



ARTICLE

# Unraveling the Cycle of Protest in Turkey's Gezi Park<sup>1</sup>

Selin Bengi Gümrükçü

Department of Political Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, USA  
Email: [bengigumrukcu@gmail.com](mailto:bengigumrukcu@gmail.com)

## Abstract

The Gezi Park protests that erupted in spring 2013 sparked renewed interest in social movements and collective action in Turkey. While much of the literature has emphasized the novelty and spontaneity of these protests, this article situates them within a broader context and historical framework of social movements in Turkey. It argues that the events surrounding the demolition of Gezi Park should be understood as a cycle of protest, best analyzed in relation to earlier cycles to gain deeper insights into the culture and agency of social movements in the country. In this regard, the article posits that the Turkish manifestations of the Global Justice Movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s provided crucial precedents for the Gezi Park protests, offering an organizational infrastructure, collective frames for mobilization, and adaptable models for action.

**Keywords:** protest; cycles of protest; social movement; Global Justice Movement; Gezi Park; Turkey

In the early hours of May 28, 2013, a group of environmentalists took up residence within Istanbul's Gezi Park, driven by a determination to safeguard the park from the imminent threat of demolition posed by an urban renewal project spearheaded by the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, "AKP").<sup>2</sup> The police response to this initial demonstration provoked a dramatic response, as a small-scale, local sit-in escalated into a large-scale, nationwide wave of protests. Though the protests were initially

---

<sup>1</sup> I thank Prof. Belinda Davis, Mimi Kirk, Jake Passel and the anonymous referees for their comments on the earlier versions of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The proposed plan involved the redevelopment of not only Gezi Park but also nearby Taksim Square, a central commuter hub and major site of political mobilization. It holds an especially significant place in the collective memory of the Turkish left as the historic spot for May Day celebrations.



aimed only at protecting one Istanbul park, the government's repression turned them into an anti-government uprising in response to increasing authoritarian tendencies voiced by frequent statements by the government about how people should live, concerning issues such as the number of kids families should have, abortion, and alcohol consumption. Protesters flooded to Gezi Park from all over Istanbul and the rest of the country, turning it into a living space with makeshift libraries and kitchens where seminars, concerts, and workshops were organized. Simultaneously, solidarity protests were held all around the country, with millions of people participating in almost all of Turkey's eighty-one provinces, lasting into the early days of summer.

The protests, which are dubbed sometimes the "Turkish Spring," "crystallized Turkey's growing social and political polarization."<sup>3</sup> The response to the protests took different forms, ranging from police intervention that left hundreds injured and several protestors and one police officer dead, to detention or arrests of protestors, excessive police presence on the streets, to vilification<sup>4</sup> and mass trials, some of which are still ongoing.

These protests bore profound significance on multiple fronts. First and foremost, they constituted one of the largest waves of protest in the country's recent memory since the tumultuous period preceding the 1980 coup, as millions of people across the country united in a powerful display of collective action. Second, the protests brought together an eclectic assortment of actors, spanning political parties (albeit with a notable lack of enthusiasm for official party involvement), nascent platforms, and individuals hailing from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds. Anti-capitalist Muslims, right-wing and far-left political organizations, and a mosaic of other groups converged in a demonstration of solidarity. Third, the protests garnered substantial interest from the international media and civil society, and they projected a resonant message far beyond national borders. Lastly, the protests manifested in a wide variety of forms and encompassed diverse modes of expression, from traditional demonstrations and the erection of barricades, to the dissemination of poignant wall writings and theatrical performances. Sit-ins, standing-men/women protests, the pervasive use of humor, and the solidarity exhibited through human chains all contributed to the rich tapestry of forms of actions.

Yet, amid the diverse array of participants, networks, and forms of action, a prevailing emphasis on rupture and newness has often permeated scholarly discourse. This article aims first to discuss the reason behind this narrative of rupture or newness around the Gezi Park protests, seeking the answers both in theory and the political history of Turkey and, second, to historicize the protests

<sup>3</sup> Filiz Başkan Canyaş, F. Orkunt Canyaş, and Selin Bengi Gümrükçü, "Turkey's 2015 Parliamentary Elections," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18.1 (January 2, 2016): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2015.1094274>.

<sup>4</sup> Selin Bengi Gümrükçü, "Populist Discourse, (Counter-)Mobilizations and Democratic Backsliding in Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 23.3 (May 27, 2022): 407–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2021.1999814>; Lisel Hintz, "Adding Insult to Injury: Vilification as Counter-Mobilization in Turkey's Gezi Protests," *From Mobilization to Counter-Revolution*, POMEPS Studies 20, 2016.

by examining what came before them. It will be argued that understanding the historical context and dynamics of the Gezi Park protests is crucial for comprehending their origins, trajectory, and outcomes. By analyzing the Gezi Park protests as a cycle of protest and placing them within a historical framework, we can uncover the underlying factors that led to their emergence, understand the protest strategies employed by participants, and assess the long-term impacts on Turkish society and politics.

### On Newness and Movement Continuity

The Gezi Park protests generated an abundance of media coverage and academic attention. For example, a quick Google Scholar search shows 1,670 titles on the Gezi Park protests between 2013–14. Given that “social movements are not routinely on the community or national calendar”<sup>5</sup>, when a protest breaks out it might be considered “out of the blue” by the media and/or general public. Thus, with every new cycle of protest, there is a tendency for journalists, scholars, and observers to focus on novelty in the current protest, focusing more on rupture from previous protests rather than movement continuity and spontaneity. Regarding the Gezi Park protests, “the abrupt and spontaneous nature of the protests”<sup>6</sup> has been highlighted.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in a more recent work focusing on rupture, it was argued that “Gezi should be located outside the linear time and conventional topography of Turkish politics and interpreted as a brief, powerful moment of rupture in a political system.”<sup>8</sup>

This trend can be arguably explained by two factors: first, the dominance of the New Social Movement (NSM) theory among scholars of social movements and collective action in Turkey might have contributed to this. Arguing that “new social movements” constitute a break with the traditional collective actors – specifically the labor movement, which displays loose and decentralized organizational forms – and raise issues related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, the environment, and peace,<sup>9</sup> NSM theorists focused on the “rupture” from the old movements in analyzing why social movements emerge. Thanks to the personal and scientific networks of prominent scholars, such as Nilüfer Göle, in well-networked Turkish universities, such as Bogaziçi University, NSM became one of the dominant theories in studying “new” social movements in Turkey.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> David Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, “Mapping the Terrain” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Efe Can Gürcan and Efe Peker, “Turkey’s Gezi Park Demonstrations of 2013: A Marxian Analysis of the Political Moment,” *Socialism and Democracy* 28.1 (January 2014): 70.

