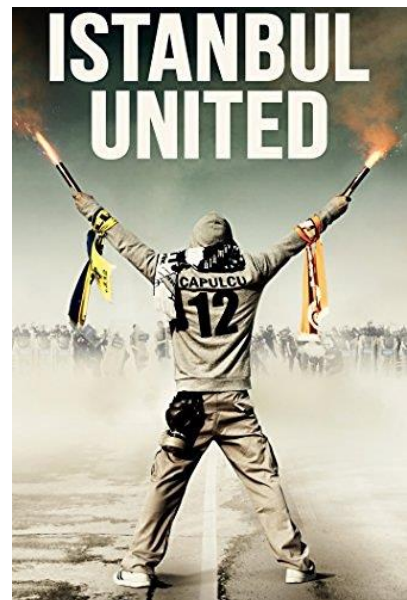


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The Women and the Football Fans*

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Ἡ Παιδεία εὐτυχοῦσι μὲν ἔστι κόσμος,
ἀτυχοῦσι δὲ καταφύγιον - Δημόκριτος.

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Assessing Gezi Park Movement's Transformative Dynamics: The Women and the Football Fans

António S. Diagoupis

Abstract

This paper traces the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul (this city has historically been known as Constantinople) and analyses the protests within the realm of what is referred to as 'contentious politics'. In its examination of the protests it aims to contribute to contextualising contentious politics in Turkey, a country located on the cross-roads of Europe and Asia and along the heated region of the Middle East, which has been transformed radically through contentious politics since 2011. By assessing the Gezi Park movement within its historical and sociological context I aim to

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pursue a textual analysis of contentious politics in the form of the cries uttered and voices heard in Istanbul and beyond during this social protest.

Exordium

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete”.¹ The Gezi Park movement embraced this concept in pursuit of transforming Turkish contentious politics. The movement succeeded in successfully redefining the social roles of the various oppressed social groups by Turkey’s president and prime-minister during the Gezi Park protests, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Gezi Park protests started in May 2013 and were an unprecedented series of demonstrations staged by the Gezi Park movement throughout Turkey, especially in Istanbul.² Particularly, on 27 May at midnight bulldozers and demolition vehicles entered the Gezi Park, located in the centre of Istanbul, to uproot the trees and pedestrianise it so that the former Taksim military barracks can be reconstructed and serve as mosque and shopping mall. However, a group of young environmental activists had camped in the park and was preventing the vehicles from demolishing the park.³ Four days later, the police attempted to violently escort them by force, but forced eviction failed. Soon, thousands of people from across Turkey gathered in the Gezi Park and the surrounding areas to protest in solidarity with the

environmental activists taking up positions in and around the park.⁴

Before long, the Gezi Park became a social platform for the promotion of free speech, through which protesters would express their grievances against the government on a broad spectrum of concerns. In the course of the early stand-off the government was forced to recall the police forces, and while the protesters remained at the park for two more weeks they initiated a whole new social movement aiming to politically combat the government.⁵ The ideologically diverse protesters formed various groups that comprised the social movement.⁶ The movement’s heterogeneous composition was perceived as its Achilles heel by the government and thus, it tried to propagate against it in order to disintegrate it. AKP politician and minister of education stated that:

[i]n five days, we achieved uniting contending social groups under a fog against us. Normally these fractions cannot come together, for it was something that the Parliamentary opposition has worked on for years. When the fog disperses, however, these contending identities will be shocked when they realize that they are sitting next to each other.⁷

However, his prediction was far from true. Despite their stark ideological differences, the protesters shared major common objectives which were directed against Erdoğan’s conservative Islamic agenda. The women joined the Gezi Park movement to resist the

enduring oppression of their personal life and social role.⁸ Additionally, the football fans joined the movement to protest against police brutality and Erdogan's interference in sport and football club affairs.⁹ Various minority groups joined the movement, each of which arguably had their own experiences of oppression by the AKP. The government's corrupt practices, the undermining of the democratic processes and civil society, the interference in citizens' personal and social daily life, the oppression of homosexuality and the persecution of transgender sex-workers, the environmental degradation, the mass deportations of migrants from the *gecekondu*, the oppression of the Alevis and the Kurds, censorship, and the imprisonment of journalists, leftists, and other perceived political enemies of the political order were only some of the reasons that instigated the Gezi Park movement that united the various groups against Erdogan's authoritarian policies. The Gezi Park movement was a form of collective action that drastically transformed Turkish contentious politics.

This paper, therefore, is positioned within the discourse of contentious politics. It aspires to contribute to contextualising contentious politics in Turkey, a country located in the heated region of the Middle East which has been transformed radically through contentious politics since 2011, by assessing the Gezi Park movement within its historical

and sociological context.¹⁰ Specifically, it performs a textual analysis on contentious politics in the form of an extensive literature review. The research aims to assess how the Gezi Park movement's dynamics transformed contentious politics in Turkey. Dynamics in this paper refers to the behaviour of groups and the individual interaction that stimulates change within a social system.¹¹ It concentrates on two ideologically dissimilar empirical cases, namely the women's group and Istanbul United, to accomplish its aim.

In terms of methodology, this study employs Tilly's historical sociology theory to examine the empirical cases. Initially, it conducts a critical literature review on contentious politics through four other prominent theoretical frameworks that are pertinent to studying the Gezi Park movement's dynamics: Namely, the theory of political opportunity, Hobbes' theory on collective action, Rosler's feminist theory, and Foucault's theory of sexuality. Subsequently, for further insights, it critically analyses Tilly's historical sociology theoretical framework which is based upon the following three elements: Campaigns, repertoires, and displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (WUNC). It concludes that Tilly's theory provides the most effective theoretical framework for assessing Gezi Park movement's dynamics.

I argue that the redefinition of the social role of the groups that comprised the Gezi Park

movement evolved the dynamics of Turkish contentious politics by transforming social movements into effective platforms for social collectivity. Furthermore, the empirical cases' analysis evinces that the Gezi Park movement's groups, regardless of their ideological orientation, can generate transformative effects on Turkey's contentious politics by redefining their social roles. In this, they conform to Tilly's historical sociology theoretical framework's three criteria.

In the first part of this paper I will conduct a review of the literature on contentious politics theory. The first section will review and critically assesses the applicability of the aforementioned theories, while the second section reviews and critically assesses the applicability of Tilly's theory which will later be employed for assessing the empirical cases' dynamics. The second part of the paper will apply Tilly's theory on the women's group to assess its dynamics' effect on Turkish contentious politics. This discussion is divided into five sections, beginning with a discussion of the situation for women in Turkey in an attempt to understand their motives for joining the Gezi Park movement. The second section assesses the campaigns of the women's group. The third section assesses its repertoires and the fourth assesses its displays of WUNC. The last section will assess the cultural evolution of the group's

social role along with its effect on Turkish contentious politics.

The following section applies Tilly's theory on the football fans' group, known as Istanbul United, to assess its dynamics on Turkish contentious politics. This section is also divided into five parts. Finally, in the epilogue, I will air my reflections on the protests and discuss my findings in greater detail.

Contentious Politics

Theory and the Gezi Park

Movement

“A social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution”, uttered Martin Luther King Jr. to denote that a social movement's dynamics determine its very substance. Among other disruptive techniques for expressing civil disobedience, revolts and revolutions are two typical forms of contentious politics in which social movements often engage in pursuit of political change. Charles Tilly, a prominent historical sociologist described as “the founding father of 21st century sociology”,¹² defined contentious politics as “interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, in which

governments appear either as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties”.¹³

The term ‘new social movement’ theory is rooted in the ideas of social movements which was first developed in the 1960s, encompassing a broad spectrum of actions ranging from simple boycotting to forceful demonstrations.¹⁴ During the global escalation of the American revolts of 1968, it was realised that the old social movements of the workers and the other exploited classes which aspired state power were obsolete and ineffective. Concepts such as new social movements emerged, which provided for autonomy, self-expression and a comprehensive critique of the postindustrial society.¹⁵ The extensive analytical research conducted on new social movements revolutionised the overall methodology for studying contentious politics; researchers now examined social movements methodically and comprehensively through a synthesis of various perspectives.¹⁶ Shortly, the term was extended to incorporate different kinds of political activities and demonstrations that were protesting for diverse purposes including gender equality, environmental protection, rights of minorities and migration, war prevention, and international solidarity among others.¹⁷

The Gezi Park movement, representative of new social movements, engaged in contentious politics intensely and it was a particularly remarkable social movement not

only quantitatively (for its unprecedented size), but also qualitatively – for its distinctively heterogeneous composition. Its composition is a focal characteristic, among the movement’s other features, which fostered the high dynamics for the emergence of a collective action of such magnitude.

