



Understanding The Gezi Movement in Istanbul: artist perspectives

Imagine a tree, large and beautiful. Imagine its leaves, diverse and colourful. And imagine the cold, the chilly cold.

Imagine a country, large and beautiful. Imagine its people, diverse and colourful. And imagine the policy, the rigorous policy.

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Foreword

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1. Introduction

Last March I travelled to Istanbul to do a two-month fieldwork on the Gezi Movement. The combination of three factors – my interest in social movements, my inextricable bond with Turkey and my affinity with Gezi – triggered me to examine the movement. Furthermore, functioning as a protestor during the ‘Gezi protests’ in The Netherlands (Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam) put me in the position to explore whether the protests here were reflecting the movement in Turkey. Although comparison has never been a goal in my thesis, it was not possible to ban it out. This, at the same time, posed an academic challenge to maintain sufficient distance to the material and analysis thereof relating to these events.

1.1 Position in the field

As noted above, I had participated in demonstrations in Holland to show solidarity with the struggle in Turkey. Simultaneously, this bound with the movement stimulated me to do research at the place where it began. While some scholars condemn such activist involvement of academics, others emphasize the advantage of an ‘insider’ position (Stewart 2001 in Howell, 2007: 371-2). The latter claim that gaining trust is easier and faster when talking to an insider. Furthermore, it is rather more likely that the insider will understand the native’s point of view (*Verstehen*¹) easier, while the ‘outsider’ will have struggles with ‘the culture’ of its respondents. So while the outsider will be stuck with a research in a research², an insider will have more time to interpret the data because he is part of the same ‘culture’. An additional consideration is that an MA student has little time for its field research. So when considering the position of insiders in general and that of MA students doing fieldwork, here, being an insider as fieldworker has more advantages than being an outsider.

The ‘impartiality’ and ‘objectivity’ of the research will be elaborated in the chapter methodology and operationalization.

1.2 The Gezi Movement

Gezi refers to a small urban park in central Istanbul near Taksim Square. It is one of the few green areas left in the city and therefore an important place for green activists. For that reason, after the declaration of the Topçu Kışlası Projesi by Prime Minister Erdoğan, - which meant the deconstruction of Gezi Park - hundreds of activists gathered in the park, set up their tents and occupied the area. While the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; Justice and Development Party) wanted to demolish the entire park to make way for a new shopping center, a mosque and the Topçu Kışlası³, the activists claimed that the destruction of the historically public park would mean that one of the few breathing areas in Istanbul would be destroyed (Kuyumlu, 2013: 275). The activists, therefore, occupied the entire park and reclaimed their rights.

¹ *Verstehen*, a concept introduced by Max Weber that is also known as “interpretive understanding.” It stems from his definition of sociology: “a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects (1947: 88)” in (Appelrouth & Desfor Edles, 2008: 142-3).

² Next to his main research, a research to ‘the culture’ of his respondents.

³ *Topçu Kışlası*, a building made in the time of Selim 2nd that is mostly seen as a symbol for the sharia. For more details, see Milliyet Gazetesi “*Topçu Kışlası’nın anlamı nedir?*” 2013 and Cumhuriyet Gazetesi “*Cumhuriyet’in ‘zaman ayarı’ ile oynamak* 2013.

Regardless of the protests on 27 May 2013, the police was determined to enter Gezi Park to take the first trees down. They succeeded. But as it turned out, the police had not warned the activists and had no legal permission to take down the trees (Kuyumlu, 2013: 275). Therefore, many occupiers remained present at the park. This resulted in ‘operation dawn’ by the police on the 30th of May to clear the park by regaining the occupied area from the activists (Kuyumlu, 2013: 275). At five in the morning the police entered Gezi Park and woke up those camping out there with tear gas bombs and water cannons. They destroyed personal properties of activists, burned some of the tents and harassed people present. Almost all activists were taken to the police station. While the police and government thought they had ended the occupation of the park, it merely caused an escalation of the situation. People throughout Turkey got out on the streets to show solidarity with the occupiers of the park. This resulted in the slogan: ‘Bu daha başlangıç, mücadeleye devam! [This is just the beginning, keep resisting!].’

To the surprise of many people, the brutal clearing of Gezi Park prompted thousands of citizens in Istanbul and other cities in Turkey to rise in protest (not mentioning the support abroad). Social media became the information source of the protesters because mainstream media –apart from a few marginal channels⁴- were not broadcasting what was happening on the streets. Messages were posted that resulted in numerous trending of topics on twitter (#direngezi, #duranadam, #occupygezi) and thousands of shares on Facebook.

1.3 Religious Policy

According to 90%⁵ of the protesting Turks in Holland the content of the Topçu Kışlası Projesi was ‘the last drop’. These protesters emphasized that the project is part of the religious policy of the AKP to transform the secular and democratic Turkey into a sharia country. They claim that there is no other explanation for the rebuilding of the Topçu Kışlası, the statements and speeches of AKP politicians - with emphasis on the Prime Minister-, and the accumulation of restrictions⁶.

This particular perspective from protesting Turks in Holland reflects to a great extent that of political analysts, intellectuals and scholars. As political scientist Çavdar argues ‘The AKP’s ideology of conservative democracy remains ambiguous, and certain governmental decisions have revealed the limitations of its political learning. In the name of responding to its conservative constituency, the AKP government from time to time engages in policies that raise questions about its claim being pluralist and tolerant (2006: 495).’ According to Çavdar this is exemplified by the government’s attempt to criminalize adultery, limit alcohol consumption, its dismissive attitude toward the Alevi population⁷, and the AKP municipalities’ tendency to promote gender segregation (2006: 495). Although the AKP started as a political party that refused to label itself as an ‘Islamist party’, its goal has always been to open the public sphere for Islam (Prodromou, 2010: 17). In turn, Çavdar argues that the representation of the AKP as pro-European and reformist has been a well-considered action. According to her and other scholars, the opposite would mean political suicide since the party had evolved from several

⁴ Halk TV, Hayat TV, Ulusal Kanal, Yol TV and Cem TV are a few examples of channels that did broadcast the protests from the beginning.

⁵ $N=20, 18/20 \times 100\% = 90\%$

⁶ In 2013 the AKP prohibited alcohol sale after 22h, prohibited boys and girls living together, and adapted the abortion law.

⁷ The Alevis are a religious and/or cultural minority group consisting of 20-30% of the Turkish population. For more details, see: Goner, O. (2005) ‘The Transformation of the Alevi Collective Identity’ *Cultural Dynamics* 17-2: 107-134.

previously extant Islamic Parties (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 428). In other words, according to these scholars, the AKP has changed its political course during the span of the elected years, or it has used this pro-European, liberal, reformist agenda as a cloak for other purposes.

When considering the statements of former Prime Minister Erdoğan⁸ and the AKP's members of Parliament (table 1), this political course may be identified as a religious policy, as I will explain in the following chapters. The chance that these statements and laws (see chapter 4) stimulated the existence of the Gezi Movement is very likely. This is why I fixed my research question as: '*Was the Gezi Movement a response to the perceived religious policy of the Turkish government in secular Turkey?*'

To answer this question I will focus my research on a limited group of participants in the 'Gezi Movement' that I refer to as "artists". The data gathered during the two months of fieldwork as participating observer and as interviewer will be used as main data for this research.

As appears from the question, the research is limited to what I have called the artists; a group from which I thought would show the most colors in perceptions. Despite the fact that there were multiple groups varying from TGB (Türkiye Gençlik Birliği; Turkish Youth Unity) to LGBT (Lezbiyen, Gey, Biseksüel, Transgender), Antikapitalist Müslümanlar (Anticapitalistic Muslims), Partizan⁹ and Football supporters, I chose the artists (musicians, actors/actresses, and writers) as my respondent group. The choice for the artists, the used methods, questions and settings will be discussed in chapter two: methodology and operationalization.

1.4 Scientific and social relevance

Unfortunately there is a lack of academic writing on the Gezi Movement. It is not just the limited amount of academic (English and Turkish) articles that makes this research imperative, the reliability of the available sources are in my opinion also questionable. Authors do not only forget to explain how they got to the conclusions drawn in their articles, they also refuse to note how their research is done. I will reflect on that in this thesis, and try to reach the academic standards that are necessary for this kind of research.

In addition to the academic relevance of this research, this thesis also provides a social relevance since Gezi is still important¹⁰. To this day, people can see that the Gezi spirit is still vivid. Take the speeches of various politicians, the funeral of Berkin Elvan¹¹, and not to forget all the trials of those who died during Gezi. One example of a valid explanation for the vividness of Gezi is the debate that aroused after the trial of Ali İsmail Korkmaz¹². People throughout Turkey wondered how it was possible that the murderers got four years of

⁸ Because this thesis is written during a period that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has become President, I will use Prime Minister and President interchangeably when referring to Erdoğan

⁹ *Partizan*, a leftist group founded on the ideas of İbrahim Kaypakkaya, which is diametrically opposed to Kemalizm.

¹⁰ See appendix: all respondents refer to the on-going spirit of Gezi.

¹¹ *Berkin Elvan*, a fourteen-year-old boy who was shot by a policeman during Gezi in Okmeydanı, İstanbul when he was on his way to buy bread.

¹² *Ali İsmail Korkmaz*, a nineteen-year-old boy who suffered severe injuries after being beaten up by six men (two policemen in plain clothes) in the middle of the night. Eventually he died from his injuries. For more details, see *Birgün Gazetesi "Ali İsmail'in katillerine ödül gibi ceza"*, 2015.

imprisonment while some children are sentenced to six years for stealing bread. Eventually this judgment led to demonstrations throughout Turkey¹³.

Although these are already important reasons to justify this research, there is another relevant argument. While the Gezi protests were still going on, Prime Minister Erdoğan had planned a meeting at Esenboğa Airport Ankara upon his return from his visit to Morocco. In his speech he emphasized that he had difficulties of keeping ‘the 50% of Turkey¹⁴’ at home. In response to this statement, people present at the meeting shouted: ‘Yol ver gidelim, Taksim ezelim’ [Give us a sign to crush Taksim].

This division was sharpened when Erdoğan called the protesters ‘a handful of marauders’ (Gürcan & Peker, 2014: 71), and emphasized that around seventy, half naked, male protesters had urinated on a veiled ‘sister’ during the protests. According to the Prime Minister and several journalists there was footage available on this crime, but because of the sensitivity of the images mainstream media decided not to broadcast it. However, months later it became clear that there was no footage of the crime. Indeed, the incident never took place¹⁵. Again, Erdoğan underlined that during the protests, the looters had entered the mosque with their shoes on, drank alcohol and had group sex. Despite the declaration of the *müezzin*¹⁶, who said that no such thing happened, Erdoğan carried on his thought.

To press my point, during and after Gezi a clear dichotomy was created. Today there are those who support the AKP and those who do not. This is in my opinion a serious problem. To prevent that these groups fall out to each other, they need to listen and empathize with each other. And I do think that an academic study - implemented with an emic approach¹⁷ - can help achieving this.

¹³ For more details, see Evrensel “*Ali İsmail Korkmaz’ı öldürenlere ‘iyi hal indirimi’ ve beraat kararı*”. 2015.

¹⁴ 50%, referring to the amount of AKP voters. For more details, see *Youtube video “Başbakan Tayyip Erdoğan’ın Ankara Esenboğa Havaalanı konuşması.”*

¹⁵ For more details, see Zaman Gazetesi ‘Elif Çakır’ın avukatlarından “Kabataş” itirafı: Kabataş’taki o hadise düzmece’, 2015.

¹⁶ The person appointed at a mosque to lead, and recite, the call to prayer every event of prayer and worship in the mosque.

¹⁷ An emic model explains the ideology or behaviour of members of a culture according to indigenous definitions. For more details, see *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*.

2. Methodology and Questions

As known, respondents are people who know a lot about their culture and are, for reasons of their own, willing to share this knowledge with the researcher (Bernard, 2006: 196). As Pelto and Pelto argue, it is necessary to support the idea of training respondents ‘to conceptualize cultural data in the frame of reference’ that the researcher uses (Pelto and Pelto 1978, in Bernard, 2006: 196).

To find an answer to my main question, the artists who have been supporting Gezi, are selected as respondent group. Here support is defined as actively protesting, and the artists are operationalized as: people who work in one or more art spheres, varying from poets, actors/actresses, to musicians.

Researchers have an influence on their own research. The way they formalize the research has a certain ‘influencing degree.’ This is not odd, as Benedict argues: ‘No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking (Benedict, 2006: 2).’ So, taken decisions are likely to influence the analysis and results because these selections are the results of their own ‘culture.’ Altogether this refers to the impossibility of refraining from subjective decisions since humans become subjective the day there are born. As Benedict noted: “From the moment of birth, the customs into which a person is born shape their experience and behaviour and that by the time a person can talk they are a little creature of their culture” (Benedict, 2006: 3).

