

Constituent Power and the Gezi Movement: The Competing Discourses on Who the People are

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Abstract

This thesis is an evaluation of the June 2013 Gezi Park Protests in Turkey, from the perspective of the constituent power. It seeks to answer questions such as “Can constituent power manifests itself as a social movement? How can we identify the constituent component in the practice of social movements? What is the relationship between claim-making and discourse-establishing mechanisms in the act of constituting?” in the context of the Gezi Movement. In order to do so, the thesis focuses on, first, the processes in which a local concern transformed into a nation-wide protest; second, the Schmittian reading of the Justice and Development Party’s discourse on popular sovereignty; finally, the Gezi Movement’s discourse of an alternative politics in relation to governmental discourse. The main argument is that Hardt and Negri’s conceptualization of *the multitude* can serve as a basis for understanding the constituent practices in social movements, especially in the Gezi Movement.

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Introduction

In December 2013, a wall near the Belvedere Palace in Wien, was sprayed with the words *Überall Taksim*. Three months later, a helicopter circulates in the sky around city center of Ankara, the capital of Republic of Turkey, with a large banner that says “We are not going to let Gezi Protesters have our city” right before the local elections. These are two different relics of the Gezi Movement of June 2013. First one is echoing the main slogan of the June Resistance “everywhere is Taksim, everywhere we resist”: reiterating the ruling Justice and Development Party’s (JDP) heavily agonising discourse on the Gezi Movement. Within that discourse, the protesters were demonized as a group of people, which are seen as utterly against “the national will”, and the nation’s well-being. In June 2013, The Gezi Movement became the interplay and clash of these two different sets of discourses. While the Gezi Movement introduced a novel attempt of protesting in the form of a mass movement, engaged with the wide range of issues, governmental discourse on national will on the other hand, focused on denying both the movement’s discourse and its right to exist in the Turkish state and society. The Movement sparked after violent police intervention to a small yet dedicated group of people, who were protesting against the destruction of the last green public space in Taksim, Beyoğlu, for the purpose of building a shopping mall. The images of police brutality got viral immediately and the next day, thousands of people marched in the streets occupying parks and squares in all the major cities in Turkey. The Gezi Movement became the epitome of people who are distressed with the JDP government’s policies and often disputing discourse. This intense mobilization ended up with a month-long police brutality, protests, local forums, occupation of public spaces, increment in the agonising discourse of the government and eight dead protesters. The Gezi Movement initiated a new stage in Turkish

politics, an awakening of an alternative politics, independent from and opposed to the institutionalized politics. This new stage that has been initiated is the challenge to governmental discourse of the national will and authority over “speaking on behalf of the people”. In particular the Gezi Movement challenged the way in which JDP’s discourse defines the people and the popular sovereignty: the challenge that is derived from much more pluralistic understanding of the society as opposed to the official discourse of national will.

This thesis will focus on the novelty of this challenge and the ways in which the Gezi Movement became the basis for a discourse of alternative politics of the multitude. The main focus of this thesis will be the clash of the two different discourses throughout the June 2013, and the constituent practice underlying the Gezi Movement. I will answer the following questions: Can constituent power manifest itself as a social movement? If yes, how and in what ways is it possible? How can we identify the constituent component in the practice of social movements (the character of action, presence/absence of procedures, natures of goals: what is to be constituted, etc.)? What is the relationship between claim making and discourse establishing mechanisms in the act of constituting?

My argument is that the Gezi Movement can be perceived as a set of constituent practices in terms of the multitude, in which JDP’s discourse of national will, their authority and definition of the nation are challenged by the discourse of an alternative politics. The multitude will be understood as the constituent practice, an active constituent power, which “is an absolute process --all-powerful and expansive, unlimited and unfinalized” (Negri “Insurgencies” 12).

Literature on the Gezi Movement so far includes theoretical evaluation of the event from class based analysis to body politics, from a rational choice perspective to discussions about secularism and cultural debate. Due to the fact that the events of June 2013 include wide

range of topics within the framework of a single case of socio-political action, it cannot be isolated to only one of these perspectives. Therefore this thesis is aiming for a critical reading of June 2013 from the perspective of constituent power and the question of who the people are.

