1.5 Gezi Resistance from a Spatial and Gendered Perspective

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Introduction

On the 1st of June 2013, a giant spontaneous protest took place in Istanbul, spreading all over the country and turning into a countrywide uprising. Evolving from a modest movement made up by around 50 people, Gezi Uprising became a turning point in the resistance history of Turkey whose citizens in the western territories were not known to be rebellious in the face of their articulated discontent with the policies of the government who had been in power for more than a decade.

The conflict started due to the redevelopment plan of a public park in the centre of the city into a building complex consisting of a shopping centre, hotel, museum, and residences. Istanbul had already been turned into a construction site when the government decided to redevelop the Gezi Park, the last green area in the city centre. It was only a handful of people who had organised around Taksim Platform to prevent the demolition of Gezi Park. This Platform argued that the public space transformation projects were carried out in an anti-democratic way, with no regard to the voices of opposition or alternative minds who thought they needed to be included in the decision-making processes related to Taksim Square. But it had become a common practice for the government to impose its urban agenda despite the opposition of hundreds of organisations such as neighbourhood associations, environmentalists, political groups, and political parties. That is why there was a widespread assumption that the protesters would be suppressed by the police and the project would go on as it had happened in the case of many other urban projects initiated by the

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central government or municipal authorities. However, as police brutality towards this small group of activists in the park ascended, the number of people supporting them grew gradually in a week, culminating in an unrest that engaged millions of protesters throughout Turkey. Riot police was repelled from the area, the demolition of the Park was prevented, people occupied the park with their coloured LGBT flags and set up an autonomous commune that lasted for two weeks, until brutally being evicted. It was a unique and historical experience, the ramifications of which are still visible in Turkish street politics.

We were part of the events, and the question of how to theorize Gezi Park was already being discussed with friends at the beginning of June and it is still going on. "At the moment, I hear some people sitting next table, talking about `theorizing Gezi´", writes Sezen in one of our first e-mails concerning the present article. How to theorize something that happened spontaneously, something you experienced and had been part of? How to make it understandable to people who have not been there without imposing a certain theory on this complex resistance?

So far, there has been no fully-fledged explanation or a definitive and convincing answer as to why the resistance arose and who exactly was resisting. The reasons for the uprising continue to be debated and there are various accounts that explain it from various perspectives. As Gezi Resistance was a heterogeneous, multi-layered, and multi-classed movement (Yarasir, 2013), there are several sides to it.

In this article we will mainly deal with the urban and gender aspects of the resistance, as these elements have been present all the time. We will describe the reasons and triggers for the uprising within the context of the transformation of urban space and we claim that gendered character of the resistance was conspicuous. In the following, we will describe the reasons and triggers for the uprising within the context of the transformation of urban space. Further, we discuss the impact women and the LGBTQ community had in the uprising and how they are affected in a particular way by urban dynamics and conservative politics, as we see space as gendered. After giving "theorizing Gezi" a try, the

somewhat different Chronology will give an impression of our experiences in the protests.

As people who participated in the uprising, commonly referred to as Gezi Resistance or Gezi Uprising, we will mainly discuss it with particular reference to spatial characteristics of today's Istanbul, one of the factors that precipitated one of the largest civil uprisings in the history of Turkey. However, we do not intend to limit our analyses to Istanbul and treat it as a bounded space whose dynamics are decoupled from various parts of the country. Indeed, there is extensive research showing most other cities went through similar urban processes (for detailed scholarly discussions of urban transformation processes in different Turkish cities please see Armatli-Koroglu&Yalciner-Ercoskun, 2006; Yardimci, 2008; Guzey, 2009; Eren&Tokmeci, 2012; Saracoglu&Demirtas-Milz, 2014).

Urban Transformation in Istanbul: a state-led process of accumulation by dispossession

Gezi Resistance can neither be reduced to nor be understood in isolation from the recent urban processes Turkey's urban centres have undergone in the past few decades, the last 10 years in particular. One side to the uprising was the outbreak of the anger of the masses who were totally denied the right to have a say in the urban decision-making processes since all the legal and democratic mechanisms were blocked by the government. Relentlessly pursuing its urban agenda despite public outcry and refusing to listen to any alternative ideas while re-designing Istanbul, the government had clearly drifted to authoritarianism in its third go-round. In such a context, rebellion was the last resort for the oppressed Istanbulites who wanted to have a say in the designing of their city. The same was the case for the residents of many other cities who were unhappy both with the urban policies of their local governments and the authoritarian policies of the central government at large that pertained to various aspects of everyday life. Thus, in this paper, we have a positive understanding of conflict, interpreting it as an empowering tool for the disenfranchised. As

Simmel (1964) argues, conflict can be an efficient way of alleviating the oppression suffered and opposition provides one with inner satisfaction and relief. Advancing Simmel's approach that treats conflict like a safety-valve, in the case of Istanbul uprising we argue, drawing on Harvey (2012), that urban revolt is a necessity for those seeking the right to the city when the political power aims to reorganize urban life with an eye to the control of defiant populations and perpetuation of its hegemony. The right to the city, a notion offered by Henry Lefebvre (1968, 1996) calls for a restructuring of the power relations that govern the production of urban space.

Istanbul has undergone a massive spatial change in the past decade, which has had its repercussions in the lives of millions. Neoliberal urban policies initiated in the '90s were intensified during the rule of Justice and Development Party, AKP hereafter, who came to power in 2003 and set urban transformation as its primary goal. While the new urban regime generated revenues for the state and profit for construction and related industries, municipalities, and fortunate property owners, it meant social exclusion (Oz&Eder, 2012), dispossession, and displacement (Bartu-Candan&Kolluoglu, 2008; Unsal&Kuyucu, 2010; Yilmaz, 2012) for hundreds of thousands. Moreover, this neoliberal accumulation urban regime was interwoven with the conservative logic of political Islam (Karaman, 2013a) that sought to transform the urban space in line with its aspirations.

Displacement and dispossession that urban transformation gave rise to were possible through the state's active involvement and its deployment of various state apparatuses at its disposal. The 2003 victory of Justice and Development Party (AKP) in general elections allowed it to form the required majority to make laws, which allowed the central government to accelerate the neoliberal urban reforms that could not be realized at such pace until then because of the lack of consensus between the different parties forming the coalition governments. One significant policy of the AKP was to transform the Mass Housing Administration (MHA), a state institution established in 1984 to provide cheap housing for low-income citizens. Through a set of amendments to various laws pertaining to urban affairs, the MHA was turned into a powerful real-estate developer and the

primary instrument through which state-owned land could be transferred to private owners. The MHA was granted vast authorities by means of which it could build public-private partnerships and sell state-owned land to private businesses. With MHA projects, various public areas and buildings were turned into high-end residences, luxurious hotels or consumption complexes. In addition to state-owned spaces and buildings, the MHA was authorized to eliminate the illegally built houses, hereafter referred to as *gecekondu,* on public land, which existed as part of the state's social housing policy since the 1950s.