As noted above, this research is grounded on the perspective of artists, which is a methodical decision. This particular informant group is selected because Gezi is a sensitive subject to examine. Considering that 8 youngsters lost their lives, thousands of people were injured, and people are traced for tweeting pro-Gezi messages, explains the susceptibility of the topic. In other words, the selection has to do with my own security and that of my possible informants.

2.1 Impartiality and objectivity

There are scholars who think that a shared background of researcher and respondents are compatible. According to these scholars, the interfaces between researcher and respondents form a possible obstacle for ‘impartial’ analysis. Indeed, they fear the amalgamation of shared views that in turn could influence the validity of the report (Howell, 2007: 339-40). The opponents, on the contrary, emphasize that a research to a group with which the researcher has no affinity, has no guarantee for an ‘unprejudiced’ position of the researcher. To press these scholars’ point, this research could have been concerned with Gezi opponents because the researcher has less-no affinity with that group. But does that mean that she will not be ‘prejudiced?’

Researchers make choices. And either way, each choice will have its advantages and disadvantages because choices are prejudiced of one’s own accord. The concepts relativism and bias underlie the revision of this thought. As Bennett notes, “relativism implies that we have no basis for judging other peoples and cultures, and certainly no basis for declaring some better than other, let alone ‘good’ or ‘evil’” (2002, 46). So in an ideal situation, a researcher is relativistic. But how can one reach relativism? According to Bennett relativism is determined by ones environment that in turn creates someone’s bias. So he implies that by minimizing or ‘removing’ ones bias - formed by your environment-, someone can reach relativism.

Social psychologist Susan T. Fiske operationalizes bias as: “a narrow, potentially erroneous reaction, compared with individuated impressions formed from personal details” (2002: 123). Bennett and Fiske agree on that the environment determines ones bias. And with that they agree on that it is unavoidable to make decisions that our unprejudiced or impartial because decisions on their behalf our prejudiced as well. So does this imply that ‘unprejudiced decision-making’ is ‘out there’ while everyone has an environment? Can you ‘switch off’ your environment?

As formulated, a researcher has a bias and interprets the collected data to its ‘culture.’ The researcher can only interpret things considering its own ‘baggage’, which implies that our data are not factual. A pivotal quote of Geertz summarizes this perfectly: ‘what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what, they and their compatriots are up to (1973: 9). In fact, Geertz underlines that “even at the ‘factual base’ of our enterprise (field research) we are ‘already explicating: and worse, explicating explications. Winks upon winks upon winks (1973: 9).” In brief, the activistic observation is an appropriate method for this research because the ‘baggage’ of the researcher is more suitable to understand the informants then when the researcher has no affinity with them. As Howell argues, ‘the self/other dynamics of a shared religious identity in the presence of cultural otherness can lead to a particular understanding of the nature of Christian commitment as a kind of ‘standpoint epistemology’ analogous to others of gender, race, sexual orientation, and so forth (Denzin 1997; Harding 1998 in Howell, 2007: 372).

2.2 Sampling methods

This research is not about individual attribute data because a scientifically drawn - random selection of cases so that every unit of analysis has an equal chance of being chosen for study, unbiased sample is not the intention of this study. On the contrary, this research revolves around cultural data. As we know: we expect cultural facts to be shared and so cultural data requires experts (Bernard, 2006: 146).

Before entering the field, I had made a name list of artists who had supported Gezi with the observer-identified method (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 38). These artists, from various art spheres, were selected in various ways. Some artists were frequently on national television, others were key figures on social media with many followers (Twitter, Facebook, etc.), and the last group of artists was recommended by acquaintances in Turkey. The informants who had uploaded photographs and/or videos were transferred to the ‘Gezi active supporters.’ The others, who I could not place, were on the ‘Gezi passive supporters’ list. I did more research to find out if they were suitable for my research.

This way of selecting people is part of in-depth research, because it requires informed informants and not just responsive respondents. These informants have to be chosen on purpose and not randomly because collecting cultural data means that the researcher needs expert informants, not randomly selected respondents (Bernard, 2006: 187). However, selecting certain people and drafting a name list on the basis of social media, mainstream media and recommendations of acquaintances could have consequences on my data. Only noting the names that my acquaintances and I knew could narrow the list and could increase the chance me talking to people from the same background. To decrease this chance, the snowball technique is chosen as sampling method.

2.2.1 snowball sampling

Snowball and respondent-driven sampling are two network sampling methods (also known, generically, as chain referral methods) for studying hard-to-find or hard-to-study populations (Bernard, 2006: 193). In the snowball technique, the researcher uses key informants to locate one or two people in a population. Then, the researcher asks those people to list others in the population and recommend someone from the list that you might interview. This way the researcher is handed from informant to informant and the sampling frame grows with each interview. Eventually, the sampling frame becomes saturated - that is, no new names are offered- (Bernard, 2006: 193).

The snowball sampling is effective when using it within a relatively small population of people who are likely to be in contact with one another. This results in an exhaustive sampling frame (Bernard, 2006: 193). However, because the snowball technique is a popular sampling method it is regularly used for large populations. This decreases the chance of a random, representative sample because people who are well known have a better chance of being named in this snowball procedure than are people who are less well known. Furthermore, the informants who have large networks name more people than do people who have small networks. In other words, using the snowball technique for large populations will increase the risks because not every person does have the same chance of being included (Bernard, 2006: 193).

To avoid these risks, it is possible to select a few people from various backgrounds to increase the chance of a random and representative sample. Since this informant group is chosen for its diversity, I have tried to select artists from various (political) backgrounds to decrease the risks of the snowball technique within a large population.

2.3 Appointments

Although there was a prepared name list, I did not have contact information. The information was also not available on the Internet. Therefore, I tried to use my own network to get into contact with the selected artists. Hereafter it depended on the agenda and enthusiasm of the artist if he/she was willing to make an appointment.

To my surprise, with the exception of two artists who were abroad, almost everyone agreed on making an appointment. Within these informants I had also spoken to an artist who did not want to be recorded, or to be cited in this thesis. I think this is a perfect example of the sensitivity of the subject.

During the first weeks in the field, I made appointments with those artists from whom I had the contact information. After introducing myself and noting from whom I received their number, I told them about my research and if they were interested in making an appointment for an interview. The informant always appointed the location. This was a conscious choice because I did want them to be in a comfortable environment when doing the interview. As Goffman argues, the world is a stage and people are 'actors' (1990:13). So it is relevant to make the informant choose the place of the interview. To press Goffman's point, the setting determines the act of the actor (1990: 35).

2.4 Interviewing: informal & semi-structured

In the research proposal I found it hard to make an assumption of how it would be to conduct this research with the artists. Especially because I did not know how they would react on my questions. In the field it became clear that the interaction between the informants and me had the upper hand in determining the methods. For example, when realizing that the structured questions of the survey were influencing the interview negatively, I decided to leave this part.

The appointments consisted of two forms of interviewing: informal and semi-structured interviews. As known, informal interviewing is characterized by a total lack of structure or control (Bernard, 2006: 211). This method was therefore suitable to begin with. The conversations during the informal interviewing were not recorded. I just tried to remember the conversation, just like it is known by informal interviews. Hereafter I continued with a semi-structured interview. As Bernard says: 'In situations where you won't get more than one chance to interview someone, semi-structured interviewing is best (2006: 212).'

As characteristic for a semi-structured interview, I had a frame with the main themes that should be touched upon. As aid there was an interview guide that consisted of these main questions and themes. Although, there was also room for new questions and themes, as well as for the interviewer as for the interviewee (Stausberg & Engler, 2014: 314-5).

2.5 Questions

As noted in the previous paragraph the semi-structured part was guided by a list of main themes and questions. To give an idea of an interview guide (see table 2), I listed a few examples of questions and themes that were discussed during the interviews.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter forms the theoretical framework of this thesis and will create a conceptual model that will form the frame of this research. To be able to give an answer to the research question the works of Goodwin and Jasper 2009; Meyer, Whittier and Robnett 2002; Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980; Cliteur 2012; Furseth and Repstad 2006 on social movements and state models will be analysed. The first paragraphs will explain social movement structures, and to comprehend religious policy classical models of the relation between state and religion will be analysed in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.1 Social Movements

To comprehend Gezi it is necessary to examine social movement theory since Gezi is typified as a social movement. For this, questions as: when and why do social movements occur? Who joins or supports movements? What do movements do? What changes do movements bring about? How are movements organized?' will be successively discussed in this part.

3.1.1 when and why do social movements occur?

Before answering the above noted question it is useful to note that there are two dichotomies between social movement theorists. The first dichotomy is possible between theorists dating from the 1960s, and today's theorists. The former exhibit a certain pattern in their analyses because they have tried to map out the roots of movements while focusing on the characteristics of movement participants or the settings of movements because these theorists are interested in the 'why they emerge when they do' question (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 11). These theorists see the 'origin question' as superfluous because movements are seen as mistakes and are therefore best avoided. However, in recent years, cultural approaches have led to the combining of the 'why and when' questions. Nowadays scholars see social movements as part of politics while early theorists saw these as 'a function of discontent in a society, and discontent as something unusual' (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 11). Because of these interpretations of early theorists, they are no longer taken seriously.

The second dichotomy is between social movement theorists who have written about the emergence of movements. According to the *Social Movement Reader* theorists could be divided into 1) the 'mass society' group and 2) a group that refers to the importance of alienation. The former highlights that a lack of organizations that functions as broker -which discontent individuals can join- will lead to the emergence of a movement (Kornhauser 1959 in Goodwin and Jasper 2009: 11). The latter, on the contrary, emphasize that the rise of a movement is in line with 'people who are estranged from the world around them or who have infantile psychological needs that absorption in a movement might satisfy' (Hoffer 1951 in Goodwin and Jasper 2009: 11).

3.1.1.1 the political dimension

The paradigm that has addressed most on movement emergence is the 'political process' approach (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998 in Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 12). This perspective emphasizes that economic and political changes happen -mostly separate from the exertions of the protestors- and that the occurrence of these shifts opens up a space for a movement. This approach underlines that protestors discern movements as political from character. This is why protestors are making demands of the state and ask for

changes in laws and policies. Indeed, according to the political process approach, shifts in the state are seen as the most important opportunity a movement needs (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 12).

3.1.1.2 the core of the movement

But what is indispensable for a social movement? Is it its innovative character? Williams argues that it is essential for a social movement to ‘articulate change from within a received set of categories and understandings’ (Williams in Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett, 2002: 250). This view brings us to Marx’s ‘men make their own history, they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.’ So according to Williams, social movements have to offer its supporters ‘a certain amount of change’ although innovation is limited.

In brief, state structures, dominant cultures, and civil society shape social movements. However, in turn, movements can reshape states, policies, civil societies, and cultures within which they operate (Williams in Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett, 2002: 289). As Williams argues, ‘social movements are neither fixed nor narrowly bounded in space, time, or membership. Instead, they are made up of shifting clusters of organizations, networks, communities, and activist individuals, connected by participation in challenges and collective identities through which participants define the boundaries and significance of their group (Williams in Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett, 2002: 289).’

3.1.2 who joins or supports movements?

Once a social movement is ‘created’ it is necessary to expand the movement (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 55). The most effective manner for recruiting people into the movement is to know someone who is already in it (Snow, Zurcher and Eklund-Olson 1980: 789-90). So social networks are not only seen as a requirement for the rise of a movement, but also as a manner to recruit people (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 56). But what is decisive in the joining of potential members into a movement?

3.1.2.1 collective identity

Various scholars highlight the importance of a collective identity for movement participation (Castells 1997; Cerulo 1997; Friedman and McAdam 1992; Hunt and Benford 1994; Jasper and Polletta 2000; Melucci 1985, 1989; Snow 2001; Snow and Anderson 1987; Snow and McAdam 2000; Taylor and Whittier 1992 in Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett, 2002: 267). This collective identity is seen as an identity that is based on shared ‘cultural capital’¹⁸. It is attained through the implementation of knowledge within the movement and it used by movement members to constitute themselves in their own terms. Eventually, according to Williams, these collective identity processes develop a shared cultural toolkit¹⁹ between movement actors.

¹⁸ *Cultural capital*, a term introduced by Pierre Bourdieu that refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class. According to Bourdieu, heavily influenced by the theories of Karl Marx, cultural capital comes in three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Here, cultural capital refers to: nonmaterial goods such as educational credentials, types of knowledge and expertise, verbal skills, and aesthetic preferences that can be converted into economic capital. For more details, see www.theory.routledgesoc.com.