<sup>7</sup> Hayriye Özen, “An Unfinished Grassroots Populism: The Gezi Park Protests in Turkey and Their Aftermath,” *South European Society and Politics* 20.4 (October 2015): 533–52.

<sup>8</sup> Spyros A. Sofos, “A Momentary Lapse of Reason? Gezi in Social-Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 31.1 (March 2018): 82.

<sup>9</sup> Alberto Melucci, “The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach,” *Social Science Information* 19.2 (May 1980): 199–226.

<sup>10</sup> Efe Can Gürcan and Efe Peker, *Challenging Neoliberalism at Turkey’s Gezi Park* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015); Ayşen Uysal, “A Militant Rather than Scientific Research Object,” in *Social Movement Studies in Europe: The State of the Art*, ed. Olivier Fillieule and Guya Accornero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 388–403.

Second, the political history of social movements in Turkey, particularly during the tumultuous 1970s, and their intricate interactions with the state and the political regime might have contributed to the growth of the “rupture” narrative. While new social movements of the 1970s are widely regarded as the precursors of today’s social movements,<sup>11</sup> in the case of Turkey the 1970s were characterized as a lost era due to high levels of political violence, accompanied by narratives filled with words like “chaos,” “fight,” and “anarchy.”<sup>12</sup> The “official narrative” also employed terms like “division,” “fractionalization,” and “conflict.”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the coup itself drastically altered the nature of politics in Turkey, as it aimed to demobilize and disengage society from political affairs. The new regime altered political institutions and the constitution in order to curb rights and freedoms to organize and mobilize and transformed the political logic by introducing the Turkish-Islam synthesis as an antidote to “the threat of communism” within the Cold War environment of the time.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the considerable efforts by the military junta, which held power for approximately three years following the September 1980 coup, to suppress memories of the pre-coup period can be argued to have contributed to a “desertification” of the history and/or memory of social movements in Turkey.

### Cycles of Protest and Movement Continuity

Despite the significance of particular protests, “mobilization rarely tends to be isolated, but rather often exists temporally aggregated on cycles of protest.”<sup>15</sup> In this regard, it is imperative to transcend the narrow focus on a singular protest event or cycle and to recognize the indispensability of examining the history and agency of political actors.<sup>16</sup> In other words, in order to understand mobilization following one episode, “looking beyond any individual protest action” is important.<sup>17</sup>

Defined as “a phase of heightened conflict and contention across the social system,”<sup>18</sup> the concept of a cycle of protest is employed to analyze the evolution

<sup>11</sup> Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring, *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective: A Survey*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Selin Bengi Gümrükçü, “Ideology, Discourse, and Alliance Structures: Explaining Far-Right Political Violence in Turkey in the 1970s,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35.1 (January 2023): 210–24.

<sup>13</sup> Meltem Isik Durmaz, “İşçi Sınıfı Belleğinin Uzamsal Çerçevesi Olarak 1 Mayıs 1977,” in *Sokağın Belleği. 1 Mayıs 1977’den Gezi Direnişi’ne Toplumsal Hareketler ve Kent Mekanı*, ed. Derya Firat (Istanbul: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Selin Bengi Gumrukcu, “Reconstructing a Cycle of Protest: Protest and Politics in Turkey, 1971-1985” (Zurich, University of Zurich, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Priska Daphi and Lorenzo Zamponi, “Exploring the Movement-Memory Nexus: Insights And Ways Forward,” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 24.4 (December 1, 2019): 399–417.

<sup>16</sup> Cristina Flesher Fominaya, “Debunking Spontaneity: Spain’s 15-M/ *Indignados* as Autonomous Movement,” *Social Movement Studies* 14.2 (March 4, 2015): 142–63.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Milder, Belinda Davis, and Friederike Brühöfener, “Social Movements after ’68: Histories, Selves, Solidarities,” in *Rethinking Social Movements After ’68: Selves and Solidarities in West Germany and Beyond*, ed. Stephen Milder, Belinda Davis, and Friederike Brühöfener (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 153.

of movement dynamics. A cycle of protest has some features that distinguish it from other periods of mobilization. These common distinguishing features, according to Sidney Tarrow, are:

a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors; a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention; new or transformed collective action frames; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified interactions between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution.<sup>19</sup>

Providing the opportunity to consider the role of time and space in contentious politics, the concept allows for considering contention as a multi-actor process,<sup>20</sup> and to move beyond solely structural factors to more dynamic ones in explaining the emergence and endurance of collective action: “Once the cycle begins, ... what carries a protest cycle forward are people’s decisions to take disruptive collective action against the elites, other groups, or authorities.”<sup>21</sup> The concept also provides the necessary tools “for conceptualizing the interrelations among movements within the cycle.”<sup>22</sup> That is, new cycles can be “viewed as a resurgent challenge with roots in an earlier cycle.”<sup>23</sup> Some scholars of social movements have studied “how every episode of collective action takes place in a context that has been influenced by previous actions and analyzes the development of the dynamics of contention across time.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, neither movements nor cycles of protest emerge or occur in a vacuum. One cycle of protests’ effects include subsequent ones, “as a movement shifts into abeyance on one set of issues, its personnel and organizations may switch the grounds of the challenge to another set of issues.”<sup>25</sup> By reshaping the political landscape, each protest campaign in turn provides different and new opportunities for the next campaign.<sup>26</sup> In other words, “movements do not die, but scale down and retrench to adapt to changes in the political climate.”<sup>27</sup> This is especially the case when a political (or cultural) climate is hostile. Consequently, even if the movement scales down or

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ruud Koopmans, “Protest in Time and Space: The Evolution of Waves of Contention,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Sidney G. Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965–1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 26.

