional chambers, religious sects or student organizations. Yet it is not a 'mass (…) or trend [either] which is unorganized, fleeting and without goals' (Christiansen, 2011a: 15). The social movement, in fact, relies on some form of organization, no matter how unstable, while it can, depending on circumstances, also include other organizations (such as political parties or state agencies), in efforts to achieve a certain goal. The goals of social movements can be different. They can aim at integration into wider society, changing some aspect of society, or, seldom, opposing social changes. In the worst or most radical cases, they can engage in violent change of the complete existing system (e.g. fascist movements or communist revolutionary movements). There are also movements which direct their actions to influence individuals instead of societies. Such movements can 'seek total change in individuals (…) such as Alcoholics Anonymous (…) or work toward partial change in individuals [such as] (…) development of unconventional lifestyles' (Flyn, 2011a: 26). Thus social movements can define their goals towards specific policy or aim at more broad cultural change (Christiansen, 2011a: 15). The scope of their goal can also vary. While some are more focused on local policies, others are more international regarding their goals. In their efforts to accomplish a given goal, they challenge precisely defined opponents (regime, power-holders, international corporations, fundamental or traditional fractions within society). The social movement efforts and actions often generate new values and political beliefs and thus they represent 'a central part of what has been called "civil society" or the "public sphere"(Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 3).

The membership in social movements is extremely volatile and it depends on 'mutual recognition between actors' (Della Porta and Diani: 2006: 21). Thus social movements are kind of 'informal social entities' (Christiansen, 2011a: 15) which make efforts, mostly through non-institutional channels, to achieve their goals. Social movements can continue to exist even when particular action decline such as protests, demonstrations and other forms of manifest events. Social movements are maintained through the connectedness between their members or, better to say, the participants who through mutual actions and communication create a collective identity. This collective identity is based on shared values, collective actions and commitment to a common goal which all participants had agreed upon be-

3 Social/political protest is not any kind of disagreement, complaint, or making demands but all of these has to be addressed to authorities/ power-holders/institutions and has to public.

fore or through the process of movement formation. Therefore, we can say that social movements are in fact networks which exist as long as there is a collective consciousness about collective identity, inter-connectedness, and need for achievement of the defined goal.

Now that I have mentioned the most important characteristics of social movements, we can engage in their possible definition. Herbert Blumer defines social movements as 'collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life' (Blumer, 1969: 99 quoted in Mayo, 2005: 54). Such a definition is not adequate if we consider what is said above. First, 'enterprise' refers to a firm organization which we have already concluded that social movements are certainly not. Second, it is possible that social movements might 'seek to establish a new order of life' but rather they aim at changing some aspects of society, expressing support for some issues or protesting against some others – they do not necessarily lead to a total transformation of society that is to revolution. Therefore, I am more prone to adopt the view of Eyerman and Jamison who emphasize the transitory nature of social movements and understand them as 'temporary public spaces, as moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities, and even ideals' (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 4 quoted in Mayo, 2005: 54). This definition reveals that social movements do not always achieve their goals but rather lay the foundation by their innovations in ideas and values for the change to be pursued in the future. There is also an emphasis on their volatility which means that their structure has always to be worked out through maintenance of collective practices, development of collective identity and devotion to the shared goal, otherwise they would decline. Hence, we could say that social movements refer to relatively spontaneous or well-organized networks of solidarity and shared values which by non-institutional means make demands to authorities and power-holders and/or challenge the established political norms, cultural beliefs and practices so to influence some change within the society.

Certain forms of independent collective action and organization could have been found throughout the history (e.g. the protest of European Protestants against Catholic Church's profligacy), but social movements, as we know them today, refer, above all, to the emergence of the modern state and formation of civil society. The term "social movement" was introduced by sociologist Lorenz von Stein in his book *The History of the French Social Movement from 1789 to the Present* published in 1850. The history of social movements, starting from the end of 18th century, is usually divided in two main periods – the industrial and the post-industrial era (Flyn, 2011a: 27). Each of these two periods with their specific characteristics produced different type of social movements. Thus the period of industrial society (the 19th and the first half of the 20th century) generated the class-based movements, especially a big number of working-class movements which were concerned with narrowly formulated issues such as workers' rights, working conditions, and wages, while the social movements of the post-industrial era (post-1960s) were focused more on the cultural change (promoting tolerance, equality, conscience about the protection of the environment, or alternative lifestyles) and strived to be globally influential. They also differed regarding the movement organization. While social movements of industrial period were more tightly organized or even bureaucratized with clear hierarchical structure, the post-industrial or so-called 'new social movements' were more loosely organized, with no-hierarchical structure, where each member had an equal position and not strictly specified roles. Some of the schol-

ars oppose such a division into old and new social movements, and I will discuss it more in details later in this chapter.

Now I will explore some of the main approaches to social movements presenting their main aspects, similarities, and differences, and also providing some comments about their contributions to social movement body of theory as well as about their limitations. The approaches that will be discussed here are so-called classical or traditional approach which encompasses several theories such as relative-deprivation, collective-behavior and mass-society theory, then post-1960s approaches such as political-process theory, resource-mobilization approach and new social movement theories. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the possible application of these approaches or at least some of their concepts to the case of the Gezi Park Movement.

Classical Approach to Social Movements

In the first half of the 20th century, the so-called classical approach was widely popular among social movement scholarly. It traces its earliest origins from Emile Durkheim's interpretation of anomie as a feeling of unhappiness, abandonment and alienation that individuals suffer from due to the lack of integration into society which had become too differentiated and complex. Such anomic feelings could lead discontent individuals to take up actions in order to change something, but those actions, according to Durcheim, were more likely to destabilize the society.

Thus, the classical approach was mostly inspired by the discipline of social psychology and so it focused mainly on the specific types of behavior such as protest, violence and mass hysteria as central to collective action. The causes for such a behavior were seen in 'grievances (…) as responses to rapid social change' (Cohen, 1985: 672) that took place in Western Europe in the 19th century and continued throughout the 20th century. This social change included some of the following processes: replacement of manual work with industrialized and mechanized labor (the working place was moved from the home and neighborhood to factories), the process of urbanization with the abandonment of rural areas and often idealized customs, the rationalization of the society (bureaucratization, compulsory education, and compulsory military service), population growth and its increased mobility, development of new service economic sector and creation of the middle-class, emergence of nuclear family, mass-media and consumption habits, breakdown of traditional cultural forms and values, changing of gender roles, etc. It was understood that individuals could not adjust easily to the rapid social transformation. Therefore, in order to reduce their grievances, they resorted to non-institutional methods either to protest against such changes or to establish new forms of communities of solidarity such as 'religious cults, secret societies, political sects, economic Utopias' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:7). Since it was implied that ev-

eryone would eventually benefit from accomplishments of the process of modernization, every sort of revolt against it, followed by "deviant" behavior like frustration, aggression, dissatisfaction, and employment of non-institutional-collective modes of action, was seen as irrational. The collective behavior together with collective action was understood for a long time as something groundless and even dangerous to the society and thus ought to be prevented. Since such a behavior was considered undesirable, it was important for scholars to identify all possible reasons for its emergence so it could be precluded. The problem with these accounts is that the proponents of the 'mass deviance' approach idealized rural lifestyles and the supposedly beneficial cohesive communal spirit of the village, and claimed that urban living had morally corrupted the lower classes. It would then appear that it was normal that workers in the city would become disgruntled and desperate. Yet, the same approach claimed that there was something inherently 'depraved' in those social strata, which made them the 'crowd' (Le Bon, 2012; Tarde, 2011; Freud, 2010), so that the state had the right to regulate and punish their protests.

The main theories of the classical approach are relative-deprivation, collective-behavior and mass-society theory. Relative-deprivation theory saw the reasons for collective behavior/action in individuals' perception of 'their situation as unjust when there is a significant difference between the conditions of their lives and their expectations' (Blumberg, 2009: 18). In this case, people had high expectations for the modernization process, but found themselves excluded from enjoying its benefits or could not easily adjust their way of living to the new requirements of modern society.

The collective-behavior perspective is the most characteristic for Neil Smelser's structural-functionalist approach that understood social movements as the side-effects of the process of modernization. Such collective behavior, interpreted as a response to newly emerged structural strains, was seen as inadequate, irrational and hysterical and leading to collective action that is more likely to fail.

Mass-society theories were developed to explain the emergence of totalitarian social movements (e.g. fascist movement). They argued that individuals took a part in such movements due to the feelings of alienation, deprivation, and aggression caused by decline of the primary groups in the society (family and neighborhood) as well as other intermediary organizations such as trade unions, churches and other voluntary associations. Mass-society theorists were afraid that such vacuum, created by the weakening of traditional organizations in the society, could become open to a (charismatic) leadership (Guesfield, 1994: 72) that would promote extreme ideas and provoke expressive emotions, or become a domain of mass-media influence.

Although all these theories interpreted the causes of collective action in slightly different ways, they have in common following assertion: the individuals react irrationally (aggression, discontent) to the structural strains which make them engaging in non-institutional-collective modes of action (out of political channels and structures) which could result in the formation of public and social movements (Cohen, 1985: 672).They also do not clarify how frustrated and atomized individuals come to act collectively.

These theories were criticized for focusing only on the causes of grievances and actors' (collective) behavior as a response to such grievances while neglecting the action itself produced by these actors. They 'ignore the dynamics by which feelings experienced at the

(micro) level of the individual give rise to (macro) phenomena such as social movements or revolutions' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 12). Finally, the actors of the post-1960s social movements could hardly fit the image of deprived and alienated irrational individuals. The new approaches will shift the focus from collective behavior to other aspects of social movements such as political environment, movement formation, organization, strategy, and collective identity. Their main contribution will be a perception of actor's behavior as rational and non-institutional channels as legitimate way of making demands to the state authorities and wider society.

Post-1960s Theoretical Approaches

The wave of protests and an amount of social movement activities which had taken off in the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s required a shift in theoretical perspective on social movements. The social transformation which had occurred after the Second World War now began to challenge the relevance of class conflict in the studies of social movements. The new processes such as 'widening of access to higher education or the entry of women into the labor market had created new structural possibilities for conflict' and need to consider other types of social stratification (Della Porta, Diani, 2006: 6). The student protests of 1968, civil rights movements, women's liberation movement, peace movement, environmentalist movement, etc. have proven to be different from the pre-1960s social movements which gave to the scholars of social movements a lot of material to criticize previous approaches and to develop new theoretical concepts that would be able to explain these new phenomena.

The first striking fact about new social movements was that their actors were neither marginalized nor economically deprived individuals. Moreover, these actors mainly enjoyed 'high educational status, relative economic security (…) and employment in personal-service occupations' (Offe, 1985: 833). Also the base of new social movements was not that homogeneous as it was the case earlier in the history of collective action. Further, these new actors adopted non-material values such as equality, participation, solidarity, protection of the environment, autonomy of the individual, and so their issues were more concerned with cultural change and 'democratization of structures in everyday life' (Cohen, 1985: 667) than with economic concerns and inequalities. They rather strive for reforms within the existing political and economic system than for revolution which some authors call self-limiting radicalism (Flyn, 2011b: 88). Further, their organization was not that strict, complex or hierarchical like in pre-1960s social movements. New social movements were mostly leaderless, more loosely structured and without clear division of responsibilities. Yet, their goals were clearly formulated and they were engaged in developing plans for their strategies and spreading their network across the whole country, and even globally. Due to these reasons, it became widely accepted among scholars that social movement actors are in fact rational individuals able to create well developed networks of communication and organization all employed so to achieve a clearly

defined goal(s). The scholars have begun to look benevolently at social movements as legitimate way of social and political participation if not even desirable.

While the issues and goals of the pre-1960s social movements were narrowly formulated (for instance, class-based or regarding only the problems of one group of discontent factory workers), the new social movements, though they could also have been concerned with specifically local issues, generally directed their actions towards the issues concerning broader social strata (e.g. youngsters, women, Afro-Americans), and even to whole humanity (e.g. regarding the protection of environment or human rights). Hence, the class-conflict (workers vs. owners of the means of production - capitalists) was replaced by social/political conflict. Based on above, the scholars now could see the post-1960s social movements were not responses to economic crises or breakdown. On the contrary, they clearly identified their goals, and through 'rational calculation of strategies' (Cohen: 1985: 673) aimed at challenging the traditional cultural and social values and striving for more participatory democracy. Therefore, many scholars were prone to accept the division into "old" and "new social movements".

The main three theories/approaches within post-1960s theoretical development that I am going to talk about in this paper are: political-process approach, resource-mobilization approach and new social movement theories. All of these perspectives brought up harsh critics about classical approach to social movements and its emphasis on grievances, collective behavior and overall irrationality of social movement collective action and its actors. Resource-Mobilization approach had even emerged as a reaction to classical approach to which it is utterly opposite. Hence, all three approaches recognize social movement actors as rational individuals and their modes of action, although non-institutional, as socially acceptable. However, there are differences along at least two lines. First, these approaches focus either on structure or actor. This dilemma is old as social sciences themselves. If the emphasis is only on structure (political system, political opportunities, or economic situation) and its influence on social movements, then we neglect the fact that social movements are not homogeneous entities which will act in a certain way depending on political environment or other external factors. As Max Weber had noticed, entities as such cannot act because action is something that is characteristic only to humans. However, the entity seemingly acts given that its action is a result of diverse interactions between individuals that this entity is consisted of. This structuralist perspective is characteristic for the political-process theory while resource-mobilization approach and new social movement theories are more concerned with actor, its motives, strategies of action, and identity formation. This actor-centered perspective also has its own shortcomings. On the one hand, the society is consisted of individuals and all social systems and changes within them are product of individuals' feelings, motives, preferences; however, on the other hand, individual's choice how to act in certain situations is limited by a range of external factors – economic, social, and/or cultural.

Another division between these approaches is based on different dimensions of society (political, economic, and cultural) which are in the focus of particular approach. Accordingly, political-process theory is mainly concerned with political sphere. In this view, 'the state is seen not only as a target but also the adjudicator of grievances' (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 6). The Resource Mobilization approach has interpreted the organizations of social movements on basis of economic model. This approach sees social movement organizations

operating as proper firms that hire staff and '"sell" their point of you to potential contributors' (ibid.) in order to accumulate as much resources as possible for the maintenance of the organization itself and for the accomplishment of individual interests. The New Social Movement theories are more concerned with cultural activities and processes of social movements – their ability to create new symbols, languages, new ways of interaction, networks of solidarity and finally collective identity. Now I will discuss more in details each of these approaches.

Political-Process Theory

This paradigm is primarily political for drawing attention to the interaction between social movements and political institutions. According to this view, social movements' actors are seen as rational, making demands to the state authorities and institutions and striving to influence the changes in policies. Besides, these theories focus on 'political and institutional environment in which social movements operate' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 16) and stress the relevance of these external factors for the emergence of social movements. In this respect, Sidney Tarrow's concept of 'political opportunity structure' contributed to this perspective the most. By this concept, Tarrow tried to explain that emergence and development of social movements depend on 'variable options open to collective actors across diverse political systems' (Lentin, 1999: 5). This mostly refers to which degree civil society actors are able to access political structures and influence political changes and decision-making processes. In other words, if the political system is repressive to a large extent, the possibility of social movement formation will be reduced, but if the system is democratic and open to formal political access, the social movement is more likely to develop.

Since political process perspective shifted the focus to the interaction between social movements' unconventional action and political institutions, it contributed to new understanding of social movements as no longer 'marginal and anti-institutional, expressions of dysfunctions of the system' (Della Porta and Diani: 2006: 17). It also put an emphasis on actors' rationality to develop strategies for social movement mobilization when political situation is favorable for such a development. For that reason, political-process theories were very often equated with resource-mobilization approach which is in the first place concerned with the way the social movement actors manage to mobilize available resources for its maintenance.

However, this perspective was criticized for its tendency to adopt 'a kind of "political reductionism"' (Melucci, 1987, 1989 in Della Porta and Diani: 18). Not all the social movements were concerned by political issues. Regarding new social movements (youth countercultures women's liberation movement, environmentalists movement), it seems that their actors, beside political change, also aimed at cultural change – raising consciousness about certain problems, adopting new values, inventing new lifestyles, etc.

Another criticism of political-process perspective referred to its focus on 'structural determinism' (Diani, 2012: 1055) where the formation of social movements depends only on external factors and how actors will adapt their actions to given circumstances. In this way, the creative potential of social movement actors is neglected. There is also another difficul-

ty regarding this view – how to 'distinguish between "objective" reality and its social construction' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966 in Della Porta andDiani, 2006: 17). Some political changes that might be favorable for the development of social movements will not have any significant effect to this process until they are perceived as such by social movement actors themselves. In other words, actors must believe that such structural opportunity exists. The social movement will occur when actors feel that situation should be changed and when they feel they have capacity to change it. This process of reflecting on external opportunities, reasons (grievances) and actors' capacities for the emergence of social movement is known as 'cognitive liberation' (Freeman, 2009: 24).

In contrast to such structuralist perspectives, the next two theoretical approaches that I am going to analyze here – resource-mobilization approach and new social movement theories – place their emphasis on actors, their motives, perspectives, and creative potential.

Resource-Mobilization Approach

The resource-mobilization approach has been developed in the end of 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s as a reaction to social psychological statements about the emergence of social movements and their actors' behavior and soon eclipsed the classical approach. The resource-mobilization theorists argued that grievances have always existed in the society, and that they were not main impulse for social movements to emerge. What helps formation of social movement and its sustainment are resources (money, time, labor, etc.). Therefore, these scholars explained the boom of social movements during the 1960s by increasing wealth of the societies. Now people had more discretionary resources to invest in social movement organizations and that is why there are more movements than ever before (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 11). In their view, grievances could always supply the grassroots support to organized social movements which already have at their disposal the power and other resources useful for goal achievement (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1215).

This approach was inspired by economist Mancur Olson's work (1965) who 'based his theory on rational action' (Opp, 1985: 46) and saw actors as exceedingly individualistic governed by costs-benefits calculations so to achieve their own interests while putting them above the interest of the broader group. According to this neo-utilitarian view, only actors who were led by the self-interest were considered rational and Olson recognized that rational individuals could take part in the protest which was contrary to previous interpretations of the classical approach. The resource-mobilization theorists accepted this utilitarian logic and applied it to their analysis of collective action. They did not see social movements as influenced by emotions or ideologies but as guided by rational action. This approach focused mainly on studying 'dynamics and tactics of social movement growth, decline and change' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1213), available resources that should be mobilized, external links of social movement organizations with other institutions and their possible incorporation into mainstream politics. Therefore, they were mostly engaged in examining 'economic-driven organizations such as labor unions' (Flyn, 2011a: 33) and interest-groups.