¹⁹ *Cultural toolkit*, a repertoire of protest methods including non-violent tactics.

3.1.2.2 the dynamic of movements

However, it is not merely important to discuss who joins or supports a movement. It is also important to examine who drops out and who remains in these movements because once people join or support it the next challenge is to keep these people in it since many movements need to work for many years to accomplish their goals. Therefore, movements who constantly face dropouts will not be very effective if they do not replace these people. Indeed, when the movement is not capable of replacing these dropouts, it will decline or it will disappear completely (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 93).

The reasons for people to lose affinity with the movement are diverse. However, it is common that the reasons for joining the movement and remaining active in the movement can differ. The recruits, for example, may greatly enjoy their lives with the other protesters, or conversely, truly dislike their lives. In any case, as Goodwin and Jasper argue, there is a distinction possible between the reasons to join and/or to remain active in the movement. The same distinction should be made between those who leave the movement and those who have never joined the movement in the first place (2009: 93). These distinctions are not unfamiliar for movement analysts because movements are not static but are influenced by other actors in the field²⁰. In fact, it happens that a movement or a movement organization heads a direction that some supporters like and others don't. But the question what it will do to the supports is most of the time a 'wait and see.'

Nowadays many academics accept that cultural meanings are an essential part of social movements. They emphasize that it is crucial to look at how protesters view the world, and what kind of oratory they use to present this perception to others. However, until today, there is done little work to understand the state and other actors in the field who play an important role in the realisation of this view of protestors. Since these actors continue to play a role in the movement's environment, it is necessary to understand their point of view. This is a serious lack in the research of social movements, which have influence on the research results because these actors are all interacted with each other. So to understand an actor in the field, you should understand the other. As Goodwin and Jasper say: 'state bureaucrats, politicians, and police officers also have distinctive worldviews, and also try to persuade others that their arguments and perspectives are valid (2009: 145).' In short, if we want to understand a social movement, we should also analyse the other actors in the field.

3.1.3 what do movements do?

According to Goodwin and Jasper, supporters of social movements firstly hope to change the social environment through persuasion or intimidation, and secondly they try to undermine their opponents' credibility with the public, media, and the state. At the courts they strive to have unfavourable laws struck down, with state agencies they try to change laws, policies, regulatory practices, administrative rules, but most importantly avoid repression. The protesters want the police and the courts to understand them, and therefore to tolerate their protests. They even have goals for their own members: 'personal transformations and continued fervor for the cause' (2009: 252).

To expand the movement the members might approach other professional groups to change their standards, they might seek allies in other protest groups, and they may hope for sympathy, contributions, and changes in

²⁰ Actors in the field that can have influence on the movement: the police, the government, and anti-movement protesters.

awareness from the public (2009: 251). For the 'evangelization' (the spread their message) they rely on the news media. Although today it is common that the degree of censorship on the mainstream media is more extensive, social media has replaced its position.

3.1.4 what changes do movements bring about?

Movements do not have a particular structure. But it is common that movements consist of different organizations and networks that disagree on strategy and ideology (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009: 409). This is why different participants have different goals, or at least a different ranking of priorities. Again, these goals may change during the span of the weeks/months/years and their goals may expand in response to the achieved successes, but it can also reduce when faced with failures.

So social movements are intertwined with politics and are shaped by the state structure, dominant culture and civil society. They consist of different organizations and networks that mostly disagree in strategy and ideology that induces different goals. However, because movement participants are discontent or even feel alienated from society, on macro level there is an overarching goal: 'reshape states, policies, civil societies, and cultures' (Williams in Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett, 2002: 289). To achieve this goal, participants try to expand the movement by recruiting people with mostly the help of social media. Here, especially the collective identity is promoted since that is seen as the most effective reason to join the movement.

3.2 Religious Policy

Sociologists of religion examine religion's effect on society and vice versa (Furseth & Repstad, 2006: 5). With their research's, the sociologists of religion contribute to the current religious discourse which is changing in the course of time. Today scholars argue that the differentiation in 'modern' societies has caused the privatization of religion. These scholars interpret these developments in society as: religion's influence is declining (Furseth & Repstad, 2006: 54). Luhmann for example says that secularization is a result of the differentiation process and that this in turn results in a society that becomes 'relative, independent from religious norms, values and legitimations' (Luhmann in Furseth & Repstad, 2006: 54). Beyer, a scientist who focuses on the religious reaction to globalization, agrees with Luhmann by saying that decisions of individuals regarding religion become more privatized, but he continues by noting that the representatives of the religious system, the religious leaders, experience the same diminishing influence in public (1990: 374-8). However, there are also scholars who argue the possibility of a new interpretation of religion. These scholars note that religion does not necessary have to decline, but argue that it can take a different form. To understand what is happening to religion in general it is necessary to analyse the different models present in societies. For this, the theory of Paul Cliteur on the relation between state and religion will be analysed in this part.

However, the vitality of political Islam/Islamism should not be excluded when discussing the position of religion in current societies because otherwise this thesis would favour a Eurocentric perspective. And since this thesis is about religious Islamic policy, the last paragraph will discuss Cliteur's works on political Islam/Islamism.

3.2.1 classical models

Paul Cliteur (1955-) is a jurist and philosopher who has done research to the classical models of the relation between state and religion. In his essay *State and Religion against the Backdrop of Religious Radicalism* (2012)

Cliteur distinguishes five models: 1) political atheism, 2) the religiously neutral state, 3) multiculturalism, 4) state church, and 5) theocracy. He operationalizes political atheism as: ‘an official state policy aiming to eradicate all sympathy for religious ideas, and the idea that God exists in particular’ (2012: 128). Cliteur argues that the Russian governance is a perfect example of the implementation of the political atheism model and the influence of the writings of Karl Marx on this model (2012: 129). He argues that Marx’ idea that ‘religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people’ and that ‘man creates his religion, religion does not create man’ is directly brought into the Russian type of governance. He argues that this model develops a notion that the state has the responsibility to ‘free people from the pernicious illusions created by religion’ (2012: 130). And therefore, the state has to liberate people from religion, since the same state has to look after the health of its citizens (2012: 130).

The second model, the religiously neutral state, is a form where freedom of conscience, equality before the law, and the neutrality of political power are centralized. Because *laïcité* is a well-known type of a religiously neutral state, Cliteur takes it as an example. He argues that *laïcité* gives space to people to choose a religion freely. It does not limit freedom of religion; on the contrary, it is a setting under which freedom of religion can flourish (2012: 130). He notes that this model is neither for nor against religion and underlines that the state has a neutral position by giving all religions the opportunity to be represented in society (2012: 131). The state is in no position to uphold religion, so none of the religions present in society can have a privileged position. Furthermore, it prohibits any form of propaganda for religion, and finance of churches or other religious institutions implemented by the state. Cliteur notes that this is mostly typified as “the separation of church and state” (2012: 131).

The third model, the multicultural state, is a model that treats all religions equally by helping them equally (2012: 132). So if the state decides to give subsidies for the maintenance of mosques and/or gives salaries to Muslim preachers, Christians and Buddhists can claim subsidies for the maintenance of their churches and temples as well. But to what extent is it possible to realize this equal treatment towards all religions in society? Are the difficulties not already starting by the definition of the concept religion? Because who decides what the interpretation of this concept will be? Will it be a top-down imposed operationalized concept by the state²¹ or will the members of religious groups be allowed to identify themselves as religious?

The fourth model is the State Church that is operationalized as: ‘a model in which the state and church have an intimate connection in upholding the public order’ (2012: 132). Within this model, one religion has a privileged position. But this does not imply that other religions are suppressed. Other religions just do not have priority just as the official religion of the state.

The fifth and last model described by Cliteur is theocracy. This model is the exact opposite of political atheism because within this model there is one religion that has priority above all other religions present in society. Within theocracy other religions are, unlike the state church model, suppressed by law and force (2012: 132). Advocators of theocracy underline that it is impossible for God and the people to be at the same line. They support the notion of one source of sovereignty; it is either the deity that is the source of the laws or this is vested

²¹ New age for example is not always recognized as a religion while most members do identify themselves as religious.

in the people. In case of Muslim countries this means that the people are either ruled by sharia-law or by man-made law (2012: 140). So according to this operationalization it is possible to conclude that theocracy and democracy are opposites since the latter is a government by the people (“demos”) while theocracy is a government by God (“Theos”).

To summarize, political atheism (1) excludes and curtails the influence of religion while the religiously neutral state (2) stays neutral. Multiculturalism (3) helps religions ‘equally’ while the state church (4) privileges one religion in particular but does not suppress other religions. And finally theocracy (5) favours one religion above others and suppresses those others by force. So according to this analysis it is inevitable to conclude that political atheism (1) and theocracy (5) are incompatible with the fundamentals of liberal democracy since both models are totalitarian by nature because both suppress the freedom of thought.

3.2.2 vitality of political Islam/Islamism

Paul Cliteur is a scholar who has written on the vitality of political Islam/Islamism. In his essay *State and Religion against the Backdrop of Religious Radicalism* (2012) he examines this topic by referring to the Iranian religious and political leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who is known for his words: ‘the prophet was also a politician. The prophet installed governors, operated as a judge, contracted treaties with foreign powers (2012: 135).’ In other words, the prophet was not only a religious but also a political authority that should and could be realized in present-day societies.

Cliteur argues that Khomeini’s thoughts are not unfamiliar to the Western World because the worldly and religious authorities were also intermingled in the West for many centuries (2012: 135). Cliteur discerns two types of governments: theocracy and caesaro-papism. Theocracy, according to Cliteur, is best described as a form of government where the worldly power is simply put in the service of religious power (2012: 135-6). In Europe this implied that the pope was superior to the emperor because theocracy meant that the religious leader was also the political leader. Caesaro-papism is in contrast to theocracy a form of government where the emperor is superior to the religious power. According to this form of administration ‘the emperor or the king is the overlord of the church’ (2012: 136). And for this, the emperor had the power to decide what the religion of the people had to be. And again, ‘he had the power to assign the religious leaders and control their behaviour and he even adjudicates in doctrinal differences’ (2012: 136).

The struggle between religious and worldly leaders ended when worldly and religious power were separated. And today in Europe, both sides are sovereign within their own domain. But with the view of Ayatollah Khomeini this present order would be de-separated because in the time of the prophet both powers were interconnected. And when considering that the ‘laws of Islam’ are not dependent on time and place (2012: 136), they are valid for all eternity and have to be executed. So Khomeini’s model is not only realizable in Iran, it could be implemented anywhere in the world. However, Khomeini’s perspective runs counter the principles of the separation of powers as laid down by Montesquieu in his *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). Indeed, these principles advocate that the legislative, administrative and judicial departments should be separated to prevent the abuse of power (2012: 136). The idea is that divided power is equal to limited power. So standing by these principles, the abuse of power -although there is no warranty- will be limited. And again, Cliteur emphasizes that ‘limited power is the general idea behind constitutionalism, which, next to democracy, is one of the central tenets

of good government (2012: 136). And for this, the ideas of Khomeini are in conflict with the central ideas of the European political order, the principles of the European Union, the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the idea of liberal democracy that animates the political development in Europe. Cliteur therefore interprets Khomeini's approach as hostile because it conflicts the basics of good government. And he argues that this is totalitarian to politics (2012: 136).

4. Gezi

It is hard to speak in terms of starts and beginnings when discussing a social movement because the terms already lead to a discussion. Like many other authors who have written about Gezi, this thesis will take 27th of May as the start of the Movement. However, it must be noted that my respondents underlined that the movement 'started' before the protests and that the Gezi spirit is still vivid today. Although it is not visually visible as in the form of protests, it is according to my respondents not a valid argument to think that the movement has ended.

4.1 Gentrification

As briefly discussed in the introduction, the announcement of the Topçu Kışlası Projesi, the end of May. The project implied that one of the few Parks left in central Istanbul would be replaced by a huge mosque, an ultramodern shopping mall and the in 1940 destroyed Halil Paşa Topçu Kışlası/Taksim Kışlası [Halil Paşa Artillery Barracks/Taksim Military Barracks] would be rebuilt.

For many people it was not surprising that the Justice and Development Party set up this project because their election campaign is centralized around the aim to turn Istanbul in a 'global hub' (Zucker, 2014: 3). And when considering the already implemented gentrification projects in low-income areas and 'ghetto's' [gecekondu], where large-scale investors bought up entire neighbourhoods while the inhabitants were replaced to unwilling places, Zucker's words that Erdoğan's notion of a city is 'a resource that can be drained for the highest possible profit' (2014: 2) becomes understandable.