Chapter I opens the thesis with a narrative of the Gezi Movement, in order to understand the ways in which the discourse of *resistance* emerged as a critique of the JDP rule and as a pathway to alternative politics. Here I discuss, the ways in which a small, local protest transformed into a mass movement and the processes which led this transformation. The forms of collective actions, the repertoire of the movement – ways of mobilization, usage of social media, formations of slogans, local forums and emergence of the solidarity- will be presented. In Chapter II, I argue that JDP's understanding of the people and the legitimacy derived from this understanding can be interpreted in terms of Carl Schmitt's theory of constituent power, and especially by using his friend-enemy distinction. This chapter will be devoted to theorizing the regime's discourse about the political sphere in Republic of Turkey will discussed. The argument is that the Gezi Movement and the discourse of the multitude emerged as a reaction to the JDP's national will discourse. In this sense, the main purpose of the chapter is to understand the routes of the constituent challenge to the constituted power by focusing on the way in which the people are defined in the governmental discourse. Chapter III will focus on theorizing the alternative. This chapter will discuss the ways in which we can understand social movements as constituent power and in relation to that, the introduction of the concept of the Multitude. After the theoretical discussion of the regime discourse and the issue of social movements as constituent power, in chapter IV, this study will focus on the novelty of Gezi Movement as the multitude. First the emergence of the multitude in the Gezi Movement will be discussed and second the constituent act in the resisting and occupying,

while promoting a discourse of alternative politics based on multitude will be discussed. Finally, in Chapter V the aftermath of the multitude will be evaluated in accordance with its impacts on the political and social spheres in the contemporary Turkish society.

Chapter 1- From a Local Concern to a Nation-Wide Protest: Narrative of the Conflict and Emergence of the Gezi Movement

The Gezi Movement is considered as one of the most striking events in recent history of the Republic of Turkey. It started in İstanbul, but almost all the cities in Turkey experienced wide range of protests, with many people from different walks of life. The name of the movement later became the Gezi Movement since “the protests spread to other provinces of Turkey from where the park is located, they are all covered under the generic name of ‘Gezi’” (Özel 8). The Gezi Park, one of the few remaining green areas in İstanbul, was to be demolished for the construction of a shopping mall. In 2011, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that the Taksim Square where the park is, were to be reorganized. Topçu Barracks, which was initially built in the same location during the reign of Sultan Selim the Third, were to be rebuilt and to become shopping mall and residence area (medyalens.com). This plan initially raised criticism from the small group of İstanbulites. Yet the mobilization of the nation-wide protests did not emerge until May 2013.

27th of May is the day when the local government started demolishing the park. As a reaction, protesters started to stay in the park overnight, in tents as the night-watch, aiming to prevent further destruction of the park. The event reached to the attention of the general public when one striking image of a woman in a red dress, who was tear gassed by the riot police started to circulate on social media. Woman in Red was to become the symbol of the movement. 29th of May was the peak of police violence against the protesters, who succeeded to broadcast police violence via social media. Images were disturbing: Police was burning the tents of the protesters, tear gas was fired and protestors gasping and screaming. Social media were soon boiling with the calls for solidarity among all major and minor cities of Turkey. Solidarity with Gezi Park Protest was accomplished by the hashtags of #occupyGezi and #direnGezi (#resistGezi) and at the 31st of May, Gezi, as a movement started. Calls for solidarity were not

only based on saving the park, but also marked the opposition to the increasing police violence under the JDP rule (direnisgunlugu.com).

On 1st of June İstanbul, Ankara, Eskişehir, İzmir and many minor cities became the prominent scenes of the protest. Many public spaces were occupied by the protesters and (direnisgunlugu.com) the protests quickly evolved into the melting pot of angst towards the government's recent policies and Prime Minister Erdogan himself. This collective unrest reached the point that no one would ever anticipate. The movement's general reaction was not only limited towards the ruling party and Prime-Minister himself, but pointed also to the inefficient opposition. Many opposition parties tried to use the movement as a carrier of their cause. Yet the movement insisted on its freedom from any opposing party. Reaction itself transformed into something more than the state of simply being angry towards certain policies - it became the manifestation of general dissatisfaction towards the institutionalized political domain in contemporary Turkish society. On that day in 48 different cities 939 people were arrested by the police because they were simply protesting (medyalens.com).