Of course, there is a range of approaches within is paradigm starting from Olson's view of actor's rational action based on utilitarian logic, to the organizational-entrepreneurial approach developed by John McCarthy and Mayer Zald and the political-conflict model and concept of political opportunity (Tilly, Obershall, Gamson, Tarrow) (Cohen, 1985: 674). However, all these perspectives have in common the following: they view collective action as strategy-based and governed by costs-benefits reasoning; they take social movement organization as basic category for social movement analysis; they do not acknowledge the difference between institutional and non-institutional collective action, and they see the success of the social movement when its material benefits are increased and its members are gained more possibilities to access official political institutions (Cohen, 1985: 675).

McCarthy and Zald (1977) were the most influential scholars within this perspective. They see 'social movement [as] a set of opinions and beliefs in population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1215). These preferences are necessary for the formation of social movement, but not sufficient. The movement cannot emerge before resources are mobilized and there is an opportunity for action. This is why these two authors are mostly interested in analyzing preexisting groups or networks of social movements that over the time develop into social movement organizations (SMOs). They understand SMOs as formal organizations which structure and way of functioning could be compared to any other firm. These organizations would 'try to accumulate resources, hire staff whose interests might diverge from constituents', and sell their point of view to potential contributors' (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 6). For instance, in the case of the Civil Rights Movement in the US there was a long standing discontent among Afro-American population, especially in the South (preferences for change). Over the time the first SMOs were established, such as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), that provided agitation, but they were able to organize mass rallies only after they 'had made such sufficient gains within institutional realms, such as education and labor rights, that it could successfully mobilize resources from external sources' (Flyn, 2011c: 118). To continue with this example: Besides NAACP, some other organizations of the Civil Rights Movement were Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) or Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). All of these SMOs strive to attain their goals that are in accordance with broader goals of social movement (the Civil Rights Movement in this case). Together they constituted a social movement industry (SMI) – 'the organizational analogue of social movement' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1219). Within one SMI, several SMOs can compete with each other for resources or potential contributors (McCarthy and Zald, 2009: 173). Finally, all social movements within the society (Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation Movement, environmentalist movement, etc.) with all of their SMOs and SMIs constitute social movement sector (SMS). Apart from the official goals that are in the accordance with the goals of broader social movement, SMOs operate like any other formal organization and have as a main goal their own sustainment or survival. As long as they exist, they would be able to attain other goals. Over the time, as particular SMO is starting to gain more access to political institutions and resources and thus becoming more complex, it will begin to hire more professional stuff to run the organization

and pursue movement goals instead of relying on volunteers. In this phase one of the most important goals becomes preserving of the newly gained political power.

The resource-mobilization approach placed a great emphasis on social movements' way of organizing, their tactics and strategies, their capacity to adapt to external political and social environment, and the possibility of making alliances with economic and political structures, but at the same time this approach limited itself regarding the analysis of 'micro-level processes of individual motivation' (Flyn, 2011c: 119), feelings, and affinities of social movement actors. In fact, it stressed only motives of gaining power and other benefits which might have not been initial motives to join social movements. In addition, this perspective was said to stress more material resources including money, organizing, labor, technology, mass-media, and ignoring non-material resources such as loyalty, friendship and other social relations, solidarity, personal networks and connections, authority and commitment to the goal. It also narrowly focused only on social movement organizes, disregarding the 'decentralized social movement communities' (ibid.) in which social interaction and cultural exchange is occurring, as well as making friendships and creating collective identity which all can be motives for joining the movement but also for keeping one being loyal to the movement and committed to attainment of its goal. Many scholars are prone to argue that only mobilization of both material and non-material resources could guarantee social movement's success.

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New Social Movement Theories

The New Social Movements theories emerged in a need to define a new form of social movements that emerged in the 1960s and beyond. The previous approaches were not sufficient to explain characteristics of new social movements. The classical approach and political process theories were able to explain **why** social movements emerge, but at the same time neglecting **how** it happens, especially ignoring the internal dynamics of social movements; while research mobilization theory was much more concerned with **how** mobilization is carried out while disregarding **why** it cames to this point. Apart from that, because of their stress on political reductionism in the former or economic calculations in the latter perspective, they were not able to grasp some of the new features of new social movements such as their heterogeneity, symbol production, the creation of collective identity or their non-political character.

The NSMs theories applied 'traditional vs. new social movement model' in their studies in which they argue that new social movements differ from traditional ones in way they perform their collective action - in their strategies, way of organization, issues they are concerned about and the goals they tend to achieve.

The great wave of so-called new social movements occurred in the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s when many social movements took place – student protests, Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation Movement, environmentalist movement, peace movement, etc. Many scholars interpreted these phenomena as consequences of great structural changes after the Second World War which included the decline of industrial work and growth of tertiary sector of administration, social services (education, health, social care) and producer services (advertising, marketing, communications) which generated a new middle class, massive entry of women to the labor market, predominantly in tertiary sector which led to women's emancipation and thus shook the established norms of patriarchalism (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 38-39), and great wave of migrations as well from developing countries to the Western Europe predominantly. These changes provoked conflicts along several lines and not only the class line like before. The base of the NSMs was not homogeneous as in the case of traditional working class movements, but was consisted of variety of actors. The new-middle class which was, according to Claus Offe, one of the main actors of NSMs (Offe, 1985), differed a lot from the traditional middle class (professors, doctors, lawyers). The frustration of these new middle class professionals was coming from their dependence on precarious and low-paid jobs which created the 'discrepancies between the cultural capital and the recognition – in terms of earnings as well as of social prestige' (Della Porta and Diani: 38).

The new issue of these actors became the political and economic regulation of almost every aspect of social life or, to put it differently, "colonization of the life-world". The state and market began to penetrate all spheres of social life, to interfere in 'symbolic infrastructure and informal social interaction' by producing meanings through education, the media, medical and psychiatric services, etc. (Offe, 1985: 846). The actors tended to oppose the state and market intervention 'reclaiming their rights to define their identities and to deter-

mine their private (…) lives' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 9). Such the new social movements' resistance referred more to cultural and social change than to political or economic one. The NSMs were concerned with preservation of the life-world including all 'personal and intimate aspects of human life' (Johnston and Larana, 1994: 8) such as body, gender, sexual identity, neighborhood, city, physical environment, language, ethnic, national or cultural identity and heritage, etc. (Offe, 1985: 827). These concerns derived from new values that NSMs' actors adopted which could be sum up by the values of autonomy and identity having their organizational correlations in decentralization, self-government, solidary forms of social organization while opposing manipulation, control, bureaucratization, and so on (ibid., 829). As Offe argues, these allegedly new values trace their origins in the European philosophy of the 18th century, which suggests that the NSMs are neither "postmodern" nor "pre- modern" in sense of romanticizing pre-rational past (ibid., 849). Offe would rather refer to them as '"modern" critique of modernization' (ibid., 850).

The actors of the NSMs were mainly the members of the new middle class. They were neither deprived, nor marginalized, nor economically disadvantaged. According to Offe, they were prone to accept "new values" due to their higher education, cultural capital that they possessed, relative economic security, and, due to their flexible working hours as personal-service professionals, they could devote more time to social movements' activities. These new middle class actors were usually joined by "old" middle class such as self-employed professionals, farmers, shop owners and artisan-producers (Offe, 1985: 834) and so-called "decommodified" groups consisted of unemployed, university students, housewives, retired people, immigrants, and so forth - the social groups which conditions of life were directly influenced by 'often highly authoritarian and restrictive mechanisms of supervision, exclusion, and social control' (ibid.).

Since the NSMs' actors find legal political institutions as extended hand of the state's political, economic and technological rationalization, they choose the unconventional modes of action through non-institutional channels. These modes of action included two types – internal and external. Internal modes of action refer to the organization within the social movement and the tactics aimed at its sustainability including the creation of collective identity. External modes of action are directed towards external world and political opponents and they can include various types of actions such as protests, civil disobedience, non-violent tactics or display of unconventional lifestyles and behavior. It should be noted that the goal of the NSMs is not overthrowing the state leadership or coming to the power instead. They do not have such revolutionary aspirations but they are rather characterized by self-limited radicalism. Their actors predominantly aim at renewing a democratic political culture and 'redrawing the boundaries between the public and the private' (Cohen, 1985: 670).

Apart from contributing to the body of theory of social movements by extracting what is "new" about the NSMs, emphasizing non-class conflicts, and placing the actor and his meanings in the center of their research, the NSMs theories receive the most merits for exploring the internal dynamics of the NSMs and collective action and tactics within their networks/structures. In this respect, the most prominent scholar was Alberto Melucci with his constructivist approach. Since the NSMs are extremely heterogeneous, characterized by fluidity of members, without any membership conditions, so none of the movement supporters could be seen

as a "typical member", without any kind of formal discipline or hierarchy, so it was important to examine what keeps their members together except the commitment to the common goal.

Melucci developed his constructivist approach in order to examine how individual gets involved in social movement activity, how actors construct collective action and unity, and how one can grasp a meaning that was produced out of heterogeneity and plurality (Melucci, 1989: 20, 58-62, in Bartholomew and Mayer, 1992: 143). Melucci sees the social movements' actors not as characters or subjects, but as products of collective social action. Such a view requires a shift from studying the manifest aspects of social movements such as demonstrations in which actors seem as subjects, to observing 'the underlying structure of action' (ibid.). Melucci developed the constructivist approach in order to perceive this hidden internal reality. He introduces the concept of collective identity so to explain how the individuals get involved in the social movement. Melucci understands 'collective identity' as one of the mobilization tactics but not in a sense of 'mobilizing interests' as Resource-Mobilization approach sees it, based on costs-benefits calculations. This concept of collective identity refers to a process (action system) of 'construction of a "we" by developing common cognitive frameworks' (ibid., 145) – orientations, values, perceptions, goals. Due to these shared cognitive frameworks, individuals enter the interactions and relationships through which they start to perceive themselves as a part of collectivity. These networks of collective identity can be created before the collective action takes place in form of visible events (protests, demonstrations), but they can also continue to exist after such events decline.

The collective identity is in fact the repository of social movements' values and norms and in this respect it can be equated with Durkheim's collective consciousness. It is a "social fact" that prohibits and allows particular behavior. In this way, 'collective identity also means doing (and not doing) certain things' (Johnston and Larana, 1994: 15).

Melucci argues that individual or social identity in today's highly differentiated societies constantly copes with 'the uncertainty created by the ceaseless flow of information, by the fact that individuals belong simultaneously to a plurality of systems' and this is why identity must be incessantly reestablished and renegotiated (Melucci, 1994: 114). It seems that nowadays the conflicts might not be any more about production and appropriation of material goods (like in traditional class conflicts) but rather about appropriation of information and production of meanings. (ibid.,115).

The main criticism refers to the division of social movements into "old" (traditional working class or trade unions involved in the class conflict) and "new" ones (identity-oriented social movements engaged with cultural issues and operating in the sphere of civil society). Many critics consider that these two types were enmeshed throughout the history of social movements. Neither the NSMs are limited only to 'issues of identity, culture and the "life-world"' (Mayo, 2005: 76) nor the "old" movements were concerned exclusively with issues of political economy. Another criticism related to the failure of the NSMs theories 'to specify the mechanisms leading from structural tensions to action' (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 11) with the exception of Melucci's and to some extent Touraine's work.

On the other hand, NSMs use some new forms of communication and mobilization thanks to the development of technology, especially of the Internet, that "old" social movement could have never experienced. Thus the formation of global social movements became

possible. Especially in the 21st century due to the development of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and emergence of smart phones, the mobilization became easier than ever given that information can spread in a second and be seen at the same time by the thousands if not millions of people. Also the new media and the Internet allowed the formation of the new forms of affiliations but also provided 'new reasons for protest and engender global consciousness as global inequalities and injustices are made more visible' (Wienclaw and Howson, 2011: 43). Therefore, for example, the environmentalist movement that is concerned with global capitalism's negative impact on the environment is able to inform through new media and thus possibly mobilize the support at the global level.

Also, Alana Lentin (1999) notices well that some of contemporary movements cannot conform easily the image of the NSMs. These movements mainly make 'particularist' demands concerned with ethnic or religious minorities' claims for recognition that sometimes can lead to separatism, but often these demands are couched in the language of universal human rights (Lentin, 1999: 11). Here Lentin mostly refers to ''nationalist', 'fundi', or 'culturalist' (…) [type of] social movements, which valorizes difference, essentializes identity, and affirms the self' (ibid.).

Now, we will move to the next section in which I will explore the possibilities of application of concepts and/or theories discussed in this chapter to the case of the Gezi Park Movement.

The Theoretical Context of the Gezi Park Movement

When we look at the characteristics of the Gezi Park Movement, it conforms the most to the theoretical framework of the NSMs theories. Let me start with the actors. Its base is extremely heterogeneous. It mainly consisted of the "new" middle, young people and students, but it was joined as well by many other groups – ethnic minorities (Kurdish, Alevis, Armenians), religious people (predominantly Muslims) and non-religious people, nationalists (right and left), social democrats, anarchists, environmentalists, LGBT, feminists, workers – blue collars and white collars, old middle class, unemployed, sexual workers, housewives, businessmen, retired people, and so forth.

The values that this amorphous group of the Gezi Park Movement participants adopted and issues that they were concerned about were similar, if not the same, to the values and issues of the NSMs: the environmentalist issue, against the interference of the state and market into every sphere of social life and into private life as well, the protection of life-worlds – right to the city, to the neighborhood, to the community, to definition of identity, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, etc.

Their goals were similar if again not the same. Although it seemed almost like a revolution, nobody in fact thought of overthrowing the government. It aimed more at strengthening of participatory democracy and decentralization, reorganization of political, social and

economic relations, and resisting to the "colonization of the life-world" (Habermas, 1987) by the state's political and economic intrusion.

The tactics were similar to NSMs. There were certainly unconventional and non-institutional – civil disobedience, boycotting mainstream media, occupying the public space, establishing the Gezi commune, etc.

The specific characteristic about the Gezi Park Movement is that it emerged absolutely spontaneously. The organization and mobilization of the people to took to the streets was instinctive – one reason was anger, frustration (grievances) because of the government's authoritarian politics and arrogant discourse, especially in the last few months; solidarity with the people who were attacked in the Gezi Park by the police; and excitement to be the part of such a huge event.

Here the political-process theory is not so applicable. While Turkey is officially a democratic system it does not function as such: it has the highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world, a high level of corruption, its media are not covering the events in the Eastern Turkey where there is a permanent war with Kurdish guerilla groups, there is a ban on assembling in the main squares in Istanbul and Ankara, the capital, and the harsh reaction of the police to any kind of protest. On the night of 31st of May, when nation-wide uprising began, the conditions were far from favorable (the disproportionate use of violence by the police, biased media reporting, mass arrests that continued throughout the whole protest, and that are still on). Obviously, people did not engage with the calculations whether the political situation was favorable for them to succeed or not. In the very beginning there were even not the clear goals defined. What made them take to the streets, as it emerges from my research, were grievances and frustrations over the state repressive laws, dragging them into more conservative society, and anger with the police violence used against peaceful protestors. It can be, however, discussed that the demonstrations waned due to excessive police violence and other forms of the state repression (such as arrests and introducing new repressive laws), but on the other hand, there could be also other reasons: people got tired of the weeks of protesting, the city center suffered a lot from the protests (the residents were disturbed by the street battles between protestors and the police and by a huge amount of the tear gas; shop keepers suffered from the lack of costumers and tourists, etc.), it became very warm to be in the streets all the time, it is a period of summer holidays so people left the city for a vacation and students went to their hometowns, some goals were already achieved – the Gezi Park is preserved, and so on. Finally, it is true that this protest addresses its demands to the state; however, it does not aim only at the political change, but rather at reforms in all aspects of the system – political, economic, cultural, and social. In fact, here we do not have an antagonistic dimension of conflict, although it might seem so observing the movement from the outside. It is more the pressure for a 'different distribution of resources or for new rules' (Melucci, 1994: 107).

The protest was leaderless from the beginning and without even any resemblance of organization. There were some attempts from certain parties (e.g. Republican People's Party) to take the role of the leader, but it was widely opposed by the protestors. Thus, movement is still leaderless and according to people's opinion, it seems it might stay like that in the future. It is extremely loosely organized and its organization depends on social media. This is why Resource-Mobilization approach would not be applicable here. The only organization which was accepted to, let me say, announce events and in the beginning of the pro-

tests to negotiate with the Government was Taksim Solidarity (*Taksim Dayanişması*) which is an umbrella organization that encompasses large number of NGOs. But even their delegation was accepted as a "means ends" in this situation of uncertainty during the existence of the Gezi Park Commune. Many of my respondents consider that there should be negotiations about the right delegation to be chosen if any delegation is needed given that there is a wide range of different interests and it is not easy to sum them up. Taksim Solidarity existed some time before the Movement occurred. Hence, there is no any organization emerging from the movement itself, but it is probably still early to talk about it. There is no impression that actors of this movement strive for some firmer organization. There are discussions ongoing but there are also too many differences among actors themselves and too many groups, so it is not easy to make consensus at least not about some kind of representative in form of organization or individuals.

Of course, there are organizations which participated in the Gezi Park Movement and we could call them social movement organizations (different parties, NGOs, communities). However, either none of them pretended to put itself forth and be certain representative of the movement, or some of them tried to push themselves forward but it was not widely accepted.

Although the manifest collective actions of the movement declined, it still exists. There is this collective consciousness or collective identity called "Gezi spirit" that is still vivid. This is why I paid so much attention on Melucci's constructivist approach in previous section. I think that this approach is useful to analyze this hidden reality of the movement and its collective identity which was formed during two weeks in Gezi Park Commune. The grievances could have not kept so many diverse people together for such a long time except the certain feeling of belonging had been created meanwhile. Through their communication, interaction, practices and actions in the park, Taksim square and even online, people got to know each other better. Through their life together in the park and through the clash with the police, actors started to share experiences. By their shared practices and actions they created new language, symbols, and one of the most important aspects – solidarity bonds. This all produced the collective identity of the Gezi Park Movement. According to Melucci, 'collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals...and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place' (Melucci, 1995: 4, in Christiansen, 2011b: 6). This identity functioned also as a social fact if we now employ Dukheim's concept. This collective identity imposed certain rules and forms of behavior. Swearing words which could offend any member of the community, such as women or LGBT for example, became unacceptable as well as every act of intolerance or any pretention for leadership. It was insisted on non-violent modes of action and any other kinds of peaceful collective actions. The acts of solidarity were strongly appreciated. These certain norms of behavior also helped the sustainability of the movement.