4.2 Gezi Park and protestors

On Monday the 27th of May bulldozers entered Gezi Park to uproot the trees to start with the implementation of the announced gentrification project. It turns out that the police had not warned the initial campers at the Park and had not legal permission to take down the trees (Kuyumlu, 2013: 275). The present (green) activists -who had been camping there to protect the trees from being uprooted- tried to stop the bulldozers and spread the news by social media²² to gather more people in the area.

Although the initial campers at Gezi were a few hundred, this number increased by the use of social media to inform more people about the situation in the park. Despite the attacks of the police on the first day, people returned and continued to occupy the area. Hereafter, the police retaliated and once again people returned, and multiplied their numbers. But on 31 May, during the early morning, the police entered the park and destroyed personal properties, burned the present tents and harassed the sleeping protesters. The police looked determined to get the people out of the Park no matter what cost. My respondent (Güven Kırac) explained this as: *'the first three days the youth was present at the Park. It seemed that nothing serious happened until they started posting messages on social media underlining that they had difficulties to get out from the Park and that they were harassed. At first, nobody was paying attention until we saw how serious it was when the police had implemented their 'operation dawn' at five in the morning. From that point, everybody ran to the area.'*

²² Facebook and Twitter were very popular during Gezi. Messages that were posted resulted in numerous trending of topics on Twitter: #direngezi, #occupygezi, #duranadam and thousand of shares on Facebook. As all of my respondents noted: the frequency of their social media use almost tripled during Gezi.

4.2.1 profile of protesters

The area around Taksim flooded with people. Students, supporters of Atatürk²³, LGBT'ers, Anticapitalist Muslims, Kurds, Alevi's, football supporters, people from the political left and right; they all came together. Various groups that were initially enemies struggled together. In fact, there were even people who had voted for the Justice and Development Party. Respondent (Barış Atay) notes: *'the whole thing was much more than voting for a certain political party. Whether you vote or not, when you realize that your rights to life are in danger, the political party you have voted for becomes suddenly irrelevant.'*

The majority of the protesters were students and labourers who dutifully went to school and work each day but who swelled out onto the streets in the evenings and the weekends. This is why banners with *Halk Gündüz Clark Kent, Geceleri Süpermen* [Clark Kent during the day, Superman at night] coloured the streets of Istanbul. For those who could not join the struggle in the streets, played pots and pans with their kitchenware and switched their lights on and off to show that they were in solidarity with Gezi.

4.2.2 the setting

The struggle did not limit itself to the Taksim area. Soon the protests spread around other areas in Istanbul, other cities across the country and it even got attention from Turks living abroad. But the atmosphere in the occupied Gezi Park was different because a community was created. Indeed, the park was home for many protesters and it even offered workshops, an open-air library, a platform for concerts and theatrical performances, but most importantly there was a *Devrim Market* [Revolution Market]. This market dissociated itself from others in that 'customers' could not buy goods with money because money was not aloud in it. People could only take goods for free and return other goods that they had in abundance to the market. Furthermore, there were stands at the Park where people could get breakfast, lunch and dinners. According to the mother of one of my respondents²⁴, the most incredible thing she saw and heard during her visit to the park was when she was handing out meals: *'when I told the teenagers -who were standing in line to get dinner from me- that they could have more if they wanted, they replied by saying, 'no otherwise those behind me will have nothing. This made me emotional because nowadays these interactions are rare within your own family, and then you see it among millions of people!'*

So the park was the embodiment of a communal life. In the world where commodities dominate the world and tensions between different groups expand, these protesters managed to share goods and thoughts with people with whom they had no bound. This is why protesters understood that there were stigmas present in society and by the interaction with protestors with different backgrounds these stigmas faded away.

According to my respondents, the atmosphere between protesters was overall friendly. There was no violence involved and protesters had respect towards each other. Take the fans of Galatasaray, Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe, previously at war to each other, now gathered under the name Istanbul United. They used the slogan 'renklerimiz

²³ *Atatürk*, the founder of Turkey, known for his secular policy.

²⁴ Mother of Burcu Sarak who joined our interview and who was caught by the police for verbally defending other protesters who were arrested for joining the protests. She stayed four days in prison and did not get her medicines while she had a sick report from the doctor.

ayrı olsa da kalbimiz bir' [although our colors are different, our hearts are one] to express their bound. Furthermore, when the supporters of Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray heard that Çarşı²⁵ had problems with the police during the protests, they joined the struggle and adopted one of their most used and popular slogans: 'Beşiktaş sen bizim her şeyimizsin'²⁶ [Beşiktaş you are our everything]. People defeated their fear, and this is maybe the most important gain for Gezi. As Şebnem Sönmez argues: *Korkunun aşılmasıyla ilgili bir duvarı yıktık biz Gezi'de*²⁷.

This friendly and respectful environment even resulted in comprehension for the Kurdish struggle. This is seen as a miracle because the Kurds in Turkey try to claim their democratic rights for many years but without much progress. And when considering the media coverage about the Kurdish struggle, Gezi protesters who were not convinced yet that the media could mile around the reports, saw what the influence of the media is. This is why the Kurds put up a banner at Gezi Park with the words: 'Şimdi anladınız mı her Kürdün evinde neden çift çanak olduğunu?' [Do you now understand why all Kurds have two different antennas?].

However, there is another side of Gezi. A side that demolishes public property, uses Molotov cocktail, and throws stones. And unfortunately, 50% of Turkey interprets Gezi this way because that is what they have seen on mainstream media channels. But my respondent Ezel Akay wants them to empathize with the Gezi-goers and notes: *What do people do when nefarious things happen? What would you do when they murder your little brother? You would gather your buddies and go after them. This is quite simple. Then you can still look at these people and condemn them using Molotov cocktail and them throwing stones, but be honest, you would also have enormous hatred in you and you would want to punish them if this happened to you. Again, it was the attitude of the government, the attitude of the state, the police and that of the governor that created Gezi. [...] Nobody can say that certain people should not be there and should leave the area. Gezi was unorganized and people joined it freely. Therefore it should not be strange that there are individuals in the crowd who are just there to cause trouble. Indeed, but do not forget that there will also be individuals who are there to start a revolution, individuals who truly want to protect trees, and individuals who understand that something new is created and want to create rules for this*²⁸.

²⁵ A Beşiktaş football-fan group formed in the eighties. Aside from football they are also involved in social activities and run many social projects.

²⁶ For more details, see documentary Taksim Commune: Gezi Park and the Uprising in Turkey of Marianne Maecelbergh and Brandon Jourdan on www.globaluprisings.org.

²⁷ For more details, see the interview with Şebnem Sönmez.

²⁸ Turkish: *Çok alçakça şeyler karşısında insanlar ne yapar? Geldiler senin küçük kardeşini öldürdüler ne yaparsın? Mahalleli ile birlikte öldürenlerin üstüne yürürsün, bu kadar basit. Hiç orada da tas atıyorum, Molotof atıyorum diye bakmasın. Büyük bir kin duyarsın karşı tarafa ve cezasını vermek istersin. Şimdi buna neden oldu hükümetin tavrı, devletin tavrı, polisin tavrı, Vali'nin tavrı. Ondan sonrasını durdurmaya imkan yok. Hiç kimse su tip insanlar bunların içerisinde olmasın diyemez. Herkes geliyor oraya ve o kadar çok insanın bulunduğu yerde bu kadar çok insanın örgütsüz bulunmasının sonucu olan bir şeyler doğar. Birisinin canı yalnızca kavga çıkarmak istiyordur, bir tanesi devrim yapmak istiyordur, bir tanesi hakikatten ağaçları kurtarmak istiyordur, bir tanesinde bu topluluk yeni bir şey başladığını biliyordur ve bunun kurallarını yaratmaya çalışıyordur.*

4.3 Defining Gezi

During the Gezi protests, many people asked protestors why they supported the movement and why it emerged when it did. Despite various explanations of advocators that the whole issue was not about ‘a few trees’ as opponents of Gezi claimed, they continued mocking by calling Gezi an ‘üç ağaç meselesi’ [a three tree issue]. So those who did not support Gezi continued claiming to know why the Gezi-goers supported the movement and referred to the ‘three trees.’

But how did the protestors explain Gezi? Why did they support the movement and why did it emerge the end of May? All these questions were asked to my respondents. Their answers are processed in the upcoming part.

4.3.1 the ‘why’ question

It is difficult to use one definition for a movement. This becomes clear from my interviews where I ask my respondents how they would define Gezi; the answers differ from ‘uprising’, ‘awakening’ to ‘resistance.’ But all respondents agree on that Gezi was a ‘people’s movement’ [Halk Hareketi] with no leader. Respondents emphasize that Gezi was not laid down from the top but that it developed within the people. They also note that the people who supported Gezi were striving for a bottom-up governance.

Although the Gezi trees are mostly mocked with, my respondents refer to them as ‘the last drop’, ‘a spark’, ‘a bang’, and/or as ‘an excuse’ for the people’s movement. They note that the protests started as an ecological issue. People gathered at the park because they did not want the government to implement another urban renewal project at the expense of a Park. Şebnem Sönmez explains her support as follow: *‘Taksim is the only centre of Istanbul and in that centre; Gezi Park is the only green area. It is the only place where you can touch and feel the earth. And those trees present at the park are seventy, eighty, perhaps one hundred years old. They are older than us. Therefore, they are the actual owners’*. In other words, it was not more than logical to protect the area from being destroyed. According to Barış Atay the situation suites a symbolic meaning. He says: *‘but why were these trees so important? Because, Istanbul is one of the world’s largest metropolises and while there are almost no breathing areas left, there is just one green park in the centre of the city. And when a group of twenty - thirty people want to protect these few trees, they face a horrible attack.’* So to see the Topçu Kışlası Project as the main reason for the fuss is invalid because the content of the project was irrelevant for the protestors: *‘even if it was not the Topçu Kışlası but another building that would be built, we would still protest because the whole problem was the destroying of trees. So the base was ecological²⁹.’* But what made it possible that 4 million people³⁰ throughout Turkey supported the movement by actively protesting on the streets? How did Gezi bring so many crosscutting identities together?

According to my respondents the violence used against innocent activists, whose goal was to protect the trees at the park, have had an enormous impact on people. And as the images of heavy-handed police spread around

²⁹ For more details, see the interview with İlkay Akkaya.

³⁰ For more details, see the article of Sinan Eden in ROAR magazine ‘The Mayonnaise Effect: Global Inspiration from Gezi.’

social media, and people realized that mainstream media was ignorant and did not report on Gezi³¹, people witnessed the pressures of the state and Gezi became a response to the violent police and government. Barış Atay describes this as: *'the first intention was to protect the trees, later on it became a response to the violent police and government who did not even have respect for this.'* Indeed, the situation changed and the protesters multiplied their numbers. From that point, something unexpected happened: people from all layers of society came together. And they all condemned the attitude of the police and government.

Turkey was surprised, because nobody expected such a protest. As noted earlier, the majority of the protestors were students, also referred as the '90'li kuşağı' (the 90's generation). As my respondents note, they had little hope because they taught that the 90's generation consisted of lazy, asocial youngsters who were not interested in the problems of the country. As Cem Yakişkan argues, *'we thought that they were only interested in video games and smartphones, but they fooled us.'* Indeed, they surprised everyone and made history with the tools of the 90's generation that most parents condemn. Indeed, they used their social media apps on their smartphones to inform each other.

4.4 The role of the media

But how was it possible that mainstream media was ignorant towards Gezi? Is there an intermingle between politics and mainstream media? To answer these questions, it is worthwhile to analyse the first election period of the Justice and Development Party. Once the AKP had won the elections in 2002, the party sought to consolidate its power in the fragmented country (Bergfeld, 2014: 3). That year, Erdoğan's son-in-law, the CEO of Çalık Holding bought Sabah newspaper. And according to Bergfeld, *'other businessmen-turned-media-moguls followed suit.'* Those moguls became either friends or enemies with the ruling party's chairman.

These assertions on the interconnection of politics and mainstream media in Turkey came to light when in 2008; Prime Minister Erdoğan's called for the boycott of the Doğan Media Group. As Bergfeld notes: *'under the conditions of political polarization and increased economic pressure to produce shareholder value, channels such as NTV of the Doğuş Media Group moved closer to the AKP in years to follow. Other capitalist entrepreneurs such as the Demirören Group, which controlled 15% of the domestic oil and gas market, diversified their business by buying the up-market Milliyet daily newspaper in 2012³².'*

4.4.1 freedom of the press

When considering the intertwining of politics and media, it is not surprising that journalists were dismissed during and after the protests for having a connection with Gezi. According to the Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası [Turkish Journalists Union] 85 journalists were dismissed from their position (White, 2014: 3). This is the official number, however, journalists who were forced to resign under pressure and those who were demoted are not included into this number. So the actual number of laid off journalists must be higher than the registered 85.