On 2nd of June, the movement kept growing with intense clashes with the police forces, especially in the capital city of Ankara. Calls for solidarity and mobilization increased with the Prime-Minister Erdoğan's statements on TV channels such as "Yes, we will build a mosque (as a part of the reorganization plans of Taksim Square and Gezi Park) as well. I do not need to ask for permission from the head of the Republican People's Party (main opposition party, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) or some looters. Our voters gave the necessary permission for this" (baskahaber.org). This unapologetic and stubborn position of the Prime-Minister and the JDP was not a new feature for their rule. One source of the criticism towards the current government is based on the JDP's lack of communication with civil society and public opinion.

While the police let the protesters to occupy Gezi Park and Taksim Square, in other parts of İstanbul and other cities, police kept using water and tear gas cannons, plastic bullets, in order to stop the protests. Many civil society organizations, trade and worker unions declared their support to the movement while some of them actively participating. While the police continued its extreme usage of violent means, Prime Minister stated that “At this moment, we can barely hold the 50% of this nation from acting against the protests” (baskahaber.com) referring to JDP’s voters on the 3rd of June. Protests started to take a sharp turn with the increment of the police violence and deeply polarizing discourse of the Prime-Minister. Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, a protester died because of one driver deliberately drove its car to the protesters; Abdullah Cömert, another protester, lost his life due to a head injury during the protests. The Mayor of Ankara stated that “everyone who participate in the protests, will be expelled from work” (baskahaber.com) as a response to call for solidarity with the movement, which was circulating in the local government’s offices.

Mainstream media kept its silence on the protests, especially CNN Turk, which aired a documentary on penguins at the first night of the mass protests started. Mass protests were held in front of the buildings of the major TV channels and media organizations, demanding the end of the government’s influence on the flow of information.

The Gezi Movement’s evolution started from a local concern and quickly established an anti-governmental, peaceful movement and resistance against police violence and state oppression. Demands of “Government Resign”, “Tayyip Resign” and slogans such as “Chemical Tayyip” referring to use of tear gas on protesters (subjektif.org), quickly evolved into a non-partisan resistance, with the demands of plurality. The space which was crafted by the movement on the streets, local forums and in social media, created the new means of communication. This very communication brought different organizations and groups together, irrespective of their traditional rivalries. The mobilization and the solidarity founded in the movement translated

itself into a discourse that require more than the simple changes in the political domain and demanded an alternative, open politics that would include everyone. This alternative politics aimed to go beyond the limitations of representative democracy and beyond the governmental discourse of the national will.

The transformation went from an environmental movement to the critique of the decreasing democratic standards under the JDP rule, neoliberal policies, clientelistic understanding of the state, lack of rule of law, oppression on minorities, women, LGBTQ individuals and human rights violations implemented in the last decade. The novelty of the Gezi Movement lies in the establishment of this alternative politics as opposing to popular sovereignty claims of the JDP.

In this regard, to understand the constituent practices in the social movements in the case of the Gezi Movement, first we have to investigate the initial aspect which is opposed by the movement: JDP's discourse on the national will. In- depth understanding of this discourse is crucial in order to understand what the movement's resistance is against. For this purpose, in the following sections, I will focus on JDP's discourse of national will and how and in what ways it has manifested itself during the movement.

Chapter 2- At the Edge of the Friend-Enemy Distinction

The way in which “the people” is perceived in Turkey is essential to understand the source and direction of the movement’s opposition. A certain understanding of the “people” is the defining feature of the JDP rule’s official discourse. From a large scale emphasis on traditional values of the Turkish-Muslim people, the governmental discourse was often promoted as the blueprint for the society. JDP follows the path in which it typically justifies its acts against criticism and protests by giving reference to elections and the votes they gathered as the proof of their legitimate rule. In this logic, people’s will is manifested through the elections and every critique or interference. Such are, for instance the decisions of constitutional court and European Court of Human Rights are regarded as attempts to eliminate or cripple the will of the people. Yet the people in JDP’s terms remained as a very specific, exclusionary category. The Gezi Movement’s initial challenge was to question and criticize the very fundamentals of this concept. JDP’s ruling discourse on sovereignty derived from the populist understanding of democratic elections, in which national-will is allegedly manifested. JDP tends to present its rule as the direct embodiment of the national will, which cannot be bounded by mundane institutions of the state. Second important feature of the governmental discourse is the emphasis on the almost sacred state of the national will, which cannot be challenged. JDP rule often responded to criticisms –domestic or international- with the argument that challenging their rule is challenging the very will of the nation that they are bounded by.

