

MEDIATIZED
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THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SOCIALITY
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:

THE CASE OF THE GEZI UPRISING IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

During Turkey's Gezi Park Protests in the summer of 2013, millions of people became connected as fellow protesters. In the early days of the Gezi movement, the increase in participatory activism through social media made visible the police brutality exercised in the last days of May 2013 against a small group of environmentalists who were protecting Gezi Park from being demolished in order to build a shopping mall. Throughout Turkey's political history, there has been no other example of this kind of spontaneous mass movement resisting the state apparatus with the large participation of diverse groups and self-convened protesters, without any dominant ideological appeal or leader affiliation. In this article, I will analyze the ways in which these patterns of contradictory interactions formed, evaluated, or triggered various types of social relationships, by critically examining the content of viral images, memes, and widely shared posts by Gezi protesters on social media. In the absence of internal cohesion or an ideological and organizational agenda, I argue that widely shared viral images, memes, and text messages provided the content to collaboratively construct and publicly frame the autonomous logic of the "Gezi spirit" by the Gezi protesters. I aim to analyze this new understanding of collective identity in autonomous logic processed through social media as a being-with (mit-sein), rather than a fusion of the individual to an enigmatic we-ness in order to represent "I". I claim that this autonomous collectivity is driven by fluidarity as a public experience of the self in relation to the other without intermediary apparatuses and hence can be conceptualized as having built a new sociality.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gezi uprising began when news spread about police violence against a small group of protesters consisting of environmentalists, artists, and students, who were attempting to protect Gezi Park from being demolished and turned into a shopping mall. This news quickly went viral, spreading like a wildfire through social media, and reached a large population, including people of diverse views and backgrounds. On May 31, 2013, a small-scale environmentalist protest for the preservation of a public park in Istanbul was transformed into a movement of mass resistance against the authoritarian policies of the Islamist and neoliberal Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has been in power in Turkey since 2002. The AKP's authoritarian policies were reflected in urban renewal projects even before the incidence of the Gezi uprising started to provoke an oppositional gathering of urban grass root individuals, artists, and environmentalist groups, as is demonstrated in the case of the closing of the Emek Cinema Theater to convert it into a shopping mall on Istiklal Street in Taksim. However, this opposition could not be channeled into the parliament or any other already established resistant groups or political organizations. Hence, Gezi protesters first became fellow protesters by answering online calls for solidarity circulated on social media and took to the streets without knowing who was going to accompany them in their offline protests.

Through the analysis of the social media's content in Turkey's Gezi uprising, in this article I aim to investigate what kind of collectivity is promoted through social media and what kind of replication of this online collectivity takes place in the offline sphere during protests among protesters. From the beginning, a sense of collective identity for the Gezi uprising was absent in the mobilization of millions of people. The concept of collective identity attributes to a sense of cohesion that supposedly leads to collective action. It refers to a shared definition of a group or would-be shared definition of a group that derives from the members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity. The example of the Gezi uprising gives rise to the question of what kind of togetherness we can conceptualize for the autonomous structure and constituent form of online, networked global struggles.

The Gezi protests did not produce a political group or party to defend its cause in the long term but a practice of sociality among protesters. Even though some of the participant groups and parties claimed to embody the Gezi uprising, they did not succeed in reaching all of the Gezi protesters who came to the streets of Turkey in the summer of 2013. For example, the United June Movement (Birlesik Haziran Hareketi), just recently established in December of 2014, consists of several leftist groups who joined the Gezi uprising. Its membership has not yet reached the masses of the Gezi uprising and is dominantly formed by leftist and activist members. It should be noted that while Turkey has a long tradition of leftist politics, the total number of votes supporting a leftist agenda (socialist and communist political tendency) have remained below 1% for the past 25 years. Furthermore, the total number for trade union membership in Turkey is under

1 million, while the official number of workers is 11.6 million.¹ Thus, the landscape of Turkish social movements prior to the Gezi uprising could be defined as harboring a critical approach towards leftist politics as a chance to bring change or victory through elections after the military coup in the 1980s. Even though the Mayday of 2013, which took place just one month before the Gezi uprising, witnessed heavy clashes between police and trade unions, the participation in Mayday was limited to trade union members. In addition, HDP,² the newly titled political party of the older pro-Kurdish nationalist BDP, also claimed to follow the Gezi uprising. But HDP's approach to the Gezi uprising was ambivalent in the first run. HDP emerged under the command of Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish militia's leader who is imprisoned in Turkey, and not through the movement or actions of the people contributing in autonomist fashion, as was the case in the Gezi uprising. While a symbolic group of HDP sympathizers and a few members of parliament representing HDP joined the protesters in the Gezi Park, the leader of the party, Selahattin Demirtaş, claimed that, "later on they put a distance with the Gezi protesters, because some protesters planned to make a coup against the elected government." This unfounded and controversial claim by Demirtaş fits well with the AKP³ government's anti-Gezi rhetoric and was highly criticized by the Gezi Park protesters. Even though it was not a political party or parties that were the cause or byproduct of the Gezi uprising, the new means of collaboration among diverse groups developed during the Gezi period were mobilized during the elections after Gezi, namely the March 2014 local elections, August 2014 Presidential elections, and the June 2015 general elections. Former Gezi protesters actively contribute to and communicate during the elections in the same fashion as the Gezi uprising by taking a bottom-up approach to their organization through online and offline spheres and actively working as voluntary non-partisan election observers to prevent election frauds, which was a long-lasting problem in Turkey. Thanks to the voluntary election observers, the 2015 general elections were completed without any major complaint about frauds.

With this in mind, it is worth asking what kind of a motivation emerged during the Gezi protests for this type of mass involvement. And why is it that the Gezi protests could not be translated into a sense of collective identity, as a product to be represented in the parliament or through an activist group? What kind of influence gave way to the realization of the uprising from online to offline space and vice versa? I shall undertake to answer these questions through several steps. First, I will refer to the theme of collective identity in the discussion of networked constituent struggles. In the second section, I present the concept of being-with as an alternative sociality facilitated through the online interactive participation of protest performance. The third part will draw upon the case study of the Gezi uprising and the digital viral content, leading to a discussion of these terms through the study of practices in the online and offline space of protesters.

BETWEEN THE CONNECTED ACTION AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Even though old leftist groups, unions, and political parties were in the first rank of the barricades during the Gezi period, the massive presence of self-convened and networked protesters changed the makeup of the protests and prevented the Gezi protests from being marginalized or contained within narrowly-ranged activist groups. Thereby, collective identity, in the sense of a shared ideology, defined political goal, and group interests to distinguish the Gezi protesters from the rest, did not exist at the outset when all of the participants were expressing their disagreement with the AKP government. As Bennett and Segerberg claim in their writing on “the Logic of Connective Action”, “people may still join actions in large numbers, but the identity reference is more derived through inclusive and diverse large-scale personal expression rather than through common group or ideological identification” (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012, p. 744). The Gezi uprising is exemplary of the autonomist character of contemporary constituent global struggles developed through social media that does not necessitate a representational “we”. As such, autonomous organization is “not recognition simply as identification with the same but precisely the recognition of particularity and difference,” as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri propose (Hardt and Negri, 2011, p. 330). Here, autonomism is the practice of “autonomy which refers to the capacity of a social actor to become a subject by defining its action around projects constructed independently of the institutions of society” (Castells, 2012, pp. 230-231). Manuel Castells articulates autonomy as the companion of individuation rather than individualism. While individuation can lead to collective action, individualism makes the well-being of the individual the ultimate goal of individuated projects (Castells, 2012, p. 230). In the case of the Gezi movement, the groups and individuals involved did not become a “we” to represent an “I”, and this is one of the reasons why a “claim-making on the basis of shared identity” could not happen during and after the Gezi protests. Furthermore, although the Gezi protests operated through autonomist logic, the Gezi protesters did not dominantly define themselves as autonomist, neither in the beginning nor at the end of the Gezi protests.