People have changed during these events. Many of my respondents pointed out that people became more tolerant, interested in other's groups issues and problems, and even became more political. Thus we could say that individuals produced certain modes of behavior, but also these collective actions produced new kind of actors.

The collective identity and collective actions of the Gezi Park Movement had also a role in mobilization. People were going to the Gezi Park Commune because they felt well there, they felt accepted or that they belonged there. They clashed with the police for anger

but also for solidarity. They called themselves çapulcu which means looter. Ironically, they got that name from their greatest opponent – Prime Minister Erdoğan – and they willingly accepted to be called like that among themselves. Such a creative practice of appropriating certain words and changing their meanings from negative into positive was widespread during these two weeks of the protests.

This "Gezi" collective identity still exists even after the demonstrations are waned, and could probably 'secure the continuity which is required for collective action to develop over time' (Diani, 2009: 66). Therefore, being a part of the social movement cannot be reduced to participation in a single event, but it means developing through series of different acts the feeling of belonging – that is to create a collective identity.

Methodology

Motives and the Choice of the Methodological Approach

The motive to make a case-study of the Gezi Park Movement came from the unique opportunity to be, as a sociologist, "granted", during my stay in Istanbul, to witness (and to be part of) the emergence of a social movement. As the Gezi Park protests occurred just about two months ago and there is still no academic literature on these events, it was a challenge for me to be among those who will be first to engage with the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement.

Since I theoretically contextualized the Gezi Park Movement within the framework of the new social movement theories, so it was logical to engage with the methodology commonly applied within this perspective in the analysis of social movement phenomena, which also coincides with my own view how to approach this case. Therefore, I chose the Weberian approach based on actors and their subjective meanings. Weber is interested in describing social action by stressing its interactive nature: the way in which individual considers the behavior of the others by interpretation of situations, and depending on these interpretations gives meanings and directs his/her course of action. Therefore, I prefer to examine the subjective meanings of the Gezi Park Movement actors and to view objects at the level of phenomena and not as expressions of political, social or economic structures. I am taking seriously into account the meanings of the actors given that through them they create their motivation and consequently develop their behavior.

As said in the previous chapters, the Gezi Park Movement is grass-roots movement still without proper social movement organization. It was created by individuals and it is sustained thanks to individuals, and this is why I engaged in the method of analyzing actors' subjective meanings of what drives them to take part in this movement and still remain active since the movement lost its manifest aspect (protests, demonstrations). Thus I tend to focus on their emotions, their actions and activities during the protests and the Gezi Park Commune, and their view about these events as well as about the current political, economic and social situation in Turkey, about extent to which these events have influenced them, what should be the main goals, what could be the consequences of these events and so on. By this study, I sought to identify what would be the main characteristics of this movement, main sources of discontent that made actors to take to the streets, and what could be the consequences of such collective action.

Primary Research Method and Choosing the Right Sample

As common to any case-study, I used qualitative research methods in this analysis. It was a field work, since I carried out my research in Istanbul where the Gezi Park protests started and where the Gezi Park Movement took the most visible form. As my primary qualitative research method I chose interview as the best way to gain insights form the actors' answers and stories about their experiences, motives, hopes, and perspectives of the given situation. The interview was open-ended and semi-structured, conducted during July 2013 with activists who participated in the Gezi Park Movement.

I was quite concerned with the choice of the right sample. Since I was the only researcher, I would not have been able to cover a large stratified sample, except that I could distribute questionnaires to a large number of people. However, for reasons mentioned above I decided to carry out interviews. I consider that neither survey nor questionnaires would provide such detailed personal perspectives on the Gezi Park Movement. In addition, during interviews I was able to gain more knowledge on certain topics through kindly asking my informants to elaborate more on their answers or to give some examples, and I could have seen their natural reactions to certain questions or subjects. Through these reactions it was possible to notice what they perceive as good or bad, or very important, what they are prone to, and what they dislike. As I have decided to make interviews, I was aware that I could talk to around 10 to 15 people. There were various profiles of people who were involved in the protests, so I was undecided which 10 to 15 people to include in my research – either the ordinary people who have never taken a part in the protest before, or experienced activists, or both. After several consultations with my supervisor and some other professors, I have decided to focus my research on activists from several civil society organizations who were part of the Gezi Park Movement. From this perspective, I think that it was a good choice, firstly, because I could gain insights not only about the Gezi Park Movement's impact on actors but also in civil society organizations; secondly, the activists could have given me more information about civil society situation in Turkey in general; and thirdly, as experienced activists they were more used to giving interviews than ordinary people.

I did 16 interviews in total but I have decided to include in this paper 12 the most informative ones. In my sample of 12 informants, there is an equal gender proportion – six women and six men. These 12 informants are involved in six different organizations:

• **Three respondents (two volunteers and one member) from LambdaIstanbul** – which is an LGBT community-oriented and mainly volunteer-based organization which serves mostly as a cultural center where LGBT individuals can get to knowing each other. It is also engaged in raising the consciousness about gender identity and sexual orientation by organizing workshops and discussion clubs and generally tries to change the negative attitude of wider society towards LGBT persons. There are no specific positions, roles or activities of the members. The members are divided into more and less experienced ones, but

everybody has equal right to speak out and give suggestions about certain issues. LambdaIstanbul obtains its financial resources mainly from membership fees and by organizing parties.

• **Two (members) from Anti-Capitalist Muslims** (*Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar*) – It is extremely loosely organized movement which functions more like a network. There is absolutely no any hierarchy or structure, but it is rather based on friendship relations. Their main and final goal is the establishment of borderless and classless society, so they are against capitalist system. They strictly follow the instructions from Quran, but they also try to interpret it in the way it can be applied to the problems of contemporary society. Although they have the word "Muslims" in the name of their movement, they consider that religion should be placed exclusively in the private sphere and they are tolerant not only to other religions but to various types of lifestyles which they consider also as a matter of individual's private life. This movement does not have any official financial sources except its own networks of solidarity.

• **Two (volunteers) from Purple Roof** (*Mor* Çatı) – This a feminist organization (legally established as a foundation) which is generally concerned with gender equality issue and specifically with violence over women and children, especially with domestic violence. This organization also has a solidarity center, where activists help women who suffered from the violence, and a shelter. There is a collective where activists discuss about diverse social and political issues concerning women and they hold workshops where they train new volunteers. As a foundation, they have some property, and they also obtain finances from donations and the EU projects they apply for.

• **Two respondents (a president and a member) from Human Rights Association** (İnsan *Hakları Derneği*) – This association was established in 1986. Its main goal is protection of human rights. Some of the activities of this organization are: providing free legal support for the people who were oppressed by the Government, submitting the cases of violation of the human rights to the European Court in Strasburg, helping political prisoners, working for children's and women's rights, for the rights of minorities, and for freedom of speech and press. This association is structured and has clearly defined positions and roles, but in practice it adopts the principle of equality and informal relations. It obtains its finances from donations and membership fees or by selling some products.

• **Two respondents (a president and a member) from SPOD** - Social Policy Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Study Association (*Sosyal Politikalar Cinsiyet Kimliğive Cinsel Yönelim* Çalışmaları *Derneği*) – SPOD advocates for LGBT rights from perspective of social policies which means that they advocate for equal rights and pay close attention to the social rights such as education, employment, and health care. They also give trainings to the lawyers and psychiatrists on LGBT issues, and they engage in lobbying activities. They were especially active in making a draft for a new Constitution. SPOD is neither strictly structured nor hierarchical organization, although it is trying to become more institutionalized by employing more professional staff instead of being volunteer-based. SPOD receives its money from Consulates, from Open Society, small amount of money from membership fees, some little from organizing the parties.

• **And one respondent (a member of the party parliament) from the Party of the Green and Left Future** (*Yeşilerve Sol Gelecek Partısı*) – It is a small party which was established in November 2012 as a combination of two previously existing parties - Green Party and Equality and Democracy Party. Their main goal is justice -economic justice, ecological justice, participatory/participation/political justice, and recognition justice (ethnic and gender diversity). Except the membership fees, there are no any other major financial resources.

By this sample I wanted to encompass various organizations that took part in the Gezi Park protests and were continuously present during the existence of the Gezi Park Commune. The only exception was Human Rights Association that in general was not present in the Gezi Park itself, but I considered them important since they exist for 27 years, and since their foundation they suffered a lot from the repression by the governments. During the Gezi Park protests they were providing legal support that is submitting claims and paying for the lawyers for demonstrators who were arrested, tortured or injured during the protests, and their offices even served as a shelter and makeshift ambulance during the most violent nights. Another exception here, but in another sense, is the Party of the Green and Left Future which is a party, not a civil society organization. I chose this party since I wished to have one organization of which one the central concerns is environmental issue. It was interesting that the protest initially started for environmental reasons, but there was no any environmental NGO or association that officially took a part in the protests. For this reason I approached the Party of the Green and Left Future which was very visible during the Gezi Park Commune and remembered among the protesters as very active during the protests. The other four organizations – LambdaIstanbul, Purple Roof, SPOD and Anti-Capitalist Muslims are the civil society organizations which were probably the most visible during the protests. LambdaIstanbul and SPOD participated in the protests under the umbrella organization called *LGBT Blok*, while Purple Roof was a part of another umbrella organization – İstanbul Feminist Kolektif. Anti-Capitalist Muslims took part in the protest on their own. Although they are a small organization, they attracted lots of attention both by protesters and the media. They presence called in question widespread black and white perception of the Gezi Park protests as a conflict of secularists vs. Islamists. For their interesting world-view of Islam and society and their influence during the Gezi Park protests it was my personal wish to approach them, though in the beginning it was quite difficult since they were very active during the month of Ramadan, making public *iftar*[4] dinners in different locations all around Istanbul.

Conducting the Interviews

I started to do my interviews few weeks after the break of the Gezi Park Commune and decline of the demonstrations. My interviews thus took place in different settings – e.g. offices of civil society organizations, anarchistic cafe, public *iftars*, park forums

4 *Iftar* refers to the evening meal when Muslims break their fast at the time of sunset during the Islamic month of Ramadan.

and Gezi Park platforms. It was in-depth, open-ended interview, which implies that informants could provide long and detailed answers about their own perspective of the events. The purpose of this interview was to allow them to elaborate on a subject as much as possible. Therefore, the interview on average lasted around one hour and forty five minutes depending on respondents themselves – how much they are prepared or inspired to talk. It was semi-structured interview which means that I had already prepared topics and questions written on the paper. The purpose of these questions was only to set up a particular topic for conversation which, in my opinion, helped respondents not to make too many digressions. I was interrupting them only in the following cases: when I would feel that topic got out of hand; to kindly ask them to elaborate a bit more on their answers if I felt that they were to some extent incomplete and that there could be something more to be said; and to ask some additional questions if I would become more interested in certain information provided by the respondent.

Research Obstacles

There were, of course, some difficulties. The first idea was to include only two organizations in my research. I was interested to see also to which extent the organizations themselves as entities are influenced by the Gezi Park events. In that case I had to do the interviews with at least five activists from each organization that would be at the different levels of involvement (volunteers, members, managers, etc.). While I was doing pilot-interviews I had already encountered some obstacles. First of all, all activists were very busy at the time – organizing park forums, seminars (in the case of LambdaIstanbul and Purple Roof), public *iftars* (in the case of Anti-Capitalist Muslims), or providing legal help for people who got injured or tortured during the protests (Human Rights Association). Second, it was not that everyone had a good command of English language. Third, the civil society organizations are mostly based on non-hierarchical structure. While in some of them there are certain positions – president, manager, lawyer, co-speaker (like in the case of Human Rights Association, SPOD or the Party of the Green and Left Future), they adopt the principle of equality and informal atmosphere, while in Purple Roof and LambdaIstanbul there are even no positions – only members and volunteers. The difference is that members pay an annual fee, but no one gets paid. All donations that they receive go for the activities of the organization. As for the Anti-Capitalist Muslims, they are organized very loosely and operate more like a network than like a proper organization. To conclude, it was very difficult to reach 5 informants within one organization who would have enough free time, good command of English and occupy different positions with different levels of responsibility. For these reasons, my sample includes different number of activists from six different organizations.

However, even with this sample, I consider that my research is of the high reliability. I also rely on the answers my respondents provided during the protests, given that, in my opinion, they did it to the best of their knowledge. Also, the answers which they

gave differed only in nuances so it was not too problematic to draw a conclusion about the issues in question. Those nuances were based mostly on different age/experience, world-view, or the main issues the activists or their organizations were concerned with.

Transcription of the Interviews

During the transcription of the interviews, I tried to keep the answers as close to the original as possible. Although my respondents generally had good English language skills, in some cases I had to insert some grammar corrections in order to make phrases more clear. I also added some words that I put in brackets for better understanding of the subject that informant talked about. I also did two interviews through translators. While it was possible to transcribe translators' words truthfully, there was always something of their own interpretation of the informants' answers which is in any case inevitable. Not that I imply here that the answers were distorted by this, but just that they do not sound so naturally. Since I have a basic knowledge ofTurkish language, I was able to notice on the spot whether the answers were distorted (and they were not) or the way they were interpreted.

Secondary Research Methods

Hence, my empirical data was collected through the in-depth, semi-structured interviews, while for the secondary sources I was using the media articles and documentary films: *Ekümenopolis* (2011) – the documentary about urban transformation of Istanbul – and *Taksim Commune: Gezi Park and The Uprising in Turkey* (2013). I also used other websites, especially social media, but mostly to get the information about "when and where" the demonstrations will be held, or public *iftars* or park forums will take the place, and so on.

I also deepened my knowledge about the Gezi Park Movement and the events related to it through informal conversations with activists and with ordinary people who took part in the protests, and with several professors from Fatih University where I did my internship.

Conclusion

Guided by the theoretical concepts, talks with more experienced researchers and my own personal experience, I tried to provide the interview questions by which I could gain insights from my respondents about the general picture of the Gezi Park Movement, as well as about some issues I am particularly interested in, and which I tend to analyze in the fourth chapter. These are: the reasons why the Gezi Park Movement occurred in this moment, its

impact on the Turkish civil society and democratization process, possible politicization of the hitherto apolitical actors, and possible formation of a new (form of) political opposition in Turkey. Although the fourth chapter might seem more descriptive, the analytical interpretation will be certainly employed, where the answers were not explicitly formulated by the Gezi Park Movement activists.

The Gezi Park Movementand.

The Democratization of Turkish Society

The Gezi Park Movement, which was formed during the first two weeks of June 2013, called into question several previously set assumptions: that Turkish society is deeply divided between secular and more Islamic parts of the population; that it is divided along ideological lines – nationalist left, nationalist right, social democracy, radical left, political Islam, etc.; that civil society is very weak in Turkey following belief that civil society and proper democracy in the sense of Western modernity are incompatible with Islam5 in countries where Muslims compose the majority of population; and that the majority of Turkish population was passive and apolitical, especially the young generation. On the example of only one phenomenon – the Gezi Park Movement – it was possible to, not only challenge, but even oppose all the above-mentioned statements. The composition of the Gezi Park Movement's actors was extremely diverse: it included almost all social groups existing within Turkish society – groups of different ethnicities, religious confessions, ideologies, classes, and age. The Gezi Park Movement showed the actual strength of Turkish civil society and the potential of young generations, who had never taken part in any protest before, to become responsible citizens striving for the democratic values and willing to participate in making decisions concerning their own daily lives. Besides, the Gezi Park Movement was an explosion of creative collective action and solidarity acts which bounded different social groups in one Gezi collective identity which, if sustained over the time, might have long-standing consequences for Turkish society.

In this chapter, I will analyze the interviews that I carried out during my stay in Istanbul in order to answer the research questions that I posed in the introductory chapter of this paper and to provide evidences for my hypothesis. In the first section of this analytical chapter, I will try to answer why the protests have started in the moment when they started, and what made such a different if not even conflicting set of social groups and other previously apolitical individuals to take part in this protest – what were the main grievances and other motives. In the second section I will focus on the formation of the Gezi Park Movement during the first two week of June 2013 and its internal dynamics – organization, activities, language, symbols, behavior of the actors and other forms of collective action that led to the formation of the collective identity popularly referred to as "Gezi spirit". In the third part of this chapter I will try to provide some insights in what this movement has achieved so far, and what are its consequences: to which extent and how it influenced its participants, both

5 Modern Islam is usually equated with political Islam or even Islamic fundamentalism.

individuals and civil society organizations; what are the possible prospects of the movement and possible future goals; and could it be the source of the future political opposition, and what kind of political opposition it might be?

Grievances and Authority

First Reaction

What immediately preceded the formation of the Gezi Park Movement was the police attack on the small environmentalist sit-in protest in Gezi Park on May 31, 2013, and hundreds of thousands of people who took to the streets in a number of Turkish cities as a response to such violence. While we could say that the police violence over protestors is sort of regular practice in Turkish state, which can be seen, for instance, every few years on May Day in Taksim Square in Istanbul, and Kızılay Square in Ankara, it was the first time that we witnessed a massive reaction to such violence, so the question "why?" appears naturally. What made people so angry?

First of all, the environmentalists in Gezi Park were mostly young apolitical people who set up the tents in the green area of the park in order to protect trees from being uprooted by the bulldozers. According to the grand Taksim reconstruction project, Gezi Park was supposed to be demolished and replaced by the replica of old Ottoman military barracks that would house the luxury apartments and the shopping mall. The main concern of the protestors was of environmental nature (to protect the trees), but it was at the same time the protest against neo-liberal capitalist politics of turning open public city spaces into closed spaces of consumption. This 'alternative-environmentalist paradigm' gives priority to the realization of post-material values such as protection of the nature, decentralized society with communal relations, participative and non-hierarchical social structure, incomes related to need, which is all opposed to 'dominant social paradigm' according to which society should be organized in a way that it can follow the demands of the market (Cotgrove and Duff, 2009: 76-77). Such a society is ordered, hierarchical, more de-personalized and less humane, based upon exploitation of the nature and human labor. However, this was not the protest inspired by certain political ideologies, but it was held for a benign cause such as protection of the park. One of my respondents Yeşim Tuba Başaran (39), the LGBT activist and the member of LambdaIstanbul organization, compared the protest for protection of Gezi Park with the protests against the destruction of Emek movie theater for the same reason – the construction of a shopping mall in its place :

> Maybe you never go to Emek Theatre, maybe you never go to cinema, but park! Even if you never go there, you see it. It's not a closed building. It's not a place that you feel unrelated to. Everybody feels related to the park.