One of the most conspicuous changes in Istanbul's topography has been with housing settlements, when the state started to abandon its social housing policy in the 1990s. The social housing policy of the Turkish state was in no way similar to that of Western states. It functioned informally by allowing migrant workers to settle on the state land in the outskirts of the city. The workers were not legal settlers but the state tolerated their illegally building houses on geographically undesirable parts of the city because they provided the newly developing urban industry with cheap labour. The migrant workers' estates developed through the '70s and '80s and, despite being illegal on paper, they were provided infrastructural services. Some of these estates gained different tenure statuses and title deeds, mostly during election times as a result of populist policies of the governments who were aware of the voting potential of the areas (Erman, 2001). As Istanbul expanded, these areas, once in the peripheries of the city and settled by people whose only concern was to find a shelter rather than to make profits from the land, became central and profitable areas. The land value they had was the prime target of the government who led its accumulation policy through construction and real estate industry. Therefore, the 2000s witnessed a revanchist mode (Kuyucu & Unsal, 2010) of governance, which forced citizens to abandon their houses to live in the new peripheries of the city, remain homeless, or lead mortgage-based lives. With the housing Development Law No. 2985, amended and renewed in 2004 with the Law No. 5162, the MHA was granted with the authority to clear *gecekondu* areas (Yilmaz, 2012). Some of these areas had already been stigmatized by the

media as run-down crime and terror centres (Yılmaz 2012, Karaman 2013b), which reduced public support for urban struggles against displacements. With urban transformation, thousands of people in various parts of Istanbul were displaced (For detailed descriptions of cases, please see Bartu-Candan&Kolluoglu, 2008; Kuyucu&Unsal, 2010; Uysal, 2011, Aksoy, 2012; Karaman, 2013b) and either sent to housing estates built by the MHA in the outskirts of the city or made homeless. In addition to losing their houses, some of the displaced residents had to pay extra sums to be able to buy the apartments offered by the MHA. One consequence of this was taking out loans and becoming debt-ridden.

It was not only the low-income group living in *gecekondu* estates who were affected by the state's urban transformation projects. There were also middle class residents who were exposed in various ways to the merciless urban transformation agenda both because the government sought to incorporate them into the newly emerging mortgage market and was determined to make profit from each acre of land it could. In areas where residents had legal ownership, earthquake risk was used as a subterfuge to justify urban renewal (Uysal, 2012). The then president of the MHA, Erdoğan Bayraktar, who later became the Minister of Environment and Urban Planning, hailed 2011 as the "year of urban transformation" (Sabah Daily, 2011). In one of his 2013 speeches, he said the year 2013, the same year he had to resign as a result of a major corruption scandal he was involved in, would be a milestone in terms of the transformation of buildings under disaster risk, mostly referring to earthquake vulnerable areas. The residents living in such areas were either forced to sell their houses or take out mortgage loans to pay for the new one built on the same land. Those who took out loans had to work for long years to pay the debt or fail to pay and sell their houses. According to Mucella Yapıcı (2013), a board member of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects and a leading activist in Gezi Uprising, legal ownership has been invalidated through various laws and owners are forced either to accept the deals offered to them, selling their houses to the contractors or developers, or

submit to the financial dictates of the urban renewal laws, paying the price-gap if they want to live in the houses built in place of their old apartments.

Real estate boom turned the city into one of the world's leading real-estate markets. The city ranked the first in 2011 and 2012 in property market performance among 27 European cities and was the fourth after Munich and Berlin in 2013 (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013a). Not surprisingly, different groups were affected by the boom in different ways. While some property owners could make profits, it was not the case for all since neither those in power nor the investors were willing to share the generated profit unless they had to. As explained earlier, various mechanisms were used to negate home-ownership rights. Increasing real estate prices and rents meant denial of home ownership to those who could not afford and increased travel time for those who had to move to the peripheries for affordable housing. Not surprisingly, tenants were in a much more vulnerable position. And, it is no coincidence that women were among the vulnerable groups since according to the data of the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre (Haberturk, 2013), only %35 of estates belonged to women as opposed to 65% owned by men throughout the country, Istanbul having a very similar ratio.

Another corollary of the urban transformation projects was gentrification. While conceptualizing the term gentrification, we refer to Hacksworth (2002), who defines gentrification as "the production of space for progressively more affluent users" (Hacksworth, 2002:815), be it a residential district or not, a long term process whereby the working-class communities are replaced by more affluent settlers. As it spans a long period of time it may not be an immediately observable process whereby the subordinate groups leave their space to the more powerful ones (Ibid). Marcuse (in Slater 2009) defines four different types of displacement which extends from direct displacement whereby settlers are physically forced to leave their dwellings as a result of rent increases or suspension of basic facilities (such as electricity) by the landlord to displacement by pressure, which takes place when inhabitants in a gentrified area feel that their friends are leaving the neighbourhood and when the area

becomes less liveable for them as a result of the changes in the environment and services they received (Slater 2009:303-304). We argue that both direct and indirect displacement took place in the case of Istanbul.

A conservative restructuring of public space

As mentioned before, urban policy of the government was conservative in character. Since 1994, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality had been governed by the same political group, National Outlook, who had to appear under the name of different political parties due to court decisions closing their parties and the separation of the younger generation to form a more liberal party with a softer Islamic tone (Welfare Party of 1994-98, Virtue Party of 98-2004, Justice and Development Party of 2004-present). Although AKP maintained good relationships with the west unlike its antecedents and promised a more democratic regime to Turkish citizens, it failed to realize its promises. AKP's liberal policies that removed discrimination against non-seculars[2] in public space were not accompanied by further expansion of rights long demanded by several civil rights organisations, which contradicted the party's claims to improve the democracy profile of the country. On the contrary, having been elected the third time, the party drifted to authoritarianism and abandoned the liberal tone it once had. Prohibitions on alcohol sale, increasing practice of sex segregation (Karaman, 2013a), clearing the tables from the streets of nightlife districts such as Beyoğlu, and providing aid to the urban poor through municipalities in a benevolent and paternalist manner can also be given as examples of conservative urban policies followed by the government.

Prohibitions on alcohol sale and consumption was one among many policies that caused discomfort among the secular populace. At only 1.5 litres a year Turkey has the lowest per capita alcohol consumption rate in Europe (OECD,

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2 Lifting the ban on headscarf in universities can be counted as on of the few liberal policies of the government.