On the other hand, the existence of digital networks eased the pre-existing frictions or indifference among these constituent and distinct individuals and groups, since the common calls reached everyone who was able to access internet memes and online images depicting police violence towards a peaceful environmentalist group. Thus, the Gezi protesters are not only a crowd, or a crowd of individuals, but people of diverse backgrounds affected by the same viral images demanding empathy, and hence, direct action in solidarity with peaceful activists struggling against riot police. To be sure, the importance of online networking in the formation of an uprising cannot be separated from the decline of public and civic spaces, and thus, social capital as a means of traditional social networks (Lim, 2014). When physical spaces are repressed, digital spaces create the possibility of encounter. This is a specific sociality pattern not produced yet facilitated through

the everyday use of social media in communication. Emotions and affective ties circulated through the social media can engender a sense of process-based collective identity formation, as in the example of the Gezi uprising. As Donatella Della Porta has argued, the protest must be considered as an independent variable in the sense of events as arenas for encounter rather than a dependable variable on the basis of political opportunities and organizational resources. This is because the protest as event causes cognitive, affective, and relational impacts on the social movement (Della Porta, 2008). Cristina Flesher Fominaya prioritizes emotional investment and solidarity bonds emerged through the experience of common action rather than ideological or interest-based unity for internal cohesion in the case of the major activist-driven, autonomous anti-globalization mobilizations prior to current global struggles and urban grassroots uprisings (Flesher Fominaya, 2007). Here, Alberto Melucci's understanding of processual collective identity as a concept can be useful to define a dynamic ongoing phase of collectivity rather than a final product. Following this perspective, collective identities can be created, reconstituted, and cobbled together rather than being biologically, structurally, culturally obvious (Snow, 2001). For Melucci, collective identity as a process incessantly produces itself in the everyday social-cultural interaction forming new cultural codes and reciprocal identification (Melucci, 1989). Therefore, the use of social media in digitally networked social movements can generate different kinds of social practices and divergent cultures in the sense of dissident collectivities based on "imagined belonging" through sharing activities that consist of posting affective images of uprisings, tweeting protest memes, and following other fellow protesters online.

While the above-mentioned understanding of processual collective identity seems to explain the motivation behind acting coherently in a social movement of heterogeneous groups and individuals, it does not problematize the concept of identity inherent in the term of collective identity. As Natalie Fenton underscores, computer-mediated solidarity is not linear; it does not follow a prescribed narrative which can lend itself to long-standing commitments or deeply held loyalties (Fenton, 2008). In this article, I will explore what is "new" in the articulation of "we" in the online sphere of the Gezi uprising and how this online engagement effects offline action. To this end, through the case study of the Gezi protests, I will outline the kinds of public spheres and social relationships that are motivating millions of people to become involved in mass uprisings. I think not only affective or cognitive identification that secures the cohesion of today's digitally networked protests, but also the sociality that these protests open up, motivate people to engage in and experience pure social ties not based on identification.

Still, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is not inherently emancipatory. Neoliberal rationalities have intersected with the existing authoritarian governmentality to produce globalized yet compliant citizens under digital surveillance enhancing the control of the state, as in the case of the AKP government's ICT reforms of e-state in Turkey (Topak, 2013). José Van Dijck recognizes that social networking sites (SNS) also

become entangled with gatekeepers, such as governments and capitalist system, as mass media does. But SNS also permit “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2012, p. 220) based on horizontal networks of interactive multidirectional communication, which is completely different than the practice of mass media audiences. SNS not only attract a large community of participants but also facilitate a culture that voluntarily shares posts across online space (Dijck, 2013). This is a specific sociality pattern facilitated through social media. Thus, the autonomous “we-ness” necessitates a new definition of collective identity for today’s landscape of global social movements. In this sense, Hardt and Negri’s concept of multitude as distinct from the crowd can better define this spontaneous collectivity: “The components of the masses, the mob, and the crowd are not singularities – and this is obvious from the fact that their differences so easily collapse into the indifference of the whole. Moreover, these social subjects are fundamentally passive in the sense that they cannot act by themselves but rather must be led ... The multitude designates an active social subject, which acts on the basis of what the singularities share in common. The multitude is an internally different, multiple social subject whose constitution and action is based not on identity or unity but on what it has in common” (Hardt and Negri, 2005, p. 100). I assert that collective identity in process, in the case of global constituent struggles such as the Gezi uprising, does not rest on a sociality that can be expressed in the current representational political system of interest groups and antagonistic identity paradigms. In fact, spontaneous autonomist uprisings emerge because of the incapacity of consensual neoliberal politics to embody them. In other words, a “we-ness” representing “I” at the end of the process to encapsulate collective identity as a final product loses the motivation of emergence. However, this does not mean that a social movement or a community based on autonomous organization can never emerge, but that its follow-up embodiment must include its motivational drive to bring a change in the understanding of politics. Throughout this article, I aim to provide this new understanding of collective identity as “being-with” beyond representational identification in the case of online, networked constituent global struggles of autonomist logic.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF COLLECTIVITY FOR CURRENT NETWORKED CONSTITUENT GLOBAL STRUGGLES OF AUTONOMIST LOGIC: BEING-WITH

Alain Touraine insists that social movements in the post-industrial era do not defend collective identity but instead contest social relationships (Touraine, 1988). As Castells stresses, the new international time/space order and the lived experience of ordinary people give rise to new social movements because the network society and post-industrial era challenge the ways in which people construct their identity (Castells, 2009). In other words, representation as a means of relating the “I” to the “other” through the “we” becomes problematic in this advanced phase of the global capitalist system that is based on a complex network of autonomous entities. Historical attachments and societal insti-

tutions that once mediated between the individual and the public have lost much of their power because of neoliberalism based on the immediacy and urgency of shrinking time and space intervals. Consequently, today's digitally constituted movements both reflect an anti-identity tendency and ideological disorientation. At the same time, new social movements are experimental in their methods of imagining divergent social relationships in order to proceed with new ways of relating the "self" to the "other".