³¹ Sabah newspaper did not feature the protests on its front page in the first three days. Instead they reported that president Abdullah Gül had rid on a horse during his visit to Turkmenistan. For more details, see the article of Mark Bergfeld in ROAR Magazine 'Beyond the Hashtags? Gezi and the AKP's Media Power'.

³² For more details, see the article of Mark Bergfeld on ROAR Magazine 'Beyond the Hashtags? Gezi and the AKP's Media Power'.

Yavuz Baydar for example, former ombudsman, was discharged from his position with the daily *Sabah* in July 2013. *Sabah*'s editorial board had refused to publish two of his articles on the Gezi protests and the government-media relations. In *The Guardian* he says: 'two days later, I was fired. The reason: I had expressed my views on press freedom in Turkey in an article in the *New York Times* (White, 2014: 3).' Furthermore, when the history magazine *NTV Tarih* planned on publishing an issue on the Gezi protests, this was prevented. Worse yet, as Beatrice White notes: the special edition was blocked, and shortly afterwards the entire magazine was shut down permanently (2014: 4).⁷

Again, many media workers were dismissed from their positions for posting messages on social media in relation to the Gezi protests (White, 2014: 4). Although these posts were sent from their personal accounts, employers did not hesitate for dismissing their employees. TRT [Turkish Public Broadcaster] for example, discharged two employees for sharing tweets that were in support of the Gezi protests. And although president Abdullah Gül had praised the role of social media during the Arab Spring, Prime Minister Erdoğan called Twitter and social media 'the greatest menace to society' while having two million followers himself.

The fear of dismissal was also present during my fieldwork. When I contacted an artist, he/she emphasized that he/she was ready to talk with me if I did not record the interview. Indeed, he/she was not fine with being cited in a work where his/her name would be listed as Gezi-goer/Gezi supporter afraid of being dismissed from his/her position. Although it is a pity not to be able to cite this 'respondent', on the other hand it is also the perfect example of the fear of people.

4.4.1.1 marginal channels

In spite of the mainstream media's ignorance, marginal channels such as Hayat TV, Halk TV, and Ulusal Kanal, which benefit greater freedom and independence than the mainstream media because they are not caught up in the same ownership structure, did cover the protests³³. However, after a few days protestors realised that even those channels that ignored the call of the government to not broadcast the protests had an own agenda. Indeed, as Diler points out: 'the partisan nature of these channels and their affiliation with political parties meant that they also engaged in a degree of political manipulation to suit their own agendas³⁴.' This is why protestors (re-)turned to social media and alternative ways to communicate. And this meant the development of a new form of journalism: citizen journalism³⁵.

4.5 The police

The police had the task to bring an end to the protests. To disperse the protestors the police used tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets in large quantities. Although these tools are legal to use and seem harmless, when chemicals are added to the water, tear gas canisters are used as projectiles to directly target protestors, and rubber

³³ The channels that live streamed the protests, received fines from RTUK (the High Council of Radio and Television) and they were threatened to shut down on the grounds of 'incitement to violence' and violating broadcasting principles.' For more details, see the article of Beatrice White in ROAR Magazine 'Cracking Down on the Press: Turkish Media after Gezi'.

³⁴ For more details, see the article of Beatrice White on ROAR Magazine January 10, 2014 'Cracking Down on the Press: Turkish Media after Gezi.'

³⁵ An example is the birth of CapulTV, a channel that was developed during Gezi for and by protestors.

bullets are fired from a very close range, the picture changes. Indeed, protestors got injured and unfortunately 9 protestors lost their lives: Mehmet Ayvaltas (19), Abdullah Cömert (22), Ethem Sarısülük (26), Ali Ismail Korkmaz (19), Ahmet Atakan, Hasan Ferit Gedik, Medeni Yıldırım, and Berkin Elvan (15). The cases of Ethem Sarısülük, Ali Ismail Korkmaz and Berkin Elvan are most probably the most dubious cases because all three are recorded on video. In the video where clearly can be seen that a protestor immediately drops to the ground after a policeman in riot gear, fires shots into a crowd of protestors³⁶, we see Ethem Sarısülük. But despite this evidence, the policeman (Ahmet Sahbaz) was released on the grounds of self-defence and is now pending trial. For the murder of Ali Ismail Korkmaz, the court decided to give four years of imprisonment³⁷. This judgment resulted in demonstrations throughout Turkey because in the same country children are sentenced to six years for stealing bread. Finally there is the trial of Berkin Elvan, a fourteen-year-old boy who was shot dead by a policeman when buying bread for breakfast. Although there are images of Berkin being shot, the murderer is still not caught and the trial continues.

According to the registrations more than 8000 people were wounded, including 100 head traumas and 60 heavy injuries, and 9 youngsters lost their lives (Eden, 2014: 2). Ironically, not a single police officer has been convicted of their crimes except the two policemen who murdered Ali Ismail (Gürsel, 2014: 1). Conversely, Prime Minister Erdoğan praised the appearance of the police by saying: ‘our police have successfully fulfilled their duties within the confines of the law. They have passed a very important test of democracy. They have written a heroic saga (Gürsel, 2014: 1).’

The struggles between protestors and police resulted in horrible scenes. Protestors looking for shelter in shops, hotels, and apartments -because of the excessive use of tear gas and water- were most of the times handed over to the police. To create a ‘safety net’, names of ‘anti-Gezi’ shops and/or chains were posted on Social Media. However, there were also places where Gezi-goers were safe. One of those famous places was the Divan Otel in the Taksim area. Here, voluntary doctors, nurses and students in education were helping injured protestors. Because the Divan Hotel was one of those few places where protestors could get help, it was overcrowded. Unfortunately, this protestors-friendly position of the Divan Otel was also familiar to the police. Therefore, they attacked the overcrowded hotel -with injured people- multiple times by firing off tear gas into the hotel and by using their water canons³⁸.

When the protestors realized that the state would shun no means at their disposal, this fed the anger of the protestors. To help the police dispersing the protestors, and to prevent that protestors moved to the Taksim area, the government decided to block public transport. Buses, subways, and ferries did not ride, but this did not stop people from protesting. The decision had a contrary effect because it was interpreted as a restriction imposed from the top. And this made the movement expand. People decided to walk to Taksim to show that nothing was going to stop them from standing up for their democratic rights.

³⁶ See the article of Erkan Gürsel on ROAR Magazine Januray 10, 2014 ‘Sarısülük’s Story: A Family Fighting for Justice.’

³⁷ At first, a huge part of the recordings was missing. Somehow, the people in charge managed to present the full video where people can see how 5 men (including 2 policemen in plain clothes) beat up the defenceless Ali Ismail.

³⁸ For images, see the documentary Taksim Commune: Gezi Park and the Uprising in Turkey on www.globaluprisings.org

4.6 Humor

One of the key strategies the protestors used to deal with the government's derogatory remarks was through humour. Because CNN Turk broadcasted a penguin documentary during the first days of the protests, the penguin became one of the Gezi symbols (see figure 3.1). And when the Prime Minister called the protestors, *çapulcu* [looters], they responded by claiming the label as a source of pride. The term became an international phenomenon and the word *capulling* became synonymous for standing one's rights³⁹.

Again, when a famous actor decided to analyse the situation by emphasizing that it was the evil eye that made the country lit in fire, a group of protestors made banners with the famous *göz boncuğu* to chase the evil eye. Furthermore, the protestors used the slogan: 'zıpla, zıpla, zıplamayan Tayyip'tir. Zıpla, zıpla, zıplamayan Tayyip'tir' [Spring, spring, those who do not spring are Tayyip. Spring, spring those who do not spring are Tayyip], and sang songs like: 'Sık bakalım, sık bakalım, biber gazı sık bakalım. Kaskını çıkar, copunu bırak, delikanlı kim bakalım' [Throw us, throw us tear gas. Take off your helmet, drop your baton, Then we'll see whose a real man].

The Banners and slogans of protestors were full of humour. A few examples of these are:

- Alkolü yasakladın millet ayıldı [You prohibited alcohol, and the nation is sober].
- Yeter artık ya! Polis çağırıcım! [Now it's enough! I'm calling the police!].
- Edison bile pişman [Even Edison regrets it].
- Bizim gibi 3 çocuk istediğine emin misin? [Are you sure you want 3 children like us?].
- Biber gazına 21 milyon dolar harcanmış. Nihayet vergilerimiz ilk kez son kurusuna kadar bizim için harlandı. [They have spent 21 million dollars on tear gas. Our taxes are, for the first time in history, spent to the last penny for us].
- Tweet: elinde cop, silahında gaz, kafasında kask, vücudunda yelek olmasına rağmen yaralanmayı başaran 244 polisi kutluyorum. [I congratulate the 244 policemen who succeeded to become injured when wearing a vest, a helmet, having a baton in their hands, and having gas in their pistols].
- Bu adamın futbol kariyerine kim mani olduysa, tarih ondan hesap soracak! [Those who prevented this man from becoming a professional football player, history will hold you responsible!]

³⁹ See the documentary Taksim Commune: Gezi Park and the Uprising in Turkey on www.globaluprisings.org

5. Religious Policy

To conclude whether Turkey's state structure has changed in the span of the years and whether the Gezi Movement was a reaction towards these developments, this part will discuss the policy of the Justice and Development Party. The classical models discussed in the previous chapter will form the framework of this part so the relation between state and religion becomes clear. The chapter will start with a short summary of the founding of Turkey and continue analyzing the state developments in relation to the concept religion.

5.1 Secularism

The Republic of Turkey is founded in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. While in the preceded Ottoman Empire the state and religion related cases were intermingled, Turkey declared its secular character in the constitution of 1928. As sociologists Soner and political scientist Toktaş note: 'the new laws of the Republic aimed to construct a secular public sphere and integrate all ethnic, cultural and religious communities into a single national identity in the form of a secularized Turkish nation. The Turkish version of secularism not only focused on emancipating the state from religion, but also on transferring religious authority from multiple religious institutions and groups to the single hand of a centric state (Soner & Toktaş, 2011: 420).'

So secularism in Turkey, which is similar to the French model⁴⁰, implies that the state fulfills an interventionist role in religion. As political scientist Çavdar argues, the Turkish state 'educates, appoints, and pays the religious professionals of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), approves the content of the Friday sermons, teaches mandatory religious courses in schools, controls religious schools, and enforces laws about wearing religious symbols and clothing in public places and state-owned institutions' (2006: 485). This type of secularism is called *active* secularism, as oppose to *passive* secularism that is seen in the United States (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 428). According to Warhola and Bezci, 'this was initially instituted to convey a certain disposition of civil authority to religion in which the state itself actively embraced and fostered a nonreligious worldview in the public realms, such as partisan politics, public education, and media (2010: 428).'

So unlike the common view on laicism -the separation of politics and religion- the Turkish state would function as an organ that would regulate and would actively be involved in defining the role of religion. Although religious leaders were independent, they had limited power. The state dominated, just as in the former Ottoman Empire (Çavdar, 2006: 485).

A perfect example of the transfer of religious authority to the single hand of a centric state is the Law on the Dissolution of Dervish House, enacted in 1925. The law implied the prohibition of Alevi places of worship (*cemevleri*⁴¹) where Alevis can practice and reproduce the Alevi-Islam⁴², faith (Soner & Toktaş, 2011: 421) and

⁴⁰ There are two models of secularism: the first model, laicism, which evolved in France, is antireligious and seeks to eliminate or control religion. The second model of secularism, evolved from the Anglo-American experience, seeks to protect religions from state intervention and encourages faith-based social networking to consolidate civil society. For more details see: Esposito, J.L. (2001) 'Islam and Secularism in the Twenty-first Century' *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, edited by John Esposito and Azzam Tamimi 1-12 New York, New York University Press.

⁴¹ The central social and religious institution in Alevism, where Alevis have their own religious ceremonies. For more details, see the article of Dressler, 2008 'Religio-Secular: Metamorphoses: the Re-making of Turkish Alevism.'

the ban of religious titles related to Alevi-Bektasi leadership (*dedelik*⁴³, *seyyitlik*, *çelebilik*, and *nakiplik*). By these restrictions the largest minority group in Turkey was unable to teach a new generation of *talipler* (students) to become a *dede*. In brief, while mosques and religious titles for Sunni Muslims continued existing, Alevi and other minority groups with a different religion, ethnicity and/or language were marginalized because the unity policy was implemented.

5.1.1 the guardian of the Secular Republic

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic the state assigned the military as the defender of the democratic and secular Turkey. Especially afraid of the various Islamic Movements and the Kurdish separatists to become influential, the military protected the state by all means necessary and was identified as the defender of democracy against [too much] democracy' (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 430). To accomplish this, the military used power via certain channels such as the Presidency, the National Security Council (MGK), and other state institutions, including even the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 433). As political scientists Warhola and Bezci note, 'if the Islamists took over, *laiklik* would be no more: if the Kurds succeeded in dismembering Turkey to create an independent state, the Kemalist Republic would be fatally, territorially compromised (2010: 430).'