<sup>22</sup> Nancy Whittier, “The Consequences of Social Movements for Each Other,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 532.

<sup>23</sup> Verta Taylor, “Social Movement Continuity: The Women’s Movement in Abeyance,” *American Sociological Review* 54.5 (October 1989): 761.

<sup>24</sup> Daphi and Zamponi, “Exploring the Movement-Memory Nexus,” 401.

<sup>25</sup> David S. Meyer and Nancy Whittier, “Social Movement Spillover,” *Social Problems* 41.2 (May 1994): 277–98.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, “Social Movement Continuity,” 722.

retrenches, “pockets of movement activity may continue to exist and can serve as starting points of a new cycle of the same or a new movement at a later point in time.”<sup>28</sup> In addition, activists may get inspiration from others, either by observing them or gaining experience with them,<sup>29</sup> as “social movement activities are usually embedded in dense relational settings,”<sup>30</sup> and a web of multiple ties facilitates participation. Following the example of the literature identifying and analyzing continuities between local manifestations of the Global Justice Movement in Europe and more recent cycles of protest, such as the mobilizations against austerity after the 2008 global economic crisis,<sup>31</sup> this article will first present the Gezi Park protests as a cycle of protest and then trace continuities back to the Global Justice Movement in Turkey, focusing especially on the domestic political context, organizational aspects, and repertoires of action.

### Gezi Park as a Cycle of Protest

The Gezi Park protest, as mentioned above, was initially a response to the urban development project to transform Istanbul’s Taksim Square area, including Gezi Park, and build a shopping mall instead, which was approved by the AKP government in September 2011. Making use of an “important avenue for political change and economic transformation” that emerged after the 2000/2001 financial crisis,<sup>32</sup> AKP came to power in 2002 with a financial “allegiance to a programme approved by major international financial institutions.”<sup>33</sup> Turkey’s economy grew significantly during the first years of AKP governance, catalyzed particularly by the construction sector. Government procurements and tenders thus became a significant instrument of wealth distribution: “public urban land ... sometimes with no market price [was] transformed into [the] property of private (privileged) individuals at symbolic prices through prearranged tenders followed by amendments of urban plans.”<sup>34</sup> Until the early 2010s, Turkey’s political-economic trajectory under AKP rule was commonly referred to as “a successful model of reconciling Islam, democracy and the market economy” mainly due to reforms undertaken in the framework of talks for Turkey’s

<sup>28</sup> Verta Taylor and Alison Dahl Crossley, “Abeyance,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*, ed. David A. Snow et al. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Whittier, “The Consequences of Social Movements for Each Other,” 533.

<sup>30</sup> Mario Diani, “Networks and Participation,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339.

<sup>31</sup> Fominaya, “Debunking Spontaneity”; Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox, eds., *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest*, (Routledge, 2013); Lorenzo Zamponi and Priska Daphi, “Breaks and Continuities in and between Cycles of Protest : Memories and Legacies of the Global Justice Movement in the Context of Anti-Austerity Mobilisations,” in *Spreading Protest : Social Movements in Times of Crisis*, ed. Donatella della Porta and Alice Mattoni (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Öniş, “Beyond the 2001 Financial Crisis,” 410.

<sup>33</sup> Cemal Burak Tansel, “Authoritarian Neoliberalism and Democratic Backsliding in Turkey: Beyond the Narratives of Progress,” *South European Society and Politics* 23.2 (April 3, 2018): 197–217.

<sup>34</sup> Korkut Boratav, “The Turkish Bourgeoisie under Neoliberalism,” *Research and Policy on Turkey* 1.1 (January 2, 2016): 1–10.

accession to the European Union.<sup>35</sup> Since the 2007 general elections, however, concerns were growing regarding the health of Turkish democracy,<sup>36</sup> as the use of political violence against protesters was increased.<sup>37</sup> In addition, concerns about the freedom of the press were on the rise,<sup>38</sup> while political liberties were curtailed, especially regarding the use of Kurdish language by elected officials.<sup>39</sup> By 2010, the ruling AKP was able to pass amendments to the 1982 constitution and change the structure of the high judiciary as a result of a referendum. With the AKP's election to a third term in office in 2011, the trendlines of democratic backsliding got starker. Political tensions increased throughout 2012, with police forcefully breaking up a large opposition march, banned by the governor of Ankara, on the anniversary of the founding of the republic.<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of 2013, Freedom House expressed concern about civil liberties in the country being at risk, citing the imprisonment of "hundreds of journalists, academics, opposition party officials, and military officers in a series of prosecutions aimed at alleged conspiracies against the state and Kurdish organizations."<sup>41</sup> The AKP became increasingly aggressive in promoting its social agenda as well. In early May, for example, the government banned advertisements for alcohol and banned shops from selling alcohol between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Later that month, just days before the protests erupted at Gezi Park, around 100 young people gathered in Ankara for a "kissing protest" against the city's subway officials who had warned passengers to follow moral rules after spotting a couple kissing on security cameras.<sup>42</sup> Although authoritarianism has been "embedded in the Turkish neoliberal experience," it became more discretionary under the AKP rule.<sup>43</sup> It was under these circumstances that the Gezi Park protests, shaking the AKP's previously "uninterrupted hegemony,"<sup>44</sup> emerged in late May 2013 and evolved into a mass mobilization against neoliberal authoritarianism. As mentioned above, protests were organized in almost all major cities in the country, with the participation of millions. Increased levels of mobilization compared to preceding and following periods can be an identifier for a cycle of protest. Figure 1 shows the levels of mass mobilization in Turkey between 2010 and 2016, three years before and after the Gezi Park protests.

<sup>35</sup> Sümercan Bozkurt-Güngen, "Labour and Authoritarian Neoliberalism: Changes and Continuities Under the AKP Governments in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics* 23.2 (2018): 230.