But in these new digital struggles, what kind of public sphere is offered to its participants? First, the online public sphere was formed through synergy in the sense that the constituents of this online gathering must motivate participation and engage interactivity among other participants. There are peak points of production and interaction focused on involvement when memes, viral images, and texts circulate largely in the online public sphere. Internet memes are digitally created posts, circulated, imitated and transformed by internet users, and they are inspired by and inspire popular culture. As Ryan Milner suggests, internet "memes are multimodal artifacts remixed by countless participants, employing popular culture for public commentary." The word "meme" derives from "mimesis", which means "to imitate". However, an imitation is never just a mere copy or simple representation because any imitation also entails intimation. Therefore, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, mimesis is an "appearance with absence" since its presence emerges with coexistence (being-with). While different meme genres involve different levels of literacy in the sense that some can be understood and created by almost anyone, others can require detailed knowledge about a digital meme subculture (Shifman, 2013), users who are not part of this subculture still have a wide spectrum of opinions to engage in this performance in their own way. Thus, the meme as a "being-with" (mit-sein) emerges due to methexis (the desire for participation) (Nancy, 2000). In the case of an internet meme, the transmission of the "sign, mode, and gesture" is processed through the "sharing" activity of the participants. Thereby, an internet meme becomes a performative show that is collaboratively created on social media through the desire for participation. Peter Dahlgren claims that "for democracy to happen, citizens must be able to encounter and talk to each other" (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 114), and the internet represents a massive boost for the public sphere. More than a tool of civic engagement through pop participation, in the sense of a combination of net culture to political participation (Jenkins, 2006), a protest meme which travels through digital networks among current and potential protesters is structurally a tool of an alternative sociality which provokes first de-individualization, but does not end up constructing a representative collective authorship.

Kevin McDonald contends that the emerging pattern of digitalized social movements should be understood as a shared struggle for "personal experience" rather than a mobilization of a collective identity encompassing a "we" to represent an "I" through solidarity building (McDonald, 2002). Here, personal experience is "the experience of the self and the other without mediation," in other words it is "the public experience of the self" (McDonald, 2002, p. 125). Hence, the contemporary digital networked action

can provide a space beyond the representation and bureaucratization of the neoliberal, post-industrial system through social media and through the organizational replication of the online sphere in the offline protest sphere. In this sense, it is not solidarity but “fluidarity” that allows for the personal experience of the self with the other and keeps the participants connected to the movement (McDonald, 2002). The term “fluidarity” was first suggested by Diane Nelson (Nelson, 1999) to characterize a practice that involves the complexity of engaging with the other in pluralized and ever changing struggles, as a result of the fact that the term of solidarity has become inadequate in the 21st century of globalization (Maruggi, 2012). Here, fluidarity refers to the personalized in contrast to the individualized mode of sociality, which escapes a representational way of being in the public. In this sense, fluidarity becomes the activator of what I refer to as “being-with”.

In the case of current social-media driven, grass root uprisings, the logic of social media permits this interactive performance of being-with. The self can engage with the other without the intermediary of the boss, leader, institution, or group. They instead generate a new sociality divergent from the current representative social engineering of the neoliberal networked era of society. For example, Gezi protesters covered events on the streets using technologies such as smartphones, streaming video, and digital photography to engage in citizen-journalism in the absence of intermediary agencies or institutions. On the other hand, these online and offline relations of fluidarity, processed and communicated through social media, are effective thanks to their direct transmission capabilities. One protester can see directly through the eyes of the other, as she is live streaming running in the streets. Consequently, the affective ties that one protester feels for the other are very much attached to the fluidarity enabled through the public sphere of the uprising. Hence, fluidarity triggers a new kind of sociality, practice, and culture that I call “being-with” rather than a representative we-ness. Therefore, the movement that is swarming and has a decentered logic of organization looks as though it is lacking a sense of collectivity, but it generates an internal cohesion of autonomous logic, a being-with, through digital communicative technologies. Here, empathy, rather than sympathy, is in charge of affective solidarity. While sympathy means judging the other through similarity of concern, whether based on ideology, identity, and other discernible criteria of comparison, empathy (*pitié* and *amour-de-soi*), in Rousseau’s fashion of the State of Nature (Rousseau, 1987), generates an emotive, yet naive animalistic solidarity for the other. Thereby, one’s affective ties for the fellow protester not only derive from fighting against a common enemy (police, state, mainstream media), but also from the constant direct exposure to the other’s personal self through social media in the absence of mass media as indirect media of communication. Thus, fluidarity does not accord with the interest-representative governmentality of the consensual system. Jacques Rancière defines “consensus” as the reduction of politics to the “police”, which therefore reduces people to the sum parts of the social body, and the political community to the relations between the interests and aspirations of these different parts (Rancière, 2010, p. 41).

Democratic logic, contrary to the police, consists in blurring and displacing the borders of the political (Rancière, 2010, p. 54). Fluidarity is a practice that accommodates Rancière's term of dissensus, which is outside of the "consensual landscape of taken granted parts of the social body as the visible, the sayable and doable" (Rancière, 2010, p. 149).

I would argue that McDonald's concept of "fluidarity" is necessary for acknowledging the logic of motivation and participation in digitally connected movements and in fact constitutes what is "new" about the understanding of we-ness. The understanding of "identity" in today's neoliberal consensual system refers to a badge upon which one's political agency can be summarized.⁴ Thus, being-with completely differs from a fusion of the individual into a formless and enigmatic collective entity. "I" remains the "I" within the "we" in today's global constituent struggles. Consequently, the notion of collective identity must be reformed in the case of digitally networked autonomous constituent struggles, since both the processual and product-based term of collective identity refer to a current or prospective representational we-ness.

METHODS

This analysis builds on participant observation in the global network of the Gezi uprising as well as a content analysis of various forms of social media networks, primarily Facebook and Twitter, operated throughout the Gezi protests. The following sections are based on my ethnographic and "net'nographic" (Kozinets, 2002) research conducted between May 2013 and May 2014. Through net'nographic research, I study the routine online communication of the Gezi network of protesters and sympathizers through individual Gezi protesters' account pages and Gezi group webpages. I explore what kind of circulation principle is used and what kind of viral images, memes, textual themes, and posts become dominant in the online sharing activities of Gezi protesters to frame the Gezi protests. For this, I gathered popular images and pieces of text primarily from the social networking sites of Facebook and Twitter. Specific images and texts included in this analysis were selected in order to illustrate the communicative norms that they underscore. This analysis is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of online content, which emphasizes the relationship between what is communicated and the social realities tied to that communication (Milner, 2013). I implemented the CDA method of the multimodal commentary (Van Leeuwen, n.d.) to analyze not only verbal data but images, video, and audio. I also draw on qualitative interviews that I conducted with a small sample of ten Gezi protesters selected through a snowballing technique in August 2013. During this time, I attended online and offline actions and events, taking extensive netnographic and ethnographic field notes. Qualitative interviews were interactive, lasted 45 minutes to 3 hours, and covered a broad range of issues related to protest participation, including specific experiences of the participants. In the following sections, I examine the parallelism and contrasts between the practice of online sphere and offline action during the Gezi

protests. With this analysis, I thus hope to contribute to first activist and then academic thinking.