2012), and around 79% of the population does not touch alcohol at all (WHO, 2005), a figure which belies the justification of the government that the law is enforced due to public health concerns. Moreover, consumption did not follow an upward trend (WHO, 2005), it was stable, which obviated the popular question raised during heated disputes by those supporting the ban, "would you prefer to be like the Europeans and restrict alcohol sales then, when it's too late?"

Unlike in Europe, in Turkey alcohol consumption in streets is not an acceptable or usual activity in many rural and urban areas[3]. Bars and pubs are mainly male venues not only in small cities but also in many districts of metropolitan centres. The presence of women in such places is an exception and women working here tend to be stigmatized. Entertainment districts and metropolitan centres are exceptional places in that alcohol consumption is a mundane activity and the presence of women is acceptable. Therefore, government-enforced restrictions and prohibitions on alcohol unfold in a very different context than do the laws regulating alcohol consumption in many European countries, who would only look on Turkey's alcohol profile with envy.

Both consumption and sale of alcohol was banned in all university campuses, "the sale of alcohol was banned within a designated distance around mosques; drinking was restricted at open air events and at public concerts and exhibitions; restaurants were forbidden from advertising alcohol; and its sale in many coastal vacation spots was restricted, purportedly based on fears of violence" (Ze'evi, 2013:5) despite the objections from the secular citizens. Legal regulations were accompanied by increased social pressure on those who consumed alcohol as conservatives knew that they were backed by the

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3   This is with the exception of Western Marmara, the region bordering with Bulgaria and Greece, which has a very old tradition of alcohol consumption. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Health, with 20%, the region (encompassing three provincial centres) has the highest alcohol consumption rates in the country. http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/26431/Bakanlik_en_cok_alkol_tuketilen_bolgeleri_a rastirdi.html

government and official authorities. The imposition of alcohol ban was stricter in less visible areas of the country as there was less public and media attention directed to the conflicts emerging in these locales. Ergin (2012) gave such examples in July 2012: the "rapid decrease in the number of venues in Anatolia that serve alcohol, the fact that their alcohol permits are not renewed by municipalities run by the ruling party (AKP), that these kind of venues are forced to relocate outside the cities and that an alcohol ban has been imposed at certain teacher's lodges" (Hurriyet Daily News, 2012). The government was subject to both public and media criticism while regulating alcohol sale and consumption. When criticized for imposing religion upon secular people using public health as subterfuge, the Prime Minister tended to retort angrily, insulting the secular populace and stigmatizing alcohol consumers as drunkards (Haberturk, 2011) and stoned (NTVMSNBC, 2013).

Moreover, many politicians of the AKP, the Prime Minister in particular, aimed to discipline women's bodies through their discourses and policies and ignored the feminists women who said in their protests "we want both the streets and the nights". It was not the case that women had enjoyed liberties and equal status with men before the AKP, but the actions and the policies of the party were in stark contrast to its promises and claims to bring advanced democracy to the country. Although the government demonstrated it was powerful enough to transform the military and many other entrenched institutions in the name of consolidating democracy, with its gender policies AKP revealed that the discourse of democracy constituted a legitimising tool to establish its hegemony and transform state apparatuses to serve itself and like-minded elites. Feminist and LGBT groups were unhappy with the AKP's unwillingness to work toward more balanced gender relations and refusing to pass related laws, such as ignoring the LGBT demands that the phrases "sexual identity and gender identity" should also be included in the Equality Clause (Article10) of the new Constitution.

Examples can be multiplied, but a couple would suffice to explain why the troubled relationship with the state of women, feminists and LGBT's did not

seem to end with the AKP era: the 2008 Minister of Family and Women's Affairs stated that she considered homosexuality as a disease that should be treated. Conservative approaches of the government perpetuated women's sense of insecurity in the streets of the city, and feminists argued that what they were exposed to in the streets could not be thought of as independent from state's gender policies. Istanbul witnessed many feminist protests against the practices and ideologies aiming to limit women's presence in the urban sphere. For instance, in 2008, a woman who went fishing in her leggings in a touristic spot, Galata Bridge, was complained about to the police by male fishers around and taken into custody (Gulbahar, 2008). The court gave her five-months of prison sentence according to the law No 225, which regulated and defined "immoral behaviours". According to the court, her "immoral behaviour" was wearing leggings and her sentence was postponed (Ibid). Although the woman claimed that she was harassed by the police and exposed to both physical and psychological torture at the police station, her claims were not taken into consideration by legal authorities. This attitude was familiar to women who were accustomed to sexual harassment of police officers and riot police in mass gatherings and protests and who found no support when they appealed to legal or political authorities. Also, despite having the authority and resources the government had done nothing to address the concerns of the LGBT groups most of whom lived in precarious conditions in major urban centres. The attitude of the AKP towards the LGBT individuals and women was in stark contrast to its claims to improve the human rights and democracy profile of the country. All these consequences of Istanbul's recent urban trajectory and the conservative restructuring of public space are relevant while explaining the composition of women and LGBT who joined the uprising and the ways they participated, which will be explained in the next sections of the article.

Gezi Women

Women and LGBT's presence was clearly visible in Gezi Resistance, which was met by surprise since these groups were excluded from, or underrepresented in, many spheres of life in Turkey. Their presence was crucial both because the most desirable woman according to the society was the one who stayed at home and because these groups were prone to police harassment during protests and men's harassment during public spectacles and concerts organized in Taksim Square in almost every New Year's Eve. It was known that these groups had a long history of protesting to the state. However, it was also common knowledge that they felt more insecure than men did when they were in the streets and public gatherings as bearers of political and social identities that did not comply with the dominant social and political norms. Despite all the disincentives, women and LGBT made their presence clear because they had their peculiar social, thereby spatial, experiences that took them there.

Just as Gezi movement was a heterogeneous movement, Gezi women displayed a huge diversity among themselves. Most mass media emphasized aesthetic images of young urban women resisting police brutality, portraying the movement as white-middle class in character, which was handy for the hegemonic bloc who wanted to delegitimize the protesters by stigmatizing them as a handful of elites wanting to keep their priorities. However, it would be too contentious to talk about a monolithic group of women who were mobilized due to a set of common reasons and voiced shared concerns. By saying this, we do not claim that there were insurmountable or clear-cut distinctions between them. On the contrary, because "gender is deeply implicated in the ways in which we inhabit and experience space and place" (Massey 1994:164) women in Gezi protests had some common experiences and stakes as women. According to the social psychological model used to explain why people participate in collective movements, one key component determining the participation of individuals in collective movements is the feeling of injustice perceived by the individual (Van Zomeren et. al.:2008). Drawing on this theory, Ulug and Acar

(2013) argue that it was the sense of injustice what was common to most women in Turkey as they were exposed to unjust treatment in various spheres of public and private life. However, they were also positioned differently to the movement as they fed from various different experiences. Space is not only gendered, but it is also classed and ethnicized, which explains the differences in Gezi women's situations.