5.1.1.1 military coups

Until today the military has undertaken four military coups d'état (1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997). Although all coups were cruel, they largely diverge. While the first resulted in the hanging off former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, his foreign and finance minister, the last coup is seen as a 'soft coup' and is mostly forgotten and omitted (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 431). Today, the third coup is the most spoken of because people who have been through this period are still alive and see the impact back in the current administration of the state.

The last coup had mainly smashed the leftist wings of the country and made room for the Islamic Movement to thrive that occurred around the mid-1980s and reached its height in the 1990s (Bayramoğlu in Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 431). The flourishing of the Islamic movement eventually led to a severe polarization of religion and secularity. And this, eventually led to the increase of Islam in society. Indeed, in the post 1980s the military considered Islam as the tool to maintain political stability and to prevent tensions in society. So to safeguard their position as defender of the Secular State, they adopted a notion called 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' (Çavdar, 2006: 487). This implied that the number of religious programs on state-owned television channels increased, religious education was introduced in schools, and that the number of religious schools (*Imam Hatip*), mosques, Quran courses, and the financial resources available to the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DIB) increased (Çavdar, 2006: 487).

⁴² This word is put between quotation marks because there are several possible perspectives toward Alevism. While some Alevi argue that they are part of the Islam, some say that it is more an ideology than a faith. See Goner, O. (2005) 'The transformation of the Alevi Collective Identity' *Cultural Dynamics* 17-2: 107-134.

⁴³ A religious title given to Alevi men belonging to a hereditary priestly caste. See: van Bruinissen, M. (1996) 'Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey' *Middle East Report* 26-3: 7-10.

According to various scholars, the rise of the Justice and Development Party has its roots in this third military coup⁴⁴. According to them, the Islamic Movement that thrived in the 1980s and continued developing in the 1990s eventually led to the electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (Warhola & Bezci, 2010: 430).

5.2 The rise of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi

The Justice and Development Party is founded in 2001 and evolved from two different Islamic parties: the Welfare Party [*Refah Partisi*] and the Virtue Party [*Fazilet Partisi*]. At the beginning AKP politicians refused to give the party a religious dimension and presented themselves as a pro-European party with a reformist agenda (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 257). According to political scientist Gamze Çavdar this is a well-considered decision because she claims that any attempt to increase the influence of Islam in Turkish Politics could have been thwarted by secular institutions, such as the military (2006: 481). Furthermore, reiterating the policy of two failed political parties would mean political suicide (Çavdar, 2006: 481).

To prevent tensions with secular institutions AKP politicians ensured that they were not out to radical transformations, and they fulfilled their promises. They expanded the freedom of women with headscarves and they were respectful towards the legacy of Atatürk. Again, they underlined that their aim was to transform Turkey into a modern western-style liberal democracy where limitations of civil freedoms (including freedom of speech and that of the press) would no longer be tolerated (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 258).

In 2010 the AKP proposed a disputed package for a new constitution to transform Turkey into a liberal and modern democracy. According to the AKP, this package (consisting of various elements) would reform Turkey and bring them closer to Europe by changing the legal standards of the protection of privacy, freedom of information and the judicial control of administrative and criminal decision of the military. However, the other side of the coin referred to the increasing power of the government with regards to the appointment of high court justices (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 258). Indeed, the suggested transformation included the Constitutional Court (responsible for the judicial control of legislation) and the composition of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*) that deals with the composition and administration of the judiciary (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 258-9).’

The reform process developed without civil society organizations and opposition parties, because they were not invited by the AKP. Although the civil society organizations, the Union of Judges and Prosecutors [*Yargıclar ve Savcılar Birliği: YARSAV*] and the Union of Bars [*Türkiye Barolar Birliği*] had expressed their strong opposition to the judicial reforms indirectly, and various opposition parties suggested splitting the various amendments on the package⁴⁵, the AKP did not respond. This eventually led to a ‘take-it or leave-it’ package with ‘single-handedly drafted amendments’ that passed the referendum with the support of 57,9% (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 259).

⁴⁴ See the articles of Warhola & Bezci, Soner & Toktas, and Cavdar.

⁴⁵ To separate favorable civil and fundamental rights from amendments that aim to politicize the organization of the Turkish judiciary

5.2.1 transformation

In 2007 the party started the *Ergenekon* investigation to run in the members of a criminal organization that was out to overthrow the AKP government. While some people encouraged the investigation some argued that the government used *Ergenekon* as a pretext to punish vocal government opponents. The investigation eventually resulted in the arrest of government-critical journalists, professors, and authors⁴⁶ (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 257). In this same year, the government started another investigation: *Balyoz* that targeted (former) army officers for an alleged military coup plan that dates back to 2003 (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 257).

In the second election period (2007-2011) the AKP gradually differed its pro-European policy. Prime Minister Erdoğan's famous speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos that ended with 'One Minute' shows this turning point of the AKP's⁴⁷ Western/European policy. Eventually, during the election campaigns of 2011 it became clear that the AKP had changed its political agenda permanently. They simply vanished Europe from their agenda by only referring to it on 2 pages of their 160 pages long election manifesto (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 260).

The party started with pro-European standpoints, promised to expand the freedom of people (press freedom, freedom of speech, etcetera) and emphasized their displeasure with the 'zero tolerance on torture'⁴⁸ (Cengiz & Hoffman, 2011: 258). However, when consulting the report of the international organization Reporters without Borders (RSF) about the press freedom in the world, Turkey has witnessed a fall of 12%⁴⁹ during the AKP's election period. Today, Turkey is ranked 149 out in 180 countries with a Freedom Index score of 44.16⁵⁰ while in 2002 Turkey was ranked 99 out of 139. A perfect example of the freedom of speech and demonstration in Turkey is maybe the Artvin Hopa⁵¹ case. Here, during police raids, an anti-government protester lost his life and several others claim to be tortured by the police while being under arrest. These events happened when the Prime Minister decided to visit the city. However, despite the seriousness of these claims, Prime Minister Erdoğan

⁴⁶ One of the government-critical authors arrested was Ahmet Şık, the writer of 'İmam'ın ordusu.' Before the book about the secret agenda of the AKP was ready to publish, Ahmet Şık was arrested and copies of the book were destroyed. Again, the leading columnist of Taraf Gazetesi (originally a pro-government newspaper that since the disagreements in December 2013 between the AKP and Gülen partially changed its position) Ahmet Altan, faced a trial. He faced a civil lawsuit for breaching Prime Minister Erdoğan's personal dignity by means of a critical newspaper column: 'Erdoğan ve Kof Kabadayılık' (English: Erdoğan and Mere Bullying). In this article, Altan criticises the attitude of the Prime Minister in the sculpture issue, also known as the Turkey-Armenia friendship symbol that was demolished. For more details, see Taraf Gazetesi, January 15, 2011.

⁴⁷ Prime Minister Erdoğan was furious when moderator David Ignatius interrupted his speech about Israel and Palestina. In his talk, Erdoğan said to Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres that the Israeli air strikes and invasion of the Palestinian territory were very wrong and that many people were killed. Erdoğan wanted to continue his speech, but was silenced by Ignatius, that resulted in the famous: 'One Minute!' For more details, see: 'Recep Erdoğan storms out of Davos after clash with Israeli president over Gaza' The Guardian, 30th of January 2009.

⁴⁸ İşkenceye sıfır tolerans [zero tolerance of torture], accessed at <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/icraat/293/iskenceye-sifir-tolerans> 13th of January 2015.

⁴⁹ In terms of percentage, Turkey's ranking in 2015 is 83% (149/180 x 100%), while in 2002 this was 71% (99/139 x 100%).

⁵⁰ For more details, see the article 'Wereldwijde persvrijheid flink verslechterd' in the Volkskrant. <http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/wereldwijde-persvrijheid-flink-verslechterd~a3850176/>

⁵¹ A city in the northeast.

underlined in a TV interview that he was convinced that the protesters were there only to cause trouble, thus, rejecting the possibility of a public inquiry into the death or the torture claims⁵². As Cengiz and Hoffman argue: ‘this attitude seems peculiar, especially with a view to the AKP’s 2002 launched policy of ‘zero tolerance on torture’ (2011: 263).

5.2.2. AKP governance

From the first election period onwards, the AKP-led urban projects TOKI (Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı) [Public Housing Administration] are the most spoken projects in the urban history of the country. The projects imply ‘the displacement of the urban poor toward new housing units that are unaffordable in the long run and to commodify urban spaces that were previously occupied by squatters’ (Sönmez, 2013: 144). While critics consider TOKI as a controversial institution because of the ‘lack of transparency and regulation’ (Sönmez, 2013: 144), advocates argue the caring and giving aspect of the state. However, when considering the matter from all sides, the perspective of Sönmez is inevitable. Sönmez argues that ‘the projects served as a cultural-hegemonic tool to expand the market logic of neoliberalism (and to create a misleading legitimacy of the AKP government as the protector of the urban poor), and that TOKI also contributed to the proliferation of AKP-led Islamic capitalists insofar as most TOKI contractors are both related to the AKP’s conservative-Islamic circles and are founded during the AKP era’ (Karaman 2013; Sönmez 2013 in Gürcan & Peker, 2014: 76). In other words, the AKP governance started with a capitalistic and neo-liberalist agenda that privileged the conservative-Islamic circles.

As noted in the previous paragraphs, the AKP’s political environment changed after the first election period by simply removing Europe from their agenda and turning their face towards the east⁵³. The JDP changed its political character by centralizing the (Sunni) Islam and became more authoritarian that appears from the utterances of several AKP politicians (see scheme 4). Indeed, Prime Minister Erdoğan several times had it in for women with no headscarves and women who wear make-up. He said: A woman with no headscarf is similar to a house with no curtains, and a house with no curtains is or for rent or for sale. He also compared bad plating with women who wear make-up.

Furthermore, the AKP demolished the Emek Movie Theater [*Emek Sineması*] that served as the centerpiece of Istanbul’s prestigious International Film Festival. The movie theater that dates from the early-Republic era and used to be a major symbol of modern art had to make way for an entertainment and shopping area (Gürcan & Peker, 2014: 78). The demolition in 2013 that was attended with protests was not totally surprising when considering the earlier interferences of politics into the art scene. Indeed, the government did not only meddle with the broadcasting of certain serials that contained inappropriate scenes, they also threatened to remove them. This censorship also enclosed the dance scene. Tutu’s of ballet dancers were lengthened after the warning of minister (culture and tourism) Ertuğrul Günay⁵⁴. The Prime Minister attacked the same dance department by noting that Bale is a *belden aşığı bir sanat, tüküreyim böyle sanata*⁵⁵ [an art form that recalls sexual things. I

⁵² Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, live TV interview, NTV, June 10, 2011.

⁵³ An example: the visa requirement for tourists from several middle-eastern countries was removed.

⁵⁴ For more details, see soL ‘Ertuğrul Günay’dan baleye müdahale: O etek kısa!’

⁵⁵ For more details, see Milliyet ‘Başbakana Bale Soruluydu.’

could spit on this type of art]. Again, some theatre plays were and still are censored because of the government-critical content or the participation of government-critical actors/actresses⁵⁶.

The intermingle of mainstream media and the government led to the expansion of the AKP vision. Government critics were rapped over the knuckles when saying something negative over the government that even led to dismissals. As Kasper notes: ‘being a media organization in Turkey means preserving the status quo. Criticize the government, and you will have your assets seized and will be levied with fines; many journalists practice self-censorship merely in order to keep their jobs and remain out of jail’ (Kasper, 2014: 3). A valid explanation for the intermingle of mainstream media and the government is the recent leaked telephone conversation, also known as *Alo Fatih* [Hello Fatih], between the Prime Minister and a member of the board of directors of Habertürk TV. Here, Erdoğan gets angry with Fatih for broadcasting a news topic on the Nationalist Party [Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi] for too long⁵⁷. Another interesting phenomenon that suits the discussion of the transformation of the AKP and their influence on mainstream media is the increase of the number of Islamic advertisements. Indeed, there is no break without commercials on new Islamic CDs, pray alarms [*namaza çağrı aleti*], a pray rug, full packets to learn how to pray, Islamic books, etcetera.

The increased budget of the Directorate of Religious Affairs under the rule of the AKP, a growth of 736% in eleven years that outpaces eleven major ministries including the Ministries of Interior, Health, and Economy, also refers to a political agenda that centralizes Islam (Gürcan & Peker, 2014: 79-80). This growth resulted in the increase of the number of mosques throughout the country. According to official data of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the growth in thirteen years is 13,3%⁵⁸.