The works of Tarrow’s, Meyer’s, and McAdam’s successively, Hobbes’ theory of collective action, Rosler’s feminist theory, and Foucault’s theory of sexuality, have all informed this research. However, Tilly’s work on historical sociology provides the most effective theoretical framework for assessing the aforementioned dynamics.

The Forerunners of Collective Action’s Dynamics: A Critical Assessment

Political Opportunity

The theory of ‘political opportunity’, mainly developed by Tarrow, McAdam, and Meyer, is exceptionally prominent for analysing social movements. Tarrow argues that political opportunities for the formation of social movements are created by incentives, consistent or temporary, which citizens may exploit or forgo.¹⁸ McAdam theorised the four key dynamic elements of political opportunities that lead to contentious politics through social action as: the political system’s openness, the ruling elite’s stability, the ruling elite’s alliances, and the tendency for

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governmental repression.¹⁹ Accordingly, the Gezi Park movement exploited both consistent and temporary incentives; the consistent incentives included Erdogan's authoritarian policies while the temporary aspect refers to the Gezi Park's pedestrianisation on which the Ottoman Taksim military barracks would be rebuilt. These incentives evinced Erdogan's intentions for civil repression and thus were exploited by the citizens through the Gezi Park movement's formation. Moreover, the latter element of McAdam's political opportunity structure, namely the tendency for governmental repression, was an enduring characteristic of Erdogan's regime which encouraged also minorities to join the movement to resist to social discrimination by rallying behind the environmental activists who initiated the Gezi Park movement.

Nonetheless, the theory of political opportunity fails to make a cogent case for the movement's dynamics. The aforementioned temporary incentives were not the reason but merely the excuse for the Gezi Park movement's emergence and the consistent incentives had not led to the formation of notable social movements previously. Specifically, AKP's conservatism has been evident since its rise to power in 2002, and since then the liberties of women, especially their right for self-determination, has been systematically repressed, with the government promoting the idea of motherhood as a way of

encouraging women to have babies and boost the country's population.²⁰ While such government policies as banning abortions, because they impeded its demographic goals, did lead to complaints and protest, this was nowhere equivalent to the rise of a social movement. Moreover, McAdam's remaining three elements of political opportunity structure are not readily evident either. The relative openness of the institutionalised political system was no crucial feature of the movement, the ruling political elite and agenda was stable, and also stable were its alliances with its salient stakeholders including the religious institutions and allied countries. Therefore, the theory of political opportunity cannot be employed to effectively examine the Gezi Park movement dynamics.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that, according to Meyer's and Tarrow's theory of political opportunity, modern representative democracies ought to integrate social movements to the extent that they become 'societies of movements' for mainly three reasons.²¹ Firstly, protests are not considered sporadic anarchical phenomena anymore but a form of civil expression. Secondly, new social movements do not constitute a direct threat to governments but, in stark contrast, collective actions objectively reflect the society's pulse because they are a mosaic of the social fabric produced through the synthesis of a broad spectrum of perspectives. Lastly, the

institutionalisation of social movements can transform their allegedly aggressive character into conciliatory political claims. In the light of the latter observation, when studying societies of movements, the social movements should be examined through the analytical tools employed for examining political parties. Three empirical observations were employed by Meyer and Tarrow to support the claim for the institutionalization of social movements.²² Firstly, contemporary protests are relatively routine; thus, both movements and authorities, arguably, share standards of action and acknowledge the dangers of deviating from them. Secondly, the government's approval of the movements' claims is discretionary but comes with consequences. Thirdly, the institutionalised actors inevitably adapt their social discourse in order to, ultimately, comply with the standards of conventional political behaviour.

Clearly, this approach of political opportunity is incompatible with the Gezi Park movement due to the theory's assumptions, the foremost being that Turkey is not a society of movements; on the contrary, even though Turkey is typically a democracy, protests are remarkably sporadic. Moreover, most groups that comprised the movement cannot be treated as political parties because the groups' structure and motives were incomparable to those of political parties. Additionally, the Gezi Park movement was not an

institutionalised movement of routine nature and lacked a shared agenda; the football fans often acted autonomously in pursuit of clashes with the police. Lastly, the movement did not adapt its tactics or communication with the government to the standards of conventional political behaviour. Consequently, Meyer's and Tarrow's approach is not pertinent to an analysis of the Gezi Park movement. Overall, while the theory of political opportunities could offer an interesting argument for the Gezi Park movement's dynamics, it is rife with incompatibilities in the incentives, the key elements, and the assumptions upon which it is built.

Collective Action

According to the Hobbesian theory of 'collective action', motives are purely egoistic and thus, collectivism serves essentially as the means for pursuing numerous self-interests since the communal notion of society bears little value other than the mass pursuit of individual objectives.²³ For Hobbes, the sole drive of human behaviour is ultimately the individual's urge for personal benefit and hence humans will always act hedonistically, videlicet they will struggle for maximising their pleasure and avoid limitations and pain.²⁴ Accordingly, even though rational people take into consideration extrinsic parameters when making decisions, they do so because these parameters might impact

their self-interests;²⁵ consequently, their decision remains purely dependent upon their self-interest. Hobbes' theory attributes actions to the satisfaction of the individual's psychological egoism and thus treats people as egoists. Hobbes' morality is materialistic; according to Hobbes' normative position, actions are driven by primitive drives like passion, not some idealistic shared values. Notably, he denies not only the existence of universally accepted morals but, interestingly, he asserts that everyone has different morals which concur only partially with others' principles. Thus, the only prerequisite for commitment is narrow self-interest.²⁶

Undoubtedly, numerous protesters with diverse moralities joined the Gezi Park movement to pursue their personal self-interests. Certainly, each group had its own reasons for demonstrating and, evidently, the movement's heterogeneous composition also indicates this diversity of motives. Specifically, even within the groups themselves divergent goals were often pursued during the protests. For instance, the feminists had different goals from the sex-workers among the women. The feminists demonstrated for control over their bodies, including their right to abortion, while sex-workers remonstrated for social dignity and for proudly claiming their right to practice their profession without being targeted for social and political exclusion by the

government; interestingly, the sex-workers asserted that their job is not immoral and, on the contrary, immoral are the politicians.²⁷ Respectively, the football fans' goals varied considerably too. Some fans simply perceived the Gezi Park movement just as an opportunity to wage their vendetta against the police by clashing with them while others, namely the Carsi of Besiktas, had political motives. The Carsi are leftist anarchists with an enduring tradition in intense sociopolitical activities who advocate working class activism and they in effect led the entire group of football fans during the protests.²⁸ Overall, Hobbes' theory of collective action is indeed pertinent to the Gezi Park protests since members of the same group occasionally had different drives and thus, advocated for rights which often differed from their group's agenda. Nonetheless, the movement was predominantly comprised of social groups whose agendas addressed communal objectives, not merely egoistic. Undeniably, the protesters' motives were personal but the dynamics of the entire collective action were not since, when it was required, the personal claims were abandoned for the movement's sake. An indicative example is that of the football fans for whom the prevalence of masculinity against the women and the LGBT group was a dominant characteristic but they willingly suppressed it when they realised its detrimental effect on the entire movement. At first the fans

employed sexist language against these groups but afterwards they apologised and thereafter the fans treated them respectfully.²⁹

Feminism: The Personal is Political

A similar theme, emphasising the individual's autonomy, was central in Martha Rosler's feminist theory too, namely, 'the personal is political'. According to this normative theory, the underlying motives behind protesting individuals or groups are personal but they also have a political dimension because they suggest social collective action. Furthermore, this approach treats societies as the synthesis of diverse citizens who ought to determine their own lifestyles and thus, structure a dynamic society based upon the citizens' norms without being restricted by systemic forces. Therefore, societal progress is determined by a degree of personal autonomy citizens can enjoy in their daily life.³⁰

This theory is pertinent to the Gezi Park movement. As aforementioned in the Hobbesian theory on collective action, even though the protesting individuals and groups had their personal motives for demonstrating, they all resented the government's policies which aimed at imposing a particular mode of living on society. Precisely, these interventions instigated the protesters' massive collective action for their right for self-determination without being socially

excluded from a society which is artificially created by the government for them.