Cidamli (2013) states that among various groups of women, three were prominent: urban women of a relatively higher socio economic status, women as mothers who knew that their children were in the park and around the barricades, and women in relatively low-income neighbourhood or *gecekondu* areas awaiting urban renewal and demolition. The first group was overrepresented by both the national and international media who sought to aestheticize the uprising or portray it from men's perspective. Also, they were more visible as they were mostly in and around the park during park occupation days. Most of them were either relatively well-educated or politicized urban women who lived in or close to the central areas of the city. There were university students, feminists, creative workers, scholars, and professionals of relatively high income among them. A pronounced concern voiced by this group was the patriarchal ideas and policy suggestions in line with these of the government seeking to control women's bodies[4].

Almost every day, Turkish newspapers were replete with sexist and discriminatory comments of AKP politicians, which aroused anger and sense of insecurity among many women. Feminists argued that such discourses had material consequences, contributing to the existing disadvantaged situation of women in Turkey, and warned the politicians through various means to watch their language so as not to encourage the deeply entrenched woman-hostile

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4 We do not claim that the rest of Gezi women had no concerns regarding government intervention in women's bodies, but due to various reasons urban women of relatively higher socio economic status and politicized urban women were more visible in protests against government's sexist policy proposals such as the abortion law.

beliefs and attitudes in the society. The Prime Minister advised women in a 2008 speech, on Women's day, to give birth to at least three children, stated he did not believe women and men were equal (in 2010) and abortion amounted to murder (in 2012). Some of the ideas of AKP politicians were translated into practice and patriarchal laws while some failed due to public outcry. In the 2010 amendment to the article 10 of the Constitution, women were categorized in the same group as children, elderly, the disabled, and war widows. In 2011, despite the opposition of various women's groups, the government replaced the State Ministry Responsible for Women and Family with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In 2012, the government attempted to ban or limit abortion, by submitting a draft law on the existing abortion law that legalized it within 10 weeks of pregnancy. However, they had to give up due to both their failure to get sufficient support from its own women voters and the reaction of women's groups, civil society organizations, and the public in general (sendika.org&Ozkazanc, 2013). There were clear signs in Gezi, such as slogans, graffiti, and discussions, that AKP's patriarchal policies played a significant role in the anger against the party and the PM. In various cities of the country, people held placards and painted the streets saying "Hey, Tayyip, Are you sure? Do you want three children like us?"

Cidamli (2013) states the second group of women was related to the park mostly through their children, feeling the need to care for them. "A lot of them live in *gecekondu*s, so they feel this perpetual threat of being evicted any time. They have a precarious relation with the city because they might be exiled" says Cidamli (2013) while describing Gezi mothers. These women's presence was visible in the park through their labour and their presence made the park a home-like place. They cooked for the park residents, regularly called their children to check if they were all right, and some stayed in the park during some nights as they felt the need to care for the young people in the park. The day after the governor of Istanbul said, "we are concerned about the safety of your children: come and take them home", mothers from various backgrounds formed a human-chain and expressed their solidarity with their children. It was a

time when motherhood was politicized and operationalised to rise against injustices of political powers.

The third group of women, Cidamli (2013) argues, participated in Gezi protests by marching in their neighbourhoods, where urban transformation was imminent. These women marched thinking that they could stop the destruction of their houses. They did not attract media attention at all, but made the Gezi Resistance known to a larger population, especially to those who did not have the resources or interest to visit the park.

We all require to transform the space in line with our own desires and Gezi women sought to do so in many ways. As Massey (1994) argues, our sense of spaces and places are gendered through and through, and in various different ways that may change across cultures and over time. Women not only reclaimed their spaces but made it clear that they did not experience space in the same way as men did. They were aware, as Daly (1991) put it, one shaped their symbolic conceptions of the world through language, and all forms of symbolizations were patriarchal since they were created and are controlled by men. Hence, a crucial attempt of them was to transform the language of the resistance. They showed their reaction to the sexist slogans and expressions of anger directed to the PM and the government. They painted on sexist slogans in the streets and marked them with purple feminas. In this way, they turned the park and the streets of the city into a space of learning for those lacking feminist awareness. Football fans, whose vocabulary was overwhelmingly sexist, wanted the feminists and LGBTs to teach them non-sexist and non-homophobic curses (Okatan&Tar, 2013).

"Almost from the beginning, the presence of women in cities, and particularly in city streets, has been questioned, and the controlling and surveillance aspects of city life have always been directed particularly at women. Urban life potentially challenged patriarchal systems" (Wilson, 1991 in Massey 1994:167), but it cannot be reduced to contingencies or fortuitous conditions. Women have a long history of reclaiming their right to public spaces such as the urban space, where they have been excluded or restricted whenever they wanted to be

present (Berktay, 2013). They have been blamed for lacking morals and chastity when they went into streets (Ibid). During Gezi resistance, women's presence in the streets at night became acceptable and respectable (Cidamli, 2013). Therefore, spatial experiences like Gezi are crucial to overcome the dualities women are locked into. Throughout the resistance, women emphasized the right to be present in the urban centres and to love as liberated subjects (Ibid). According to Berktay (2013), during resistance women used love as a means of liberation. It was an experience that they experimented with their bodies and the potentials bodily awareness offered to them. Media images which tried to aestheticize the resistance resonate with Berktay's argument. Alternative media published images of protesters as lovers – hand in hand, kissing, hugging, doing victory signs- behind the barricades, fires, and in the streets of the city that were associated with the resistance.

The labour of Gezi mothers was a crucial contribution in terms of transforming the park into a space of use value. One of the most valued things in the park was home-made food. They cooked both in the Gezi kitchen and in their houses to pack and send the food to the kitchen. They feminized the park and turned it into a home-like place. Another significant contribution of Gezi mothers was increasing the legitimacy of the resistance. They opened the doors of their houses to the protesters running away from the riot police in the streets of Istanbul. They helped the protesters in the streets by providing them with first aid, mostly in the form of water and Talcid, which reduces the effect of tear-gas. In response to the statements of the officials and AKP members that protesters were marginals, terrorists or vandals, protesters shared the pictures of women who looked like typical mothers. Under many pictures, it was written: "a marginal aunt helping the protesters". These moments were both the politicization of the mothers and de-politicization of the resistance. Resistance became a mundane and a more legitimate activity when mothers were involved. Moreover, by taking sides in the resistance, thereby politicising motherhood, women opened cracks in the dominant official discourses that evoked motherhood as the sole responsibility of women.