<sup>36</sup> Başkan-Canyaş, Canyaş and Gümrükçü, "Turkey's 2015 Parliamentary Elections."

<sup>37</sup> Onur Bakiner, "How Did We Get Here? Turkey's Slow Shift to Authoritarianism," in *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance and the AKP*, ed. Bahar Baser and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk (London: I.B. Taurus, 2017): 29.

<sup>38</sup> Arch Puddington, "Freedom in the World 2013," *Freedom House*, 2013, <https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW%202013%20Booklet.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Watts, "How Did We Get Here?," 32.

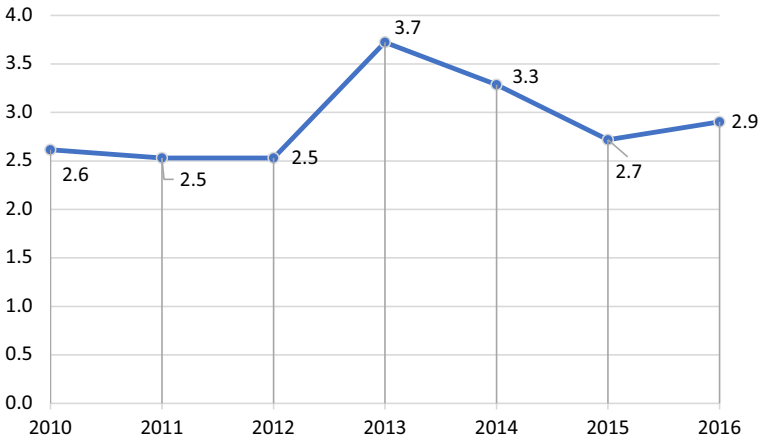
<sup>40</sup> Ivan Watson and Gul Tuysuz, "Police, Protesters Clash at Republic Day March in Turkey," *CNN*, October 29, 2012, <https://www.cnn.com/2012/10/29/world/europe/turkey-holiday-clash/index.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Puddington, "Freedom in the World 2013."

<sup>42</sup> Fatma Aksu, "Ankara Metrosunda 'Öpüşme' Eylemi.," *Hurriyet*, May 25, 2013, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/ankara-metrosunda-opusme-eylemi-23368283>.

<sup>43</sup> Bozkurt-Güngen, "Labour and Authoritarian Neoliberalism," 236.

<sup>44</sup> Ergin Bulut and Erdem Yörük, "Mediatized Populisms| Digital Populism: Trolls and Political Polarization of Twitter in Turkey," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 4108.



**Figure 1.** Levels of mass mobilization in Turkey, 2010–16.

Note: The scale ranges from 0–4; 0 refers to virtually no events, 4 refers to many large- and small-scale events.

Source: VDem Project.

From the very first police intervention, many protesters were injured, including parliamentarians, as well as journalists covering the protests. According to a survey conducted in Gezi Park on June 6 and 7, nearly half of protest participants (49 percent) came to the park in reaction to this repression. Of those without political or NGO affiliations, the share of those who came after seeing the repression was significantly higher: 73 and 75 percent, respectively. The vast majority of the participants (93.6 percent) came to the park as “ordinary citizens” as opposed to representing a group or a party.<sup>45</sup> This would suggest a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors and that organized and unorganized actions went hand in hand, even though the latter were dominant.

Regarding the forms of contention, as stated above, cycles of protest produce innovative forms of protest, which “gives protesters a strategic advantage” since authorities are not prepared for new strategies.<sup>46</sup> While some of the forms of action used, both conventional and unconventional, such as marches, human chains, and “casserole protests,” were adopted from previous cycles of protests, as will be discussed below, the Gezi Park protests did include a phase of innovation in the forms of contention. One example was the “standing man.” On June 17, 2013, a dancer and performance artist named Erdem Gündüz went to Taksim Square and stood in place to demonstrate that the protests were not

<sup>45</sup> KONDA “Gezi Park Survey: Who Are They, Why Are They There and What Do They Demand?” June 2013, [https://konda.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/KONDA\\_GeziParkiSurvey\\_English.pdf](https://konda.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/KONDA_GeziParkiSurvey_English.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Ruud Koopmans, “The Dynamics of Protest Waves: West Germany, 1965 to 1989,” *American Sociological Review* 58.5 (October 1993): 637.



over.<sup>47</sup> Standing for eight hours, Gündüz's performance/demonstration inspired hundreds of other protesters (and counter-protesters) within Turkey and abroad, making the "standing man" one of the distinctive symbols of the Gezi Park protests. Another example was a "new form of squatting" that targeted vacant houses in large cities in Turkey,<sup>48</sup> which led to the first squatted and self-managed social center in Istanbul, the Don Quixote Social Center (*Don Kişot Sosyal Merkezi*) by the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity Forum.<sup>49</sup>

Through the course of collective action, activists interpret grievances to mobilize potential allies and bystanders.<sup>50</sup> In doing so, it has been argued, they would use collective action frames, which are defined as "the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and suggest alternative modes of actions."<sup>51</sup> New or transformed collective action frames – which can take diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational forms<sup>52</sup> – are a feature of cycles of protest. In terms of demands, it is clear that the Gezi Park protests started as a reaction to the government's urban development policies that adversely affected the environment. However, as a result of the increasing interactions between protesters and the state, demands diversified. At the end of the first week of the protests, a group that helped incite the protests, Taksim Solidarity (*Taksim Dayanışması*), held a meeting with a deputy prime minister and listed its demands as follows: cancellation of the Taksim development project that sparked the initial protest; dismissal of the governors and heads of the police departments of Istanbul, Ankara, and Hatay; release of detained protesters; and cessation of the use of tear gas by police.<sup>53</sup> In this regard, the group used injustice-frames in articulating its demands, highlighting the neoliberal authoritarian policies undertaken by the government and how they were impacting urban areas and lives through construction. This appealed to grievances mostly felt by educated youth and urban residents.<sup>54</sup> While similar injustice frames had been mobilized earlier during

<sup>47</sup> Erin B. Mee, "Standing Man and the Impromptu Performance of Hope: An Interview with Erdem Gündüz," *TDR/The Drama Review* 58.3 (September 2014): 69–83.