However, despite the pertinence of Rosler's theory to the Gezi Park movement, its applicability is drastically limited by its scope. The theory emerged during the feminist movement of the 1970s and thus focalises on women. The theory's 'personal' aspect revolves around the traditional role of women within family and society, and the sexism they are subjected to by social institutions like governments and cultures. Therefore, Rosler's feminist theory's application would be limited only to the empirical case of the women and could not address the football fans because they were principally men and they did not undergo sexism; in stark contrast, they practiced sexism.³¹

Sexuality

Foucault's theory of 'sexuality' emphasises the control of the body, masculinity, and femininity. Foucault argues that since the 17th century people have lived in the era of repressed sexuality, during which sexuality was initially repressed verbally (through *logos*) in pursuit of societies in which sex would only exist for reproduction and socioeconomic purposes.³² Subsequently, citizens are indoctrinated into believing that any form of sexuality or sexual relations which does not aim for reproduction are

superfluous and thus redundant.³³ According to Foucault, from the early 17th century until the end of the 18th century the marital sexual relationship prevailed because it was prescribed by the Canon Law of Christianity which dictated urban laws, among other societal aspects of life, and reproached nonconforming actions as reprehensible. Markedly, reprehensible actions were also deemed sinful and so extramarital sexual actions were considered sins. Moreover, there was no hierarchical distinction among sins. Therefore, in the Church's pursuit for control of the human body and self-determination, adultery was considered an equally grave sin alongside incest and sodomy.³⁴

In the 19th century the Church's influence deteriorated dramatically. Consequently, the repression of sexuality was drastically transformed. It was now based upon bloodlines and it was extended to most social institutions under a discriminatory ideology. The state firmly dictated the structure and the conditions of marriage, family, property as well as the issues concerning the citizens' body, daily life, and behaviour in order to ensure that their bloodlines remained unspoiled and their race pure. Foucault's theory of sexuality as a political cause can serve as the theoretical framework for examining state policies and government-encouraged physical control of the body which promotes heterosexuality, reproduction, and the traditional family

structure and roles. The concept of masculinity and femininity is a dominant characteristic of Foucault's theory and is very pertinent to this study's empirical cases. However, proceeding with the application of the theory of sexuality on the Gezi Park movement requires further investigation. The women's group only instrumentalised sexuality as a political weapon against the government when the feminists reproved the insults against Erdogan's son as an offspring of a sex-worker, and the sex-workers attempts to humiliate politicians by asserting that their children would never be politicians.³⁵ Furthermore, even though the football fans often practiced sexism against the police and sometimes against the LGBT group and the women, their underlying motives were not gender-based. Therefore, sexuality was not reflective of their dynamics or motives, but sexism was merely a distinctive characteristic of their vocabulary, even among themselves, and was later abandoned through their interaction with other groups.³⁶ Even though Foucault's theory is indeed pertinent to the Gezi Park movement, its applicability would only be superficial because sexuality was not decisive or the dominant characteristic of its dynamics.

Overall, even though these four theories are indeed pertinent to the Gezi Park movement's dynamics, they do not constitute a cogent argument for effectively assessing them.

Historical Sociology

“War made the state, and the state made war”³⁷ uttered the historical sociologist Charles Tilly to denote that the key reason behind the emergence of strife, like the new social movements, is that although they do not aspire to state power, political power is essential in achieving their mission, and thus they engage in contentious politics.³⁸ Tilly’s definition of contentious politics refers to actors’ interactions for interest and can delineate effectively not only the Gezi Park movement’s dynamics but the dynamics of Erdogan’s policies too – these being in summary, the AKP’s conservative agenda of invigorating Islam, infringing civil liberties by restricting alcohol and smoking, and intervening in the citizens’ daily lives with the patrimonial justification of safeguarding them from malevolent temptations.³⁹ Moreover, the government rigorously undermined the state’s democratic legitimacy because it engaged in contentious politics by inciting social upheavals to advance its own interests. The state security forces treated discriminatorily specific groups, predominantly ethnic minorities, and instrumentalised social groups in order to induce protests which of course served to strengthen the praetorian vanguard for the regime’s security and the protection of its interests.

According to Tilly, such regimes vitiate the country’s public political life and they can be

overthrown either through struggles in the elite or social struggles via massive demonstrations.⁴⁰ Tilly’s theory attempts to establish social movements’ genesis according to their historical context by defining their multiple sociological dimensions. Therefore, he argues that the contemporary perception for the formation of contemporary social movements as the citizens’ resistance to authority is simply a time-specific perception of the modern era and thus it is subject to change.⁴¹ Nevertheless, contemporary social movements have been considered equivalent to collective action, regardless of their organisational structure. According to Seferiadis, collective action is not personal, experimental, expressive or a-political (i.e., irrelevant to the community), but is people acting collectively, subjects without access to political resources and, therefore, deprived of involvement in substantive negotiations.⁴² However, Tilly defined social movements through deduction in an attempt to emphasise that social movements are not merely popular collective actions, nor confined in their constituting institutions and networks, and are not just historical subjects.⁴³ Yet, social movements have specific, coherent, and evolving history of their interactions, policies, and practices which is three centuries old and whose inception concurs with journalism’s rise and the invention of the printing press.⁴⁴

In pursuit of assessing the dynamics of collective action through a historico-sociological theoretical framework, Tilly elaborately deciphered the subject of social movements into three fundamental elements: campaigns, repertoires and displays of WUNC.⁴⁵ Tilly's theory of historical sociology is remarkably prominent and has been employed widely across the field of contentious politics.⁴⁶ The repertoires are of modern collective actions and rituals.⁴⁷ These could refer to such activities as the creation of organisations, the use of media, demonstrations, parades, riots and the distribution of leaflets.⁴⁸ Tilly's conception of repertoire induces the characteristics of predictability, repetition, and relative standardisation of the acceptable actions performed by a movement's membership.⁴⁹ Tilly treats the displays of WUNC, as the required actions and the behaviour that the individuals who comprise a social movement should possess.⁵⁰ Through the concept of worthiness, Tilly denotes the required solemnity of the protesters, especially the leading individuals, who should be decent, elegantly dressed, presentable, and involve women, children, and important people in their mission. Through unity, he denotes the concordant bonds, attitudes, and behaviours that indicate their solidarity such as wearing uniforms and badges, holding banners, marching in synchronised stride, and using symbolic language such as particular songs

and slogans. The concept of numbers refers to the quantitative 'volume' of the participants, the collection of signatures for demands, messages from supporters, demonstrating protesters, and all the elements that relate to the movement's size in general. The concept of commitment represents the degree of the protesters' selfless contribution; commitment is expressed by attending gatherings even in bad weather, by involving old or disabled people, and through donations among other deeds.⁵¹ In accordance with Seferiadis' aforementioned conception of contemporary collective action, Tilly treats contemporary social movements as any collective action that combines campaigns, repertoires, and displays, three elements that are commonly found in modern collective actions.⁵² Therefore, virtually any social demand could be successful if the requirements for these three elements are effectively met. The enduring claims, successful use of media, effective mass mobilisation, strategically aligned behaviours, and solidarity are pivotal characteristics for fostering the dynamics of a successful social movement which can be legitimate in the public and the political spheres.

Arguably, the Gezi Park movement is an indicative model of effective collective action because it employed most of these characteristics relatively effectively. It promoted specific demands which were

expressed through several channels of communications, were endorsed by every participating group, and massively mobilised the public to dynamically assert their rights. Overall, Tilly's historical sociology approach's emphasis on the political nature of social movements encourages one to consider them as simply an unconventional form of political action. Furthermore, this approach provides the analytical tools for assessing the structural dynamics of social movements by treating social movements as rational social enterprises that operate within a political market and manage their resources in pursuit of clearly defined and measurable goals. Moreover, the selection of the appropriate means of action depends upon the effectiveness of the actors' actions and the nature of the power groups. The allocation of resources to a social movement's actors typically invigorates their dynamics and enhances their effectiveness. However, other parameters affect, and often limit, the dynamics of groups within a social movement, including their organisational structure, the nature of their elites, their degree of institutionalisation within the political system, their level of autonomy, and the groups' individual objectives, priorities and public endorsement. For these reasons, the leaders of groups or institutions, the trade unions, the groups with strong financial resources, the large groups, and the groups with direct access to the political system and

the administrative mechanisms hold influential positions within contentious politics. Furthermore, Tilly highlights the increasing effect of new technologies when assessing the dynamics of social movements.⁵³ Even though new technologies are characterised by efficiency because they reduce the mobilisation's costs through mass texting, emails, etc., they are often not widely applicable because of their limited accessibility to some citizens and thus can rarely be the sole channels of communication. Nevertheless, even though the participation of the privileged can sometimes compromise the unprivileged citizens, such instruments are indeed essential for managing massive social movements.