LGBT participations in the uprising

Gezi Park is located next to Taksim and Tarlabaşı neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu district. When we analyse the gender composition of these neighbourhoods, it becomes clear how the way these neighbourhoods and Gezi Park are transformed fits into the ideals of conservative urbanisation. As "transness is an urban phenomenon[5], an identity specific to time and space" (Saltan, 2013: vii) it is no wonder that trans individuals are affected by the urban processes around themselves, and therefore desire to be included in the decisions pertaining to it. Apart from being a part of the urban life as citizens, what makes Gezi Park and its surrounding particularly important for LGBT people is that these areas, we shall call it Beyoğlu area for practical reasons, have the highest population density of LGBT individuals in the country, and these people have a history of displacement, violence, and exclusion.

Beyoğlu and especially Taksim with the İstiklal Avenue is a tourist area with lots of stores, cafés, restaurants and bars. It is a lively area that keeps ready several opportunities for meeting friends and going shopping. It represents a perfect consumption area, welcomed by the ruling AKP – at least during the daytime. But Beyoğlu is also one of the most popular night-life districts in Istanbul. It is a heterogeneous area which "brings people from different backgrounds together, such as non-Muslim people, people of Romani origin, people of Kurdish origin etc. – who also have long been subject to violence. *Gayrimeşru* [which means illegitimate, unlawful and out of wedlock] world of Beyoğlu thus consists of ethnic, religious, sexual minorities – unlawful children that were born out of wedlock" (Saltan, 2013:14). Different worlds meet and coexist in Beyoğlu, with

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5 Saltan defines "transness as an urban phenomenon, an identity specific to time and space", "a spatial and a temporal term" (3), "an umbrella term that is beyond gender and sexuality[...] it is defined as an identity specific to certain time and space, an urban phenomenon, a subculture defined by sex, gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity." (6). Class "becomes the most prominent factor in determining the relationship between heteronormativity and transness, and that regulates the distribution of urban space in Istanbul" (4).

five-star hotels blinking at the posh avenues, but the "backstreets [are] inhabited by displaced immigrants" (Ibid:14). With so much diversity, in Beyoğlu, compared to the rest of the country, it is much easier to escape from curious gazes and evade surveillance.

However, gentrification processes tended to threaten this cosmopolitan composition of Beyoğlu district. LGBT individuals had long been familiar with displacement and eviction in Beyoğlu area. In the late 1980s, many transgender individuals in Cihangir[6] neighbourhood were brutally evicted from the area through a joint work of neighbourhood residents, city officials, police, certain NGOs, and the media (Bayramoğlu, 2013). When an area is transformed into "a profitable neighbourhood, that is to say a middle-class environment, politically and economically vulnerable social groups are the first ones to suffer" (Ibid:3). LGBT individuals had the first-hand experience to know this. After being gentrified, Cihangir became a place with cafés, galleries and antique shops (Ibid). It is then no wonder that with their memories of dispossession and displacement, LGBT individuals were against further projects that aimed to homogenize and gentrify the Taksim area. It is no surprise that LGBT associations have participated in Gezi protests since it´s beginning, "organized distribution points for food and drinks, [...] provided first medical aid to protesters hit by the police, as many other groups did" (Kaos Gl, 2013).

As mentioned above, Beyoğlu has the highest population density of LGBT individuals in the country, but surprisingly has no gay neighbourhood; instead lots of Trans folk created a "trans ghetto" (Saltan, 2013:17), in which they are "visible day and night" (Ibid:18). Although they are visible at day, night-life differs and Gezi Park is a prime example for that: "Gezi Park, which in the daylight is a paradise for families looking for a green corner, at night becomes

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6 Cihangir is in Beyoğlu area. Today it is heavily populated by artists and creative workers. People in the area experienced both indirect gentrification that took place when housing become less affordable, and direct gentrification as in the case of the forced eviction of many trans individuals.

the republic of a proletarian and almost anarchist homosexuality which prefers the trees along Mete street to chic gay clubs, when in search for a quickie, a male prostitute, a love...", (Kaos GL, 2012) describes Kaos Gl[7]. Gezi Park is a cruising area, "where gay people meet each other, make friends, organize sexual encounters". Gezi Park can be seen as a night space, which is formed by night and night, often "associated with certain activities and possibilities, whether they entail criminal acts, a rendezvous for lovers, nonconventional behaviors, organizing for rebellion" (William, 2008:518). In this sense, it has "deterritorializing aspects" (Ibid). The way it is experienced by the LGBT constitutes a counterhegemonic production of space. As a night space, it constitutes a threat for a conservative, normative society: subcultures have the opportunity to "express different conceptions of what it means to be a human being, flouting normality and conventionality" (Ibid:519). Further heteronormative coding of a space can be changed by night and allows "counter-hegemonic practices by marginalized groups" (Ibid:520). Leisure spaces as counter-spaces, have a "potential for resistance to hegemonic values and social norms, such as opposition to the linear rhythms of work or perhaps the expression of human joy that is not commodified" (Ibid:520). These "deterritorializing aspects of darkness" lead to the wish of governmental and commercial actors to bring back "conventional order and regularity in the darkness" (Ibid:521) and it gets clear, why the conservative neoliberal AKP ruled government is interested in transforming the district and the park.

Following Williams, different strategies are used to control, or reterritorialize the night for keeping a hegemonic order: channeling, marginalization, and exclusion. Channeling directs activities and desires into the socially

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7 "The purpose of the Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Researches and Solidarity Association (Kaos GL) is to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans individuals in embracing libertarian values, realizing their own existence, and in cultivating themselves in order to contribute to the development of social peace and welfare together with the development of their individual, social and cultural life and behavior." see Kaos GL 2011.

"appropriate" places. Therefore technologies of illumination and advertising are used, whereas marginalization effects categorize groups of people as "socially inferior, dangerous, or both – and thereby to spatially segregate them from other parts of the city" (Williams, 2008:522). The strategy of exclusion creates "superordinate places of security or consumption" and "is a type of spatial segregation" (Ibid:523). By trying to transform a night space like the Gezi Park into a shopping mall and by trying to get the whole Beyoğlu district under control by prohibition of alcohol, bans of protest, all the reterritorializing strategies are used.