<sup>48</sup> The "new form of squatting" is in reference to shantytowns as an older form, dating back to the 1950s in Turkey, of a means to satisfy needs for housing or shelter. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç, "Squatting (in Turkey): A Practice of Transforming Public Spaces into Commons," in *Waves of Social Movement Mobilizations in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to the Neo-Liberal World Order and Democracy*, ed. Nahide Konak and Rasim Ö. Dönmez (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 83.

<sup>49</sup> Yeldeğirmeni is a neighborhood in the Asian municipality of Kadıköy. Meaning "windmill," the area's name inspired the activists to name the center after Don Quixote.

<sup>50</sup> David A. Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51.4 (August 1986): 464.

<sup>51</sup> Mayer N. Zald, "Culture, Ideology and Strategic Framing," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 262.

<sup>52</sup> Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26.1 (August 2000): 611–39.

<sup>53</sup> Sebnem Arsu, Sebnem, "Protest Group Gives Turkish Official a List of Demands. New York Times," *New York Times*, June 5, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/06/world/europe/turkey-protests.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Yusuf Sarfati, "Dynamics of Mobilization during Gezi Park Protests in Turkey," in *The Whole World Is Texting: Youth Protest in the Information Age*, ed. Irving Epstein (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 28.

the Global Justice Movement,<sup>55</sup> the audience during that wave of mobilization was mostly actors in the global arena rather than national governments.

Finally, interactions play a crucial role as “the dynamics of protest are shaped by many actors” as social movements interact with various actors, such as other social movements, counter-movements, security forces, allies, and the government.<sup>56</sup> What distinguish cycles of protests are sequences of intensified interactions between challengers and authorities. During the Gezi Park protests, this interaction mainly took the form of overt repression in the form of police intervention. Once police were ordered to intervene, “hundreds, if not thousands of interactions unfolded between protesters and police throughout urban trenches” around the country.<sup>57</sup> The police reaction was so disproportionate it became one of the main injustices driving the Gezi protests,<sup>58</sup> as the police response left five people dead and more than 8,000 injured in the first three weeks of June, according to the Turkish Medical Association.<sup>59</sup> Data showed that 48 percent of the protests during the Gezi Park cycle included coercive or violent action by the police, compared to only 7.4 percent for other protests between 2011 and 2013.<sup>60</sup>

It is argued that “with the progression of neo-liberal capitalism since 1980, a shared logic of social movement has emerged.”<sup>61</sup> This, furthermore, led to the emergence of not only the Global Justice Movement, but also the Occupy-style protests across the world as it “has been globally transmitted, translated and adapted to particular times and locations.”<sup>62</sup> Several works have examined the Gezi Park protests within this context of global mobilization, drawing connections between Gezi and preceding movements *abroad* based on their perspective, dimension, and qualities,<sup>63</sup> a broader criticism of the neo-liberal approach,<sup>64</sup> or an incorporation of gender justice claims.<sup>65</sup> While these efforts have attempted to place the Gezi Park protests within a broader global cycle of protest, there has been a notable lack of attention given to their relationship with preceding

<sup>55</sup> Selin Bengi Gümürükçi, “The Rise of a Social Movement: The Emergence of Anti-Globalization Movements in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies* 11.2 (June 2010): 163–80.

<sup>56</sup> Koopmans, “The Dynamics of Protest Waves,” 637.

<sup>57</sup> Alexei Anisin and Pelin Ayan Musil, “Protester-Police Fraternalization in the 2013 Gezi Park Uprisings,” *Social Movement Studies* 21.4 (2022): 399.

<sup>58</sup> Yeşim Arat, “Violence, Resistance, and Gezi Park,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45.4 (November 2013): 807–09.

<sup>59</sup> Pinar Karahan, “Gezi Parkı bilançosu: 4 ölü 60’ı ağır 7832 yaralı,” *Hürriyet*, June 21, 2013, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/gezi-parki-bilancosu-4-olu-60-i-agir-7832-yarali-23556728>.

<sup>60</sup> Atak and della Porta, “Popular Uprisings in Turkey,” 616.

<sup>61</sup> Todd Wolfson and Peter N. Funke, “The Contemporary Epoch of Struggle: Anti-Austerity Protests, the Arab Uprisings and Occupy Wall Street,” in *Translating Dissent*, ed. Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 2015), 60.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Sarfati, “Dynamics of Mobilization.”

<sup>64</sup> Antimo L. Farro and Deniz Günce Demirhisar, “The Gezi Park Movement: A Turkish Experience of the Twenty-First-Century Collective Movements,” *International Review of Sociology* 24.1 (April 2014): 185.

<sup>65</sup> Zeynep Kilicoglu, “Contextualising Feminist Global Justice Activism: A Case Study of the Gezi Park Protests,” *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics* 5.1 (March 2021): 13.

movements in Turkey, thus neglecting the analysis of continuity between previous protest cycles and Gezi.

### Continuity from the Global Justice Movement to Gezi Park

The groups, movements, political parties, and civil society organizations that came together at the Gezi Park protests did not “emerge out of nowhere,” but were part of ongoing bottom-up mobilization efforts “that had been ongoing unnoticed for an extended period.”<sup>66</sup> When the web of groups is untangled, a clear line of continuity can be drawn from Gezi Park back to the Global Justice Movement.<sup>67</sup>

The roots of the Gezi Park protests can be traced back to 2009, thereby linking them with remnants of the Global Justice Movement. The joint IMF–World Bank meeting in Istanbul in 2009 was a significant factor in the revitalization of the Global Justice Movement in Turkey. During the summit, protests were held under the banner of the Anti-IMF-World Bank Union (*IMF ve DB Karşısı Birlik*, the “Union”), comprising KESK, DİSK, TMMOB, and TTB. Several left-wing organizations also participated, such as Resistanbul (*Direnistanbul Koordinasyonu*), a coalition of “feminist, LGBTI, libertarian Marxists, anarchist, anti-authoritarian, ecologist” activists and groups.<sup>68</sup> This broad and rapid mobilization shows the importance of former movement experience and preexisting local and transnational activist networks for the revitalization of activism. While the Union organized marches in central Istanbul, Resistanbul organized a week-long “resistance festival” called Direnal to counter the Istanbul Biennial art exhibition. Direnal included protests not only against the international financial organizations but also against ecological destruction and urban transformation through gentrification, outlining the relationship between neoliberalism, global injustice, and the AKP’s urban and environmental policies.<sup>69</sup> While civil initiatives against urban transformation projects and gentrification, such as Resistanbul or Society’s Urbanization Movement (*Toplumun Şehircilik Hareketi* or İMECE),<sup>70</sup> became

<sup>66</sup> Jay Cassano, “The Right to the City Movement and the Turkish Summer,” *Jadaliyya*, June 1, 2013, [www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28710](http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28710).