“FLUIDARITY” IN THE GEZI UPRISING: PUBLIC EXPERIENCE OF THE “SELF”

COLLECTIVITY AS BEING-WITH

In reaction to the mainstream media’s censorship, answering a need for an alternative source of news, the number of active Twitter users in Turkey increased from 1.8 million to 9.5 million within the first ten days of Gezi alone (Cetin, 2013). Hence, the quickly personalized title “capulcu” and its related versions became popular online profile names, when Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan defined the Gezi protesters as “capulcu” (looters) in order to minimize the significance of the Gezi protests and to depict the Gezi protesters as unimportant, worthless people who could easily be ignored. As a consequence, even though there was no central collective identity frame related to a political or ideological affiliation to describe all of the groups, communities, and individuals participating in the Gezi protests, “capulcu” as a label became trendy among the protesters.

“Capulcu” mobilized the expression of large-scale personal concerns without creating the need for bargaining among the constituents’ stances, views, and groupings. Indeed, “capulcu” cannot be considered as a representative collective identity, but rather as a symbolic mobilizer, as a “mask”. The relationship between the identity and the person is fluid. Thereby, a successful protest meme can travel between a diverse range of participants by connecting various agents as each agent personally appropriates, imitates (“mimesis), and then participates (“methexis”) in the action by sharing the meme. The use of “capulcu” coincides with Ernesto Laclau’s term “empty signifier”, a signifier of pure cancellation of all differences (Laclau, 2007, p. 38), in the sense that “capulcu” as a term privileges the dimension of equivalence to the point that its differential nature is almost obliterated. “Empty signifier” beyond the exclusion delimits communitarian space.. In the case of a protest meme, one protester can potentially share several titles, messages, and posts, and at the same time, many protesters can share one message. This is neither an act of individualization nor collectivization. McDonald defines this personalization as a form of opposition to individualization (McDonald, 2002, p. 118). It indicates a solidarity based on “fluidarity”. As Castells underscores through the example of Marcos, Mexico’s Zapatistas leader (Castells, 2009, p. 426), Marcos does not signify a “charismatic leader or shrewd strategist” but a mobilizer that everyone can engage in: There is no “Marcos”, he is a fabrication of the Zapatista movement, an unidentified leader or non-leader. Anybody who wears Marcos’ mask is Marcos. Here using a version of the pseudonym “capulcu”, “tweeting it, liking it, sharing it” through online accounts emphasizes personal contribution to the idea, the need for direct action but not the allegiance of its authors. George Katsiaficas explains this in his conception of autonomous discourse:

“Unlike many people in what is called the Left, however, I do not seek to construct a set of categories that serve as a prism for my friendships and alliances, preferring instead to form these on the basis of feeling and action, not ideological purity” (Katsiaficas, 1997, p. 203).



Figure 1. Selected viral texts and images promoted through the social media on the internet meme of “capulcu”. The dominant sentence “Everyday I’m chapulling” started with a video clip with the adaptation of a dance melody with the theme. Figure 1(d) states that “I am not rightist or leftist but I am Capulcu”. Figure 1(f) shows Noam Chomsky supporting the Gezi uprising. The varied versions of intellectuals claiming to be “capulcu” were popular in fostering the positive meaning of being a Gezi protester.

In the example of “capulcu” discussed above, the playful circulation of the title “capulcu” was motivated by the appropriation of the word by the Gezi protesters with a desire to change and reverse the word’s meaning and significance based on this new appropriation. One common practice was to inflect or misspell intentionally to accommodate “capulcu” into one’s last or first name in online personal accounts in a grammatically awkward way mostly as a suffix or prefix: *Pajovsky Capulcuyan*, *Capulzade*, *Capul*, *Alper the Chapuller* and so forth. In a sense, the meaning of “capulcu” became something to be proud of, similar to a badge or title acquired through participating in the Gezi uprising similar to a glorious event. As a result, the word “capulcu” acquired positive connotations, as a supporter of a righteous/just/fair cause, in contrast to the mass media’s negative framing of the protesters. Some of the protesters changed not only their online account names but also the political view sections on Facebook to *Capulcu*, *Chapullist*, etc. The creative ways of translating the meaning of “capulcu” also became popular on social media during the Gezi protests.

Several charts or translation lists started to spread among the Gezi protesters' online accounts. Various adaptations of world-famous works of art were promoted to provoke the re-definition of the word "capulcu". The successful and funny creations of this trend were shared and re-shared, "favorited" and "liked" among the protesters, and thus, the connectivity between them fed in and out of these online interactions and offline gatherings during the protests every day in the peak periods of the Gezi uprising.

Consequently, social media activities constructed a public sphere for the Gezi uprising where everyone could think and act according to his or her abilities and inclinations. The anti-political aspect of the pseudonym "capulcu" is in fact highly political since it triggers a new sociality that cannot be articulated in the current consensual politics of identity and hence othering. Here, not the idea of "capulcu" but its invitation to direct action contradicting passive representation is political. The idea of "capulcu" is empty and in fact the use of the "capulcu" pseudonym decreased in mid-June at the peak of the Gezi uprising, not because people ceased to identify with it, but because the joke's irony had become predictable and was no longer creative. Thus, "capulcu" is not an identity or identity-to-be that represents a socio-political stance or interest. Also, it does not require an emotionally pure allegiance of kinship or comradeship since nobody can determine whether you are still one of the protesters, whether you participate in all of the online calls for gatherings in the streets, or whether you have a word in forums established in the neighborhood after the Gezi protests: Hence, your input to the Gezi protests remains as your personal contribution but not as a sign of your reliable identity as a Gezi protester.

I asked my interviewees about their sharing activities on social media during the Gezi uprising and why they "liked, shared, retweeted" a Gezi protester's post:

"If he emphasized on an important subject – that is for supporting. Not for supporting his idea every time. For example, right now⁵ sharing about Gezi on Facebook is rare. If somebody shares something about Gezi, I support it so that it can be apparent no matter what. This is the logic of social media as you know. Knowing that there are people out there, who can continue to be active."

"If somebody likes your post, you feel that you are not alone. This is the effect of being 'liked'. It does not mean that your post is nonsense if it is not widely shared."

"If there is much interaction around a mass call to get in the street, for example, you know that you are not alone if you go out in the streets. It is not an insurance. But for the first incidence on May 30, it was huge, everyone I know in Facebook posting about it. These were people who did not share a political post before. I said OK, this time is different."

"We could not be the news, so we started to do the news. I opened my Twitter account during the Gezi protests. I was uploading photos not videos. I took photos of people cleaning together in Gezi Park. My followers increased somehow, I guess that is because I was writing regularly, if you write a lot, your followers increase."

"I am retweeting so that it can work. So that people can see."

"I try to retweet something that I am sure about. If the original post is written by someone that I know. Because you have a responsibility. You are doing the job of the press there."

“I remember that I could not sleep during the Gezi protests. One time, she was live-streaming. She was running from the police while she was recording. I thought that I am the only one maybe watching this. I could not turn it off and go to sleep but instead I was sharing it everywhere I could.”