It is the case that big reconstruction projects which are underway all around Istanbul and in other cities, concerned Turkish public for a long time. But these projects are usually undertaken at the outskirts of the big cities or in some rural areas, so out of the sight of ordinary citizens. Nobody could have believed that demolition of Gezi Park would take a place for real given that Gezi Park was a symbol of the city. When eventually the threat of demolition materialized in the form of bulldozers, people have decided to take a concrete action. Their cause was not problematic for majority of citizens – it was just the protection of the park.

People have not taken to the streets before to protest or to give support in other incidents – such as the police violence every few years against the big demonstrations on May Day led by leftist workers' unions and supported by other leftist activists. The same police violence occurred on the May Day 2013, and there was no reaction from the public. The whole May was marked by the protests in which leftist activists and other civil society organizations participated, and all of these protests were dispersed by the police violence. Selime Büyükgöze (29), the feminist activist, and the volunteer in Purple Roof (*Mor* Çatı) organization concerned mostly with the violence over women and children, noticed this absence of solidarity during the May Day protests this year:

> The feeling I felt very strongly was just one month before [the Gezi Park protests] - on the May Day. I felt sorry that there was again a lot of tear gas a lot of violence and in Beşiktaş6 [on the May Day] no one was even looking through the windows. And that made me very sad, that lack of solidarity. It was like we were marginalized people, so people just thought that there was no bound between them and us.

Obviously, people did not feel related to the reasons of these protests – workers' rights or opposing the government's ban of public assemble in Taksim Square introduced this year because of the construction works. People either did not feel concerned with working class issues or they might have seen this as a kind of a provocation by leftist activists.

However, the Gezi Park protest was something different. It was small, peaceful, leaderless, without reflecting any ideological affiliation, without flags or slogans. There were just (mostly young) people camping in the park to protect it from demolition – a decision which was generally unpopular among the citizens of Istanbul. For four consecutive days, the police was attacking protestors in early morning hours, when eventually, on the May 31, they assaulted the protestors in full force determined to take over the park. The attack was quite brutal with the tear gas and water cannons, accompanied by burning the tents and the belongings of the protestors. Moreover, the mainstream media like NTV and CNN *Türk* did not report on anything. People were learning about these incidents on the social media. While NTV was broadcasting culinary shows at the time of the clashes between the police and the protestors in the central square of Istanbul, CNN Türk was showing the nature doc-

6 Beşiktaş is one of the central districts in Istanbul.

umentary about the penguins. This ignoring of the events by the media probably fueled people's anger. 'A historical moment was being captured only on social media. The signs now read: "Revolution will not be televised. But it will be tweeted". (Tabanca 2013). One of my respondents, Cihan Huroğlu (32), the LGBT activist and member of SPOD, the organization struggling for respect of human rights and freedoms with the special emphasis on gender identity and sexual orientation, noticed that the revolution in protesting occurred because of the technology – the social media, followed up by the emergence of the smart phones:

> Social media was important of course, but I think that smart phone thing just changed everything. As long as there is a video, people take it seriously. And that is why demonstrations in Ankara and elsewhere or even in some other districts of the city took place. As I said in the beginning, Cihangir7is a capital of smart phones, videos, and cameras and photos. So, there was so much documentation, and so many people put that on the social media. If something happens in Taksim there is always some guy with camera or smart phone recording it, but much worse things are happening in other parts of Turkey and there is no one to record it [less people there have smart phones]. The social media yes, but plus the smart phones brought revolution in protesting.

Thus, each protestor became a 'journalist' carrying a smart phone and filming state repression, thereby bypassing the official media (Hanafi, 2012: 205).

According to what has been said above, there were few reasons that brought massive number of people to the streets to clash with the police. First, it was the disproportionate police violence toward the small group of peaceful protestors, and those protestors were ordinary citizens, not the adherents of any political party, or activists of any other organization. People got the impression that everyone, no matter the activist or not, no matter ideologically colored or not, or no matter the reason of disagreement on certain decisions of the government, would face the same violence. That concerned people a lot and at the same time made them angry. Martina Gaidzik (30), a German citizen who is a resident of Istanbul for the last five years, a feminist activist and a volunteer in Purple Roof organization, described this feeling of anger:

> We went out in the streets because we were so angry. You know, I am here for five years, and during this time I felt as well that the *pressure is greater than before*. So many things are going on with which we are angry (…). They don't listen to us. They don't care what we want or what we don't want. And *they have a great influence on our personal lives*. I think it was the main reason for other people too – first they don't listen to you, they don't accept you, then they attack you, injure you, and people just said – Enough!

Murat Özbank (46), the member of the Party of the Left and Green Future, stated the same reason as dominant:

> Mainly it was the police violence, actually the reaction to disproportionate police violence used against non-violent civil protestors. It was actually not the first time that Turkish police did that, but it was the first time *against ordinary people who are not politically active* and usually don't take part in any demonstration.

7 Cihangir is a central neighborhood in Istanbul in immediate vicinity of Taksim Square.

Sedef Çakmak (31), the LGBT activist and the president of SPOD, also agrees that the police violence was the main trigger for people to take to the streets:

> Well, the main reason that it [environmentalist protest] turned into such a major uprising is the policemen – the excessive use of pepper gas, the excessive use of force. I think that was the main reason why the people were in the streets including myself.

Some of my respondents stressed also the feeling of solidarity that brought the people to the streets. Abdürrahim Özer (29), the member of Anti-Capitalist Muslims from Ankara, said the following:

> It was such a horrible event, the police with their vehicles, tear gas and everything. When I saw that scene, I said: "I must do something". And the protests in Ankara started to support Istanbul, to support Gezi Park. It was not a distinct or a separate movement, but it was (…) to support Istanbul.

Besire Paralik (23), a Cypriot residing in Istanbul, the LGBT activist and the member of LambdaIstanbul stated the same reason to join the protests:

> I am from Cyprus, but I took a part in the protests because I am human. For example, when these protests started, my friend just returned back to Cyprus. And I just wondered if something similar happened in Cyprus, would he leave again or the things would change? If he wants to live here, he shouldn't just complain, he should take a part. That is why I've never hesitated to take part in this movement.

Other people took to the streets because of the excitement or curiosity to see with their own eyes what was happening and what the media did not broadcasted. Selime described her feelings of excitement:

> I am an activist and I am in the streets in most of the demonstrations and this was in fact exciting for all of us, especially for the activists like me. During the first three days [of the uprising] I wasn't in Istanbul. I was in Diyarbakır and I felt really sorry [for not being in Istanbul] and I was looking forward to coming back here (…). That's the thing that made me excited, that people who couldn't come together in any platform actually were together and doing something together. This is what excited me a lot and of course the police violence and the state violence to which we are in fact accustomed to. I also attended some demonstrations with Kurdish Party8 and we always experienced that violence. But now this was something else.

To sum up, the reasons that brought the people to the streets on the night of the 31st of May were, first of all, the anger because of the excessive police violence towards peaceful demonstrators in whom people could easily reflect themselves as ordinary citizens who make ordinary demands to the government such as preserving of the park in the center of the city, as well as anger because of the media negligence of the protests; solidarity – giving support to the protestors; and excitement of being part of the biggest uprising in Turkish modern history. We should not perceive these motives as separate, but as components of

8 Selime refers here to Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrası Partisi) (BDP).

that first reaction to the protests. Of course, such an incident in Gezi Park on the 31st of May was just a trigger for people to take part in the uprising. What accumulated frustrations that exploded that night were the series of controversial decisions, immediately preceding the protests, made by the government and incited by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. These decisions reflected the abrupt change of the course of the government from democratic reforms towards more authoritarian rule personalized in the Prime Minister Erdoğan.

Sources of Grievances

Turkish Republic became a multi-party democratic system holding free elections since 1946, but it has never been a proper democracy. Until the rise of the AKP to power, devout Muslims were discriminated to a certain extent. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, only a small urban secularist elite enjoyed the benefits of the modernization, while broader Muslim social strata were deprived in many aspects – the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, lack of education, breaking of the traditional religious communities such as different Sufi orders, etc. Muslim headscarved women were banned from entering universities. They had to choose between being Muslim and being educated. The Kurds, the largest ethnic minority in Turkey, which composes up to 20% of Turkish population, have never gained the legal status of minority, but have always been considered, as Muslims, a part of the Turkish nation body. In this sense they remained deprived of some of the privileges that are granted to other legally recognized minorities such as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews (since in Turkey only non-Muslims can be 'minorities'). The Kurds do not have the right to study in their mother tongue, given that, according to the constitutional principle, teaching in other language but the official one – Turkish - is not allowed (Özbudun, 2009: 22). Since the 1980s, the Kurdish people are protesting for their basic civil rights in a peaceful way, while more radical fractions lay claim for the independent state of Kurdistan. The war between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerilla bands led by Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in eastern regions of Turkey began in 1984 and, although the AKP has made significant efforts to pacify the conflict, is still officially ongoing.

Turkey also suffered three *coups d'etat* undertaken by the army and followed by the establishment of military junta (1960-1961, 1971-1973, 1980-1983). The army was always loyal to the principles of Kemalism9, and perceived itself as the guardian of state secularism and unity of the Turkish nation. The military interventions can in fact be seen as state reactions against the 'unhealthy' automization and differentiation of economic, political and cultural groups (Göle, 1994: 214). For instance, the leftist movements that flourished in 1960s were seen as threatening to the national unity and territorial integrity of Turkey, while the Islamist movements of the 1970s were also condemned as reactionary forces standing in the way of progress. During the military rule in the 1980s, the leftist alternative was banned and removed, and thus left a vacuum in the political space to be filled by Islamic parties calling for social justice, security and respect for human rights.

9 Kemalism is an ideology based upon six principles: Republicanism, Secularism, Nationalism, Populism, Revolutionism, and Statism.

During the 1990s, the rise of the political Islam was significant, which resulted in the victory of the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) at local elections in 1994 and its entering the government in 1995. This party was openly advocating Islamic values, but it adopted the vocabulary of 'modern statecraft' characteristic for European countries. This party was calling for 'better democracy' and more 'social justice' (Navaro-Yashin, 1998: 6). It supported covered female students who were protesting against being banned from attending universities and calling for respect for human rights. The Welfare Party represented itself as a voice of civil society, a voice of those who were oppressed. However, already in 1997, under the military pressure for not taking measures against the rising of the political Islam, it had to withdraw from the government.

Its successor, The Justice and Development Party (AKP) under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former mayor of Istanbul, is a similar case. It was founded in 2001 and already in 2002 it won a landslide victory in the election, winning over two-thirds of parliamentary seats. Up to date, it is the party that enjoys the biggest support in Turkey. In the last elections, in 2011, it won almost 50% of the votes providing for Erdoğan the third mandate as a Prime Minister. The AKP emerged from the moderate wing of Welfare Party and it gives priority to economic liberalization and development, endorses secularist ideals, and disassociates itself from political Islam, adopting the 'label of "social conservative" rather than "Islamist"' (Christie-Miller, 6 June 2013). However, its ranks are composed of intellectuals who were operating during the years when the Welfare Party was in power; it emphasizes Islam as the essential defining value of Turkish culture, the wives of the most prominent party's members are headscarved, and they gave strong support to covered female students by passing an amendment to the Constitution allowing women to wear headscarves at Turkish universities. They were justifying this as a struggle for human rights and individual freedoms.

With its rhetoric about a more just and democratic society and by its swearing loyalty to the state secularism and striving for the membership in the European Union, the AKP won over not only 'religious-minded Turks, but also liberal and intellectual circles' (Fuller, 13 June 2013). Their greatest successes are probably the economic boom making Turkey the 17th largest economy in the world in 2012, the limiting of the power of the army by 'facilitating trials targeting top military officials for allegedly plotting coups' (Christie-Miller, 6 June 2013) and pacifying the 30 year-long conflict with Kurdish minority in the East by bringing PKK leaders to the peace negotiations.

Sedef also acknowledged the AKP's efforts to carry out the democratic reforms:

> I was very happy with the first years of AKP, you know, because they made very nice democratic attempts even though it was just, 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.

Selime thinks similarly regarding the AKP's achievements so far:

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

However, since the beginning of 2013, the government changed its politics radically. Erdoğan, after being for ten years in power, started to resemble an isolated autocrat making all decisions on his own, by which he began to severely interfere in the private lives of his citizens. Besides, by the several acts in these few months, he showed that he is openly influenced by the political Islam and nostalgic for the Ottoman past. All these strange acts and decisions that astonished even religious people, accelerated during May 2013 and eventually culminated with the police violence and nationwide protest against such politics.

It seems that Erdoğan still cherishes his dreams of a "Neo-Ottoman Empire" and there were several events that might feed these speculations. Last May, on the 560th anniversary of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, the Prime Minister Erdoğan 'broke ground on a third Bosphorus Bridge (…) naming it after the controversial conquering Sultan Selim I' (Weiss, 13 June 2013) who was responsible for murdering of tens of thousands of Alevis, a religious group in Turkey. Another controversial decision was the construction of replica of the 19th century Ottoman military barracks in the place of Gezi Park. Erdoğan justifies such a decision by invoking history: "We are working to bring back history that has been destroyed. ...We will unite Taksim with its history" (Perry, 12 June 2013). He also has attempts to build a mosque in Taksim Square, which is the center of secular nightlife. This affects most of the Kemalists10 who are loyal to the legacy of Atatürk and want to preserve the secularist appearance of Taksim square, but also other secularist layers of society are concerned by such attempts.

Other more striking decisions were regarding people's private lives now called as attempt of social engineering or raise of "pious generation" as Erdoğan put it while he was demanding school reforms last year such as separation of boys and girls in the classrooms (Christie-Miller, 6 June 2013). He also asked young people to refrain from kissing in public which provoked minor protests in Ankara. On the 24th of May the government passed the surprising law by which it banned selling of alcohol between 10 pm and 6 am as well as 'banishing it from the vicinity of schools and mosques' (Harding, 8 June 2013). Also Erdoğan declared 'a yogurt drink *ayran* as Turkish national beverage' while that title was traditionally attributed to the alcoholic drink *rakı* (Christie-Miller, 6 June 2013). He also called Atatürk and his closest ally, İsmet İnönü, a couple of «drunkards» (Harding, 8 June 2013) which seems as an attempt to undermine the significance of Atatürk himself.

Also, the diverse processes of urban gentrification, which I mentioned in the first chapter, cut the neighborhood and communal ties, provoking the feelings of alienation and abandonment. This is at the same time related to the protest against neoliberal capitalism. The state is selling public land and public city spaces to the investors, which thus become private property for making profits. The money obtained from the selling of the public property goes to the pockets of the small economic elite and powerholders, and those who had to be relocated in this process are left on their own. As Yeşim points it out:

> 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. It is very psychological thing. They change your environment without asking you.

10 Kemalists are Turkish nationalists who support Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) (CHP) which was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It was in power during the single-party state period (1923-1946). Now it is the main oppositional party to the AKP's government.

There was a series of laws and debates which affect specifically the private lives of women: the law that bans the C-section except in the case of woman's health problems, the law that suggests that morning-after pill could be bought only with the prescription from a doctor, the efforts to ban the abortion, and Erdoğan's famous calling for women to have three children and his 'opposition to day-care centers' (Weiss, 13 June 2013). This was all interpreted, especially by feminists, as AKP's attempt to close women inside the private sphere imposing on them the responsibility of child care and all other housework, and thus equating woman with the family. Also these are marked as efforts to control women's body and sexuality.

Selime, as a woman and a feminist, is particularly irritated by states' intervention in the private sphere:

> This is now called the lifestyle issue. Just 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-section or to do abortion, etc. People feel like the state is trying to get into their houses and this bothers them a lot.

Another unexpected decision was the ban of public assembly in Taksim Square under the pretext of possible accidents that might occur due to the construction works in the square. Despite the ban, people tried to gather in Taksim Square on the May Day and they faced the police forces throwing tear gas on them and using water cannons. The day after the May Day, the Prime Minister declared, without any specific reason, that he would not allow any marches in İstiklal Avenue – the central promenade in Istanbul. The protest continued throughout whole May and every time the protestors were subjected to the police violence.

Cem (30), the LGBT activist and the volunteer of LambdaIstanbul notices how this ban 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 are constructions and we might get hurt. But with the tear gas and water cannons they hurt more people than the construction sites might do.

According to Yeşim, due to a number of violent clashes between the police and the protestors throughout May, people stopped being afraid to take to the streets and clash with the police:

> During May, they [the police] attacked all kinds of activism. 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.

There are also grievances related to the insufficient political representation of the citizens. Turkey has the highest electoral threshold among European countries which is 10% and which prevents smaller parties from entering the Parliament. Almost none of my re-

spondents said that he or she feels represented in the political space in Turkey. Cem complains that this is certainly not democracy:

> It is said that in Turkey there is no democracy. Right now there are three parties in the parliament, maybe four with the party of Kurdish people [BDP]. And 10% of bridge [threshold] should be overcome. None of the three parties represents me. None of them is my party. They are someone else's representatives, but not mine. Is that a democracy? No, it's not.

Ümit Efe (50), the president of the Human Rights Association (İnsan *Hakları Derneği*) (İHD), besides she does not feel politically represented, points out that Turkish state has in fact never been democratic:

> I don't feel like represented because we don't have freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, and because the government is imposing the vision of how this society should be. But we have this situation since Turkish Republic was established in 1923. You always had to fight for the rights, they were never guaranteed. The rights of minorities are not even guaranteed by the law.

The problem of democracy in Turkey is reflected also in the media. Turkey has the highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world ('"Harmful for children": Turkish TV channels fined for live coverage of protests', 13 June 2013) accused on the unfounded charges, which makes journalists to resort to self-censorship. But the AKP government is not the only Turkish government intolerant to any kind of criticism. The intimidation and silencing of the media is in the tradition of the Turkish state since it was founded. One of the last media gaffes that provoked lots of frustration in the public, before the Gezi Park protests, was the scarce reporting about the biggest terroristic attack in Turkey ever which occurred on May 11, 2013, in the city of Reyhanlı, close to the Syrian border. Turkish state accused Syrian regime of the death of over fifty people and injuring of over hundred people. The media was surprisingly silent about such a big incident which provoked speculations that it was staged and that Turkish government might have been involved.