The means of action are decisive factors for turning a social movement into a disruptive revolution that changes people and institutions. To achieve the dynamics to pursue this purpose, most social movements of the 21st century strive to develop a socially constructed identity which aspires for international collectivity.⁵⁴ Therefore, international social coalitions that support or oppose international institutions (e.g. NATO, IMF) and international objectives (e.g. war prevention) are proliferating dramatically, especially in concerns regarding human rights. Nevertheless, the inadvertent enlargement of social movements engenders notable risks, stemming mainly from their

decentralised management, such as opportunities for rebellious separatists and the detachment of the movement's elite from the protesting members.⁵⁵ Additionally, Tilly argues that the internationalisation of social movements will eventually lead to their professionalisation and so can affect both positively and negatively the democratic procedures of the involved countries.⁵⁶ The progress of social movements is dependent on the exploitation of the emerging political opportunities arising from societal demands.⁵⁷ Societal demands on policy areas that attract public attention threaten governments and thus tend to discourage collaboration with the political system and influential groups. Therefore, the social movements that deal with high-profile policy areas are considered more threatening and encounter closed political opportunity structures while the movements that engage in challenges in low-profile policy areas tend to cooperate with governments and be strategically incorporated.⁵⁸

The three necessary elements of Tilly's historical sociology approach on social movements, namely campaigns, repertoires, and displays of WUNC, have been integral to the Gezi Park movement's formation and a catalyst to its development. Tilly, arguably, provides the most effective theoretical framework for comprehensively assessing the Gezi Park movement's dynamics. The Gezi

Park movement consisted of a plethora of social groups including human rights activists, labour unions, environmentalists, minorities such as the Kurds and Alawites, anti-capitalists, liberal Muslims, students, entrepreneurs, academics, artists, nationalists, anarchists, immigrants, and the LGBT community, among several other groups among which some shared religious and political ideologies while others did not.⁵⁹ Moreover, some groups shared membership with others.⁶⁰ For instance, the group of the women, the largest group of the Gezi Park movement in size, was a very heterogeneous group since it consisted of students, mothers, feminists, and sex-workers. So, its composition became a subject of intense research.⁶¹ Another diverse group that had a profound role in the Gezi Park movement was the football fans, also known as Istanbul United, with an even more astonishing heterogeneous composition. This group united the fans of Istanbul's three most widely supported football teams, namely Besiktas, Fenerbahce, and Galatasaray, who had been fanatically fighting each other prior to the Gezi Park protests.

The Women's Group

Here I will examine the dynamics of the women's group within the Gezi Park movement. Initially, the women's motives will be explained by concisely describing

their position within Turkey's sociocultural landscape before the Gezi Park protests, paving the way for an analysis of the composition and role of the women's group during the protests.

Women in Turkey

"Women and men are not equal"⁶² is what Erdogan asserted. Through the rise of the AKP to power in 2002, a conservative Islamic agenda has been promoted in Turkey's sociopolitical life which has greatly affected the Turkish women's social status. In pursuit of this agenda which arguably degrades women's social role, Erdogan has tried to abolish the ban on headscarves for women,⁶³ and has led the endorsement of Islamic social norms and the promotion of women's maternal role, their expected submissive attitude towards men, and the control of women's bodies through campaigns for personal honour.⁶⁴ Domestic violence against women, often pregnant women, is a prevalent phenomenon that typifies the degradation of women's role in Turkey's society. However, women largely tolerate such treatment without resisting because they are unaware of the laws and the available measures for their protection. At the same time, the government tends to not take action to prevent domestic violence.⁶⁵ Evidence suggests that women are being domestically abused by men, regardless of the family's socioeconomic status, especially in traditional families in which men

have the dominant role and women are submissive.⁶⁶ Irrespective of the physical violence, women are often expected to tolerate almost every act of their husband, even extramarital affairs, polygyny is still practiced in some regions, and women are often not allowed to divorce since they also run the risk of being murdered for family honour.⁶⁷

Social and sexual oppression occurs in Turkey and thus impunity for violence against women in Turkey is not unusual.⁶⁸ Moreover, the control over women threatens women's personal life in other ways too. Thus, equating abortion with murder in 2012,⁶⁹ Erdogan based his declaration on religious rationale and attempted to pass laws for banning this practice altogether.⁷⁰ Overall, the role of women has been dramatically marginalised since the AKP's rise to power in 2002 via the promotion of its conservative Islamic agenda which it strives to legally secure. This undermining of women is the underlying reason behind the rally of several female groups behind the women's group in an attempt to vigorously oppose Erdogan's oppressive measures.

In accordance with the Gezi Park movement's composition, the women's group that participated in the Gezi Park movement was remarkably heterogeneous as well including numerous middle-aged women who had never participated in any form of political or social

action.⁷¹ Up to this point, many young women had abstained from political life completely by not even voting, largely due to their mistrust of the political elite.⁷² Furthermore, mothers of juvenile protesters joined the movement after Erdogan's threats towards their offspring. The feminists were the dominant group of the women's group but the secular and the religious groups of women were also very influential.⁷³ Kurdish women of all ages joined the movement along with Turkish women from the working and the middle classes, including sex-workers.⁷⁴ Generally, the women's group was the largest group within the Gezi Park movement and thus it practically encompassed women of all ages, classes, ideologies who altogether formed one of the most dynamic groups of the Gezi Park movement, actually representing the entire country's female population. The dynamics of the women's groups will be analysed through the following: campaigns, repertoires, displays of WUNC.

Campaigns

Tilly refers to campaigns as protracted claims directed against the authorities. The claims of the women's group were clearly defined and opposed to the brutality, violence, and harassment unleashed against them.⁷⁵ The group held the AKP responsible not only for tolerating these malignities through impunity but for instigating them through its rhetoric. The protesting women were chanting

fervently: "A life without Tayyip, a life without harassment",⁷⁶ "Run Tayyip run, women are coming", "Women walking, struggle continuing".⁷⁷ The women demanded their right for control over their bodies, a subject that Erdogan's government demanded too.⁷⁸ The Gezi Park movement appeared to be the only means for them to claim their autonomy and decide for themselves whether they will raise three children, as Erdogan urged them to, have an abortion, or be childless without being stigmatised as deficient, as Erdogan called them.⁷⁹ The persistent campaign under the slogan "My body, My decision" which aimed to oppose the banning of abortions evolved for the purposes of the Gezi Park movement into "My park, My decision" and "My country, My decision".⁸⁰ Posters and banners were also widely deployed among protesters with slogans directed towards the same claims which wrote "Prime minister, get your hands off my body, AKP get your hands off my body, abortion is a right, Uludere a massacre".⁸¹ A dominant characteristic of their grievances was also the social empowerment of women: they opposed the traditional family structure promoted by the government which urged women to stay home in order to take care of the household, give birth to children and raise them. Eslen-Ziva and Erhart compiled several of the women's slogans that characteristically represented their claims through the following assertive

posters: “Let’s not stay boxed in at home, let’s go out to the parks and streets. [...] Our place is at work, not the kitchen [...] Forget your housework and let the world stop spinning!”.⁸² Furthermore, the following assertive slogans were also chanted by women during the protests: “We are getting out of the home, come from your house, from the private sphere. [...] Taksim is Ours, Gezi is Ours, Istanbul is Ours”.⁸³ One of their arguments opposed their exclusion from several mosques on Fridays and it was expressed through the following poster: “We want the mosques, streets at night, and squares”.⁸⁴ The women’s claims were clear and confronted Erdogan’s plans for dictating their personal life and depriving them of public life. Their claims aspired for autonomy in their personal life, autonomy in their academic and professional career, and autonomy in their social life by having fun through smoking and drinking alcohol and, generally, customise their amusement according to their personal tastes. These demands seem consistent with reports of loss of personal freedom. According to Freedom House’s official report, for example, personal autonomy in Turkey had drastically declined along with other individual, associational, and organisational rights.⁸⁵ In response to Erdogan’s urge for at least three children, the protesting women were wearing t-shirts on which was printed “At least three books, at least three beers, at least three cats, at least

three songs”.⁸⁶ Evidently, the women’s group protested against Erdogan’s government for numerous protracted claims which opposed the governmental policies against women’s rights.