Beyoğlu and the Gezi Park as a night space, and especially the transness of that place, functions in a stark contrast to what is dictated by heteronormative family structures. When we take into consideration the genderedness of that space, we see something beyond class, the intersection of class with gender. Hegemonic powers aim to prevent any emancipatory potential in and around Taksim, redesigning the area in line with neoliberal and conservative values. However, the success of Gezi Resistance worked against to this ideal. During the protests, people came into contact with LGBT differently: "Homosexual and transgender activists [...] tried to persuade them [other protesters] not to use any more homophobic, transphobic, misogynist slogans... The results were surprising: the chorus most often used by fans ("Erdoğan is a fag [ibne]") became "Erdoğan is sexist", while also anti-capitalist Muslims participated in the Pride, along with tens of thousands of Turks that, thanks to the common struggle for Gezi Park, have known and finally understood their "non-heterosexual" fellow-citizens" (Kaos GL, 2013).

The atmosphere in Gezi Park created by people was a consciousness raising and learning experience for the participants. LGBT groups organised workshops during resistance days to raise awareness on gender issues. One could see the striking banners announcing the workshops, one of which was "everything you want to know about being a fag". For the first time in their lives, many heterosexuals saw themselves belonging to the same category with LGBTs: *direnisci* (resisting people). It is not common to see male-looking people in high

heels and with heavy make-up in crowded public spaces where families hang around, but Gezi Park witnessed such scenes during occupation days. The spirit of solidarity allowed the LGBT individuals to deconstruct the mainstream conceptions of what a public gathering looked like.

The last week of June 2013 was pride week and the theme was resistance. With the solidarity of Gezi protesters, the parade has been the most crowded one so far, with around forty thousand people marching in the parade. It is a great achievement compared to the first parade with 40 people eleven years ago, most of whom had to cover their faces. Just like the Gezi uprising, and unlike pride parades in most parts of Europe, it was spontaneous, heterogeneous, and multilayered. Karaahmet (2013) provides their impressions of the parade as follows: "in Gay Prides abroad there is a barrier between those marching, and the public can watch and support them behind the barriers. But in Istanbul the parade encompassed the whole street, and anyone who wanted could join or watch by. But seeing the fanfare, nobody wanted to remain as onlookers. Everybody wanted to jump into the crowd."

The somewhat different Chronology

Starting point

Let's take the night of **27th of May** as a beginning of the uprising: bulldozers start to cut down trees in Gezi Park without valid permission from the court, but could be stopped by activists. On the next day, **28th of May,** more people are informed by activist networks[8] and come to demonstrate against the demolition. Again bulldozers start to tear down trees and it is an emotional dramatic scene. When a friend manages to climb into one of the trees which is about to be torn down by the bulldozer, it gets more dramatic. More police are coming. They put up fences to prevent the trees from being protected and start shooting gas when they cannot stand the protesters shouting anymore. Sırrı Surreya Önder from BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and Gülseren Onanç from CHP (Republican People´s Party) places themselves in front of the bulldozer and demand to see the permission. As they are members of parliament the police are not allowed to touch them. The demolition stops.

This day is important because it's the foundation for the protest: everything is spontaneous, no one is prepared, the police did not know how to treat the protesters. The woman with the red dress, *kırmızı elbiseli kadın*, is there on that day. She was pepper sprayed directly into the face, which was luckily captured by a photographer unlike much of the police brutality that took place in the park. The picture of her spread through social media and immediately became stylized as one of the symbols of the protest. The people participating in the protests don´t leave their homes without vinegar, milk and lemons as antidotes against the tear gas from that day onwars.

It is indignation that makes more people come the next day. They come and stay overnight, make music and there is a good mood after this brutality. Now,

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8 Mainly by Taksim Platform and the the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects.

there is hope and good feelings; something is going to happen. The morning of the **29th of May** is peaceful. People are planting new trees, and increasing numbers of people come. They bring tents, instruments and celebrate the fact that they saved the park. At 5:00 am on the morning of the **30th of May,** riot police attack the peaceful protesters with water cannons and tear gas. They burn tents, drums and personal items. Karaman (2013c) explains what happened in the initial days as follows:

> one could almost sense an air of brazen assurance in the way that the police pepper-sprayed the activists one by one as if exterminating uninvited insects, and burned their tents and possessions in a bonfire set in the middle of the park. The apparent expectation was that the protestors would be silenced, as they had been in many previous cases, and any potential supporters or sympathizers would be intimidated.

However, unlike the general expectation, instead of being scared off by police brutality, more and more people come the next day and get prepared for the resistance. Again in the morning, at 05.00 am on the **31st of May,** gas masks and vinegar, scarfs, Talcid, milk, goggles are put on. But they are not yet strong enough when police attack. Riot police encircle the park, coming from all sides to drive the protesters out. The number of the protesters increase after 18:00, as many people go to the park after work. Yet the police push the protesters out and manage to block the park with barriers. In front of the Divan Hotel the clashes go on during the day, and also there are fights in İstiklal Avenue.

Then it´s weekend. Saturday, **1st of June** when it gets really big. The ferries from Asia to Europe are cancelled in order to prevent protesters from going to Taksim Square. That's why there are thousands who decide to walk across the bridge. The bridge is a one kilometre long six lane highway. Thousands are flocking into Taksim Square. All the streets leading to the square are swarming with people. One can still hear the noise created by gas bombs and smell the caustic chemicals used by the riot police. It is so crowded at Taksim Square, İstiklal Avenue, Gümüşsuyu, and everywhere around the park that it is no longer possible to enter the Square. As five women, trying to go into the square using Gümüşsuyu route, we are all surprised by the crowd and some of us cannot believe we aren't harassed at all, in the most crowded and packed event

of our lives. We try an alternative route to go into the Park, but the police is still tear gassing this street. We suppose that they will keep doing so the whole day. But to our surprise, the gassing stops and the police retreats. Their profuse use of the gas was just a valedictory treat. In return, fighters in the front rows exchange goodbye remarks with their non-technological and innocent instruments. We are in Gezi Park, with no police,and no state! This mass of people and surely some fighters in the front row – with big support of the Beşiktaş football-fan-club – manage to rush the police out of the park.