The ban of outdoor seating in bars and restaurants by the AKP-run municipalities, the ban on Youtube, file-sharing and social media websites, the legislation on alcohol restrictions, the call to prohibit abortion and C-section, the obligatory religion lessons⁵⁹, the ethic lessons for women from AKP politicians, the prohibition for male and female students to live together, and the recently accepted controversial safety law⁶⁰ are examples of the restrictions of civil freedoms, the increasing power of the state (including official institutions as the police) and the interference of the state into civil lives. In other words, it refers to a Turkey that is becoming a security state with Islamic characteristics (Gurcan & Peker, 2014: 80).

⁵⁶ The play *Kırmızı Yorgunlar* in which government-critic actors and actresses take part, was censored in Kocaeli by Kocaeli Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Sosyal İşler Daire Başkanlığı. For more details, see Antakya Gazetesi ‘Barış Atay’lı Kırmızı Yorgunlar’a sansür mü?’

⁵⁷ See Youtube video ‘ALO Fatih, Tayyip Erdoğan Devlet Bahçeli’nin Basın Toplantısını kestiriyor.’

⁵⁸ The number of mosques has increased from 75,369 in 2001 to 85,412 in 2013. This is a growth of 13,3% ((85,412-75,369)/75,369x100%). For more details, see <http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>

⁵⁹ Based on the Sunni Islam. This is why it caused fuss within the Alevi minority and other religious minorities.

⁶⁰ For more details, see ‘De rechtsstaat in Turkije staat onder druk, zegt EU-rapporteur & Turkse parlementariers op de vuist om veiligheidswet’, <http://nos.nl/artikel/2022373-de-rechtsstaat-in-turkije-staat-onder-druk-zegt-eu-rapporteur.html>

5.2.3 the AKP's international agenda

The AKP's religious policy is not limited to Turkey's borders. In fact, the AKP government has long provided both financial and logistical support for the Sunni extremist challengers to President Bashar al-Assad in Syria⁶¹ (Gürcan & Peker, 2014: 84). As Gürcan and Peker argue 'the Al-Qaeda/Salafist movement has become the main beneficiary of Turkey's support and hospitality for the opposition groups' (2014: 84). Indeed, supporters of Al Qaeda/Salafists were welcomed in Turkey. This regularly resulted in clashes with the locals of Hatay⁶². These Syrian Salafists explicitly articulate the official support of the government in their daily confrontations with the local people. Indeed, they emphasize that Prime Minister Erdoğan has brought them to Turkey so he should pay the services that they get from local businesses. According to a news article of Kaplangil, the Salafists even threaten the locals by saying 'or else we will call Recep' (Kaplangil 2012).

The inhabitants of Hatay emphasize that they are afraid of these 'bearded Syrians.' These men disturb the public order but the Turkish military and other state officials do nothing to prevent these terrorist groups from entering Turkish cities. On the contrary, according to columnist Ömer Ödemiş, 'the Turkish government facilitates the infiltration of these groups by partially removing the barbed wire on the borders' he also notes that shuttles and ambulance services are provided by Turkish officials (Ödemiş, 2012).

Considering the AKP's Syria politics it is not strange that quite recently el Nusra is removed from the terrorist list and that current Prime Minister Davutoğlu referred to IS as *bir grup ofkeli genc* [a group of angry boys]. Is it a coincidence that the term terrorist is not dropped here? Or is there a strong interrelation of state-faith-power in which the Sunni identity dominates?

5.2.4 Turkey's state structure

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Paul Cliteur distinguishes five types of models. According to his theory Turkey fits into the second category, a religious neutral state, because Turkey is *laik*. But does the Turkish state fulfill the demands of a religious neutral state?

5.2.4.1 models: religious neutral or state church?

Turkey is according to its constitution a *laik* country. And as Cliteur argues, *laik* countries give people space to choose their religion freely; they do not limit freedom of religion. Furthermore, religious neutral states are neither for nor against religion and therefore take a neutral position by giving all religions the opportunity to be represented in society (2012: 131). So to live up the norms of this model, none of the religions that are present in society can have a privileged position. It is not merely inappropriate to make propaganda for religion; religious institutions cannot be financed because that will jeopardize the element of political secularism that is mostly typified as "the separation of church and state" (2012: 131).

Again there is the state church model. This model is characterized by the interconnection of state and church in order to uphold the public order. It also implies that one religion has a privileged position and all other religions do not have priority as the official religion of the state.

⁶¹ The ruling president of Syria, Bashar al-Assad is known for his Alawi background.

⁶² Also called Antakya, a southern province of Turkey near the border of Syria. The city is known for its large number of Alevi inhabitants.

When taking this explanation and the writings in this chapter into account, it is possible to conclude that Turkey has declared itself a *laik* country without living up the norms that Cliteur describes in his theories. Indeed, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the Turkish state has banned the religious titles for *Alevi dede's* while the title of imam continued to exist. So the Turkish state did not take a neutral position by giving all religions the opportunity to be represented in society. Furthermore, according to Cliteur's theory, *laik* countries are not allowed to finance religious institutions because that implies that the separation of church and state is in danger. However, Turkey has a Ministry of Religious Affairs that controls religious tasks throughout the country. Furthermore, the Sunni Islamic identity has a privileged position. Thus, there is an intimate connection between the state and religious institutions in Turkey and therefore, according to the theory of Cliteur, Turkey suits the state church model better.

Furthermore, when considering the ideas of Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini who emphasizes that the prophet was not only a religious but also a political authority and that this should and could be realized in present-day societies, I think that a relation between this thought and that of the ruling AKP is possible. For example, AKP politician Favai Aslan declared that Prime Minister Erdoğan is a world leader who fulfils all the characteristics of God⁶³. Again, politician İsmail Hakkı Eser said that they feel connected with Erdoğan and that they love him. Indeed, he emphasized that they see him as a second prophet⁶⁴. In brief, I think that there is intimate connection between the AKP and the view of Khomeini on religiously and political power because Erdoğan already acts as the described prophet of Khomeini. Indeed, Erdoğan installed governors, operated as a judge, contracted treaties with foreign powers.

⁶³ For more details, see <http://www.habererk.com/yazi/414/basbakan-allahin-butun-vasiflarini-tasiyor-mu#.VY0Fo87BFyY>.

⁶⁴ For more details, see Cumhuriyet Gazetesi 'Tayyip Erdoğan 2. Peygamber.'

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research is to answer the question ‘*Was the Gezi Movement a response to the perceived religious policy of the Turkish Government in secular Turkey?*’ After reading the various articles written on this topic, and most importantly after analysing all the interviews with the artists, I will try to give an answer to my research question.

6.1 Short summary

Gezi is unique because it has accomplished to gather people from diverse array of backgrounds. But what made Gezi so unique to become a widespread movement that brought these diverse people together? According to my respondents the most important reason to support Gezi was the restrictions of the government and them interfering into their lives. The Gezi-goers felt threatened by the government seeking to dictate what the national values are and how individuals should (or should not) behave in their private lives (The Economist 2013b). In succession, the government declared its condemnation towards gays, abortion, women laughing in public, pregnant women demonstrating on the streets, and female and male students living together. They prohibited people kissing in public and the Prime Minister openly asked women to bare at least three children. Taner Rumeli explains this as follow: *It is hegemonic; the government determines everything because their aim is a top-down governance model. And this oppression of the government became too much and made people revolt*⁶⁵. Eren Aytuğ interprets these restrictions and interference as humiliation and notes: *Nobody was ever humiliated like this before, not personally by someone. So not by a Prime Minister or the government. We were always humiliated as a general community. The Kurds were humiliated, the Romans, et cetera. But today’s humiliation is an intervention into the private lives of people. As not drinking alcohol, you should not do this or that. And there is of course the police violence that follows you*⁶⁶. So the interference of the government eventually led to the shout: ‘Yeter artık!’ [Enough!] and found its echo in the wall slogans that were present during the Gezi protests: ‘We are all kissing incessantly, Tayyip!’, ‘And what if we are gay?!’ [Veleve ki ibneyiz], ‘Don’t make war, make love with me Tayyip!’ [Savaşma seviş benimle Tayyip!].

6.1.1 single-man power politics

As Gözde Kılıç asserts ‘the politics of Erdoğan resembles a one-man rule, based on the unconditional submission to the authority of the all-knowing Father. Those who raise their voice or show discontent are not welcomed. There is no place for dissident voices. Loyalty is the only measure’ (2014: 2). Indeed, as Erdoğan declared during Gezi, he was determined to implement the project no matter what cost: *‘biz birkaç tane çapulcunun, o insana gelip meydana gelip halkımızı tahrik etmesine seyirci kalmayız. Çünkü bu millet bize reyini verirken tarihimize sahip çık diye verdi’* [We will not listen to a few looters]⁶⁷. So neither the public nor local

⁶⁵ Turkish: *İşte hegemonik, yani insanın üstüne çöken ve her şeyini devlet aklıyla gerçekleştirmesi. Devletin baskısı artık insanlara fazla geldi ve herkes bir anda isyan etti.*

⁶⁶ Turkish: *Hiç kimse bu kadar insanların, yani birey olarak birisi tarafından aşağılanmadı. Yani bir başbakan/devlet tarafından aşağılanmadı. Hep genel bir cemaat olarak aşağılandık. İşte Kürtler aşağılandı, Çingeneler aşağılandı. Bu sefer ki aşağılanma insanların özel hayatına bir müdahaleydi. Yani içki içme, bunu yapma, sunu yapma. Bir de polis şiddeti üstüne üstüne geliyor.*

⁶⁷ For more details, see ‘Erdoğan: AKM yıkılacak, Taksim’e cami de yapılacak’ Radikal Gazetesi 2nd of June 2013

authorities could ever be part of the decision-making process because Erdoğan's agenda is based on a single-man power politics. Furthermore, he showed what the consequences could be when disagreeing with his policy. During one of his famous speeches during the Gezi protests he openly declared that he is not the Prime Minister of those who support Gezi⁶⁸. Ezel Akay describes this as follow: *during Gezi, he made the 'us and them' distinction. At that point he underlined that he was not our Prime Minister anymore. He declared that himself. [...] Tayyip Erdoğan divided this country into two groups. This is horrific. This is the last thing that should be said in this country, because of the presence of different peoples and the possibility of a civil war*⁶⁹. So, as Kılıç argues 'what happens is that he ends up appearing as a tyrant or a despot who forces his will on his people. He plays the role of the Big Brother: a totalitarian figure who has access to the most intimate and personal corners of our lives and who is constantly watching us (Kılıç, 2014: 3).

6.2 Conclusion

But is the Gezi Movement a reaction towards these interferences, towards the implementation of the *Topçu Kışlası Projesi* and with that against the uprooting of the trees⁷⁰, or is it a response to the perceived religious policy of the AKP? Actually it is a combination of all. After the announcement of the project end May, a small group of environmentalists occupied the park to protect the area. And when people noticed that none of the 'big' channels broadcasted anything on the park while environmentalists were struggling with the heavy-handed police, people throughout the country 'awakened.' People from different backgrounds and layers came together to show their grief towards this appearance.

However, when only mentioning the above mentioned factors I would derogate the backbone of the movement. I cannot simply juxtapose the movement with the AKP government because the movement is a sigh towards a bigger whole. It is a reaction towards the present system based on neo-liberalism and neo-capitalism⁷¹. As my respondent Barış Güney argued: *the subject is not the AKP, it is about the collected problems during the span of the years. [...] If the AKP leaves and another party will rule, the problem will not be solved because the problem is the system. The problem is that people are exploited*⁷². As Taner Rumeli says: *Gezi was against the whole system*⁷³.

⁶⁸ His speech at Esenboğa Airport.

⁶⁹ *Turkish: Gezi zamanında kararını verdi ve dedi ki: 'biz ve siz.' Orada herkesin başbakanı olmayı bıraktı. Kendisi bunu aleni ifade etti. [...] Bu ülkedeki insanları ikiye böldü Tayyip Erdoğan söylemi. Korkunç bir şey. Yani bu ülkede en uzak durulması gereken şey. Çünkü burası bir iç savaşı ülkesi.*

⁷⁰ As Haluk Ünal emphasizes, these two components could not be separated. They are intertwined. *Turkish: Oradaki ağaçları kesip, o parkı iptal edip, oraya bir Kışla dikme fikri/projesi aynı şeyin tartışılması. Tekil bir şey o.*

⁷¹ As Matze Kasper argues in his article *To survive, the Movement will have to compromise*: 'Gezi's goals – which include the elimination of authoritarian neoliberalism – are much more ambitious than simply removing Erdoğan and the AKP from power.