Taking account of these responses, it can be argued that high-intensity interaction on social media gives the impression of an active community and sometimes a formation of agreement about a tactic for the next steps of the uprising. Accordingly, increase in online sharing on a specific opposition tactic during the protests constitutes the latent phase for upcoming offline protest action. Hence, cohesion does not constitute a form of representational identification. But there is a sense of responsibility to act for the Gezi uprising, since everybody's personal contribution is required for sustaining the protests. Yet, this sense of responsibility does not come from affection for the similar but empathy for the human activated by direct contact. The lack of intermediary agencies for informing and deciding in fact necessitates the direct action of every single protester, in the sense of a personal experience of the self with the other without delegation. Consequently the lack of representational system encourages interaction and participation. On the other hand, the term responsibility indicates a we-ness that cannot function without the “I”'s personal action. This gives much more power to the “I” in comparison to the “We”. However, the old representational “We” and “I” relation prioritizes “We” as the actor before the “I”. Therefore, being-with is not a simple case of a “community” leading its members through loyalty building and commitment rewards, but a collectivity formed by the operation of fluidarity. Here, the invention of technology, which enables the direct presentation of personal experiences, encourages participation in the sense that it provides firsthand relations with other protesters. To be sure, this direct relation of the self with the other exists through the compression of time and location in digital communication. In other words, this experience of divergent public experience, of “being-with”, generates an affective solidarity as a result, fostering fluidarity in its turn. Thus, this affective solidarity derives from a common experience of “fluidarity”, and it activates in its turn a personalized commitment to the participants' action. There is a “we”, but it does not represent the constituents. In her analysis of autonomous protests, Fominaya proposes that autonomist activists own or generate a representative collective identity in terms of diversity, heterogeneity, and inclusivity (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, p. 399). It should be worthy to note that today's digital networked constituent struggles do not primarily consist of people with activist experience or of leftist socio-political intellectual capital per se. In fact, what is distinguishing in the case of the recent uprisings of autonomous logic is that they are mass gatherings of non-activist people alienated from representational politics. Thus, diversity, heterogeneity, or inclusivity can emerge as long as these principles contribute to maintaining fluidarity during and in the follow-up of such a mass protest.

THE PUBLIC SELF: THEME OF DESIRE FOR PARTICIPATION

In the online sphere of the Gezi uprising, images of some Gezi protesters became internet memes or viral images, representing their specific roles, performances or acts in the Gezi uprising. Their offline names are unknown or forgotten, what circulates is their figurative or textural trace in the online sphere.



Figure 2. "Heroes of Gezi Protests": Names of the characters and explanation of their character from left to right: -Woman in black: The character became a meme when she bravely resisted by standing in the way of TOMA, the armored police vehicle.

-RedHACK: Red Hackers– Communist Hacker Group in Turkey,

-Standing Man: The initiator of the Standing Man protests. He protests by standing for hours without moving.

-Woman in Red: The first meme depicting the first group of environmentalist protesters resisting against tear gas.

-Talcid Man: Talcid Man appeared after the rumor that Talcid medicine relieves pain caused by tear gas spread on social media. He helped people in the Gezi protests who suffered after having been exposed to tear gas.

-Carsi: The group of supporters of Besiktas soccer team. The specific body posture is taken from a video which shows - Carsi cheerleader chanting together with the Gezi protesters after a tear gas attack.

-Naked Man: He is famous for resisting the police naked.

The celebrity status of these protesters only existed in the online sphere of the Gezi uprising, because their fame is not an individual status facilitating the separation of the famous person from the rest, the spectacle. The meme above is a depiction of some of the favorite "characters" of the Gezi protests, represented as a list of heroes with magic powers. Similar to the story of the X-Men, these characters were good mutants who evolved because of and in reaction to police violence. The direct action of these online Gezi protesters-to-be celebrities was immediately recorded in digital form through smart phones and reached the public through social media. Here, the recorder and the recorded had open access to the public. The citizen-journalist protesters spreading information across the lines of the

protests allowed for the presence of the self with the public. Thus, social media, filled with the personal images and videos taken by the protesters during the events and protests all over Turkey and the world, functioned as an open collective diary for the Gezi uprising. While not every protester gained a viral representation, protesters enjoyed sharing images of events or acts that they witnessed or that they thought best presented the events in question. Since protesters were wearing gasmasks or other things, characters of viral images were also often anonymous. Interviewees mention the joy of the Gezi public sphere:

“Everyone was checking social media before the end of the workday. I could see my colleague’s gasmask under the desk. We were smiling to each other”

“I remember getting in the subway. Everybody was chanting and greeting us just like heroes. I had never felt anything like this before. But this is the young generation growing up with Counter Strike computer games, you know... Go. Go... Adrenaline pumping”

Juris states that the presence of festive and playful performances, such as “The Pink and Silver March” in Prague’s anti-globalization protests (2000), generate particularly vivid memories and high levels of affective solidarity, since performative tactics indicates the contrast of creativity, color and play to the dark, oppressive forces of law and order: “Play, in particular, reveals the possibility of radically reorganizing current social arrangement” (Juris, 2008, p. 141). In the case of the Gezi uprising, the spread of these creative performances through and by social media among Gezi protesters both invited protesters to action (desire for participation) and produced a divergent sociality where creative, yet undisciplined or unproductive body gestures became communicative.

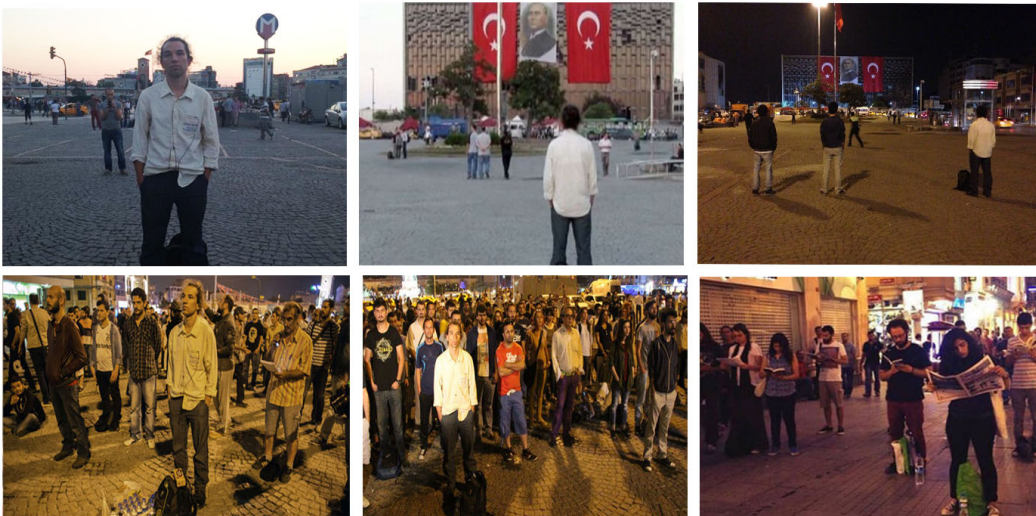


Figure 3. “Standing Man protests”. The viral pictures of the artist performance standing for hours became a meme and was replicated by the other Gezi protesters in their protest against the demolition of the Gezi commune. The display of adjacent images illustrates the spread of the Standing Man Protests among the protesters. The first Standing Man protest happened on 17 June 2013 in Taksim Square, Istanbul