It is a mood of excitement in the park. Everyone is anxious, but full of energy and hope to have the power to change something. Most of the people took part in a protest for the first time in their lives and learnt that they have power. But this is just the beginning, the struggle will continue: *Bu daha başlangınç, mücadeleye devam!*

Urban Utopia

1st of June is the day where the time of the autonomous Gezi Park begins. Barricades are put up around the park. People collect garbage, plant trees and start to put up their fortress. In the next days, Gezi Park becomes the well of resistance. Even on workdays, crowds of people flock here. Everything else has been relegated to second place: work, university, travel plans. In the park are some first aid points, where you can find everything you need: water, food, medicine, blankets and more. They've even built a stretcher to bring those with injuries straight here. There is a kitchen in the old tea garden where free food is distributed. As soon as you find a free patch of grass to sit down, someone comes and dishes out food and drink. People are bringing useful donations to the park, as things get established in this new fortress: setting up beds, stringing up hammocks, music, dancing and singing, dance performances, workshops are on offer, and all around are decorated trees and graffiti. In one corner, they're digging the soil over to set up a garden. In another corner they're setting up a small library. The materials for all this great creative activity are

easy to come by because the park is right next to a huge construction site where you'll find everything you could possibly need in abundance: sheet metal, wooden boards, nails, stone, wire, steel and more besides.

The Atatürk Cultural Centre in Taksim Square has been empty due to renovation work and therefore has also been occupied without further ado, for it's in the secured zone. Flags and banners have been hung up, and two musicians are making the most of the acoustics to play the violin. If you circuit around the occupied area, you can see the barricades. They are impressive and in one of the largest access roads to Taksim are 14 barricades, one after another. All the traffic that normally passes this way is somehow finding another route without organised diversions.

People in Gezi Park were living an Urban Utopia. They experienced a huge solidarity in the Gezi Commune, contrary to the ideal of urban competitiveness promoted by the government. It was an alternative community demonstrating an alternative utilisation of public space. Money was not an acceptable currency in the park. As opposed to exchange value, it was use value that mattered. The Commune kitchen served free food to everyone who lined up. People could donate food, drink, clothes, medical and cleaning supplies to the commune, but not money. They slept in tents built on the land where the government planned to build a luxury hotel. The protesters occupied their space and experienced an appropriation of urban space according to their own desires. It was a space that functioned in such a stark contrast to what the sovereign imagined. In the Gezi Commune, there was no state violence because the police were banned, no cash flow because everything was free, and no authoritarian politics but instead forums with direct democracy. An ideal public space was created, where different aspects and perspectives had been present at the same time and made something unique possible: different people contributed with their individual abilities and made themselves agents of history.

The abilities of people were valued by each other. It was a productive mutual learning, an interaction process in which people understood, that they could resist if they united and created an alternative to the government-imposed

lifestyle. In the park people felt responsible for their surroundings and it was an interesting experience to witness how people organized themselves, how everyone found their task and ways of decision-making or reaching a consensus. Different groups, even from different football clubs who had been fighting against each other previosly, united in solidarity. Next to the football fans there were the feminists, who painted over sexist slogans and explained that Gezi Park and its surroundings was no space for sexism. The anti-capitalist Muslims organised a workshop about sexuality and religion together with the LGBT activists. Kurdish people, nationalists, leftists, old and young chanted slogans together[9].

The Park was the creative source of the resistance: urban gardening, workshops, music, yoga, lectures, dancing, concerts, t-shirt prints and much more. The creativity seemed to be endless and several different forms of protest were created: banging on pots and pans, news exchange via internet, joke calls to TV shows who didn't talk about the protest, the performance of the standing man, the dancing dervish with the gas mask, protest-songs, biking around the Taksim Square or organizing a water fight in front of the water cannons. The people did this with an enormous power, support, creativity, solidarity and humour. "Tayyip – connecting people" was one of the jokes and indeed it was like that.

These are some of the incredibly important positive aspects of Gezi Resistance, but not all cities had this kind of situation. There have been lots of violent clashes in Ankara, Izmir and other major cities as well as in various districts of

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9 We would like to caution against romanticizing the co-existence in the park. We acknowledge that there were sexist and racist moments but they did not translate into violence, which surprised us. It was the first time in a predominantly non-Kurd space, we witnessed the Turks, notorious for their instinctive reactions in issues that tap their nationalist veins, just standing and watching the Kurds singing in Kurdish and dancing with the Kurdistan flag. For a Kurdish reflection on the issue, please see http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/396-a-look-at-gezi-park-from-turkey-s-kurdistan

Istanbul, some resulting in serious injuries or death. So outside the autonomous Gezi Park, the horror went on: On the **6th of June** Erdoğan returns from his trip to North Africa. It is a big spectacle, a huge event. His supporters have been brought to the Atatürk airport to welcome and support him. Every TV Channel broadcasts his speech. He says, or shouts, that the protests have to stop immediately (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013b). On Twitter is an opinion on the summary of his speech. "TurkishCrimeMinister is literally inviting the civil war. I hope no blood spills tomorrow. Round 2 has began." Erdoğan calls the protesters looters and marauders (Çapulçu), even linked to terrorists (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013c). This presentation is scaremongering. The label Çapulcu immediately turns into a self-label by the so called protesters and is even brought into English: "everyday I´m chapulling". The next day, **7th of June,** six newspapers are published with the same headline, by a seeming coincidence. It is a quote from Erdoğan's speech in which he blames the protesters for being vandals and some being terrorist groups: "We welcome democratic demands". The people in the park stay calm, Gezi-University gives a course, the vegetables in the Gezi-Garden grow. One tent is for children, the Gezi-Kindergarden. And there is lot of humour. People take their power from laughing, from the irony of all these events (BBC, 2013). Artists support the protest with songs, like the band Türk Kardesler (Youtube, 2013a) with their hymn to the pots and pans protests.

But all that does not help, when on the **11th June 2013,** at 7:30, the police comes back to Taksim Square. Turkish Media, who refrained from reporting about the protesters killed or left blind by police brutality, now shows nothing but images of a handful of alleged protesters throwing Molotov cocktails at the police. The water cannons are unable to drive away the demonstrators because the water pressure is too low. For some everything is staged; while others believe that even if it is real, in no way can it rival the untrammelled state violence and pain inflicted on people who demanded their democratic rights. While the Turkish mainstream media is doing it´s job, adherents of the ruling party flock into the social media, blaming the protesters for being vandals,

atheists, alcoholics, Armenians, Jewish, Greeks, non-Muslims, terrorists, gays, betrayers, coup supporters, prostitutes, and anything one could be.

The police are in the square, where they remove flags and banners from the Atatürk Culture Centre and the Atatürk statue. A group of peaceful demonstrators manage to form a human chain around the park to "protect" it. But the peaceful mood is shattered when water cannons are set off in the square. Stones fly, water cannons shoot indiscriminately in all directions. At the first aid point in the park are more and more injuries. People are brought to the park's medical team with bleeding wounds, some unconscious. Gas has been thrown directly into the park (Bianet, 2013a). The whole night there has been clashes with the police: tear-gas, water, plastic bullets and injured people. When we enter the park in the next morning it is not a pretty sight. But people are coming, cleaning, and collecting. Again police are gathering at the square. Some ask why when there is no need for this provocation. Clearance vehicles start to tear down the barricades. On the other side, there is the same picture.