<sup>67</sup> It should be noted that this discussion locating the Gezi Park protests within the framework of Global Justice Movement does not disregard the wider scope and scale of the former. Especially after the police intervention in late May, Gezi Park protests turned out to be one of the largest cycles of protest in contemporary Turkey, bringing together a variety of actors from political parties (although the participants did not welcome official participation from political parties) to barely organized platforms, and individuals of different socio-economic and political backgrounds, from anti-capitalist Muslims to right-wing and far-left political organizations.

<sup>68</sup> Emine Özcan, “IMF-DB İstanbul’da, Direnistanbul Sokaktaydı,” *Bianet*, October 17, 2009, <http://bianet.org/bianet/diger/117690-imf-db-istanbul-da-direnistanbul-sokaktaydi>.

<sup>69</sup> “2 Ekim: Kapitalizmin Ekolojik Tahribatına Karşı Küresel Direniş Eylemi,” *Direnistanbul*, October 1, 2009, <https://direnistanbul.wordpress.com/2009/10/01/2-ekim-kapitalizmin-ekolojik-tahribatina-karsi-kuresel-direnis-eylemi/>. “Conceptual Framework of Direnal-Istanbul Resistance Days: What Keeps Us Not-Alive?,” *Resistanbul*, September 4, 2009, <https://resistanbul.wordpress.com/2009/09/04/conceptual-framework-of-direnal-istanbul-resistance-days-what-keeps-us-not-alive/>.

<sup>70</sup> Established in 2006, mainly by urban planners, İMECE considered struggle against urban problems in the same realm as those of peasants, women, and sexual minorities.

the leading opponents of the AKP-run municipality's urban transformation policy for Istanbul<sup>71</sup> in the years leading up to the Gezi, the year 2010 is considered "a turning point for urban oppositional movements," thanks to the Sixth European Social Forum in Istanbul which brought these groups together.<sup>72</sup> A group of 128 organizations organized the umbrella group Taksim Solidarity, bringing together associations, foundations, networks, and political parties. Some of these organizations had also been involved in the Global Justice Movement, including but not limited to DİSK and several groups within TMMOB and the Turkish Medical Association. A group of architects and neighborhood associations within Taksim Solidarity organized an initiative called Taksim Platform (*Taksim Platformu*), highlighting the importance of Gezi Park in their first press release on February 4, 2013. A few days later, Taksim Platform took its first action to protect the park from being demolished: several artists, urban planners, architects, and politicians "adopted" the park's trees.<sup>73</sup> The following month, the group organized press releases and signed petitions calling for the redevelopment project to be halted.<sup>74</sup> Taksim Solidarity remained active, issuing a press release in June<sup>75</sup> and organizing a protest in October against the development project, with the participation of some members of parliament from the main opposition party, during which a human-chain was performed.<sup>76</sup>

However, perhaps the most important protest Taksim Solidarity organized before the May 2013 Gezi Park protests was a sit-in in the Taksim Square, organized from November to December 2012. For a month, protesters took to Taksim Square every evening for about three hours.<sup>77</sup> Although some considered them less effective than hoped, a "small group embracing the sit-ins claimed that they wanted to continue, and thus the sit-ins continued."<sup>78</sup> After December, the sit-ins went from a daily recurrence to weekly (on Saturdays) and continued into the new year.<sup>79</sup> Over the following months, participants of the weekly sit-ins formed connections with neighbors who had signed Taksim Platform's petitions against the redevelopment plan and, at some point, the locals pointed the protesters' attention to the threat against Gezi Park.<sup>80</sup> In April 2013, the

<sup>71</sup> Murat Cemal Yalçın and Erbatur Çavuşoğlu, "Kentsel dönüşümü ve kentsel muhalefeti kent hakkı üzerinden düşünmek," in *Kentsel Dönüşüm ve İnsan Hakları*, ed. Seda Kalem Berk and Pınar Uyan Semerci (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013), 97.

<sup>72</sup> Rittersberger-Tiliç, "Squatting," 70. The Turkey Social Forum was established in 2005 with the initial signatures of 28 organizations, including DİSK, KESK, TMMOB, and others that were active during both the Global Justice Movement and in Taksim Solidarity.

<sup>73</sup> Elif İnce, "Gezi'nin Ağaçları Evlat Edinildi.," *Radikal*, February 13, 2012, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/gezinin-agaclari-evlat-edinildi-1078569/>.

<sup>74</sup> "Taksim Dayanışması Güncesi," *TMMOB Mimarlar Odası*, November 25, 2015, <http://www.mimarist.org/taksim-dayanismanisi-guncesi/>.

<sup>75</sup> "Yayalastırma Acil Olarak Durdurulmalı.," *Radikal*, June 6, 2012, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/yayalastirma-acil-olarak-durdurulmal-1090312/>.

<sup>76</sup> "Taksim Meydanıyla 'dayanışıldı': Taksim ranta kurban edilemez," *BaskaHaber*, October 15, 2012, <http://www.baskahaber.org/2012/10/taksim-meydanyla-dayansildi-taksim-ranta.html>.

<sup>77</sup> "Taksim Dayanışması Güncesi," *TMMOB Mimarlar Odası*.