⁷² *Turkish: Mevzu sadece AK Parti mevzusu değil. Mevzu çok uzun yıllardır yaşanan sorunların birikmesinden kaynaklanıyor [...] AK partide gitse adını senin koyabileceğin herhangi bir partide gelse bu sorun ortadan kalkmaz çünkü bu sorun sistem sorunu. Bu sorun insanların sömürüldüğünün sorunu.*

⁷³ *Turkish: Gezi sistemin tamamına karşıydı*

6.2.1 gentrification and neo-liberal policy

A perfect example of a system problem is gentrification, part of neo-liberalist policy and the catalyst of Gezi. When looking back to 2010 and 2011, Istanbul was the most attractive European city for real estate investment and development due to the urban renewal projects. Today it is clear that the persons who are involved in these projects are those who have top salaries. Indeed, Zucker emphasizes that ‘the people in real estate and the construction business, pose the majority among the country’s 100 richest persons (2014: 5).’ So while the low-income groups such as the Roma in Sulukule (Zucker, 2012: 4) are forced to sell their homes to private investors, and are replaced to homes with high rents far away from the city centre, these private investors are making more and more profit. This same pattern would be visible in the implementation of Topçu Kışlası Projesi, because here, a green area would be replaced for a profit-making shopping mall, a mosque and the Topçu Kışlası, which would be owned by relations of government officials.

6.2.2 the current order

According to my respondents Gezi is the counter voice for the failing neo-liberal and neo-capitalist system in which the AKP plays a central role. In fact, they emphasize that the AKP has transformed this neoliberal governance by adding an Islamic ‘twist’ to it. Therefore, the primary concern of the protestors is the implemented neoliberal policy under the cloak of Islamic governance that firstly deepens the gap between the poor and the rich and then divides the country in religious and non-religious people. As my respondent Pinar Aydinlar argues: *religion, is the biggest trump card that governments use. You can cow a sleeping and aestheticized folk with religion and can squeeze them to a desired shape*⁷⁴.

The above-mentioned Islamic twist and authoritarianism of the neoliberal governance of the AKP was also present during the Gezi protests. Indeed, government officials did not only ignore the demands of the protestors, they portrayed them as vandals destroying public property and referred to them as all part of the same group of secular religion-haters who have no agenda except to criticize and stand against the decisions of the AKP⁷⁵. For this he referred to the Kabataş incident⁷⁶, and underlined that Gezi-goers had drinking alcohol and had group sex

⁷⁴ Turkish: *Din, iktidarların en büyük kullandığı kozdur. Siz uyutulmuş ve uyuşturulmuş bir toplumu, bir halkı din gerçeği ile gerçekten tamimiyle sindirin, o zaman istediğiniz kalıba dökebilirsiniz.*

⁷⁵ Once the ‘big’ channels started to report about Gezi they focused themselves on protestors damaging public domain, harassing the police and insulting state-members (Kılıç, 2014: 2). Erdal Erzincan describes as follow: ‘Yani ben bazen düşünüyorum “ben oradaydım ya, bu nasıl bir şeydir?!” diye. Orada söylenen şeyin, kendi gördüklerimle, duyduklarım ile kıyasladığımda hiç bağdaşmıyor. Bende oradayım ve televizyondaki gösterilen şeylerle orada yaşanan şeylerin hiç bir ilgisi yok. Gerçekten orada olmayan herkesi çok kolay etkileyecek kelimeler buluyorlar ve yan yana getiriyorlar.’ [Sometimes I wander and ask myself, “I was there, how is this possible?!” When I compare the things that are said and the things I saw, they do not connect in no way. I was also there and the things that are shown on television and the things I have seen are totally different things. But for those who were not there the situation is different. The media finds words and images that can easy influence these people].

⁷⁶ Erdal Erzincan argues: ‘Camiye insanların ayakkabıyla girmeleri. Oradaki imam her şeyi açıkladı zaten. Ben din adına yalan söyleyemem dedi ve işinden atıldı. Bunların hepsi insanları kıskırtmak ve kendilerinin haklı olduğunu göstermek için. Çok iyi seçilmiş konular ve kelimeler. Din çok önemli çünkü. “Benim camime saldırıyorlar, camide içki içiyorlar.” Bunlar çok hassas noktalar.’ [They have entered the mosque with their shoes on. The Imam of the mosque already explained everything. When he said that he cannot lie because he is religious, he was dismissed from his position. This is all done to

in mosques while entering these sacred places with their shoes on. In short, Erdoğan seeing everything in black and white and his refusal to take into account the complex and diverse colors of the participants and their dogma-free agendas - sealed the fate for the future of the protests⁷⁷.' In brief, religion was and still is an important factor of the AKP policy⁷⁸.

6.2.3 answer

To come back to my research question, '*Was the Gezi Movement a response to the perceived religious policy of the Turkish Government in secular Turkey?*' I can say that Gezi is a response to the increasing authoritarianism and heavy-handed rule by the AKP. Of course, the religious policy has an impact on this movement but it is not the main thing. It is a combination of different factors that come together under the roof of neo-liberalism.

The separations in society (Kurds versus Turks, Sunnis versus Alevis, us versus them) are all dichotomies that the system needs. People need to be separated because when they come together they are powerful and can work against this system.

As seen during the Gezi Movement and as it becomes clear in the interviews, Gezi was home to different groups. Groups that initially were enemies came together and declared that they have no problems with each other, other than governments having problems with each other. And when the Gezi-goers are face-to-face with anti-Gezi people who refer to the diversity of the movement and condemning the presence of certain groups, they speak proudly of their brotherhood. They underline that the governments and profit-based business – that are intertwined- are the problem because they are the ones who are becoming more powerful and rich by creating distinctions in society. And with the use of certain tools, such as religion in the case of Turkey, they try to convict people to poverty in the broadest sense. Because what is more threatening for a government, that seeks a neo-liberalist policy, than the brotherhood of different groups? Because what happens if the communal life at Gezi Park could be implemented in Turkish society? What happens when money is not a matter anymore just like in Gezi Park two year ago? What happens if solidarity wins? Is that not what capitalism is afraid of? What if people help each other in different tasks and certain commodities become irrelevant? What if the amount of consumers declines? This is exactly what Gezi was about and what the government is afraid of. So it should not be a surprise when groups, who have not tasted the spirit of Gezi, point to the movement and say that the Kurdish separatists were also there. Yes they were there, but are they not part of the country? Do they not live in your city? Yes, they do! So they are also present during Gezi, because Gezi was home to all of Turkey. And of course there were vandals, and of course this is not ideal. But Gezi was a bottom-up movement with no leader, a people's movement that raised spontaneously. So, it was not more than understanding that these situations occurred, because Gezi was a reflection of society with one difference: no separation between people!

provoke and to show the rest that they are right. These topics and words are chosen consciously because religion related topics are very important. "They have attacked my mosque and that have been drinking alcohol in it", these are sensitive topics].

⁷⁷ See the article of Gozde Kilic 'The Sultan is Watching: Erdogan's Lust for Power' January 9, 2014 ROAR Magazine.

⁷⁸ President Erdoğan showed a Qur'an during a meeting, emphasizing that he was brought up with the holy book.

There was horizontal democracy in Gezi Park, and the supporters demand this same structure – the interpretation of democracy free from a top-down approach- to be realised at macro-level because the political and social status quo is deteriorating. Indeed, as Patz argues ‘the status quo is characterized by heinous and growing wealth inequality, desperate unemployment, savage austerity, opportunistic privatizations and deeply embedded political corruption’ (Patz, 2014: 1).

So the demands of the Gezi supporters are clear, but how can these be implemented? In my opinion, this struggle will continue until all workers of the world will unite and show that they will not permit the exploitation of the working class. If the supporters of Gezi show that the gain of Gezi (defeating the fears) reaches a level of being ready to become unemployed, than something really outstanding can happen. But of course if all workers unite!

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8. Appendix

Year	Statement	Politician
2012	A woman with no headscarf is just like a home with no curtains. And a home with no curtains is for rent or for sale.	Prime Minister Erdoğan
2010	I don't believe in men and women equality.	Prime Minister Erdoğan
2009	The unemployment rate is rising because women are looking for jobs.	Minister of Finance, Mehmet imsek
2013	Male and Female students cannot live in the same place.	Prime Minister Erdoğan
2013	The third bridge in Istanbul will be called Yavuz Sultan Selim*.	President Abdullah Gül
2010	Ballet is an art form that we can compare with sex.	Prime Minister Erdoğan

Table 1: *Yavuz Sultan Selim, an ottoman sultan who is known for killing 40000 Alevis.

Theme	Gezi	Social & Mainstream Media	Religious Policy & Background Informant
Question 1	What is Gezi according to you?	How did you hear about the protests?	What is the Topcu Kislası Project?
Question 2	How did you experience Gezi?	Do you have an account on social media websites? Which ones?	What do you think of the speeches of Erdogan (during Gezi)?
Question 3	Why did you support Gezi?	How often do you use social media?	What is your religious background?
Question 4	How would you name Gezi? (Uprising, Awakening, etc)	How was the time span during Gezi?	What are the main issues you encounter and do you foresee

			possible solutions for them?
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Table 2: Example interview guide



Figure 3.1

- Kürtaj Uludere gibi bir katliamdır/Abortion is slaughter, just like Uludere - Erdoğan.
- Tecavüze uğrayan kadınlar doğum yapsınlar, devlet o çocuklara bakar/Women who have been raped should bare those children, the state will take care of them – Recep Akdağ
- Her kadın en az üç çocuk doğurmalı/Every woman should at least bare three children - Erdoğan.
- Nişanlı bir çift te olsa, kızla erkeğin el ele tutuşması dinimize uygun değil/a girl and a boy should not hold each others hand, even if they are engaged. This is not appropriate for our religion - Diyanet İşleri Başkanı/President of Religious Affairs.
- Demirtaş Zaza, Kılıçdaroğlu Alevi, ben de Sünni'yim/Demirtaş is Zaza, Kılıçdaroğlu is Alevi, and I am Sünni - Erdoğan.
- Kızım türbanlı olduğu için Amerika'da okudu/Because my daughter wears a veil she was forced to study in America – Erdoğan.
- ISID bir grup öfkeli genç/ISIS is a group of angry youngsters – Davutoğlu.
- Cem evleri terörist yuvası/Cem houses are the homes of terrorists – Metin Metiner.
- Mazlum mu Yezit mi? Biz Yezit 'in yanındayız/Mazlum or Yezit? We are on the side of Yezit – Metin Metiner.
- Dekolteli spikeri görüp Hüseyin Çelik böyle giyinilemez deyip ½ gün içerisinde işten atıldı/After seeing an announcer with décolleté, Hüseyin Çelik managed to dismiss her from her position in half a day because her way of dressing was inappropriate - Hüseyin Çelik.
- Başbakan maden faciasını 1800lerdeki Avrupa'da maden kazalarıyla karşılaştırdı. Aynı zamanda, Allah'ın taktiridir dedi/The Prime Minister compared the mine disaster in Soma with the mine disasters in the 1800s in Europe. At the same time he said: It is God's will – Erdoğan.
- 3'üncü köprü'nün adı Yavuz Sultan Selim olacak/The name of the third bridge will be named after Yavuz Sultan Selim - AKP.
- 40 yıl onlar bizi fişledi, şimdi biz onları fişliyoruz/They have prosecuted us for 40 years, now we are prosecuting them – Avni Doğan.
- İki ayyaş/Two drunkards, referring to Atatürk and İnönü - Erdoğan.
- Affedersin Ermeni/I am sorry, an Armenian - Erdoğan.
- Mehmet Ali Alabora hedef gösterildi/Actor Mehmet Ali Alabora was threatened for playing an important role during Gezi - Erdoğan.
- 23 nisan nedeniyle bir günlük başkan olan çocuğa: şimdi sen başbakansın, ister asarsın ister kesersin/On children's day, the Prime Minister gave his chair to a little child and said: now you are the Prime Minister, now you can hang them up or you can cut them - Erdoğan.
- Ergenekon'un savcısıyım/I am the prosecutor of Ergenekon - Erdoğan.
- Ergenekon için, Türkiye bağırsaklarını temizliyor/About Ergenekon, Turkey is cleaning its intestines – Arınç.
- Makyaj yapan kadının kaportası bozuktur/A woman who wears make-up has a bad bodywork - Erdoğan.
- Eşcinsellik hastalık, tedavi edilmeli/Homosexuality is a disease, it should be treated - Aliye Kavaf.
- Her şey seks ve alkolden ibaret değil/Life isn't just about sex and booze – Arınç.
- Fazıl Say, an internationally renowned pianist, was sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment for blasphemy. This because of a re-tweet of a verse by the eleventh century poet Omar Khayyam.

(Scheme 4)