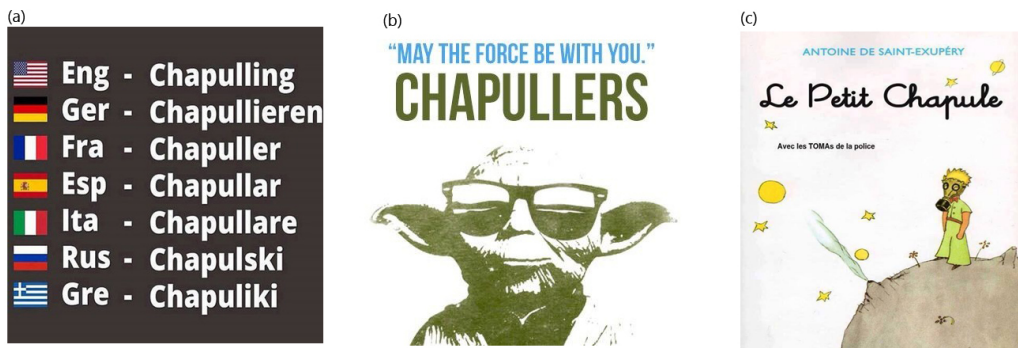


Figure 4. Translation chart for the word *Capulcu* to other foreign languages - Figure 2(b)/ Yoda, the Jedi master in the popular movie *Star Wars* states his famous motto for the Gezi protesters as they are also like Jedi warriors. Figure 2(c)/ Adaptation of the cover of the famous French children's book, *Le Petit Prince* (*The Little Prince*), to the Gezi uprising.

Another example, the case of the Standing Man, illustrates how celebrity building and a collective performative event planned through social media can diverge from the mainstream media formulation. After the Gezi commune⁶ was demolished by the police force, demoralization spread among the Gezi protesters. In response to this, the Standing Man protests were started through the initiative of one person whose subversive action was to just stand idle in the middle of the Taksim Square for several hours without moving. The news about Standing Man and the images of his artistic performance of peaceful protest became the top-shared image on social media within hours, and other Gezi protesters joined him or replicated the Standing Man protests across Turkey, alone or in groups, in the streets. Some protesters also added new elements to the protest, such as reading while standing in the streets. Here, the primary cause for the dissemination of the Standing Man protests is the viral image of the first person standing. It is likely that if this act of one individual standing for hours in Taksim Square had not been seen and recorded, it would have gone by unnoticed and would not have spread. The Standing Man protests were therefore neither a collective nor an individual action. Everyone who joined the Standing Man protests had their own individual and personal experience. In addition to this, the creativity of this peaceful type of protest was derived from its non-directive stance, in the sense that the Standing Man did not shout slogans, he did not carry any banners stating his message, and he also did not call other people to join him. Thus, the act and the message of the Standing Man was formed through the social media, and this message was then transformed to a protest through the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of this act in the offline and online public sphere without a final specific formation of the meaning except that it was against the demolition of Gezi Park commune on 15 June. To be spreadable in online space, the content of the meme must also be movable, reusable, and part of a larger flow of content (Jenkins, 2006).

Thereby, the point of attraction for participating in digitally networked uprisings is the fluidarity-enabled public sphere, which is not a driver for common identification. Thus, inner social cohesion among the participants in a mass uprising does not arise from representative logic. Gezi celebrities did not become spokesmen of the Gezi uprising, nor were there any charismatic leaders or group principles that dictated the how-to of the Standing Man protests to the participants. The Gezi protesters' sharing of the viral images of Gezi celebrities is not a passive repetitive act but an active involvement of the public self.

LESS ABSTRACTION, NO REPRESENTATION

Specific types of memes referring to popular culture travelled easily between the online accounts of protesters, demonstrating some of the common traits of the protesters, such as familiarity with foreign languages and specific art productions necessitating some sense of common cultural capital as well as a particular educational level. To be sure, the middle class sections of the Gezi protesters were the most active members on social media during the Gezi protests. Although middle class participants did not share any strict identity category, what they did have in common was an awareness of local and worldwide classic and popular culture. On the one hand, the memes placed less demand on the prospective middle class protester in terms of sharing common identifications and facilitating social transmissions.

On the other hand, this language of popular culture allowed a break from classical leftist language dominated by ideological concepts in the communications of the activist environment. Instead of ideological concepts in the possession of a small group of leftist intelligentsia, funny messages that were decodable for a younger and much larger generation were shared. This facilitated mass involvement and participation in the sense that a larger part of community could engage in public expression without access to a broad base of theoretical knowledge or familiarity with heroic names. Here, the public expression of the "self" bypassed the need for mediators, as there were no such abstractions, references, and experiences that demanded skill and long-committed learning. As Milner emphasized in his study of Occupy memes, vibrant public discourse depends on more voices having access to channels of engagement (Milner, 2013), hence, memes are part of a media ecology that allows a broader public discussion. Consequently, this process of popularization through memes bypassed the limitations of the hierarchical type of communication in the political action and helped to reach more people. Thus, the popularization of activism and the politicization of popular culture took place simultaneously and developed gradually during the Gezi uprising.

Fominaya, in her article on the role of humor in autonomist action, considers humor as a resource for internal cohesion, which can generate a sense of we-ness to invite participation and lead to action (Flesher Fominaya, 2007). She states that humor creates a

hostility-free positive environment, provides relief from the gravity of political work, and therefore, humor is essential for attracting participants and retaining them in this activist environment despite mounting frustrations (Flesher Fominaya, 2007, p. 247). Here, she notes that “shared humor turned what could have been a disheartening meeting into a collective expression of group identity”. I agree with Fominaya that humor activates participation. Although the joke demands little previous data to understand it, it is primarily funny for the participants of the Gezi uprising, because they can remark and appreciate the irony involved in the joke by means of the Gezi experience. Online sharing of funny posts also means that participants can share the experience of the Gezi uprising while differing in other ways. Hence, humor can ease fractions and disagreements. But more importantly, humor triggers fluidarity and enables the direct action of the participant without the necessity of learning the process of a group’s underlying principles. The massive participation of non-activist participants in the Gezi protests stems from the fact that they were able to engage in protest culture with their own personal commitment without the membership requirement. In the case of the Gezi uprising, humor first deconstructed the intellectual hierarchy in activist culture and enabled fluidarity, then eased fractions among participants. That is why humor is not primarily “an expression of group identity” but the activation of non-representative we-ness.