İhsan Kaçar (33), the member of Human Rights Association (İHD) complains on the treatment of the journalists:

> Although I am a journalist, I cannot work for the newspapers because of the "language" [censorship]. I am a journalist who is standing for human rights, democracy, freedom of speech, and Turkish newspapers are more in a line with Government, and I have difficulties working for them, so I feel excluded. For example, if I want to do a report on PKK, agency wants me to call them in my report "the terrorist organization", but I cannot do that, because it is not in accordance with my conscience.

The media definitely failed the most during the Gezi Park protests when they didn't broadcast anything about the violence going on in the center of Istanbul. In first four days of the protests, official TV channels and newspapers were completely silent. Except from the social media, people started to acquire information from oppositional private media such as Republican People's Party's (CHP) TV channels – *Halk* TV and *Ulusal* TV – which were

together with Alevi's channel, *Cem* TV, and *EM* TV fined by The Radio and Television Supreme Council ('"Harmful for children": Turkish TV channels fined for live coverage of protests', 13 June 2013). Most of my respondents knew that the media was biased, but none of them expected that it would go that far – completely ignoring such a massive event that was taking place in the biggest Turkish cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Antalya, Adana, etc.). While some of them indicate to the economic bound of the media to the government, others say that the media is biased because of big political pressure from above. Ümit said the following about this pressure on the media:

> And people who started telling the truth ended up in jail – reporters, journalists and people who were using Facebook and Twitter. They [services working for the government] were seeing what they [the protestors] were posting and they put them in the jail. The police was aiming the gas canisters at reporters, also at foreign ones. And foreign journalists had to leave the country.

Murat pointed out that it was in fact good that the media did not show anything so that ordinary people could really see what the media are like:

> I distrusted the mainstream of Turkish media long before that. But the interesting thing is that the Turkish media proved why they must be distrusted during these events. And that's interesting because most of the people were part of the news which is not actually broadcasted on television. So, you are here, and you experience the things and you know that's the news worthy to add.

Selime also thinks that this ignoring of the Gezi Park events by the media had its own positive consequences given that people became aware that the information they receive should be always questioned:

> And also relations behind the media, because in Turkey almost all the big, mainstream media companies are also in other businesses and that is why they are related with the government and this is why they don't show anything. And also these relations of what is going on behind became, I think, more visible. It was a good result that people are seeing what is going on. I also heard that lot of people were talking – now, we understand why Kurds have two antennas, now we understand what they have been through. Because there has been a war there [in the East] for 30 years and nothing in the news. And also there is a life going on there, but you see in the news a place like no one lives there. It looks so "humanless", so you don't mind when they bomb there. But in fact people are having a life there. For many people that was also one of the achievements [of becoming aware].

Cem also points out the positive effect of the media failure to broadcast about the Gezi Park 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 rebellions]? I said to myself – Cem, you have to accept something now – the media is 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. We started to ask questions to each other. We

> learned about our views, believes, way of life. That was actually incredible. We started to learn what is really going on in Turkey, in general, apart from Gezi Park.

Yeşim also states that this improved the interaction between the people and woke them from their passivity:

> Already on the second day of the protests [the 1st of June] people learned how to read the news and not just from the papers, but also from twitting or talking to each other. They started to ask questions to each other to understand what was happening over there. And it was just in 24 hours. They quickly learned how they can inform themselves. It's fantastic I guess!

Many of my respondents said that the oppositional nationalist CHP's media *Halk* TV and *Ulusal* TV were quite objective, but they are also stressing that CHP, naturally, had its own interests to show government's rule in a bad light. Abdürrahim, Anti-Capitalist Muslim from Ankara, supports this assumption:

> I don't believe that they did this in the cause of freedom, individual rights, more democracy, but they are the oppositional media, these protests are directed against the government (…) and this was something that they could use really well, and they really used it well.

Except from the oppositional CHP's media and the social media, the protestors also followed a number of the small media such as *Cem* TV and *Hayat* TV, and those on the Internet such as *Demokrat Haber*, sendika.org. bianet.org, and T24. As for the press, the protestors mostly trusted to those newspapers that are more leftist such as *Sol*, *Radikal* İki, *Evrensel*, and also satirical magazines are very popular – *Uykusuz* and *Penguen*.

İhsan points out that although there are lots of small alternative media, they are not very effective at the large scale:

> Also, the small media reported correctly about the protests, but possibly it wasn't very effective, because the people in Turkey usually follow the mainstream media. They just switch on their TV and that's it. They don't use the Internet.

All the grievances mentioned above were provoked by the series of reasons – invoking of the Ottoman past which is in the contrast with spirit of secularism and modernization, social engineering meaning the interfering of the state into private lives of individuals, process of gentrification, insufficient political representation, and general lack of democracy including violation of human rights, limiting or banning the freedom of assembly, freedom of press, freedom of speech and opinion, and of course the police violence perceived as directed towards everyone who objects the government's decisions.

Authority

When I asked my respondents whether the discontent, roused from all these grievances, is mainly directed against the Prime Minister Erdoğan given that it seems he always says the last word regarding any decision, they all without exception responded affirmatively. According to them, the decisions regarding all spheres of life are made by one person – the Prime Minister – and they feel like their voices are not being heard and that they cannot influence anything, not even the decisions concerning their own private lives. They feel that they slipped in the rule of one man. Abdürrahim notes:

> 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 don't feel like we are being taken care of, that we are being heard, but instead we always feel some very minor group, or in certain cases only one person - the Prime Minister - makes all the decisions, and then he imposes them on the population.

It is not a common thing that the Prime Minister makes decisions regarding very local issues such as the reconstruction of a park. Abdürrahim notes well that since Erdoğan was the one insisting of the reconstruction of Gezi Park, it was natural that the discontent would be directed against him:

> If the faith of a small park in Istanbul is in the hands of the Prime Minister, then all the protests will be directed against him. If this decision to build something in that park, either the military barracks or a shopping mole, came from the municipality of Istanbul, or the municipality of Beyoğlu[11], than I think the reaction would be totally different. But when he as prime minister says: "I will build this, and you can't object me, people elected me and I will do this and I will do that, and you will have to live with it"...

Cihan points out that there is no any opposition within the AKP either, and that the main concern of officers even at the lower levels is to please the Prime Minister:

> The AKP is so hierarchical party that nobody reacts against him [Erdoğan], nobody can say anything against him. But also bureaucrats, in their own small playfield, they cannot decide by themselves. The mayor of Beyoğlu, he was so helpless to say anything on Gezi Park. You just could have seen that he just couldn't talk. He was so afraid of saying something wrong even he just wanted to repeat what Erdoğan had said. He is just so afraid to say an alternative sentence. So, yes, the source of this discontent is one person, you can say so.

Abdürrahim also agrees that there is no any opposition to Erdoğan within the government and his own AKP and that the power in fact is becoming personalized:

11 Beyoğlu is a central district in Istanbul which encompasses Taksim Square and its surroundings including Gezi Park.

> Everyone, even in his own party, is looking at his mouth for every decision...there is no a real opposition within his party. We kind of drafted into a one man rule...the main protests are directed against this structure. But Erdoğan is now the person who represents this system. There is no surprise that people shouted his name, because he is the face of this system now.

Besire also supports this argument of one man rule:

> I think that Erdogan holds authority not only in the society but in his party as well. He is the only one. He sees himself as a God, and he governs everybody within his party as well.

Selime says it likewise:

> Of course, people are not happy with the government, but the government actually means him, and the party means him. It's almost the same.

Some of my respondents pointed out that the protest was not directed against Erdoğan in the beginning, but he did not do anything to calm the situation. Moreover, he managed to additionally fuel the anger and the discontent of protesters. Murat notes:

> Obviously, there is a number of people who protest in opposition to Erdoğan – it is a common denominator of most people, but in the beginning it was not a protest against the government or against Erdoğan. It was just a first reaction to the disproportionate use of police violence and it was only after Erdoğan backed or supported the police that he became the expressive target. Actually, I think he has to thank himself for it.

Ümit also agrees with Murat's statement:

> At the beginning of the events, Erdoğan could have easily solved that problem. But he actually constrained the people. He had really a hard line, he didn't look for solution. He used very derogative language towards people. He didn't want to compromise. At the beginning it was not just about Erdoğan, it was about the political system, but he became like a single leader – a dictator, so this discontent turned as well against him. And it's not like just Tayyip Erdoğan, but also governors and the police forces themselves. But the main source of discontent is Erdoğan.

This personalization of power, reflected in Erdoğan's omnipresence in the public space, eventually turned against him by making him a sole responsible for all the grievances and problems in Turkish society (Göle, 2013: 11).

Many protesters complained about Erdoğan's neglecting or even ignoring of what was going on, and especially on his derogatory and polarizing language backed by the "anti-Gezi" language of the official media. Erdoğan and the media used some of the typical tactics in 'downplaying the significance of the protests' (Jenkins, 9 June 2013) such as: polarization by emphasizing the deviant actions of the protesters, especially those that are in contrast with Muslim beliefs and practices, by accusing them of entering Dolmabahçe Mosque with their shoes on, drinking in the mosque, or attacking covered women; marginalization meaning showing the protests as non-representative (Gitlin, 2009: 301) by saying that they

were in fact organized by the oppositional CHP or by "marginal extremist groups" (Jenkins, 9 June 2013) plotting together with the army; emphasis on the presence of "marginal" or deviant groups – communists, anarchists, foreign payrolls, terrorists, backed by the so-called "interest-rate lobby" in order to undermine Turkey's economy; emphasis on violence of the protestors who are throwing Molotov cocktails or stones on the police, and, on the other hand, emphasizing the kind acts of the policemen by showing them helping injured people for example; disdaining protestors by calling them "looters" (çapulcu) and "drunkards" (*ayyaş*). It was interesting that the government could not decide whether the 'uprising is too political or purely apolitical' (Gökarıksel, 10 June 2013), carried out by domestic dissidents or it was a part of international conspiracy. What was for sure is that by this "polarizing language" dividing the population in deviant protesters and good citizens (those 50% of population that supports the AKP), Erdoğan was provoking a sort of a civil conflict. Fortunately, he failed in his attention to mobilize his supporters to resist the protestors. Moreover, the effect was opposite – his deprecating language made protesters even more angry and thus contributed to their mobilization. Selime says in a joking manner that Erdoğan with his firm attitude in fact united the people:

> If the government had said – do whatever you like – I think people would have just begun to fight [between each other], and there would be lots of disagreements. And then he [Erdoğan] comes up and says something and then everyone is very well connected. It was kind of funny that you as a dissident or activist cannot find any better thing to connect people. In fact, almost every word he said was a motivation for everyone to go to the streets.

Abdürrahim also confirms that this "polarizing language" was the additional motivation for the protestors:

> We were subjected to this harsh reaction of the police. But, every evening, when we return home, we wake up the next morning, and we hear the Prime Minister talking nonsense and agitating. And every morning we say: ok, we are going again, this is not going to end. If he continues this attitude, the resistance must continue as well.

However, Abdürrahim adds that what Erdoğan was trying to do by provoking a possible civil conflict was quite worrying:

> When you ask if the Prime Minister tried to provoke this civil conflict, actually he tried to provoke this from the beginning. He tried to agitate his supporters by saying: they [the protesters] are entering the mosque with their shoes on, they drink beer in the mosque, or they attacked women with head scarves - this kind of false information. He said: I could hardly keep the 50% in their homes"...You know, this was an actual call for the 50% to get out and to suppress the Gezi Movement. When the Istanbul counter-meeting[12] was about to end, he said: "Please, return to your homes, and take this flags [the AKP flags] with you. Don't put them in your wardrobes but please hang them from your windows, from your balconies". And, this was an actual call again for the separation between his supporters and the rest of the population. (…) It was really disturbing.

12 There was a counter-meeting on 16th of June, organized by the AKP in Kazlıçeşme, in Istanbul, where Erdoğan addressed several hundreds of thousands of his supporters.

Cihan notices that this polarizing discourse might be a strategy before the local elections that will take a place in few months:

> It is quite obvious that this is a strategy. He [Erdoğan] is not speaking his mind out. He does not really believe in what he is saying. We have seen many times that he is a cleaver guy. He uses this propaganda like – they [the protesters] entered the mosque in their shoes and they drank their alcohol there. It cannot be true, and he knows it cannot be true, and he uses this to create popular support.

Cem thinks similarly:

> As a leader, you can make a successful story in the economy, but there will be still someone unhappy with that, or with social politics… But when you defeat the enemy, you are like a hero.

In this section I tried to answer the question why the protests started in the moment they started, and what provoked such a big number of people across the whole country to take part in these protests. As we can conclude, there were different kinds of grievances which were accumulated during a long period of time, and the discontent accelerated during May due to several incidents and unexpected decisions made by the government when one man has a final say. These decisions, new laws and debates severely influence people's lives. If we also add "traditional" violation of freedom of speech and freedom of press, imprisoning of the journalists, incomprehensively high electoral threshold, inhumane neo-liberal politics, damaging of the environment, growing class differences, and slipping of the democratically elected regime into authoritarian rule create a picture of increasing repression in Turkish society. The discontent culminated during May 2013 due to a series of incidents and growing pressure on freedom of choice and lifestyle, eventually exploded when the police brutally attacked ordinary citizens who were peacefully protesting for the preservation of Gezi Park. Seeing this, people felt abandoned – nobody does not want to know what they have to say about the issues that concern their own lives, they are getting attacked by those who should protect them (the police), and there is nobody to criticize that or at least to report what is happening (the media). Therefore, the people realized that they should take matters into their own hands and make their voices be heard.

The classical approach to social movements could be applied to the case of the Gezi Park protests, at least regarding its very beginning. Indeed, people took to the streets because of the grievances that they suffered from for a long time. There was no single organization which called for the protests. People organized and mobilized themselves via interaction face-to-face, on the social media and via the smart phones. During only 24 hours they managed to make police to retreat, they occupied Taksim area and formed a commune in Gezi Park.

In the next section I will explore the internal dynamics of the Gezi Park Movement including spontaneous organization, creative collective action and acts of solidarity which resulted in unity of diverse social groups who started to recognize each other as the Gezi Park protestors and thus created collective identity based on the shared goals and mutual experience of two weeks of clashing with the police and sharing life together in the Gezi Park Commune.

The Formation and Internal Dynamics of the Gezi Park Movement

The Role of the Social Media

As mentioned above, the organization and mobilization of the Gezi Park protests was completely spontaneous. Although the oppositional parties and civil society organizations joined very soon the Gezi Park protestors and set up their own stands in different corners of Gezi Park and although some of them tended to take a role of the leader of the movement, it was never widely accepted. Therefore, all merits for organization and mobilizing of the increasingly individual society go to the social media and new technologies, but also to the protesters themselves who learned in a short period of time how to use them either to spread or to acquire the information. Especially, in the situation where there is no any official media coverage of the events, the people massively resorted to Twitter and Facebook to find out where the police blockades, where it is safe, etc. Besire described one of the first actions of the protesters using the social media:

> I just used Facebook. And minute to minute, I was getting news before I joined. I mean the first day. And I remember the protesters suggested to people who live around Taksim to remove their passwords, because they needed to connect so to say each other what was going on in each street. And the people who live around Taksim removed their Internet passwords so everybody in the area could connect and put news on social media. So I could write – I am in front of this and that restaurant, it's safe here, you can come here.

Majority of the respondents singled out Twitter as the most important social media network during the protests because of its way of informing – minute to minute updates. As Besire, they also agree that the social media was very helpful in avoiding the places where violence was occurring or to help injured people. Abdürrahim notes:

> Twitter is more useful if you are in the streets, if you are subjected to the police violence. You can find out which street to avoid, where people need help, and that kind of moment to moment information, and it's easy to follow. And news feed in Tweeter is more helpful.

İhsan says the same:

> The most important was Twitter primarily because of the way it is able to inform people. And this is actually how they did a lot of their organizing. Basically, they knew where the injured people were to help them, and where they could build barricades, and where the police was going… It was the most effective social media for these events.

Murat aptly points out that the social media, which had served before as a source of entertainment, during these protests became a virtual public space where people engage in doing politics:

> As I already said, they [the social media] work as a virtual public spirit. And it's a virtual space where people engage in the politics with one another. And, one of the targets of the government right now is that media itself, because of the communication between the people. And that communication is what feeds this spirit. That's why the government targets the social media, in the sense of demonizing it, arresting the users, investigating the tweets. The communication between the protestors using this media is now more risky than before the protests.

Erdoğan indeed attacked social media by calling Twitter "a menace to society" (Altay, 14 June 2013). The government tries to intimidate the users of the social media by deleting their accounts, or deleting the posts about the protests, or arresting the users who posted a lot about it. However, the social media is still beyond the government's control. While protesters cannot gather physically that easily due to the risk of being subjected to the police violence, they can still form the public spaces in the virtual world. Now the social media as a form of a public space becomes 'the site of power' where common action can be coordinated (Benhabib, 1996: 78).

However, Sedef notes that the social media should be also taken with a grain of salt:

> On the other hand, it was also quite dangerous, because there was lot of disinformation flowing. It is also quite vulnerable to manipulation. So, you should treat social media as you treat regular media. You should always be skeptical and always question the news that you are receiving from there.

Although there were the provocations and disinformation on the social media, significance of their role in organizing and mobilizing the people during the Gezi Park protests was undoubtable. The social media became a new means of mobilizing the people in highly differentiated societies given that only social media is the space, though virtual one, where people of different affinities, interests and political views come together. Therefore, the social media has the greatest domain that goes beyond the domains of any other community, party or organization.