<sup>78</sup> Kağan İsmen, "Öncesi ve Sonrası ...,," *Mimar.ist*.48 (Fall 2013): 62.

<sup>79</sup> "Taksim Dayanışması Güncesi," *TMMOB Mimarlar Odası*.

<sup>80</sup> İsmen, "Öncesi ve Sonrası ..."

protesters organized the First Taksim Gezi Park Festival with the support of Taksim Solidarity, other civil society organizations, and labor unions.<sup>81</sup> Around 40,000 people attended and the organizers “took oaths from tens of thousands of participants to stand up to the bulldozers in case they enter Gezi Park.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, by the end of May, when the police broke up what was remembered as the first Gezi Park protest, “hundreds of civic organizations [had] already [been] in coordination, using social media to make public calls for the space to be defended.”<sup>83</sup> This chronology illustrates how some of the same groups participated in both the Gezi Park and earlier protest movement and its earlier iteration. In light of such continuities, it can thus be argued that the existence of know-how and experiences from the Global Justice Movement, and its network of both formal and informal organizations, helped transform what would have been a single-issue action against a one-off urban renewal project in Gezi Park into a massive nationwide cycle of protest.<sup>84</sup>

The demands of the Gezi Park protesters, laid out semiofficially by Taksim Solidarity, were mostly national yet also specifically local. However, once protests spread around the country, protesters’ wider demands related to greater freedoms became more visible.<sup>85</sup> Given the interaction with protesters abroad and the embeddedness of Gezi Park protests in transnational networks,<sup>86</sup> it was not surprising to see slogans like “occupy Gezi,” “Resistanbul,” or “rebellion, revolution, freedom.” Similarly, the Gezi Park protests’ most famous and still-used slogan, “everywhere Taksim, everywhere resistance” (*her yer Taksim, her yer direniş*) is itself a testament to the continuities between the Global Justice Movement and the Gezi Park protests. It was adapted from a slogan first used in 2001 during a protest organized by KESK against neoliberal globalization and the summit of the Group of Eight (G8) in Genoa, Italy: “everywhere Genoa, everywhere resistance” (*her yer Cenova, her yer direniş*).<sup>87</sup>

Movements “adopt tactics that are familiar from previous use, or that they have observed to be effective for others,”<sup>88</sup> as was also the case with the protesters in Gezi. Two phenomena that came to be most identified with the

<sup>81</sup> “1. Taksim Gezi Parki Festivali,” TMMOB Elektrik Mühendisleri Odası, 2013, [http://www.emo.org.tr/genel/bizden\\_detay.php?kod=97551&tipi=15&sube=6](http://www.emo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=97551&tipi=15&sube=6). It should be noted that three smaller scale festivals were organized in the park in March 2012. For more information, see: “Traditional Gezi Park Festivals,” *Herkes İçin Mimarlık*, <https://herkesicinmimarlik.org/en/calismalar/traditional-gezi-park-festivals/> (accessed October 22, 2021).

<sup>82</sup> İsmen, “Oncesi ve Sonrası ...”

<sup>83</sup> Isabel David and Kumru F. Toktamış, “Introduction: Gezi in Retrospect,” in *Everywhere Taksim: Sowing the Seeds for a New Turkey at Gezi*, ed. Isabel David and Kumru F. Toktamış (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 18.

<sup>84</sup> Chiara Milan and Leonidas Oikonomakis, “‘Missing the Forest for the Trees’: From Single-Issue Protests to Resonant Mass-Movements in Greece, Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in *Social Movements in the Balkans: Rebellion and Protest from Maribor to Taksim*, ed. Florian Bieber and Dario Brentin (London: Routledge, 2018), 113–30.

<sup>85</sup> Arat, “Violence, Resistance,” 808.

<sup>86</sup> Milan and Oikonomakis, “‘Missing the Forest for the Trees,’” 118.

<sup>87</sup> “KESK’in Küreselleşme Karştı Eylemi,” *Radikal*, July 21, 2001, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=8652>.

<sup>88</sup> Whittier, “The Consequences of Social Movements for Each Other,” 533.

Gezi Park protests were the protests' use of social media and humor, both of which were regarded as novel in much of the press coverage at the time and even some of the scholarship since.<sup>89</sup> However, both built on precedents in Turkey. For example, the Global Justice Movement was already relying on internet platforms during the early 2000s, although such networks were not nearly as far-reaching as social media sites would become in the 2010s. During this earlier wave, websites and email groups were the main tools for activists to organize, disseminate information, and discuss logistics. By the time of the Gezi Park protests, a massive global social media infrastructure could be utilized by organizers and supporters. Indeed, there were more than 8 million tweets recorded within the first five days, using protest-related hashtags like #direngezi (literally “resist Gezi”).<sup>90</sup> The use of humor was also an adaptation from earlier protests, building off a long tradition of Turkish political humor exemplified by satirical magazines such as *Gırgır*, *Leman*, *Penguen*, and *Uykusuz*.<sup>91</sup> The Gezi protests have also often been represented as the first manifestation in Turkey<sup>92</sup> of “global occupations” during which protesters take control of a public space and set up a model of direct democracy through “self-management and mutual collaboration by forming a common kitchen, library, and health station.”<sup>93</sup> However, the Turkish labor movement had introduced such encampments on an even larger scale years before, during the TEKEL protests. A year after the state-owned tobacco and alcohol company TEKEL was sold to British American Tobacco, hundreds of its factory workers came to Ankara in December 2009 to protest their termination/reassignment to other public sectors, which jeopardized their social security status. Considered a late manifestation of the Global Justice Movement,<sup>94</sup> the workers staged a sit-in that turned into a tent city that evolved “in a bottom-up fashion with an expansive solidarity network emerging in due course that led to its depiction as the ‘Sakarya Commune,’”<sup>95</sup> named after the surrounding neighborhood. For seventy-eight days over the winter of 2009–10, protesters lived there, “cooking, sleeping and socializing with guests of solidarity in their tents of board, plastic wraps and whatever form of shelter they could obtain from the

<sup>89</sup> Sarfati, “Dynamics of Mobilization.”