Former Prime Minister, now President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the protesters as “looters” with an obvious outrage at the Respect to the National Will Gathering, an organization that formed by the JDP following the first weeks of the mass protests. Thousands of JDP supporters marched to the arena of the gathering. Supporters mostly consist from lower and middle class, conservative people. Demonization of the protesters was quickly

established by the means of media and party officials' public speeches. The aim was to delegitimize the protesters and their demands, while at the same time legitimizing the brutal police violence. "You saw the state of bus stops and billboards in Ankara" pointing out to the damaged public goods throughout the protests, "Are those environmentalists? Is this environmentalism? Is this the way to be respectful to nature?" asked by Prime Minister (trthabermobil.com) and echoed by pro-Erdoğan media throughout the protests. Delegitimizing the protests required a variety of claims that aimed at discrediting the events. Starting with the fake journal news about the corrupt morality of the protesters, claims of drug abuse and orgies in the occupied parks, demonization took place in a layered manner. This attempt of discrediting gave references to conceptualization of the protesters' claims and actions in cultural and traditional terms—such as immoral acts, which are not compatible with the proper conservative Turkish society- and also challenging the national will.

In order to understand this discourse and offer its in-depth evaluation, now I will turn to Carl Schmitt's theoretical framework of popular sovereignty, constituent power and the concept of the political. From there, the chapter will move on to its investigation of JDP rule's discourse in these terms.

2.1 Schmittian Understanding of the Nation and the Political

The first stop in understanding Schmitt is his conceptualization of popular sovereignty and the nation. For Schmitt the authorship belongs to the nation. The nation is superior to the concept of the people since the nation "denotes, specifically, the people as capable of political action, with the consciousness of its political distinctiveness and with the will to political existence" (Schmitt, "Constitutional Theory" 127). As one of the prominent thinkers in the decisionist school of thought, Schmitt conceptualizes the constituent power as the ability of the nation to act and make precise decisions about its own political existence. "All constitutionally constituted powers and competencies are based on the constitution-making power" (Schmitt,

“Constitutional Theory” 127) through which the nation makes the decision about its own political existence. The nation as the constituent power cannot be limited by its own past decisions. Neither can the nation be constrained by the decisions and rules of the constituted power.

The nation as the sovereign always has the capacity to decide the terms of its own existence. The opening sentence of his famous work, *Political Theology* clearly states his thoughts on the issue: “Sovereign is he who decides on exception” (Schmitt, “Political Theology” 5). The constitution, the state or any given institutional structure crafted by the nation is bound to sovereign’s decisions. In the case of state of emergency, Schmitt argues that in no given circumstances, the constitution can propose guidelines of issues that may provoke an emergency. The very existence of the exceptional moment is based on the sovereign’s decision and can never be taken away from it by the constituted power. He states that “All law is situational. The sovereign produces and guarantees the situation in its totality. He has the monopoly over the last decision; not as the monopoly to coerce or to rule, but as the monopoly to decide” (Schmitt, “Political Theology” 13). This monopoly over the ability to decide is the constituent act and the practice performed by the sovereign body that acts as the embodiment of the nation’s sovereignty.

The second stop is the distinction of friend and enemy, followed by the concept of the political. “The friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense...not mixed and weakened by economic, moral, and other conception” (“Concept of the Political” 28). Enemy is not the one that friends (or us) are in competition or some sort of interest based rivalry with. Enemy is the stranger, the foreigner to the existential core of the friendship, who is distinguishable solely by defining foundations of friendship. Therefore nation comes to being by virtue of individuals’ capacity to identify the core feature of their own existence that makes them friends. In other words, the nation emerged by the

very fundamental features that establish homogeneity, existential criteria that makes people unified and inalienable from each other. Enemy is the one who simply poses an existential threat to the nation by simply being foreign.