The Culture of the Gezi Park Movement

After the police retreated from Taksim Square, during early morning hours on June 1, the protesters made a party in Gezi Park to celebrate their victory. Soon after, they started to build the barricades in the streets leading to Taksim Square and Gezi Park so to establish the boundaries of the occupied space. They started to clean Gezi Park, to collect rubbish and set up the tents. In next few days, more and more people were arriving to the park making their own manifestations. Gezi Park became very colorful place - a commune which atmosphere resembled some hippy festival. People were singing, dancing, and playing drums. They organized an open-air library, yoga sessions, cinema, workshops for children, there was a

small playground, music stage, makeshift infirmary, and free food distributed to denizens of the commune. All of this was a product of spontaneous organization, solidarity acts, and creativity. Different parties and NGOs set up their stands and began disseminating their ideas and concerns. People started to learn about different groups, some of them they met face-to-face for the first time. People who created this atmosphere of peace and solidarity were themselves astonished by the possibility of being side by side with such different social groups and coexisting together in such a small space. Kemalists started to communicate with Kurds, the football supporters of three rival clubs – Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galata Saray – were united for the first time. The football supporters, who usually cherish the culture of masculinity and are known as homophobic, accepted LGBT people during those two weeks. My respondents also pointed out this sudden change in people. Doğan Ozkan (34), a member of Anti-Capitalist Muslims described this rapid change within the people in Gezi Park:

> In the first week when we could go to the park, nationalists wanted to come there, racists wanted to come there. These were very hard times for us. But God changed all of them. Racists became non-racist people. How it can be? I don't know. Seeing others, they changed their ideas. They didn't come there to change their ideas, of course, but they changed them. Believe to God. But as you saw everywhere in the park 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 soldiers of Mustafa Kemal". The only march they knew was Itstiklal. It is a nationalist march. They just knew that but they changed themselves. So, in the second week, they became very friendly people. We were a commune. We trusted each other. 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.

Sedef was also very surprised that people unexpectedly became so tolerant:

> There was a huge group close to us and they started to say "*ibne Tayyip*" which means "fagot Tayyip". And we looked at each other and we were thinking: "Ok, I am just too bored, too tired to even protest to them". But then there was this guy who was not from the LGBT movement… we knew that… we know almost everyone (laugh). And he said to that group: "Friends, let's not talk the same language as fascists. Let's not use sexist vocabulary. Let's not use the language of those that we object". When there are some sexist talks, usually some LGBT activists would oppose to that. And LGBT activists would object to misogynist talks as well. So, I was quite shocked to see this guy saying that. And I was like: "Wow, thank you". And the more shocking thing was… as I said we were stuck with that group for more than two hours and we didn't hear that slogan again! So, it was quite shocking for us. I also heard lots of stories like that from my friends. So, people were minding their language, they were trying to find another ways to express themselves and their anger, which was something good.

Indeed, there were lots of examples of language transformation and acts of solidarity. Cem tells another amazing story:

> There is a Çarşı[13] group and they are usually so masculine and heterosexist. And they were always cursing like that – "Fagots! Son of the bitch!" And we always tried to correct

13 Çarşı is a name of a fan group of Beşiktaş football club.

> them. We said: "Hey guys, don't do this because we are here as well. I am gay, and you are cursing gay people by using this. I am not something bad". So they came to Lambda, our organization, to apologize. They captured a shield from a policeman and they brought it to us as a present. "We wanted to give this to you. We wanted to apologize because we didn't know…" Right now we are working together. That's really fantastic. So, the language has changed. When language changes, then the mind changes. You start to think in another way.

Selime gives a similar example of people starting to mind their language:

> For us, feminists, it was just problematic to hear a lot of sexist language. Most of the people chanted using a language that is against women, against LGBT, against prostitutes, and that is why the first thing we did, when we got to the park, was making stickers and standstills against such language. One of our stickers was saying that "Do not curse to women, fags and prostitutes". I think that people in general use a lot of sexist language [in ordinary life], and when you go and warn them, they get angry and just keep on with that. But in Gezi Park we had experiences that people would say: "Pardon". And they stopped using it.

In these changes of the language it is possible to notice the establishment of certain norms of behavior among protestors, or, in Durkheim's words, forming of "collective consciousness". Cursing to certain social groups became improper, while tolerance and solidarity were highly appreciated. Violence was unacceptable as well among the protesters, although there was some violence to a lesser degree such as throwing stones on the police, which all of my respondents describe as a self-defense. Abdürrahim states:

> There was some damage done to the environment. People tried to stop the police vehicles by forming barricades. I don't count that as violence, because people tried to defend themselves. It was a passive, peaceful movement. Of course, in every situation, in every resistance, every protest, there will be few individuals that will be uncontrollable, those who didn't really understand the movement, or embraced it. But the main body of the movement was peaceful and innovative.

Murat thinks the same:

> Now, it is true that there was some violence, but violence in general is the main reason why the protest escalated and got this big. But that violence was first used by the police, and it is in the nature of the things that violence provokes violence. Yes, some people were throwing stones on the police, but one can see it as the self-defense. But apart from that, in general, the overwhelming aura of the protest is humorous, civil and peaceful.

The actions and tactics of the protestors were indeed humorous and creative. The most popular was the symbolic practice of changing the meanings of certain objects. Abdürrahim gives the example of the most famous one:

> When the Prime Minister said "these are the çapulcu[14]" [referring to the protesters], we transformed it, we filled it with a new meaning. It has now a positive connotation. Now people want to be called çapulcu, because it now means: someone who is fighting for his rights, without doing any harm to others, something like that.

14 Çapulcu means looter or marauder in Turkish.

Another famous practice of changing of meanings was making penguins the symbols of the protest depicting them with gas masks or holding the posters "Everywhere Taksim, everywhere resistance" because, during the first night of the protests, CNN *Türk*, instead of showing what was happening in Taksim Square, broadcasted the nature documentary on penguins. This mockery was widely accepted among protesters, and penguins, that in general have nothing to do with Turkey and even less with environmentalist protest in Gezi Park, became one of its most famous symbols. By placing the objects in different context, the protesters undermined the original meaning, thus, producing a subversive effect (Hebdige, 1979). These kinds of practices created a new internal language of the group which serves as one of the aspects of the collective identity of that same group.

Hence, generally, the protest had the atmosphere of creativity and freedom of expression which obviously lacked in Turkish public space. My respondents agree that making fun while protesting was a new thing in history of Turkish protests. Cihan notes:

> It was good that you could bring some fun because all kinds of socialist resistance are always boring. But I think making fun was something new. I liked very much the painting of bulldozers which were there to destroy the park. People painted them pink. It was so nice.

Selime also agrees that making fun was something original in Turkish case:

> I think this [having fun] also reflects the participants of the protest – the young generation. I mean, there are some slogans that have been used for 30 years, especially in the left wing, and they are very serious. You don't laugh.

Ümit points out that the newly created culture of the Gezi Park Movement was in fact open to everyone. It was a culture that embraced the peaceful, tolerant and cheerful atmosphere which everyone could identify with. She notes:

> These protesters kind of created their own culture – a new culture, so that anyone could join this and it mobilized people in general – fathers, and mothers, and children joined all these slogans.

This laughing atmosphere motivated the people to join the commune in Gezi Park if not for some concrete reasons that at least for having fun. As Selime points out this new tactics of having fun could also additionally to encourage the people:

> There were people who would, during the police attacks, shout – "Hooray! Gas!" They were shouting like that. It also encouraged people a lot. Also the language of the soccer supporters… since the soccer supporters are used to chanting, they would shout some slogan, and people would accept it.

The most famous slogan of football fans was: "You can use your tear gas bombs, you can use your tear gas bombs/ Have courage if you are a real man/ Take off your helmet and drop your batons/ Then we'll see who the real man is". (Zirin, 10 June 2013). With its overtly masculine symbolic this slogan was able to encourage people but at the same time mocked the police which protesters liked. Cihan points out that such making fun of the police was possible given that people in fact did not face the "real" violence:

> The protest was so efficient because people could have lots of fun within it. I was also surprised that people made a lot of fun with the police. Of course, people didn't actually face the real violence, I have to say. It was the police violence. And people knew that police had to stop at one point. I mean they cannot go on killing you. It's still not something like in the Middle East. It was still not terrible if you compare to Egypt – like a small movement happens and hundred people dies. We had lots of gas and stuff (laugh). So I think, it wasn't that traumatic or dramatic, so people could have made fun of it. I also give credits to those people who invented those creative jokes. It was nice and funny, and kept people resisting more.

Selime comments that protestors still cherish the culture of the movement by exchanging and sharing its content:

> I think the language of the Gezi was very new, it was ironic, and it was very young, and funny. And it had power to take something from the government's anti-Gezi speech and turn it into something to laugh at. I think everyone got very amused by all the wall writings. We still share it. There are a lot of photos circulating and we share them.

It seems that all these symbols, new language, and jokes are still vivid and sustained by the protesters, though they are moved to the virtual sphere of the social media. After two extremely harsh police actions, on the 15th and the 16th of June, and at the same time the two worst nights since the beginning of the rebellion, when they eventually broke down the commune and took over Taksim Sqaure and Gezi Park, the protests began gradually to decline.

Changing of Tactics

To my question "In your opinion, why the protest lost its massive scale" referring to the decline of manifest events such as demonstrations or occupying a public space, most of my respondents objected saying that it is still massive, but it just changed its form. Related to this, Yeşim puts it:

> So, I think the protest is continuing, because the protest is not just to protest something, it is like to create your life. If you think that Gezi Park protest means that police attacks you, and then you don't go out any more, then it's over. Or if you think "there is no police around, I am sleeping in my tent, my friend is reading a book, somebody collects garbage, the people are bringing food, no money, woohoo" – if you think that this is Gezi Park, then it's over, but if you think that Gezi Park is changing your life, it is still continuing.

Sedef agrees with Yeşim that the protest is still massive. Also, she gives some reasons for why it is not manifest anymore:

> Actually, it changed. I would say that it is again massive, but it is dormant, it is sleeping. For me, I was in the demonstrations for three weeks because I am an activist and I also believed that it is important to be there. But you know, after three weeks, it got scarier because there were lots of people with weapons and we also read a lot about Turkish histo-

> ry, about what was happening during the 1980s [she refers here to the military coup]. So, I was always afraid that it would turn into the 1980s. And I was also quite exhausted by breathing pepper gas all the time.

Selime also stresses the reasons such as exhaustion, the fear of the state repression, but also holiday time:

> First of all, I think it's not so sustainable to be in the streets all the time. People got very tired. And all these police violence is hard to take. Even during the park days everyone was tired going there every day. And I think the arrestments also affected it. People got very afraid. I think it is worse than being subjected to the gas or water, just people are very afraid of getting arrested. And in fact they [the police] arrested lots of people, and some people from Taksim Solidarity[15]. And I think summer is very effective here. Everyone is at the vacation. Especially young generation attended the demonstrations. Now the most of them are out of town.

According to İhsan, the series of arrestments and the state pressure are the main reasons why the protest declined:

> They [the people/protesters] are generally scared because of the way that government came to power, and they affected every kind of sector of society – the media, the police, the intelligentsia, the army. Essentially, they put their people on these positions so they can control everything. They spread this fear and pressure throughout the whole society. They arrest almost everyone – reporters, teachers, lawyers… Basically, this is the perception of people – if they can take these people, they can take me. This fear just spread from a top down that everyone can be taken.

However, İhsan also adds that the young generations are not that much political and that the Gezi Park protest was solely a fun for them:

> Essentially, the protests subsided because the main generation that was protesting was not really political. They didn't come together to form a strong opposition. It was more like exciting time than the actual political response. And once the excitement died out after a month, they didn't really want to join as much.

Although the protest lost its visibility in the public, the actors of the Gezi Park Movement seem to be still active. They have resorted to more innovative and less provocative tactics than protesting or occupying the public space. More important, now they moved their actions away from Taksim Square, the space in which the government is so keen to hold the power. Now they are organizing in different parts of the city (mainly in the parks) a number of minor and subtle protests in the form of forums where participants discuss different issues and possible further steps of the movement. In that way, they created a model of participatory democracy at very local level. However, their main purpose seems to be raising the consciousness about different problems in the society and keeping alive the spirit of activism. Regarding this, Cem says the following:

15 Taksim Solidarity (TaksimDayanişması) is a civil society umbrella organization which is comprised of a large number of other different organizations – NGOs, trade unions, political parties, community groups, etc. It enjoyed wide support among the Gezi Park protestors and, in the beginning of the protests, it had a role of a delegation of the movement to talk to the government.

> The shape of the protests has changed. Every organization and other people tried to do something else other than going out, protesting, marching. You have to change tactics. You come to the streets, police attacks, then you come back. It becomes routine. Protest has developed into something else. People are gathering in the parks right now. On the weekends, they gather there. It is massive overall but they are disintegrated in different parks or parts of the country. But they still talk. The consciousness of people is integrated.

Cihan also supports the idea of changing the tactics of protesting:

> And there are also forums and people want really to put their energy in those forums. You know, playing in the streets is just to show something, but people have already showed enough. It can come back and that was the message, but more important are forums and people participating in them.

Apart from the forums, the people organized summer camps across the country in which they participated voluntarily in order to spread a word about the protests. Cem observes:

> So many people, so many çapulars, hold summer schools. They teach voluntarily over there the maths, English and so own. By that, they are trying to spread what was happening in Gezi Park, especially in Eastern Turkey. Right now we have changed the concept, the type of demonstrations. We have learned so much during the Gezi Park [protests] – that was the mission and that's completed. And so many people are gathering in summer camps, or there are other ways of protesting, like "Standing Man" as you know.

The "Standing Man" (*Duran Adam*), which Cem mentioned, and public *iftars* were probably the most innovative tactics so far. The "Standing Man" showed the whole absurd of the violence of Turkish police. After the brutal break down of the commune, it was not so safe anymore to hold demonstrations in Taksim Square. Therefore, a Turkish artist, Erdem Gündüz, decided just to stand in the square with his hands in pockets as a kind of protest. He was standing and being silent for hours, so the police did not know what to do with him. On the one hand, it was a protest, on the other hand, it was just standing, and the police could not arrest the man just for doing nothing but standing. The idea was brilliant, and lots of people joined it the same day. Until the evening there were around a hundred of people standing in Taksim Square. Eventually, the police dispersed the group and arrested several people. However, the idea spread, and it was possible to see small groups of people standing in the different parts of Istanbul, as well as in other cities in Turkey.

Another great idea for peaceful protesting came from Anti-Capitalist Muslims in the form of public *iftars*. First one was held on the first day of Ramadan as a protest against a collective breaking fast dinner in Taksim Square organized by mayor of Beyoğlu. It showed the hypocrisy of the AKP organizing the dinner for its supporters in Taksim while at the same time banning others to assemble in the square dispersing them by the tear gas and water cannons. The Anti-Capitalist Muslims put the newspapers and plastic bags on the ground along İstiklal Avenue having their own *iftar*. Soon after, hundreds of people joined them, thus, forming a kilometer long "*sofra*"[16] along İstiklal Avenue made of newspapers and lots

16 *Sofra* is an Ottoman word for a low table or tray used for dining.

of food brought by citizens themselves. There was a cordon of police separating the protesters from the AKP supporters having *iftar* in Takism Square. However, the idea spread, and since then the public *iftars* were held in different public spaces in Istanbul and other cities. The *iftars* were joined by secular people as well given that now they had another symbolic meaning. The religious practice became of the secondary importance here. The public *iftars* now had the meaning of protest and represented the act of sharing and being together – the act of collective action. Abdürrahim comments that public *iftars* had important role in sustainability of the movement during month of Ramadan:

> Yeah, people embraced the idea. Even without our [Anti-Capitalis Muslims'] intervention, without any information to us, people continue these *iftars*. Some people saw Ramadan as something that will slow down the protest movement, but I believe, on the contrary, because of Ramadan, because of these *iftar* meals, every evening in Istanbul, in Ankara and in other places, these tables were set, and people once again came together, like in Gezi Park. People from very different origins, ideological backgrounds, they come together, they share their food, and they kind of cherish the Gezi Park spirit.

Although the protests were now peaceful, static and scattered in different areas or moved to the virtual space of the social media, the government's harsh reaction continued. It is reflected in the massive police raids around the big cities, arrestments of the social media users, replacing the private security at universities by the police, and the presence of a large number of policemen whenever some minor gathering occurs in Taksim Square. To my question why the state fears so much the Gezi Park Movement even if now it seems benign, Abdürrahim replied:

> It is because they saw something in Gezi Park that can really endanger their position in power. And that's why, even when the massive protests started to shrink, and isolated movements continued in different districts, they still considered them dangerous. They didn't want any opposition to be heard. If one neighborhood in Ankara is resisting against the police, all of Turkey knows about it. It's not about isolated neighborhoods anymore. People can contact with each other so fast.

Cihan agrees that Erdoğan is worried that these protests could grow into something bigger which could endanger his position if they are not prevented on time:

> But he [Erdoğan] is really afraid of that possibility. He cannot see that people wouldn't have reacted like that if there had been no police violence. He just cannot see that, he cannot trust that, he cannot take a risk and that is why he reacts harshly, and it was worth trying for him in order not to take that risk. Because he cannot know how big the demonstrations can go. Of course, it's silly and undemocratic.

On the other hand, Sedef thinks that the government sees these protests rather as an offence to its authority than as a danger, but it does not know how to deal with them other than using violence as a means to teach people a lesson:

> Seriously, why they are afraid of hippies hugging trees? I really don't understand that. To show to the others that they would get the same if they try to protest? That would be an idea, I think.

> For the Standing Man probably they didn't understand what he was doing. So the only thing that they can do against the Standing Man is to arrest him. That could be why they are doing it.

The government showed that it was unable to cope with this new situation constructively. The Gezi Park Movement definitely sent the message that the people do not trust the government anymore because the government does not respect people's will. Instead of taking these protests as a strong sign that something must be changed, the government, or we could freely say the Prime Minister Erdoğan, took these actions in his vanity as an undermining of his authority. I would agree with Sedef that this harsh reaction is more about arrogance than about the fear. Erdoğan is too self-confident to consider the crowd of several hundreds of thousands of people as a real threat to his rule. What really bothered Erdoğan was this unconventional way of protesting that he was not used to. The mockery, jokes, diverting the meanings of his own words, having fun despite the police violence – all these collective actions showed that hardly anyone took him seriously. As Arendt says: 'The greatest enemy of authority, therefore, is contempt, and the surest way to undermine it is laughter' (Arendt, 1972: 144).

Impact of the Gezi Park Movement on Turkish (Civil) Society

The Self-Limiting Radicalism of the Gezi Park Actors

Although all of my respondents stated that the discontent was mainly directed against the Prime Minister Erdoğan including themselves criticizing him of being the most responsible for backing the police violence but also for inciting the passing of the controversial laws, which interfere people's private lives, it was interesting that actually none of the respondents wanted him to resign. While one could get an impression that the protest were anti-governmental or anti-Erdoğan calling him to resign, this was in fact not the option and it never was. First of all, there are still some good things that the government has done such as weakening the political influence of the army, pacifying the 30 years long conflict with Kurdish guerilla in the Eastern regions, and copying well with the global financial crisis making Turkey one of the largest economies in the world. Secondly, it is legitimately elected government that enjoys wide support of almost 50% of population. Thirdly, there is in fact no alternative meaning that the respondents could not single out any of the parties currently in Parliament or any possible or impossible coalition between them as a better option. They were talking only about parties occupying seats in Parliament (AKP, CHP, MHP, and BDP) given that all the other parties do not stand a chance to change something since the electoral threshold is 10% making their access to Parliament extremely difficult.