Yet, the offline replication of this online non-elitist language of memes was not always successful. Several of my interviewees complained about the insistence of using an elitist theoretical and mostly leftist political jargon that had the effect of intimidating other participants in some of the public park forums that they joined after the Gezi Park was forcefully evacuated by the police. People met in their neighborhood parks from late June and until August 2013. One of my interviewees also spoke about the rise of spokesmen or public intellectuals advocating for the Gezi uprising in the later stages of the protests in an attempt to represent all of the protesters in the mainstream media. Some of them also expressed a dislike for groups of people who were distributing leftist booklets in the forums or in the Gezi commune, because these acts implied that the participants of the Gezi uprising needed to be educated or instructed. Thus, if interaction in social media among Gezi protesters reflects the latent (Fominaya, 2010; Melucci, 1989) phase of the action, the failure to generate a visible phase of action in the offline sphere based on being-with often provoked burnout. As follows, an activist culture necessitating identification and hierarchical engagement decreases the motivation for joining in action, because it blocks fluidarity. What makes millions of people participate to the networked constituent protests is this generated possibility of immediate personal experience in the public sphere, a sense of being-with without the necessity of being represented. As Castells (2009) put forward, today’s individual of the information age cannot be a representational construction of identity. The Gezi protests put an end to the usual circle of life, work and sleep. Despite some of these unsuccessful replications of the fluidarity-enabled online sphere in offline action, my informants also expressed that what they remember of

the Gezi uprising are the spaces of communication and direct interaction with the other, as an experience of fluidarity. Following McDonald's (2002) arguments on fluidarity, while representative we-ness is based on "identity correspondence" and an ethic of "us", being-with is mobilized through subjectivity, and it indicates an ethic in an experience of self and other without the need of mediation:

"There was a time when I could sit down with my friends in Taksim Square as a student. Right now I am working but I can't afford to eat and drink in Taksim. Moreover, the AKP's municipal government does not allow anyone to put tables in the streets anymore. Where can people gather then? There is no public space anywhere here, only shopping malls and fancy restaurants to attract rich tourists. But in Gezi, I saw people who I had not had a chance to see for a while because of work and so ..."

"For three weeks, we were only talking about Gezi. Everybody left their business, their lover, their work, their study and only dealt with this."

"Even the most hard-working students skipped school. I saw my professors there... When I asked them about exams they said that more important things were happening here in Gezi."

Thus a constituent part of the Gezi protesters is this group of immaterial laborers who are not exploited in absolute economical terms as Cihan Tugal suggests, but who became impoverished in social life (Tugal, 2013). Tugal states that the Gezi uprising provided a non-commodified space where the pleasure of pure social ties without a promise of future economic gain was experienced. Indeed, this "pleasure of pure social ties" is very specific to the presentative collectivity enabled by fluidarity. That is because what is "pure" as a social tie not only escapes the drive of economic interest but also the similarity criteria based on personal and social identity for solidarity. The competition and interest that drive the capitalist market are already generated within every sphere of social relationships included in activist environments. A representative collective identity consolidated after the Gezi protests cannot secure the persistence of the movement, because it repeats the existent system of representational politics and competitive drive.

EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY:

THE REPRESENTATION OF PLURALITY IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE GEZI UPRISING

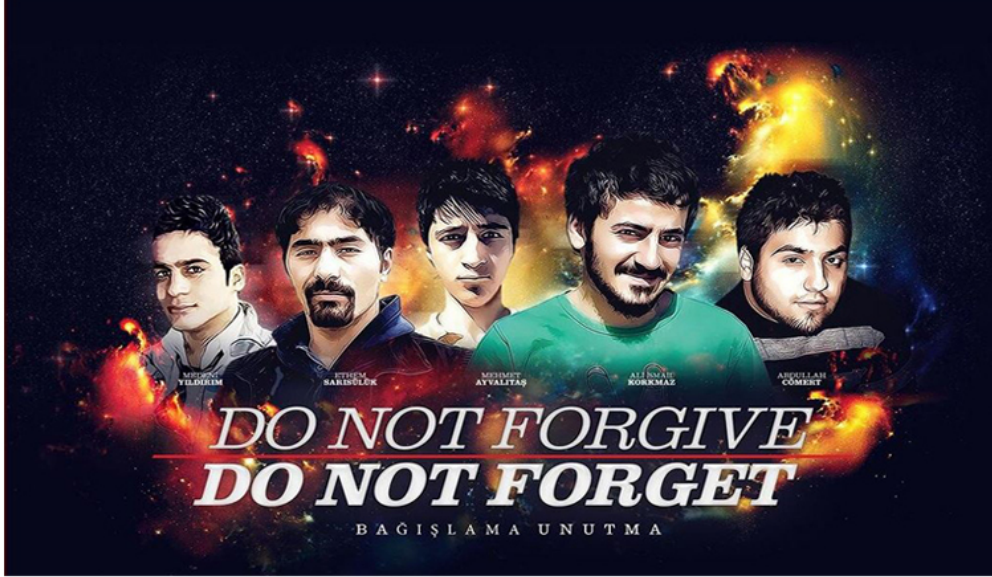
PLURALITY

Different protesters who encountered each other in the offline protest scene after answering common online calls for the Gezi protests could have become alienated from the protests because of particular antagonistic people or groups who were present there. Therefore, Gezi activism on social media also contributed to retaining its current participants, encouraging prospective protesters and constructing a type of solidarity among the people, groups, and various identities already defined in the current social system. The theme of plurality came to define the Gezi uprising and helped to maintain the participation of diverse groups and people who were connected through answering online calls to action.

The slogans shouted by one group could often intimidate or antagonize another group joining the Gezi protests. There were several attempts to remedy these antagonisms through the use of social media. For instance, when sexist or patriarchal slogans, such as “son of a whore”, were articulated mostly to insult government representatives, a meme declaring that “PM Erdogan is not our child” was disseminated among the sex worker participants of the Gezi uprising. This funny meme created awareness of the inclusion of and solidarity with another group participating in the Gezi protests.

However, in another example, some of the leftist and pro-Kurdish groups and participants left the protest scene when a militaristic slogan in support of the nationalist state order that preceded the AKP government, namely “all of us are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk, the founder of modern republican Turkey in 1923)”, became popular among the nationalist participants of the Gezi. This is because the Gezi participants belonging to a specific political group or activist organization used to connect with the “other” through a representational identity system, and antagonisms derived from previous activist experiences among them could surface during offline action. Clare Saunders states that strong collective identification at the group level often weakens the inner cohesion of the movement because of extensive differences between movement organizations in her case study of radical, conservative, and reformist environmental organizations in the UK (Saunders, 2008). Following the same line, in her article on Fathers’ Right Groups in the US, Jocelyn Elise Crowley claims that individuals who are members of social movement organizations do not necessarily identify with the broader movement in which those organizations participate (Crowley, 2008). In social media, images representing solidarity between all of the victims of police violence during the Gezi protests started to be widely shared in order to foster this newly emerging collaboration between different groups and identities. Abdullah Comert, the first figure on the right in the above image, is from the youth organization of the CHP (Republican People’s Party), currently the major opposition party and also the founding party of the republic representing a mostly secularist and nationalist political tendency. On the other hand, Medeni Yildirim, the first figure on the left, was in fact killed by the Turkish military during a demonstration against the construction of a new gendarmerie outpost in the east of Turkey, in the Kurdish region at the time when the Gezi protests were spreading around Turkey. In other words, the inclusion of Medeni Yildirim, a supporter of the Kurdish movement, in the list of the victims of the Gezi Protests was an act intended to foster solidarity between all potential oppositional groups to AKP rule as well as to reconcile antagonisms between the nationalist and Kurdish Gezi Park supporters. The illustration and representation of all of the victims of the Gezi protests together represents a desire for the elimination of othering among oppositional group members and views. This artificial inclusion of Medeni Yildirim among the Gezi victims of police violence has not been accepted by some of the more nationalist groups that have participated in the Gezi protests. These more nationalist groups preferred other representations of the Gezi protests victims in the

(a)



(b)



Figure 5. Two different versions of the viral image showing Gezi victims of police violence are seen in this figure. Figure 5(b) is against the inclusion of Medeni Yildirim among the other Gezi heroes.

social media. However, the presence of this artificial representation as a meme shows the power of viral images in forming, evaluating, or triggering alternative constructions of memory through online swarming. Hence, Medeni Yildirim became a Gezi hero without participating directly in the Gezi protests.