<sup>90</sup> Meltem Banko and Ali Rıza Babaoğlu, *Gezi Parkı Sürecine Dijital Vatandaş'ın Etkisi* (Istanbul: authors, 2013), 18–21.

<sup>91</sup> Okan Taycan, “Gezi Hadisesi ve Mizah,” *Birikim*, October 9, 2013, <https://birikimdergisi.com/guncel/929/gezi-hadisesi-ve-mizah>.

<sup>92</sup> Mehmet Döşemeci, “Social Movement vs. Social Arrest: The Global Occupations of the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Long 1989: Decades of Global Revolution*, ed. Piotr H. Kosicki and Kyrill Kunakhovich (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2019): 209–30.

<sup>93</sup> Rittersberger-Tılıç, “Squatting,” 91.

<sup>94</sup> Yavuz Yıldırım and Selin Bengi Gümrükçü, “TEKEL-HES ve Gezi Parkı Protestoları Ekseninde Türkiye’de Eylem Dalgalarının Sürekliliği ve Değişimi,” *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 26 (January 2017): 388–405.

<sup>95</sup> Galip L. Yalman and Aylin Topal, “Labour Containment Strategies and Working Class Struggles in the Neoliberal Era: The Case of TEKEL Workers in Turkey,” *Critical Sociology* 45.3 (May 2019): 447–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920517711489>.

local merchants.”<sup>96</sup> Supported by TMMOB, the Sakarya Commune helped the labor movement to interface with the local public.<sup>97</sup> In addition, the same sloganeer formula popularized in the Gezi movement was originated in the TEKEL sit-in: “Everywhere TEKEL, everywhere resistance.”<sup>98</sup> Thus, the TEKEL resistance arguably set the stage for the Gezi Park protests by “undermining the commodity character of the public sphere” and showing that the public sphere can be reclaimed.<sup>99</sup>

## Conclusion

While the Gezi Park protests that erupted in May 2013 in Turkey have received a lot of attention from the academy, there seems to be no consensus in the literature as to how to frame them. This article has suggested that Gezi represents a *cycle*, carrying many of the same features as other periods of mobilization, both previous and subsequent; innovation, such as the emergence of “standing men” protests; transformative collective action frames; and intensified interactions between protesters and the state.

While the issue of framing might appear minor, the frame one uses to depict an episode of contention shapes the way it is analyzed. In suggesting that the events following the Gezi Park sit-in of May 28, 2013, represent a cycle of protest, this article has recognized that social movements and cycles of protests do not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they build on what preceded them, be it know-how, frames, organizational structures, or forms of actions. This is especially crucial for understanding the historical accumulation and culture of these movements and protest cycles as well as the history of collective action, whether in a specific context or internationally.

As pointed out in the literature, one episode of contention might shape another by impacting the political landscape,<sup>100</sup> by inspiring participants via observation or firsthand experience,<sup>101</sup> or by providing resources, especially organizational know-how. Within this framework, this article has argued that while one cannot eliminate the importance of participants’ agency, the Gezi Park protests should be read in relation to the former cycles of protests in Turkey, especially the local manifestations of the Global Justice Movement in the 1990s and 2000s, rather than as an isolated or utterly new and spontaneous event. As this article has showed, by the time the Gezi Park protests erupted in May

<sup>96</sup> Eriñç Yeldan, “TEKEL Workers’ Resistance: Re-Awakening of the Proletariat in Turkey,” *sendika.org*, January 30, 2010, <https://sendika.org/2010/01/tekel-workers-resistance-re-awakening-of-the-proletariat-in-turkey-erinc-yeldan-40352/>.

<sup>97</sup> Yavuz Yıldırım, “An Analysis of the TEKEL Resistance at Turkey in the Context of Social Movements,” *European Scientific Journal* 9.26 (Sept. 2013): 22.

<sup>98</sup> “TEKEL işçileri: 1 Nisan’da Ankara’dayız,” *Bianet*, March 28, 2010, <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/print/120937-tekel-iscileri-1-nisan-da-ankara-dayiz> (accessed October 22, 2021).

<sup>99</sup> Gülden Özcan, “TEKEL Resistance in Turkey: The Making of the Proletarian Public Sphere,” in *Contemporary Left-Wing Activism 1* (London: Routledge, 2018), 60.

<sup>100</sup> Tilly, *Contentious Performances*.

<sup>101</sup> Whittier, “The Consequences of Social Movements for Each Other.”

2013, there had already been an ongoing struggle against the urban transformation project in the area, with participation by groups and activists who had participated in earlier waves of protests.

As discussed, the Global Justice Movement in Turkey and the Gezi Park protests had many commonalities. First, they both opposed neoliberal policies implemented at the international and national level. Even though the focus of the Gezi Park protests shifted more to the impingement on freedoms and rising discretionary authoritarianism of the incumbent government once they gained nationwide attention and velocity, they began as a struggle against a prototypically neoliberal urban development plan that aimed to demolish a public space and build a high-end shopping mall in its place. Second, the two protest cycles shared an organizational base. The civil society organizations, professional associations, and labor unions that were active during the initial stages of protests trying to protect the Gezi Park had also been heavily involved in the emergence and diffusion of the Global Justice Movement to and within Turkey. Third, the two cycles' repertoires of action were quite similar. During both, protesters employed unconventional forms of action, including but not limited to festival-like performances, demonstrations, human chains, and sit-ins while heavily relying on internet technologies to organize and disseminate their message.

It should be emphasized, however, that the involvement of veteran activists and/or organizations from previous protest cycles and the use of similar forms of actions do not mean that the Gezi Park protests were not spontaneous. As discussed, research has showed that it was the harshness of the initial reaction of the police to the small group of protesters in the park – not the sit-in itself – that drove massive crowds onto the streets. Furthermore, many of those who joined the protests, especially youth, had not been previously active in politics or political organizations. This is in line with the argument in the literature on social movements that protests are shaped by interactions between movements and other movements, allies, adversaries, and, perhaps most importantly, the state and security forces. These various networks of interaction between the Gezi Park protests and preceding movements or cycles of protests and the third parties require further research.