As Abdürrahim says the resign of the government was not general idea or a goal of the protest. In his opinion, the resign of the government would not change anything. It is the political system that should undergo some changes:

> People called the government to resign, but it was more like an outcry, rather than a practical demand. I think it was more about the people asking the government to resign from this attitude, this kind of dictatorship. So they wanted them to quit this kind of politics, rather than to resign altogether and set up a new government with an opposition. And, when you look at it, it's practically impossible, because the ruling party [the AKP] now has 340 seats, so, there is no other option. Without including AKP, there is no possibility to form the government. So, it was not practical. Like I said, the ruling party is only the face of the system, so, if they would resign, than the new government would not be so much different. It's about changing the election low, it's about changing the party system, the Constitution...Without this party or that party...it wouldn't matter.

Cihan does not have a problem with this government to stay in power. Since there is no alternative, he believes that the best solution would be if Erdoğan becomes more democratic:

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

Cem agrees that his 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 for 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 thinks that we are against him, but we are not against him, we are against his behavior. We are not against him as our Prime Minister, but we are against him for not listening to us, or because he pretends being a sultan. He may stay there with exercising a real democracy. He was elected because he was using the word "democracy" quite much.

Yeşim thinks the same:

> I don't support the slogan for their [the government's] resign. So, if they resign today, what's next tomorrow? And it's not a common slogan. It was the slogan of some anti-AKP groups. People tell the government "Do your job! Now you're not doing your job. Please, do your job!" That was the most common political idea of the Gezi Park. It wasn't even the threat, it was very sincere.

Selime also does not support the resign of the government since there is no alternative, but she also thinks that some state officials responsible for the violence should have resigned:

> I never thought that they would resign, and most of the dissident groups didn't support the resign of the government. So, who would come? CHP? But they are also nationalist.

> And there is also a peace process that the AKP conducts [with Kurds in the East], and we also know that CHP and Kurds could never be in the same government. But what we were expecting, and what he [Erdoğan] should have done is to dismiss some of the related ministers and police chiefs.

Murat gave a comment of the possible options if the government hypothetically resigned:

> I mean there are some other options. I don't think that a military coup is an option, obviously it is not a possibility at all and that's a good thing. One other option would be a nationalist coalition between nationalist left [CHP] and nationalist right [MHP] and I wouldn't like that myself. Choosing between nationalist right and left coalition and Islamist AK Party is like no choice at all. I don't know which one is worse than the other, as far as I am concerned. But the most likely scenario for a new government at the given configuration of power is that. And the third option would be new left coalition between the new left and the Kurdish Movement. These are the hypothetical possibilities or alternatives.

Cihan aptly points up why it is good that the AKP remains in power:

> For the Muslims who support Tayyip, it creates the best psychological atmosphere to bring those estranged parties together, because if the representative of the Islamic community, well, let's say Muslims, wouldn't be at the top, those people would become more radicalized… all that kind of victim discourse that they are using… and now they don't feel a need to use it, because it's not anymore convincing if they use that kind of terminology, so they are more into dialogue actually and I find it as a positive thing. And you can talk to them, and you can even convince them that Tayyip is doing this or that wrong. That is why I never said "*Tayyip istifa*" [Tayyip should quit]. This slogan was brought by nationalists, almost nationalist socialists like the Worker's Party (İşçi *Partı*), militarist Kemalists, fascists.

From these statements it is possible to conclude that the protestors did not seek a radical change of the society or political system, overthrowing of the government like a sort of revolution. They did not want to impose their demands on the wider society respecting their electoral will. What they wanted was the government to consider also their opinion and their choice which is a legitimate request especially in the country which tends to be democratic. It seems that the problem lies in Erdoğan's very perspective of democracy. He 'identifies democracy with the rule of moral majority' (conservative Muslims) and the wide support to the AKP by almost 50% of the electorate as an expression of 'national will' (Taşkın, 2008: 66). This populist rhetoric could be seen as an attempt to silence 'the real plurality of the people' (ibid.) by disregarding those who oppose the government's decisions and even referring to them as marginal or deviants.

According to my respondents, the most important outcomes of this protest, except the accomplishment of the only concrete goal – the preservation of Gezi Park – was coming together, making their voice being heard, and showing to the government that they can act in concert and, if not change, they can at least oppose any decision of the government which has a huge negative impact on their lives.

Doğan points out that the people realized their potential to act:

> We achieved the goal. We showed to Erdoğan, and not only to Erdogan, but to Turkish government that people will act against them and people will win over them. Even if Er-

> doğan stays [in power], it is not important. He cannot do whatever he wants. So, people now understood their power.

Sedef puts it in a similar way:

> Well, I am not a revolutionist type of person. I believe in evolution, not in revolution (laugh). So, I see this Gezi protest as a huge step in the evolution. It totally shook the parliament. Well, I am not quite optimistic that the parliament will change itself, because the walls of the parliament are quite thick, so your voice cannot be heard that easily from the inside. But it quite shook them. So, I think it's a good thing that they will keep in mind that people also have power.

Murat agrees that the main goal was that people discovered their power to come together and act against the government's wrong steps:

> The main goal is the protest itself. It is about the people discovering they do have political power if they act together, and the pluralism of the movement, and I think the movement itself is the huge step towards democratization in Turkey, and that would be enough for me. Obviously people do have different goals, but they do have one goal, and that goal is democratization, or the opposition to the one person leadership. Whatever other goals you pursue, people just don't want to be ruled by one person. They just want to have a say about their common life, public life in Turkey.

Selime comments that although the police dispersed protesters, they are satisfied with what was achieved so far and that is realizing that they can act in concert against the government:

> I can just say what has been achieved so far. I think the most important one [of the goals] was that they [people] can gather together and that they can be a voice against the government. The government didn't make a huge step back, but at least it was stopped. Although we don't gather at the protests anymore, and the Gezi Commune was demolished, people don't feel defeated. I think that's important. This is that feeling that when we are together, we can be against the government and we can change something. That was something that had been achieved. And throughout these protests, some people who are not into politics got politicized. And that was also one of the achievements.

Yeşim notes that the goal is not something concrete that this movement should achieve, but it is more about the maintenance and dissemination of political activism that was born during the most intensive days of the movement:

> This is not a movement to achieve a goal, and then – ok, we are done. It's not like this. It's a social transformation. There is no a point when you can say – ok, we transformed it perfectly, now we can stop here. So, it will continue. It's a kind of political activism, it is a kind of street activism. It is not only Gezi Park activism. Now it is everywhere.

Politicization of the Actors and the Rise of Civil Society

One of the most striking goals that the Gezi Park Movement has achieved was also the spontaneous politicization of the hitherto apolitical actors. While some of them had lots of fun and returned to their homes after the Gezi Park commune was broken down, a large number of actors became socially and politically aware beginning either to question or criticize things around them or seeking to become members of different political parties or civil society organizations. Cem describes how he became aware of the problems that Kurds cope with:

> The Kurdish people couldn't talk before. They were talking but they weren't listened to by some people, including me [myself]. Now I am listening to them. I am fighting with them actually. The Kurdish people were always fighting for their rights actually. They were always fighting for something that we couldn't understand, that I couldn't understand. I was always thinking – "they are fighting for their rights, but they have their rights, hey com'on!" – I was telling this to myself. You have the rights. You are citizens of Turkish Republic. But after the Gezi Park protest or during the Gezi Park protests, the behavior of the media on the one side, the behavior of the government on the other side, made me think that Kurdish people are right for fighting for their rights. So, that is why I took them as having a major influence on me, apart from LGBT people.

Abdürrahim connects this decades-long political passivity as something inherited from the 1980s and the period of military rule:

> We were considered by our parents as apolitical individuals, like they went through this, especially in the '70s. People killed each other in the streets because of these ideologies, 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 the job with the 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 into the organizations, into non-government organizations, they were afraid of protesting in the streets, of any kind of political activity, but on 31st of May, all these warnings were left behind, all this education was left behind, and we entered a new era, a new period. 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 organizations which more or less represent their own ideas, and if they do so, if this can be done massively, than I think that the protests will gain a different momentum, and it will be more difficult for the government to suppress them, to manipulate them.

Cihan also states how people became more interested in politics and willing to join different civil society organizations:

> My friends, who didn't talk about politics, started to talk about it or wanted to start to talk on that. So that was new, and it was new because people felt as a part of something. People have learned, you know, that knowing about other social movements is interesting and good, and it is also good that you participate in associations. Just saying I am supporting it is not enough. People who were thinking – yeah, I should go to that association - start-

> ed to come just now, after the Gezi Park events. So, people now really started to go to associations and to contact them. They are saying – "I was always staying behind but now I want to participate". The degree of participation in social movements would probably increase. That's what I am expecting. People were always complaining that Turkish associations, Turkish NGOs and human rights activists are very few. So, now people will probably be more engaged, there will be more members of associations.

Hence, the Gezi Park Movement had a huge impact on individuals in raising consciousness about the problems in Turkish society, also raising the activist-awareness, making people wanting to participate in platforms, forums or civil society organizations which all lead towards a deepening of democracy. The point is that this democratization of society did not come from above – from the government or the state institutions, but from below – from the people themselves.

Moreover, this movement did not only inspire individuals to become more political, but it also had a huge impact on civil society organizations, which was reflected in the increase of their membership, changing the tactics or starting to consider some other issues as a part of their agenda, and beginning to collaborate with each other. My respondents who are themselves activists and members of civil society organizations prove this through their stories of how the Gezi Park events influenced the organizations or associations they belong to. İhsan, the member of Human Rights Association, states that while his organization was accused before of being too biased focusing mainly on the rights of minorities, during the Gezi Park protests people could see that they are concerned with the respect for human rights in general:

> In the past month [during the protests], we were heavily affected. We were working night and day, especially when the events were going on. All the people who were subjected to the violence came here for support – usually people who were afraid of being arrested, and those who were looking for medical help. Even the other room over there was turned into infirmary or a hospital, and we were helping people in getting legal advice. Before the protest, there were groups having kind of prejudice about this organization, because they kind of saw it as it is focused on Kurdish rights as social rights and LGBT rights, and they didn't see organization in very favorable light. So, as they became to come here and seek help, they kind of got to know us better, and saw that we actually try to help people. Even the AKP people and women who wear headscarves started to see that we are not biased.

Selime points out that the activists in her organization, Purple Roof, realized that they should introduce some new issues in their agenda:

> We realized that we did not focus on the city and women issues, we did not put it in our political agenda, and we should because (…) when people go through gentrification process, it is still women who are affected the most. Even the street lights are concern for women. And as for shelters, there are now some centers where you can go when you experience domestic violence but they are very far away from the city. And we were telling some things about that but they were not in our political agenda. And yes, we are now considering that relation – the city environment and the women's issues.

Murat, the member of the Party of the Green and Left Future, notes that the issues and goals of this party are in accordance with issues and goals of the Gezi Park Movement, and people who did not even know before about the party, became interested to join:

> I was a member of this Party of the Green and Left Future precisely because I shared these values and this spirit of the Gezi Park [movement]. Obviously, we didn't organize this movement. We were all astonished and pleasantly surprised by this thing to happen. We are in it, and how did it impact our organization, well, now we don't need to convince people to come and join our political party, they come themselves. Most people are actually astonished, because our political party seems to be inconspicuous (…) because we are very small. We are not very public, so people just ask where we are, so they could find us. We had a stand in the park during the protests, and now we have a stand where you found us. So, we don't need to convince people to join us.

Abdürrahim, the member of Anti-Capitalist Muslims pointed out that their agenda was also in line with the issues and goals of the Gezi Park Movement from the very beginning. He also states that Anti-Capitalist Muslims have benefited a lot from the movement in a sense that they became more visible, people became interested to know more about them, and their organization thus grew more:

> Our friends were there [in Gezi Park] before the police came, with the people who set up the tents, who defended the park. Because, when we say: "All the dominion belongs to God, we mean all the dominion belongs to people. That goes for the park as well, and it's a quote from Quran. And also, one of the pillars that capitalism is standing on is pillaging the environment for their own benefits, and what was planned for Gezi Park was exactly this - they were going to destroy the environment, the trees, and they were going to set up a shopping mall, like a symbol of consumption, of capitalism, so we also stand against it. So, the initial goals from the protest movement were also in line with our ideology, and from then on, we embraced the idea that we shouldn't ask for identity of the oppressed, we all share the Gezi Park, the same faith with us. And we are also not going to ask of the identity of the people in power, even though they claim they are Muslims. We are going to look at what they are doing.

> We were first heard of by the public last May [2012], when our friends in Istanbul joined the 1st of May march. They were called to talk about themselves, but still our movement was not known in the public. But, with the Gezi Park Movement, the focus was directed at us, who we are. Because, when Prime Minister says: "My sister, who is wearing the headscarf is being attacked by the protestors", and we said: "No, we have sisters who are wearing the headscarves, and they are right in the middle of Gezi Park". So, we negate each and every argument of the Prime Minister. He said: "These people are disrespectful to our religion". But people who say they are atheists, socialists, who didn't join the prayer [in the park], they formed a circle around us, and they said: "We are here symbolically, to protect you from any harm". And this was such a clear response, such a strong, powerful response to prime minister's arguments. That is why the attention was focused on who we are, what we defend, what are we composed of. And then, our meetings started to be more crowded. We actually rented a place on the 2nd of June, a month ago. So, we now completed our process of becoming a formal organization in Ankara as well, and people come and ask how can they meet us, they want to join us. The interest for our group increased.

From Abdürrahim's statement it is also seen that the Gezi Park Movement benefited from their presence as well given that it undermined general black-and-white perspective of these events as a clash of secularist citizens vs. religious-minded ones.

Doğan, also the member of Anti-Capitalist Muslims, states that the Gezi Park Movement had an effect on his organization making some members becoming more tolerant:

> I love this Gezi Park [movement] effect on our organization. There were some people who were saying that if you drink, you will go to hell or if you are homosexual, you will go to hell. And then they came to Gezi Park and they said: "Maybe, we should think about that again". So, it's excellent. You know, we [Anti-Capitalist Muslims] were surrounded only by Muslims [before the Gezi Park events] and religious people become more fundamentalist when they come together. They say: "I obey to God. No, I obey more to God" (laugh). Like this. Now in Gezi Park, the people came face-to-face with each other. After Gezi Park we organized the trip to Roboski[17] which is a Kurdish village. Before the Gezi Park [events] we had never done it. Because some people in our organization were not Kurd-friendly. They were thinking like the state does. If you would say that you are Kurdish, then you are PKK.

Cem, the member of LGBT organization – LambdaIstanbul - also testifies that the Gezi Park Movement had a positive influence on his organization. He stresses the increased visibility of LGBT community in Turkish society, the growth of Lambda's membership in this period, new collaborations – with Kurdish LGBT community and with Anti-Capitalist Muslims for exploring the relation between religion and homosexuality, which was not the practice before:

> Also we interacted with other groups too – for example, with Anti-Capitalist Muslims. Or we came together with Kurdish people. Right now the movement of Gezi Park has created another union – *Hêvî* which means "hope" in Kurdish – for supporting Kurdish LGBT people. Our visibility has increased a lot. This was a goal actually that we were trying to achieve so far. One of the outcomes was Pride[18] that was quite massive [50.000 people]. I am not sure whether there are some changes within the organization regarding the goals because we were saying the samethings so far. Maybe it didn't change, but it got strength. Now there are lots of people who want to become volunteers in Lambda. And there are also good things happening in Lambda. Everybody wants to talk and to join to do something. We have always tried to achieve this. We have also united with Anti-Capitalist Muslims. There was always something against religion in Lambda. We were always talking that we have to find the solution for this because we live in a religious country, and so many parents are religious. When people are opening up, they face so many problems with their religious family. They don't have any words to tell that to people, because it is a belief and there are no any anti-arguments for that. Right now, when we are talking about that, we can have something with Anti-Capitalist Muslims, maybe in terms of theology, in terms of religion, we can talk about Sodom and Gomorrah again, and in this way we can find a solution for these religious beliefs, because many people think they are sinners if they do this [if they are homosexual]. And Anti-Capitalist Muslims have another approach, so maybe we can find a compromise of being religious and being gay at the same time. In our minds before, religion was something to avoid. Now we can have it back, so the other people who are against the LGBT movement could gradually accept us.

As one could see, the Gezi Park Movement not only incited the activism in people, it also inspired people to consider other ideas and tactics all employed in making Turkish society more tolerant and democratic. The question that remains here to be answered is whether this energy, this commitment to the same or similar goals, this shared experience of the pro-

17 Roboski is the village close to Iranian border which was bombed on December 28, 2011 by Turkish forces under the pretext that it was hiding some of the PKK members. During this attack, 34 Kurdish villagers were killed. It turned out that they were actually smugglers and mainly teenagers, but not the PKK members. This incident is known as Roboski or Uludere massacre. Anti-Capitalists Muslims collectively went there a month ago to pay their respects to Kurdish victims.

18 The LGBT Pride 2013 was held on the 30th of June in Istiklal Avenue, and it was the most attended Pride since 2003 when it was organized for the first time.

test, and this empowerment coming from realization that collective action is not only possible but even necessary, could transform this wide and unstable network into a firmer form of a political opposition and what such opposition might look like?

Forming of a New Political Opposition?

When I asked my respondents whether some form of leadership, organization, institutionalization, or even forming of a new political party would be possible, their answer was always negative saying that leadership and institutionalization are not inherent to the nature of this movement. Martina thinks that institutionalization is not a good solution given that it would certainly divide the people within the movement:

> There are some people who want to make a new party. They are some people who say – no, no party. If there would be an organization, the movement would die. It would divide people. Actually, the people who want party, they say: "If we want to change something in this country, we have to be in the Parliament". Actually, they are right, because the decisions are made in the Parliament, but at the same time, the other people are right as well. Because if we decide to found the party, so who will become the leader. And we are so many different people, so who can represent all the groups? This is a big problem.