Repertoires

Tilly’s theoretical framework treats repertoires as modern collective actions and rituals.⁸⁷ The women’s group was particularly creative in this respect and managed to become a distinctive symbol of the Gezi Park movement. Remarkably, a woman, known as ‘the woman in red’, became the emblematic figure against women’s oppression and served as the means to attract female protesters in the movement and gain global support through the digital media.⁸⁸ The woman in red is a young lady who was photographed wearing a red dress, holding a white bag, and standing next to the police deployment unwary of the police officer who was spraying tear-gas in her face (see Appendix A).⁸⁹

Furthermore, the women’s group adopted Erdem Gündüz’s form of protesting known as ‘the standing man effect’. The protesters stood still for hours and thus discomforting the police in not knowing how to treat them since they did not constitute a direct threat nor did they perform any illegal acts. Yonca adopted this form of remonstrance by standing still for 30 hours at the place in Ankara where the police shot the 26 year old protester Ethem Sarisolok in the head. Photos

quickly circulated with Yonca and the victim's wife and brother at her side (see Appendix B).⁹⁰ Her action was the means for conveying her grievances to Erdogan she explained by declaring the following:

By standing, I felt that I was finally able to pay my respects to Ethem and his family. I felt that I could mourn and express my sorrow for all the people who were hurt, injured and dead during the three weeks of resistance. The government ordered us to 'go home'. I was not going home, but standing here, continuing to resist. I felt like shouting out loud, 'No sir, I am not going back home!' and here I am 'standing'.⁹¹

Additionally, another repertoire was developed through the media and encouraged several women to join the Gezi Park movement. However, this repertoire was not performed by the protesters but by the government itself. The governor of Istanbul, Mutlu, called the mothers of the juvenile protesters to protect their children by bringing them back home. Nevertheless, Mutlu's call backfired as mothers joined the Gezi Park movement and formed a chain of bodies along with their children so that they may protect not only their offspring but their future too (see Appendix C).⁹²

Moreover, other than protesting, the women created other events including forums and workshops in order to effectively deal with women's more specialized concerns.⁹³ A characteristic example of such events addressed the women's struggle for eliminating sexist language throughout the

movement, especially language that is often ascribed to sex-workers and homosexuals. Some protesters called the politicians, and especially Erdogan, 'sons of whores'. Such slogans were highly offensive to the sex-workers because they portrayed them as unethical and so the women's group took action to eliminate such slogans. One sex-worker, namely Ecem Dalkiran, protested with a poster that asserted that "We whores are certain that these politicians are not our sons".⁹⁴ Subsequently, women took the matter of sexist language seriously and initiated interactive seminars in order to educate the protesters on the harmful implications of sexist language not only for the women but for the entire movement's cohesion and the society as a whole. Notably, the Carsi, a group of football fans that used sexist language often in football stadiums, acknowledged their mistake and apologised to the sex-workers by offering flowers and stating "[w]e are used to this sort of language, but didn't misunderstand, we love you".⁹⁵

Displays of Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment (WUNC)

Worthiness

According to the Tilly, worthiness refers to the protesters' solemnity and the involvement

of women, children, and important people in the mission.⁹⁶ The aforementioned action of the mothers who protected their children against Mutlu's exhortation is definitely an act of worthiness because it attracted women without previous political action, often without even solid political ideology, who have been consistent with the governmentally promoted maternal role not in service of the government or their husbands but in service of their children.⁹⁷

Moreover, not all mothers joined the Gezi Park movement after Mutlu's exhortation. Most mothers were holding their children while protesting since the very first days of the Gezi Park movement. Their action was a stark sign of the mothers' resistance towards Erdogan's concept of motherhood and independence from their husbands. They embraced a vibrant notion of motherhood; mothers who could join a social movement and claim their personal and their children's rights. That notion of motherhood was absent from Erdogan's conservative Islamic agenda.⁹⁸ Also, the lady in the red elegant dress indicates that the appearance of the protesters was dignified, it was not the appearance of a *capulcu*, a looter or drunk as Erdogan strived to portray them.⁹⁹

Unity

Unity pertains to a group's solidarity.¹⁰⁰ The heterogeneous composition of the women's group might have drastically hindered its

unity. Nevertheless, women of distinct social, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds joined the women's group and acted unitarily by incorporating within their campaigns and repertoires the claims of the various women's subgroups. These claims were mutually adopted and supported by the various subgroups. An indicative example of expression of the women's solidarity was the aforementioned instance when the sex-workers' dignity was protected by the women, especially the feminists, through interactive campaigns against sexism. Moreover, the feminists joined the mothers' initiative to actively protect their children by protesting instead of passively bringing them home.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, the women who favoured the ban on headscarves in public institutions were also supported by hijab-wearing women (see Appendix D).¹⁰² Comparatively, the women without headscarves supported the hijab-wearing women by incorporating their right for self-definition of their identity through the following slogans: "Get your hands off my body, headscarf and identity. [...] Don't attack my headscarf".¹⁰³ Overall, every protesting woman supported the other women's claims through slogans, posters, and banners and, especially, the claims for the empowerment and autonomy of women. Women equally opposed both the attempted lift of the headscarf ban and the social stigma against hijab-wearing women. Specifically, a feminist activist by the name of Nilgun

Yurdalan who disagreed with women wearing headscarves stated that “[a] woman being harassed or attacked because of her headscarf is a very serious matter. In a situation like this, it is necessary to catch the attacker immediately. It was very important that the march was joined by women from different areas of society, whether they be secular, feminist, or socialist”.¹⁰⁴

The participation of culturally diverse women within the same social movement also made them realise their unrealistically biased perception of each other. Through their interaction women developed a mutual understanding of their sociopolitical position and consolidated their claims under one agenda which embraced holistically the women’s social concerns. This interaction is accurately explained by Birgul, another feminist, as follows:

We, as feminists, pitched our tents in the Gezi Park. [...] During this process, women in the Park whom we regard as ‘apolitical’ expressed their critiques about restrictive discourses of the left to feminists. We would have called those women as ‘disorganized’, but they had a completely different way of organizing that we were not able to conceive. As feminists, we questioned ourselves, and then, personally I clearly understood that it is not possible anymore to move forward by using the outdated ways.¹⁰⁵

Undeniably, the Gezi Park movement evolved the women’s perception of their identity and the perception of the women’s identity in

total. Women joined the Gezi Park movement driven by their personal experiences, and ideologies but through it they became rich in perceptions by realising other ‘truths’ through different perspectives. Ultimately, the women recognised that they had more reasons to unite than to be divided and through their various activities they endorsed a stable rhetoric which they endeavoured to diffuse throughout the Gezi Park movement. A leftist woman, known as Selen, described the unitary action by expressing that “[f]or the first time a Kurd, a nationalist, a Muslim and I are all together. You think you know the reality very well and then suddenly ... boom! Gezi Park was one of the greatest thrills of my life. It’s not something I can explain with all my previous world experience”.¹⁰⁶ Another leftist woman, Aysegul, expressed the women’s unity within the Gezi Park movement more emphatically:

I cannot describe what Gezi represented to me. For the first time I was no longer alone, no longer a minority! The left is a very small group and when we protest we are always alone in the streets. Gezi made real the collective protest I dreamed since I was a child. It gave me a lot of hope, because we were strong like in my parent’s past. I thought that we could do something for the future. And even in a funny way. What happened has its roots in the 1980 coup and people finally understood what kind of society we live in. We [young socialists] always thought our generation was a lost generation because it was apolitical, but now we know that is not so.¹⁰⁷

Clearly, the display of unity of the women's group was in its most remarkable and unexpected display of WUNC which was not restricted to the Gezi Park movement, but it transformed their perception of the other women's subgroups.