That is the end of the autonomous zone, and it is just a question of time until the park will be touched too. Erdoğan asks the protesters to finish the protest within 24 hours (Hurriyet Daily News 2013d). But there is no eviction. Erdoğan says he wants to meet with activists and find a democratic solution. But out of 11 people invited, only one is from Taksim Platform and no other significant actors who the protesters rely on are included. Many of the others invited are not activists, but either artists known for their pro-government ideas or professionals approaching the issue from a technical perspective, rather than having concerns about "the right to the city". Erdoğan's new idea is a referendum, in which the people can decide about the park (Bianet, 2013b). But he missed that it's not just about a park any more and that there are a few more demands: all the people who got arrested during the protests should be released, police officers who ordered and implemented brutality towards the protesters should be trialled and punished, the government should give up arbitrarily suspending people's fundamental democratic rights that allow them to gather, rally, and protest in urban public spaces. Amidst all these discussions there is one more of these wonderful

moments: a piano player brings back the good energy by setting his piano by one of the last barricades. His audience are prepared to fight, as the period of 24 hours, within which Erdoğan wanted the park to be evacuated, is over.

Despite the image of democratic dialogue the government is trying to draw before the international audience, repression continues relentlessly. The ministry of health orders to start investigations against doctors who helped the wounded protesters. 100 lawyers go to the İstanbul central courthouse to support the protest. Half of them get arrested. In the whole country their colleagues take the streets to support the arrested and say that they are not willing to act against human rights, but are forced to do so (Bianet 2013 c).

On the 15th of June 2013, after the evening prayers, police brutally clears the park. It was full of peaceful people and lots of children. It was absolutely unpredictable it would happen that day, at that time. It is not possible to get to the park, as there is too much gas in the air. But that does not seem to be enough. There are people with scarlet skin who got into contact with water from the water cannons, which was obviously mixed with chemicals. People try to ease their pain with Talcid. Hotels, mosques (Hurriyet Daily News 2013e) and hospitals open their doors and also become a target of police and government. The riot police attack hospitals with water cannons (Youtube, 2013b). Water cannons, gas in different forms, chemicals, sound bombs, little yellow colour bombs and plastic bullets continue to be used the whole night.

Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance

16th of June: the park is completely sealed off. Everything that was built there is destroyed: gardens, tents, art projects, infirmary, library, food, homes, personal stuff is taken away with evacuation vehicles (Bianet 2013d). Where there was graffiti there is grey colour now and its incredible how busy and fast workers try to hide every trace of the resistance. The well of resistance is destroyed, but not the resistance itself. As soon as one way of protesting is no longer possible, people find another way: If they take Gezi Park, then every park becomes Gezi Park: in fourteen city parks, people came together in forums. In a grass roots

democracy they exchange ideas and try to work out how to continue the resistance (Bianet, 2013e). If it's not allowed to protest in Taksim square, then "duran adam", "standing-man" comes and people immediately understand and stand still in front of the Atatürk Culture Centre in solidarity (Bianet, 2013f).

How many journalists[10], lawyers, doctors, protesters and activists are in custody is uncertain. The government orders a new charge of gas bombs, because in the last twenty days around 130,000 of them have been fired (Hurriyet Daily News 2013f). People are missing (Bianet, 2013g), traumatized, have lost their eyes, are dead or injured (Bianet, 2013h). But still people do not give up or lose their bravery and humour, instead finding several peaceful ways of resisting.

It has been more than six months since Gezi-Commune was dispersed, but the spirit of resistance is still awake. Despite being less visible due to weather conditions, neighbourhood forums gather in closed spaces and try to have a say in the designing of their spaces and build solidarity with other neighbourhoods who are working towards the same goal. They organise protests against the ongoing urban policies that violate their rights to the city as well as other political issues that have repercussions in their lives. As we said earlier, the forums keep singing: "This is just a beginning, resistance continues!"

Conclusion

There have been diverse accounts on the Gezi Uprising. These range from the accounts that place the uprising within the wider historical context of capitalist accumulation crises to those which explain it within the specific power dynamics of Turkish politics, such as seeing it largely as a reaction of the new and secular

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10 In addition to being exposed to violence, to many journalists lost their jobs, The Turkish Union of Journalists said they documented at least 22 cases of journalists being fired and another 37 who had been forced to quit their jobs.

middle classes to the authoritarian policies of the government. While some accounts argue the Gezi Park conflict was just a venting of a long accumulated frustration against the Government's authoritarian policies, some argue it was no coincidence that the unrest was ignited in a city space given the decades of commodification of urban space and subsequent social exclusion. No matter how divergent these accounts might be, one point they all acknowledge is that women and LGBT were clearly visible in the uprising and it was a turning point for the LGBT movement.

Within the premise that there are various sides to the Gezi movement, we analysed it in this article within the context of the recent urban processes that Istanbul has been through, and the gendered character of these processes. We argued that space is gendered and the composition of women participating in Gezi Uprising and the way they participated is linked to neoliberal and conservative urban policies of the government, as well as to its larger discourses on women's bodies. Women claimed their right to housing, to the streets, to the city, and to their bodies throughout the resistance. It was not only the oppressive gender policies of the government but also the sexist attitudes displayed by the protesters that they aimed to transform and transformed. The Gezi Park experience was a landmark in LGBT movement in which they for the first time had been accepted as a part of a heterogeneous community and recognized as active constituting subjects of the space, instead of being marginalized from society. We have argued that they had a significant role in the resistance because of the peculiar dynamics of their *lived spaces.*

We also explained how the Gezi experience was turned into a learning experience by feminists and LGBT individuals who worked to raise awareness on gender issues and organized consciousness raising workshops throughout the commune occupation days and afterwards. In this learning experience one of the most significant gains of Gezi Uprising began to take place: neighbourhood forums where people regularly meet and discuss various issues related to their neighbourhood and the politics of the country. Forums express their views on various political issues and assert their rights to be included in

the decision-making processes related to their environment. There are also autonomous feminist forums or feminist groups within neighbourhood forums that promote feminist policy making and participation processes.

Further we showed, that the social conflict in Istanbul, can be seen as a social change. It was a conscious raising and learning experience for the participants, solidarity and fellowship among the protesters was incredibly big and they managed to influence the powerful government and had a say in the urban decision-making processes. But – quoting one of the most famous slogans of the resistance again – "this is just the beginning, the struggle will continue".

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