Selime also agrees that institutionalization is not possible because of so many different opinions and demands within the Gezi Park Movement:

> I think if these protests had had a leader, it would have killed it. No one can agree on the leader. That was the main feature of this protest because there are lots of different opinions in this, and people were just out in the street in non-organized way. Afterwards, people got organized, but the main call didn't come from a leader. People were even bothered that some other people or some parties tried to become a leader during the time of Gezi Park Commune., especially non-politicized people [were bothered]… well, in Turkey being political is the same of being attached to some ideology. I think that the same goes for more organization or institutionalization.

Sedef points out as well that the institutionalization of the movement is not an option. However, she thinks that organizations within the Gezi Park Movement could direct their actions through more institutionalized channels:

> Institutionalizing of the movement would not work, I think, because the spirit of the Gezi uprising is not suitable to be institutionalized. It cannot be institutionalized, but of course there are lots of institutionalized bodies appeared in Gezi Park. They can continue their activities and that would also help.

Yeşim says that even if any party emerges from the Gezi Park activism, she would be critical to it as she is regarding any other party:

> Forming a new party? If somebody forms a new party inspired by the Gezi Park movement, ok, I wouldn't see it as a Gezi Park party, I would see it as another new party. I would just look and try to understand their agenda and decide whether I will support them or not.

As it is seen from the respondents' statements, it is not likely at the moment that any firm political organization would emerge from the Gezi Park Movement. This can lead us to a conclusion that the Gezi Park Movement, while it certainly opposed some decisions made by the government, did not, in fact, influence any change in the political system. Should we therefore consider it less political?

According to Paul Wapner, the main problem of the analysis of social movements today is that 'other efforts directed towards societies at large are usually ignored or devalued because they are not considered to be genuinely political in character' (Wapner, 2009: 202). He considers such perspective as a 'narrow view of politics' (ibid.) given that it excludes the societal dimension. Thus, if the efforts of a movement cannot be turned into a state action, they should not be seen as aiming only at social or cultural change (Wapner, 2009: 203). I find his concept of 'civic politics' (ibid.) quite applicable to the case of the Gezi Park Movement and its wide influence on Turkish society. According to Wapner, civic politics is exercised within civil society, which 'exists above the individual, and yet below the state' (Wapner, 2009: 203). It encompasses all the aspects of society – economic, social, and cultural (companies, market, non-government organizations, other communities and affiliations, family and friendship networks). Thus, the main goal of the Gezi Park Movement is to spread a word about the problems in the society and to raise the consciousness of the people convincing them to engage in solving those problems. The moment the large number of people changes their behavior toward becoming more tolerant, solidary, or politically aware, such a transformation will be reflected in the organizations of civil society – religious communities, NGOs, companies, and all other entities which activities are the results of jointly interaction of individuals that they are composed of. The same goes even for the AKP supporters. The goal of the Gezi Park Movement actors seems not to win against them, but to *win over them by persuasion*. As the respondents pointed out, this movement would lose its egalitarian character and unity, and it might turn away potential adherents, if it took on the real political agenda. 'Its political significance and effectiveness is' in fact 'rooted in its public performativity' (Göle, 2013: 12), which could be the reason why it attracted so many previously apolitical actors.

The actors of the Gezi Park Movement stressed that the biggest achievement was the one of coming together and showing to the government that they have a potential to act and to prevent it from making decisions against their will. This achievement appears quite abstract and unstable. It can vanish the moment the movement disperses. As Arendt puts it '(…) power (…)can only be actualized but never fully materialized, power is to an astonishing degree independent of material factors, either of numbers or means' (Arendt, 1958: 200). This means that '(…) the power of a few can be greater than the power of many' (ibid.) as long as they are able to act in concert convincing the others to change their behavior and their perspectives. It was already done at the small level when a few actors in Gezi Park convinced the majority to mind their language.

The changes at the level of the whole society could be made only in a long run, and therefore the 'Gezi spirit' needs to be maintained over the time, and this is possible only if actors stay together, cherish relations and networks that were established during the protests and continue to spread ideas of the movement. Only in that way they will be able to answer the next challenge coming from the government or any other group that would try to impose (coercively) its own world-view on the wider society.

To conclude, the Gezi Park Movement is the embodiment of a civic power ('Gezi spirit') that acts within civil society. However, its actions are not limited only to social or cultural change, but they also include making demands to the state and they can influence the political changes in a long run. Hence, it also has a political dimension. However, this political opposition is nothing concrete or materialized in sense of organization or political party. It is rather fluid - coming from the potential of acting together. As long as the actors are able or willing to maintain the 'Gezi spirit' by coming together, disseminating their ideas, negotiating, sharing their experiences and invoking memories of their mutual experiences, collaborating, in a word, strengthening their collective identity – they will be empowered to stand against any authority, to criticize it and possibly pursue a change within the society.

Conclusion

In this paper I was interested in exploring the development and impact of the Gezi Park Movement on the democratization process in Turkey. Therefore, my first aim was to understand why the Gezi Park Movement emerged in this particular moment, i.e., what were the reasons and motives which made a large number of people to take to the streets and become part of a new social movement. Further, I wanted to focus on the very formation of the Gezi Park Movement and its internal dynamics, especially on the collective action and practices which led to the formation of collective identity. Finally, I aimed to analyze the goals of the movement that were achieved so far, and its consequences reflected in identity and politicization of the actors, and its impact on civil society organizations. I engaged in exploring the problems aforesaid in order to support my hypothesis, in which I proposed that the Gezi Park Movement, and events related to it, resulted in a formation of a new form of political oppositional force, fundamentally different from institutions or organizations, such as political parties. I depicted a kind of Arendtian politics – a more abstract notion of politics, which strives for people to have the "right to have rights".

After I explored different theoretical approaches, I concluded that the case of the Gezi Park Movement fits the best the theoretical framework of the new social movements theories, especially the constructivist approach developed by Alberto Melucci - which I tended to follow during my analysis of the formation of the Gezi Park Movement collective identity.

As for methodology, I have chosen a Weberian approach inspired by phenomenology, by which I tended to analyze the Gezi Park Movement at the level of phenomena through the subjective meanings and perspectives of its actors. In my opinion, this approach is the most suitable given that the Gezi Park Movement itself is an outcome of the collective action and interaction between individuals. Therefore, I considered the perception of the actors as crucial for studying the case of the Gezi Park Movement.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were my primary and preferred research method, which I would propose a topic and then let my respondents tell their opinions, perceptions, and experiences regarding the topic in question. The interviews were carried out during July 2013, in Istanbul. Since I was interested to explore not only to which extent the Gezi Park Movement influenced the actors, but also how big was its impact on civil society sector, I chose to include in my sample activists from different civil society organizations who took part in the Gezi Park Movement. Therefore, in this paper, I did an analysis of the answers provided by twelve respondents (six men and six women) from six different civil society organizations including: two LGBT organizations - LambdaIstanbul and SPOD, one feminist organization - Purple Roof, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, Human Rights Association and the Party of the Green and Left Future. My secondary research sources were online press articles and documentary fims.

What most of my respondents agreed upon is that a large number of people took to the streets on the 31st of May, 2013 mainly because of the anger provoked by the excessive police violence against peaceful protestors and the media non-coverage of these events; the protest burst as an act of solidarity; and spread further by the excitement of being a part of the largest crowd ever in the streets of Istanbul, Ankara and other Turkish cities (at least in the memory of the living). What is possible to conclude here is that such a reaction was just a trigger, though a strong one, for releasing the frustrations accumulated for a long period of time, especially during the month of May of 2013. The measures of the government, that provoked such grievances, included: the violation of some of the basic democratic principles such as freedom of public assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of press; invoking of the Ottoman past which many people associate with the government's allegedly hidden 'Islamic agenda' (one could use a less Orientalism-loaded term - 'agenda for piety') or with a despotic rule; the laws passed by the government which appeared to interfere with the people's private lives; and a high percentage of the electoral threshold which prevents diverse social groups to have their representatives in the Parliament. People recognized these recent acts of the government as the limitation of their rights to access the process of decision-making concerning their own daily lives. When they eventually saw the police violence as the most undemocratic treatment of the ordinary citizens expressing their attitude about a certain issue (in this case the demolition of Gezi Park), they realized that they might be treated in the same way for communicating any possible disagreements with decisions made by the government.

In the second part of the analysis chapter, I was interested to explore the dynamics of the Gezi Park Movement, i.e., to understand the processes of mobilization and organization, and the formation of the collective identity and the movement's culture. From the answers of my respondents, it was possible to draw a conclusion that the mobilization and organization of the movement emerged from the grassroots and spontaneously, carried out not by any leader or organizer (in the form of an individual or a collective) but by the people. Therefore, the movement is of an egalitarian structure, having a form of a network, rather than of an organization. It is seen from the respondents' statements that the actors within the movement created a language, culture and certain norms of behavior. These all resulted in a formation of a collective identity, popularly referred to as 'Gezi spirit', which bonds the actors together in physical public space (squares, parks), or virtual public space (the social media) providing the consistency and continuity of the Gezi Park Movement.

In the third section of the fourth chapter my aim was to explore what were/are the actual goals of the Gezi Park Movement, to which extent it influenced the individuals and civil society organizations which took a part as actors in the movement, and whether this will result in a formation of a new political opposition, and what kind of opposition it could be. The results of my research show that the Gezi Park Movement actors adopted a principle of self-limiting radicalism which aims at a structural reform in the sense of defending the civil society and its autonomy, rather than at a revolutionary change, such as the overthrow of the government (Cohen, 1985: 664). The answers provided by the respondents illustrate the impact of the Gezi Park Movement both on the individuals and civil society organizations. They especially stress the politicization of the actors who became aware and critical of the political process in Turkey, attentive to the problems in the society, and willing to take part

in overall processes of the deepening of democracy. The impact of the Gezi Park Movement on the civil society organizations is reflected in that they now consider adding some new issues to their agenda, especially with regard to the previously 'unknown' to them problems of minority groups, and in the beginning of the collaboration with some other social groups or organizations. There is a new consideration given to the importance of increasing the membership in civil society organizations and working on retaining the members, and becoming more energetic and organized in spreading their ideas through public discussions and park forums. Finally, I tried to prove that all these changes within the Turkish civil society lead to a formation of a new form of political opposition. From the answers of my respondents I could conclude that the new political opposition is developed in a specific form of civic power, which acts in the domain of civil society though raising and changing the collective consciousness about the problems, finding solutions through processes of negotiation, and through persuasion (of "non-Gezi" actors, i.e., the 'bystanders'). Its political dimension is reflected in making demands to the state (the government), negotiating with political actors (the political parties and the government) and possibly (in a long run) pursuing the political change (for instance, influencing the lowering of the electoral threshold). In order to make these changes possible, the power must be always maintained through a constant strengthening of the collective identity, given that that power exists as long as people remain together. Once the people immerse into passivity, the potential of collective action is lost. Hence, the 'power cannot be stored up and kept in reserve for emergencies (...) but exists only in its actualization' (Arendt, 1958: 200).

What would be interesting to explore in future research is the view of the actors of the two political parties, which were very active during the Gezi Park protests - the CHP (Republican People's Party) and the BDP (Peace and Democracy Party). The CHP (the oldest, founding-of-the republic era Kemalist party) is known for its rigid nationalist and secularist political agenda, and is, thus, considered as not more democratic than the AKP (for instance). The BDP is a center-left party concerned with respect for human rights, justice and equality, while it is also supportive of Kurdish nationalism. I wish I could have included respondents from both of these groups in my research, given that the results might have been slightly different, especially regarding the sources of grievances and the goals of the Gezi Park Movement. However, it would expand my work in the direction of a party politics analysis, and would certainly make me exceed the maximum length allowed for this paper. With this caution and pointing to a possible future research agenda, I believe that the sample, which my research is based upon, is representative for the majority of actors who participated in the Gezi Park Movement.

To conclude, the Gezi Park Movement occurred spontaneously as an expression of for a long time accumulated frustrations provoked by the government's new laws and decisions as a reflection of its increasingly authoritarian stance, which began to greatly influence the private lives of Turkish citizens, and the increasingly controlling behavior of the Prime Minister Erdoğan. During the Gezi Park protests, the new energy that sprang out from the anger was not channeled to violence and destruction, but to the creation of new forms of action and norms of behavior, which proved to be a huge step forward in the process of democratization in Turkey.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

I Introductory Questions:

1. Name and Surname:
2. Sex:
3. Age:
4. Place of birth and current residence:
5. Education (if studying, then what):
6. Religion (if any):
7. Ethnicity/Nationality:
8. Current job title:
9. Are you a member of some party/NGO/movement/community/any kind of organization (political, religious, non-institutional, etc.)?
10. What is your position/role/activity in this organization?
11. What are the main concerns, goals, and activities of this organization?
12. Are there any membership conditions?
13. Where financial resources come from for its work?

II Questions requiring more personal opinion:

1. Why do you think the Gezi Park Protest has turned from the minor environmentalist protest into a massive one? What was the critical issue(s) for a big number of people to take part in the protests and even to clash with the police?

2. What was the main initial reason why you took a part in the protests?

3. Do you consider that you, as citizen(s), are sufficiently visible and represented, with your specific or general problems and demands/interests in the political and public space in Turkey?

4. What do you think about PM Erdoğan and his behavior – in general and in this particular situation? Do you agree that the discontent is mainly directed against him? If yes, in your opinion, why is that so? If not, what is, according to you, the main resource of discontent?

5. There is still very harsh reaction by the state although the protests are not that massive as in the beginning. According to you, why is that so? Why the state considers Gezi Park Movement so dangerous?

6. Hypothetically, if this Government resigned, in your opinion, would it resolve many issues? What would be the best alternative?

7. What is the role of the media in these events? What are Turkish media that you trust the most and those that you distrust the most? If you follow the foreign press, does it report correctly about the protests?

8. In your opinion, why the protest lost its massive scale?

9. According to you, who are now the main actors of the protest – which organizations/movements or/and individuals? How would you characterize/identify them?

10. What are you hoping that this protest will achieve? What are/should be the main goals?

11. It seems that the struggle for more democracy and human rights might not be sufficient to constantly mobilize massive number of people. Although they might support the protests, most of them are still bystanders. According to you, what is there to be done in order to mobilize broader social strata? For example:
    - Should the protest have a leader (in form of an individual or an organization)?
    - Should it become more institutionalized/organized?
    - Some form of a more of a (more permanent) delegation to speak with the government?
    - Some form of collaboration with existing political parties? Forming a new party?
    - Something else?

12. Does this protest need more financial support/resources and whom such resources should protestors seek from?

13. What is your opinion on the role of social media in this protest? Define those most important in your view? Would you say you belong to some/several of them?

14. What could you say about the language, symbols, and overall atmosphere of the protest? Feel free to give some examples. What can you say about the language of the state leaders, the media, Anti-Gezi actors?

15. What are the main activities and tactics of the Gezi Park Movement and how would you describe them (for example, as violent, peaceful, innovative, creative, already seen, efficient, inefficient, etc.)?

16. How much the activities of your organization are linked to the tactics and goals of the Gezi Park Movement? How big is the impact of these protests on your organization? Are there any changes regarding the goals and activities, and, if yes, to which extent?

Author's Biography

Marija Krstic Drasko was born in 1985 in Belgrade, Serbia. She graduated in 2011 at the Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade. Marija obtained Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe in 2013 from the Faculty of Political Sciences "Roberto Ruffilli", University of Bologna, where she specialized in modern history and politics of the Balkans and Turkey. As an Italian exchange student, she studied one year at the Department of International Relations at Marmara University in Istanbul, while simultaneously working as International Cooperation Assistant at the Department of Sociology at Fatih University. Marija's main interests lie in the fields of social movements, subversive practices, urban studies, civil society, strengthening of democratic institutions, and minority policy, especially in geopolitical areas of the Balkans and Turkey.

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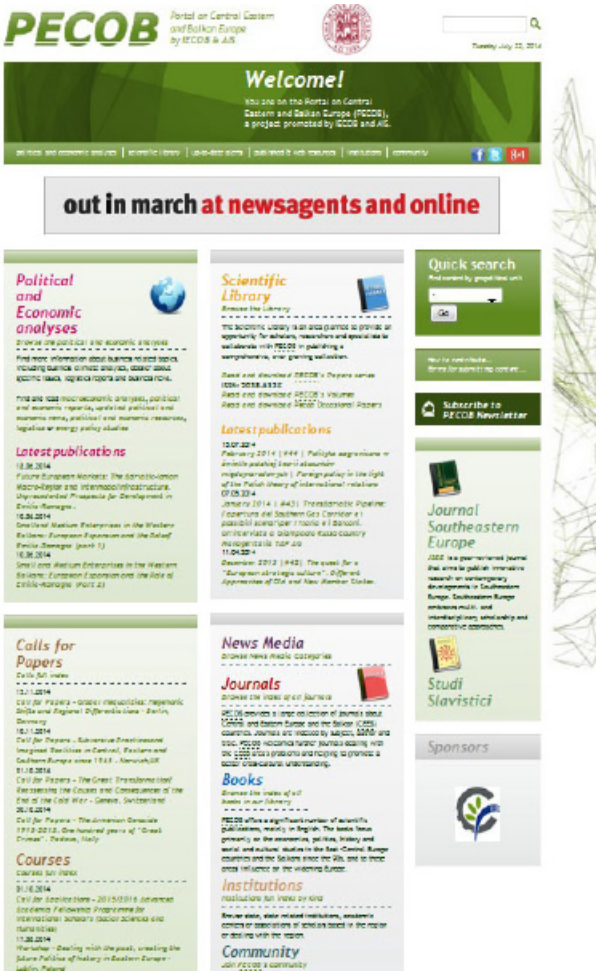

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Tania Marocchi

Tania Marocchi works for PECOB's research team and is the head of PECOB's Up-to-Date Alerts section. Inquiries regarding conferences and events, calls for academic papers or applications, and internships with IECOB should be directed to Ms Marocchi at tania.marocchi@pecob.eu.

Andrea Gullotta

Andrea Gullotta is a contributor for PECOB's scientific library. Mr Gullotta's work can be found primarily in the "Language, Literature and Culture" section of the Scientific Library. Mr Andrea Gullotta can be reached at andrea.gullotta@unive.it.

Andrew Troska

Andrew Troska is an editor and translator for PECOB. Mr Troska updates English-language content and translates past articles, primarily from Italian into English. Requests for translation (between English and Italian) or editing (for English grammar, syntax, and diction) of works to be published on PECOB can be directed to him at andy.troska@pecob.eu.

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