Numbers

Numbers refers to the movement's size.¹⁰⁸ More women participated in the Gezi Park movement than men.¹⁰⁹ However, it is not possible to determine their exact number since some women protested through the women's group while others joined other groups of the movement. It would be inaccurate to include the latter in the women's group data since they did not directly protest for the women's claims. Nonetheless, the size of the women's group was a determining factor of the group's dynamics which were also reinforced by the women who, even though they did not protest for their own reasons, felt pride and empathy for them. As an illustration, numerous women who did not protest supported the protesting women by standing at their balconies and windows banging their pots in order to express their support for the women group's resistance to Erdogan's government.¹¹⁰ Moreover, another group of women who did not protest supported the movement too; they were female doctors and nurses who rushed to the protesters' aid after they had clashed with the police in order to treat the injured

protesters.¹¹¹ In a nutshell, even though it is not possible to know how many women participated in the Gezi Park movement, the protesting women comprised the majority of the women and they were cherished by most other women who encouraged and supported them through their own means.

Commitment

Commitment denotes the protesters' selfless contribution.¹¹² The members of the women's group were so committed in their mission that they did not abandon the Gezi Park movement even if they were harassed and abused. In the police's unsuccessful attempt to suppress the women's group, they even resorted to sexual harassment in order to scare women.¹¹³ However, even though the police officers assumed they would not be exposed by the women, especially the more religious, in order to protect their social prestige, the women reported their actions to civil society institutions which brought their claims to the court.¹¹⁴ After the first report on 30th June, several other women followed who not only ignored the consequences of legal action on their social lives but reported even more police brutalities that eventually caused even more women to join the Gezi Park protests. Other than the female protesters, even female doctors who were treating the beaten protesters were sexually assaulted by the police.¹¹⁵

Also, the commitment of the veiled women was confoundingly resilient. These women not only confronted the police's violence in unity with other women but they also confronted the hostile treatment by some protesters who opposed headscarves. However, instead of opposing, or at least abandoning, the Gezi Park movement they exhibited strength of character and remained devoted to their struggle against the government, ignoring their adversaries.¹¹⁶ Arguably, these women were twice as courageous and committed to their cause. The women's commitment to the Gezi Park movement, despite the violence and sexual harassment, created numerous everyday heroes as it has been previously shown. These heroes enhanced the women's group's commitment by encouraging them to imitate them by becoming 'fearless' even after the police escalated the violence. Nur, a 29-year old woman articulated the common sentiments in the following words:

Right now, on the 16th day of the occupation, I feel that the violence from the police is getting more aggressive. [...] Whenever we thought that the police was not able to attack because so many people were around, we saw that the police was violent and that it did not matter that so many people were resisting. [...] Now I feel no fear because so many people are here. No fear.¹¹⁷

The emerging heroes of the women's group fostered a robust sense of altruism within the group which empowered women to pursue their rights by overcoming the traditional norms, violence, and fears. The women's

group stayed intact and united regardless of the hardships which were mainly imposed by the police.

Assessment

Overall, the analysis of the women group's dynamics evinces that it fulfils Tilly's requirements of social movements. Undeniably, the many protesting women were fervent and conscious about their aforementioned protracted claims. The remaining women who were not so resolute formed their perceptions throughout the Gezi Park movement. The dynamics that emerged within the women's group were specific and targeted Erdogan's government which had hastened to oppress their lives, bodies, and minds. In pursuit of its conservative Islamic agenda, the AKP deliberately undermined the women's social role by confining it to household and reproduction so that they may serve Erdogan's demographic plans. The government would have never imagined that the oppression of women would mobilise, not only the feminists who have traditionally been Erdogan's opponents, but the traditional women who wanted to maintain their role of the housewife and be predominantly mothers. Of course, the mothers' decision was mainly encouraged by the government's threat directed towards their children. Overall, the most important consequence of the women's group's participation in the Gezi Park movement, however, is the fact that its

dynamics had an astonishing transformative effect not only on themselves but on the Turkish contentious politics in general. Throughout the Gezi Park protests, the women's group played a catalytic role not only through demonstrating but, predominantly, because they evolved their social role to be equal to the men's and they had both men and women realise it. While claiming their rights and social dignity, they also educated men and women and managed to effectively eliminate sexist discourse from social movements thus contributing to their worthiness and exhibiting unity regardless of who practiced it. They fostered a conciliatory character for the movement, educated protesters on proper social practices and created forums for interactively exchanging views among the Gezi Park movement's groups. Education is a transformational process whose effect exceeds social movements and in this regard the women's group had a far-reaching transformative effect on the protesters and the Turkish society. Certainly though the women's group strengthened Turkish women's social position, refined contentious politics in Turkey and, predominantly, it fostered civilisation by encouraging cross-cultural cooperation via interactive exchange of information which aimed to arrive to sociopolitical claims through a synthesis of various perspectives.

Istanbul United

In this section I will analyse the dynamics of the football fans' group that participated in the Gezi Park movement according to Tilly's historical sociology theory in order to assess the movement's transformative dynamics for Turkey's contentious politics. Firstly, the football fans' motives will be delineated by describing their position within Turkey's sociocultural landscape before the Gezi protests and, successively, the synthesis of the football fans' group will be explored. The group's actions within the Gezi Park movement will then be analysed in keeping with the aforementioned theoretical framework's elements; and finally the cultural evolution of the football fans' social role will be assessed.

Football fans in Turkey

Football is definitely the most popular sport in Turkey. The three most popular football teams in Turkey are Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Galatasaray and their fans are essentially men.¹¹⁸ Markedly, Turkish football's popularity is so impactful that it has occasionally been instrumentalised by political elites as diplomatic capital. Thus, in the past the Turkish government arranged a football match between Fenerbache and al-Ittihad Aleppo in order to improve its relations with its neighbouring country Syria.¹¹⁹ Moreover, Turkish governments

have often used football fans in the past to propagate nationalist messages.¹²⁰ The most dominant characteristic of the fans' attitude is the excessive use of violence amongst the fans which is not limited to football groups but tends to extend beyond the stadia and to the streets of Turkish cities.¹²¹ The fanaticism is so intense that they often resort to severe violence.¹²² The three teams, namely Besiktas, Fenerbahce, and Galatasaray, have the largest fan bases and their fans are the most fanatical amongst Turkish clubs.¹²³ Their frequent conflicts often lead to clashes with the police who are constantly trying to contain the violence.¹²⁴ The fans of Besiktas are called Carsi and they consist of radical men who do not miss the opportunity to promote a particular political ideology. Carsi have an anarchist and leftist orientation and they fervently oppose fascism, racism, pornography, and child abuse among other similar causes. They often promote these causes through posters and slogans during football matches.¹²⁵ The organised fans of Fenerbahce call themselves the Association of Fenerbahce and include subgroups like the 'Kill For You' and Galatasaray's fans are known as Ultraslan.¹²⁶ The football fans' group was a predominant group of the Gezi Park movement that has not been extensively researched compared to the women's group.¹²⁷ The fans' group consisted of the fans of Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Galatasaray, who altogether united under a common group

of football fans, namely 'Istanbul United'.¹²⁸ The leaders of Istanbul United were the Besiktas' fans, the Carsi.¹²⁹

Campaigns

The football fans' protests addressed their opposition to Erdogan's authoritarian practices. Prior to the Gezi Park movement and regardless of football concerns, the young fans were discontent with the government, as most youngsters were, because they felt that their secular lifestyles and practices were being restricted.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Erdogan's intervention in football affairs was not welcomed by the fans. In January 2011, Erdogan's representatives called Galatasaray's president incompetent and, eventually, forced him to resign irrespective of the club's or its fans' views. Further, in May 2011, the government pushed policies for the outright repression of what they called 'hooligan behaviour' due to Carsi's recurrent clashes with the police.¹³¹ The football fans' oppression was the predominant reason for their participation in the Gezi Park movement but not the only one. According to Irak, an expert in studying football fans in Turkey, the reasons that led to the institution of Istanbul United encompassed "political hegemony, police violence, the democratic deficit and distrust of the media".¹³² Evidently, the democratic deficit of Erdogan's political hegemony was perceived as a catalytic threat to their freedom. A culture of impunity was

fostered within the police force which, in turn, served as the government's praetorian guard.¹³³ "Naturally we are going to rebel against all unfairness we see. Where there is no justice, democratic reaction is legitimate, and you need to suck it up, my friend", uttered Cene, the founder of Carci. His use of football slang indicates that his reaction to the government is not simply an anarchist or political initiative but a commonsensical reaction to Erdogan's unfair interventions. The concern for government's oppression of democratic processes was also expressed by İlker Yıldız, another Carci, who asserted that the Gezi Park's pedestrianisation was merely one dissent among several others which were more substantive and were represented by the Gezi Park movement. Specifically, he claimed that

[t]he issue is not anymore about the shopping mall or about the trees. If this much violence is the response to the most rightful and peaceful demonstration on earth, tomorrow what will their response be to a protest against a politician, to a workers strike, or to a football fan issue! Removal of the right to demonstrate/to protest is a question of democracy and regime.¹³⁴

Interestingly, their passionate ideological orientation did not segregate this emerging movement but united it. Obviously, Carci's ideological orientation was diametrically opposed to Erdogan's government. Carci's priority became Istanbul United's unity. The Carci's struggle for unity is also expressed through another Carci's, Ayhan Aytac, ardent

motivation speech who said "Friends, this struggle is beyond political divides. It is a struggle about being human".¹³⁵ The fans considered the government's segregative attempts insidious and its violent oppression unreasonable, fascist, and, most notably, inhuman. Another Carci, Doruk Kaymak, described the Gezi Park protests' situation by saying: "Really bad things are happening; the police brutally attack people with tear gas. While one group tried to escape, the wall crashed down over them; there are wounded people. What kind of government is that! How people can vote for these guys! I've never seen fascism of this kind".¹³⁶ Overall, the football fans protested against their prolonged oppression and police brutality.