The offline replications and re-definitions of this sense of solidarity among diverse and sometimes antagonistic groups or views demonstrate how viral images can work in the construction of pluralistic forms of resistance with the potential to overcome conflicts in the offline public sphere. Still, these types of solidarity claims, on the basis of identity and already-present group membership, reproduce the way in which social relationships are governed in the existing social system. Here, pluralism as the Gezi community's collective identity borrows from the understanding of public appearance in terms of group identity. Hence, such a representation encapsulates key identities, ideologies, and orientations, and establishes the boundary between legitimate Gezi protesters versus unwanted participants. Therefore, the consolidation of an identity for a Gezi protester through the plurality of the representational paradigm in fact reduced the scope of the Gezi participants. More importantly, it created a competition for the true definition of a Gezi protester among activist and political members. On the other hand, such a reductionist understanding of plurality does not embody the inspiration of first-time protesters. When I asked my interviewees, who had no past experience with political organization or even protest participation, why they became Gezi protesters, most of them answered that they did not consider the Gezi protests to be "political" because they did not think that any party, association, or alternative counter-organizations in the public sphere could truly or effectively represent them:

"Gezi was so attractive that when I was there, in the park, it did not come to my mind to talk to the people in the political tents."

Consequently, while such a consolidation of the Gezi protesters' definition as a collective identity can provide the basis for internal cohesion and the bargaining principle in the long run, it diminishes its potential for constructing an alternative sociality beyond the scope of the consensual representational political system. This derives from the fact that such an early consolidation of the plurality principle in a mass protest constructs the terrain of tolerance among already established strong group identities, but it does not provide an alternative sociality to show the absurdity of such identity politics and group membership based on interests. Such a term of plurality under the banner of identity politics cannot form a being-with based on fluidarity, because it does not recognize such a presentative we-ness. Instead it borrows from already stabilized strong group memberships through reproducing the boundary work. This reflects the inextricable next-best option that is being different but coming together without eliminating the othering, following the principle of liberal tolerance.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

My study suggests that these complex levels of focus and engagement in the Gezi uprising were primarily conditioned through the replication of horizontal organization

activated on social media in the offline sphere. Hence, personal experience within the public, self-generated new collectivity bypasses the representational system of the public sphere. I argue that in this divergent sociality based on fluidarity, a new collectivity in process, increased the participation and motivation needed to sustain the Gezi uprising for participants alienated from representational politics. On the other hand, social media also worked to consolidate a representative collective identity based on liberal plurality and tolerance. This fixation tendency, which prioritizes plurality based on identity politics, did not capture the unrepresentative we-ness based on fluidarity and the masses participating in the Gezi protests through initial common calls of social media at the start of the uprising. I claim that such early consolidation of collective identity based on plurality without offering a new sociality could not sustain the initial motivation of participants. While group identity paradigms started to dominate during the aftermath of the Gezi protests, the motivated majority of participants remained alienated from representational politics and became passive afterwards. Thus, the principle of liberal plurality based on identity politics reproduces the already dominant politics of othering and representative we-ness.

As Melucci suggests, the formation of collective identity is an ongoing process and it is not fixed. Yesterday's passivized Gezi protesters have been re-activated through the motivation of fluidarity-driven online and offline public spheres. The effects of the Gezi movement are diverse and cause both short and long-term political transformations. Recently, almost exactly two years after the Gezi uprising, in the June 2015 general elections, the AKP lost its 13 years long majority in the parliament thanks to the endurance of the participatory protests and critiques of the government based on the new social networks founded during and following the Gezi period. Such an engagement could not have been imagined before the Gezi uprising and the experience of alternative sociality of fluidarity facilitated in the first place through the active civic engagement of the voters and volunteer organization of a massive amount of people as election observers. Yet, it can also be argued that the identification fostered through the perception of the AKP as the common enemy was also a major motivation for people to come together. Thus, the emergence of fluidarity does not mean the extinction of solidarity-based representational relationships working through political interest. However, the main motivator behind and achievement of recent globally networked struggles is the process of practicing an alternative sociality that allows participatory deliberation, which is not compatible with the representational political system.

Based on Castells' argument on the difficulty of constructing identity in our contemporary information society, I argue, through the example of Gezi uprising, that the motivation behind today's digitalized mass movements is the insufficiency of the representational public sphere in the age of network society in which the individual is both alienated from the political system and is socially self-sufficient in communicating with the other without intermediary mechanisms. That is why, McDonald argues, that what

we encounter in the action is a struggle for subjectivity (McDonald, 2002, p. 125). Hence, the slogan uniting recent global constituent struggles is: “They do not represent us!” This common slogan does not reflect a representative identity but a “being-with” where “we” does not represent “I”, which in turn activates a personalized interaction and expression of the public self. The direct presentation of personal experiences in the online realm provides firsthand interactions with other protesters participating in other global uprisings. They do not need “identity” as a medium to express themselves or to be recognized by others. The understanding of “we-ness” must be revolutionized and go beyond a representative identity paradigm to better conceptualize digital, networked constituent global struggles. This is a new collectivity based on fluidarity; hence not a representative but presentative we-ness is in process and has yet to appear.

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NOTES

- 1 Retrieved from the webpage of Institution of Social Security. <http://www.sgk.com.tr/581-Haber-sindikali-isci-sayisi-1-milyonun-altinda---.html>.
- 2 Halkların Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party).
- 3 Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party).
- 4 For Melucci, the word 'identity' alludes to a sense of permanence which does not perfectly correspond to the processual analysis he advocates for (1996, p.70). On the other hand, the reason why I do not use the term identity firstly derives from the fact that an uprising moving people spontaneously in autonomous logic cannot be embodied by the term of identity, which is dominantly tied with identity politics rather than politics of sociality.
- 5 August, 2013.
- 6 The Gezi commune was first formed in the Gezi Park by the protesters to obstruct the work of the police and the vehicles that came to destroy the Gezi Park. Between 1 June and 15 June, the Gezi Park was governed by the groups and the individuals who participated in the Gezi protests. In the Gezi commune, people shared everyday life and all facilities without the mediation and the dictation of the state and the police.