Repertoires

Initially, when the football fans of the three teams joined the Gezi Park movement, they united under one group, namely 'Istanbul United' (See Appendix E). They also combined their teams' three logos to create a single Istanbul United logo.¹³⁷ The Gezi Park movement took place a few weeks after two fans of Galatasaray had killed a 20-year old fan of Fenerbahce; he was only one of many victims of the teams' bloody street-fights. Nonetheless, the fans joined forces successfully through the Gezi Park movement in order to oppose government policies.¹³⁸ Humour was characteristic of Istanbul United's repertoire which was also promoted

effectively through the media. Traditionally, the football fans had developed a vigorous presence in the social media because they were excluded from the mass media. Their effective use of humour indicated their distinctive fearlessness which attracted several revolutionaries to the Gezi Park movement through slogans like “Tear gas, oley!”, which was shouted during their clashes with the police in order to encourage the protesters to withstand police pressure.¹³⁹ Moreover, the humour and the slang language was a means for strengthening the fans’ intimacy with the other citizens so that they may identify with them and support their cause. Their slogans, like the following, referred to several social concerns through their own experiences: “*Hološko + Bir miktar para verelim HÜKÜMETİ VERİN!*”, meaning that we will give you the football star Hološko and some money and you will give us back the government!¹⁴⁰ Additionally, Istanbul United played a crucial role within the Gezi Park movement because it was the only group experienced in fighting the police (See Appendix F).¹⁴¹ Their uncompromising resistance became symbol of the movement which ritualistically cheered for them during the clashes. Their support climaxed when the Carci captured a bulldozer and used it to destroy the police’s armoured water cannons (See Appendix G). Their action boosted the entire movement’s morale and the protesters were confident that through the football fans

they could even win the battle against the police force. Furthermore, the fans could withstand and reciprocate brutality against the police without breaking formation. They encouraged other protesters not to retreat. A leading Carci who had realised the importance of Istanbul United for the Gezi Park movement’s survival said:

Let me tell you this, this is our training; we are trained (*antrenmanlıyız*) for this. Ordinary people do not know what to do at the moment of clash with the police. Thanks to game days, and the events of May the first, we are trained. During the Gezi protests, no fan of Çarşı carried cleavers or big gyro knives. We know how far the police can go and we know the maximum effective range of tear gas; therefore we know better than ordinary people how to protect ourselves from tear gas. This is what Çarşı has done; without going too far, staying back.¹⁴²

Evidently, the football fans were very conscious of their strong role within the Gezi Park movement and they were determined to perform their duty wholeheartedly because it was not only their interests they represented but the interests of the entire Turkish society. However, they were very realistic, disciplined, and modest in their actions at the same time. They did not consider themselves heroes but they were aware that they served as vanguards and role-models for the entire movement. Their attitude is brilliantly explained through another Carci’s words:

[m]ost of the people who came there were novices, in regard to tear gas

and struggle against the police. Çarşı is now very experienced with these. That day, while walking from Harbiye towards the police group, we were being repeatedly tear gassed. Of course, we were ready for this, with our head gears, and scarves. We covered our mouths and put lemon drops into our eyes. Those guys there (the novices) were backing off when the tear gas arrived. This was not good. Because we needed to move forward against the police violence, even when we were tear gassed, in order to push them back. We actually achieved this, and this is the reason we were successful that day. We were motivating those guys. If Çarşı is a legend today, it all started that day.¹⁴³

Indeed, Istanbul United became a legend within Turkish contentious politics and even a documentary was filmed to provide insights and praise their action. The characteristics that made them so appealing were not only their competence in battling the police, but the combination of their tutelary spirit which defended not only themselves and the groups that agreed with them but other groups that prior to the Gezi Park protests considered them lowlives; the fans abandoned their obstinate, often even racist, perception about the LGBT group and the women through reconciliation and their cultivation of conciliatory character. Remarkably, they abstained substantially from sexist language which was an integral part of their daily speech. The women contributed to this cause drastically through their interactive workshops which successfully minimised the

fans' homophobic language that would insult other groups and even encouraged them to apologise.¹⁴⁴ They even apologised when they insulted others through their talks without having offensive intentions. The fans' attitude obviously prioritised cooperation through the institution of shared norms over unilateral initiatives through inconsiderate behaviour. Their cooperativeness inspired all groups of the Gezi Park movement to work together since the fans were the most intransigent group. Additionally, the football fans also exhibited moral character by protecting the anti-capitalist Muslims. The Gezi Park movement opposed earnestly religious politics since this was seen as being Erdogan's instrument. Therefore, religious practices could generate unnecessary conflict over trivia within the Gezi Park movement. Therefore, Istanbul United along with the LGBT group safeguarded public prayers.¹⁴⁵ Surprisingly, the standardisation of acceptable norms for mutual respect within the Gezi Park movement was not merely followed by the fans but it was wholeheartedly embraced and sometimes even led by them. Markedly, not only the fans protect the other groups' right for praying publically but these tough guys who praised masculinity cooperated closely with the LGBT group which has a totally different stance on this issue. A traditional society, according to Erdogan's conservative standards, would not have allowed for such cooperation. However, these ideological

misconceptions had vanished and this was definitely not a development that the government could have predicted.

The cooperation between Istanbul United and other groups continued, especially in standardising the mutually acceptable moral conduct within the Gezi Park movement. This collectivity remained dynamic even during the clashes with the police. Remarkably, when Istanbul United lost formation in the front line momentarily while battling with the police, the fans asked the LGBT group to line up in front of them so that they may regroup into formation. Their plan was performed effectively. Minutes later, when some fans were badly injured, one of them shouted “the boy in the skirt has a first-aid kit”. He did so not to humiliate him but to indicate, in his own words of course, that that boy was in the front line to assist them. Mutual respect was cultivated deeply in the Gezi Park movement’s protesters and that was evident even at the most intense moments of the protests. The football fans considered their former target for sarcasm, namely the LGBT group, as equally brave and the LGBT members felt it and reciprocated their sincere respect towards Istanbul United.¹⁴⁶ The football fans, despite their absence of formal leadership, became the inspirational leaders of the Gezi Park movement who encouraged and organised the other protesting groups. Their leading role during the demonstrations is also evinced by the following words of Ali who

worked as engineer at a university: “They were coming like a band (*bando*), and filling people with energy and confidence. We all became Beşiktaş fans. Then, we thought it’s more important to convert our own teams into something similar to Beşiktaş”.¹⁴⁷ The football fans in a way structured the Gezi Park movement’s *modus operandi* not only for protesting but for ensuring the harmonious cooperation of its various groups. Moreover, the other protesters became more competent through encouragement and training. The other groups learned from Istanbul United’s organisation and developed their own group in line with it by incorporating their own characteristics. Additionally, the football fans distributed kandil cookies to the protesters as religious gifts in order to express their gratitude to the imam of the Dolmabahçe mosque. This imam had let the doctors to temporarily convert the mosque into an improvised hospital where medical personnel could treat the wounded. The football fans’ tactic was very clever because it countered Erdogan’s call to the conservative Muslims to reprobate the Gezi Park movement. Through the offering of sweets the football fans successfully branded the imam’s altruistic decision as pro-Gezi, securing several Muslims’ endorsement of their cause.¹⁴⁸ The football fans’ tactics throughout the Gezi Park movement were extremely effective in unifying, safeguarding, inspiring, and organising the Gezi Park movement.

Arguably though, educating the fans who were the movement's opinion leaders by establishing the acceptable conduct of communication was the most challenging and effective success of the football fans' repertoire.

Displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (WUNC)

Worthiness

The football fans were used as scapegoat by the government to undermine the Gezi Park movement's legitimacy because they were depicted as brainless hooligans whose highest ambition in life would be their team winning a trophy.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, there were no women, children or significantly important individuals within the group. However, Istanbul United vanguarded the various groups that comprised women and children. Furthermore, it attracted moderately important people like the president of Fenerbahce, Aziz Yildirim, who is a respectable public figure. Yildirim not only did not condemn the pro-Gezi slogans of Fenerbahce's fans during matches but, interestingly, he joined them in protesting against the government. Moreover, following the end of the Gezi Park protests, a rally was organised by the lawyers of Ali Ismail Korkmaz, a 19-year old student who was killed during the protests, in his memory. 300,000 fans of Istanbul United joined the

rally, including Fenerbahce's president Yildirim. During the match that followed the rally, the fans united again and chanted rhythmically "*Her Yer Futbol, Her Yer Direnis*"¹⁵⁰ : 'football is everywhere, resistance is everywhere'. Indeed, football was equated with resistance to the government. The protesters' position within the Turkish society had forever been changed and their ideological positions matured. Since the Gezi Park protests, the football fans are considered socially conscious citizens who are worthy of respect and they still participate in social causes. They are the evidence that the Gezi Park movement's dynamics remain potent.

Unity

Through the Gezi Park movement, the football fans' solidarity has been utterly revolutionised. The strong bonds within each team have traditionally been unparalleled; however the expansion of these bonds to incorporate the entire Turkish society was unprecedented. The individuals who prior to the Gezi protests were sworn enemies of each other united for the Gezi Park movement under Istanbul United and formed the frontline of the pitched battles against the police. They were wearing t-shirts with Istanbul United's logo and allied themselves with groups, like the LGBT group, whose perceptions were completely different and who had been viewed as outsiders in the

past.¹⁵¹ The fans acknowledged their enemies and allies and acted accordingly in each situation. The fans of Istanbul United dressed similarly, they were marching in synchronised stride, and used symbolic language in their slogans and posters so that their uniformity united them under a unified social movement, one solid group, a true family. While the size of Istanbul United's fans base is not reported, undoubtedly Besiktas, Fenerbahce, and Galatasaray are the three most popular football teams in Turkey. Therefore, the vast majority of the Turkish football fans would fall under Istanbul United.

Commitment

Commitment was definitely the most characteristic element of Istanbul United. As described above, the football fans never hesitated to confront the police, especially when they had to protect the other groups. Their altruistic attitude rendered them role-models of the Gezi Park movement. Their selflessness was not curbed even after several arrests of their members. They seemed conscious of the fact that the government was determined to neutralise them through any means necessary in order to break the Gezi Park movement. Intimidation, such as the incarceration of two fans on criminal and terrorist charges, did not erode the morale of Istanbul United group.¹⁵² Overall, the football fans were completely devoted to safeguarding the Gezi Park movement. Their commitment

was tested extensively through police brutality, threats, social stigmatisation, accusation for criminality, but they survived and became the movement's legend.

Assessment

The football fans' group was probably the most intriguing group within the Gezi Park protests movement. It had protracted claims against oppression, police brutality, political intervention in football affairs, and Erdogan's authoritarianism which they held responsible for the country's democratic deficit. It trained, safeguarded and boosted the morale of the Gezi Park movement through both victorious battles against the police and humour, and it was characterised by wide cooperation, smart tactics, vigorousness, and mutual respect. Moreover, it reconciled with formerly opposing groups. Additionally, they were exemplars of unity not only among themselves but within the entire movement. The predominant feature of Istanbul United's dynamics though was its transformative effect on the football fans and the wider Turkish society. The commonly shared perception about the football fans' reputation changed drastically. The underlying reason for this change was that the fans themselves had transformed their club loyalty into social solidarity. Before the Gezi Park protests, football fans had been perceived as uneducated troublemakers who were mindless and only interested in football and violence.

Arguably, this assumption was not completely erroneous since the fans had not proved to be much more useful than this until then. However, Istanbul United enabled them to question these assumptions and empowered them to transform themselves by developing the entire movement's dynamics in pursuit of democratic objectives. On the whole, they acknowledged any mistakes they did and apologised for them. They showed respect and earned it by protecting other groups and simultaneously encouraging them and motivating them. Their transformation remains substantially impactful on Turkish contentious politics. The fans participation in social causes and political discourse has become part of their life both verbally and through action.

Epilogue

The Gezi Park movement verified Tilly's theory that social movements are not just historical subjects but they evolve by adapting to the societies' dynamics. New social movements are heterogeneous in composition and represent a broader spectrum of perspectives and thus they lean towards the formation of increasingly dynamic societies. Interestingly, social movements not only reflect societies but they constantly determine social dynamics, including social roles and social reality. Therefore, societies determine their dynamics through social movements'

dynamism. This study employed Tilly's historical sociology theoretical framework to assess the Gezi Park movement's dynamics in an attempt to examine how these dynamics transformed contentious politics in Turkey. Particularly, the three elements of Tilly's theory, namely campaigns, repertoires, and displays of WUNC were applied to two representative groups of the Gezi Park movement, namely the women's group and Istanbul United. These were arguably the key actors within the Gezi Park movement and they had been dramatically oppressed by Erdogan's government for years. These two groups successfully qualified as social movements according to Tilly's theory, despite their starkly dissimilar ideologies. Consequently, their character is determined by their dynamics and not by their ideological position. The women's group comprised ideologically diverse women who united under one group and formed the largest group within the Gezi Park movement. During the protests they were exemplars of unity through various activities including interactive seminars, the standing man effect, the chain of bodies, and the medical support through the nurses. Through the Gezi Park movement, they managed to evolve their social role to be equal to men's, educate others and promote cross-cultural cooperation.

The Istanbul United group consisted of the alliance among the fans of the three most popular football teams who were traditionally

sworn enemies. It protested against the fans' prolonged oppression through police brutality, intervention in football affairs and other authoritarian practices. Within the Gezi Park movement, the fans created Istanbul United's logo, they made effective use of humour, the social media and other tactics, they trained other groups in combating the police, and boosted their morale by exhibiting selflessness, fearless attitude, and charismatic leadership. Their actions became legend for Turkish contentious politics and even a documentary, titled 'Istanbul United', was filmed to celebrate them. Overall, they did vanguard the entire Gezi Park movement and, most interestingly, they developed a conciliatory character with other groups. Through the Gezi Park movement they also evolved their social role by earning the society's respect which since then has come to consider them not merely socially aware but active democratic citizens. Clearly, their evolution exceeded Istanbul United and their struggle for social concerns remained vigorous after the Gezi Park protests. For instance, Istanbul United's fans gathered again and chanted slogans like "Thief Tayyip

Erdogan, Everywhere Corruption, Everywhere Bribery"¹⁵³ during their march in memory of Kormaz's assassination. Until today, the football fans remain socially active and are regarded as a significant threat to the rule of the AKP. Arguably, the Gezi Park movement's spirit remained after the Gezi Park protests.

The dynamics of these groups transformed the Gezi Park movement into an effective platform for social collectivity. This platform enabled these two groups to redefine their social role within the Turkish society. Moreover, it empowered potential groups to redefine themselves too. Thereupon, this unprecedented opportunity for self-determination transformed the dynamics of Turkish contentious politics. Ultimately, this transformation can gradually lead, the effects of the summer 2017 coup notwithstanding, to the creation of a new social reality which is characterised by increased personal autonomy, political freedom, social justice, protection of human rights, and encouragement of social mobilisation, all of which are integral elements of effective citizenship.

Appendices

Appendix A: Lady in Red¹⁵⁴.



Appendix B: The standing Yonca¹⁵⁵.



Appendix C: The body chain of mothers to protect their children from the police¹.



Appendix D: Woman with veil protesting together with feminists².



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Appendix E: Fans of Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray together³.



Appendix F: Fan of Fenerbahçe during the police attacks⁴.



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Appendix G: Football fans hijacked bulldozer⁵.



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