The concept of the political emerges from this distinction, as an ability to distinguish enemies apart from friends and to act together with and on the behalf of the friends. “The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism” (Schmitt, “The Concept of the Political” 29) in the sense that anything that follows from this point is shaped and defined by the deeply embedded antagonism between the friend and the enemy. In this moment it has to be clearly stated that for Schmitt, the political is the self-constitution of the nation as the highest expression of the nation’s existence. “What remains here from the original friend-enemy grouping is only sort of antagonistic moment, which manifests itself in all sorts of tactics and practices” (Schmitt, “The Concept of the Political” 30), which clearly indicates the deterministic nature of the grouping and its translation into every structure in a given state. In Schmitt “the state is the political unity of people” (Loughlin 7). This unity is existential: “it does not rest on some abstract idea; it is the expression in practice of the relative homogeneity of a people” (Loughlin 7). Therefore, the distinction of friend and enemy is the very essence of the nation and the basis on which the state and the constitution are built upon. Schmitt praises the declarative power of the nation as the sole power that is capable of deciding who they are. The state and the political in general is the embodiment of the national will. The state is bound to be this embodiment since the decision -on who the people are, and who the enemies are-, is the prime act that constitutes the foundations of the upcoming political domain.

Finally, Schmitt’s understanding of the constituent power must be visited. The constituent power conceptualized by Schmitt, is in an ever-active state, whose agent enjoys never-ending supremacy over the constituted power. He describes constituent power in extra-legal terms, always fluid and active, as opposed to the constituted one, which is static, legal and

institutionalized (Schmitt, “Constitutional Theory”). The nation as the constituent power, the friends, can never be defined in legally stabilized terms. The conceptualization of the friends can always be changed, as well as the existential threat, posed by the enemies. In this active state, constituent power in Schmittian terms always remains conditional. Relativity is at its core, as the idea that constituent power is a pure, unconstrained act of constituting. The limited capacity of authorship of the constituted power is deriving from the actively changing, extra-legal constituent power. The original authorship therefore holds the ability to decide who the nation is, ability to distinguish friend from enemy. With this formula, Schmittian constituent power is not and cannot be restrained by any creation of its own. What has been constituted by the constituent power can never become its own limitation. Legal frameworks, therefore, are not applicable to its will. Even the constitution itself is not a boundary for the will of the sovereign since the constitution “is not based on a norm, it based on a political decision concerning the type and form of its own being” (Schmitt, “Constitutional Theory” 125).

In Schmitt’s terms, there can be no contradiction or tension between the popular sovereignty and constitution, since “the people, the nation, remains the origin of all political action, the source of all power, which express itself in continually new forms, producing from itself these ever renewing forms and organizations” (Schmitt, “Constitutional Theory” 128). In this regard, the nation as the ultimate sovereign remains the sole basis of the political domain, in which will of the nation is translated into a government, which can act as the sole speaker of the nation.

2.2- The Dominant Discourse of National-Will and Popular Sovereignty in Turkey

“Them!” stated by Prime Minister, and continued: “We do not believe the protestors’ sincerity. They should be hanged in the trees in the park since they are used to it. They are using social media to spread false information”, “every citizen of this state, has the right to

protest within the framework of law and democracy. But no one has the right to illegally occupy places while they are disturbing the people and order” (1haber.com). Variations of this statement echoed heavily throughout the June 2013, against the protesters. Meanwhile the “us” in JDP’s terms, especially the police force assumed to have acted in a legal framework, and passed the “democracy test” with their capability to maintain order. Although the Gezi Movement was the peak moment in the discourse of us and them, the hegemonic and agonising governmental discourse of friend and enemy has been evident in the last decade. The last five years of JDP’s rule are based on a strong emphasis on the traditional values of the Turkish society. Before identifying the discourse of us and them, it is important to understand the conceptualization of the “nation” in the Turkish context. *Millet* the term used to denote the nation in JDP discourse, is a relic from the Ottoman institutional practice of Millet system which was based on the segregation of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Ottoman Empire. After the revolution of 1923, the concept of nation has been used in much more secular context. Still, the traces of its Islamic background remained. “Us” as the members of the “millet” in these terms is heavily influenced by the conservative identification of the idea of belonging. In a very Schmittian sense, “us” as the supporters of the JDP, perceived “them” as an existential threat to the very foundations of Turkish *millet*.

In JDP government’s official discourse, the state was presented as the embodiment of the nation (or more accurately millet). Consequently, the claims to political legitimacy are derived from this very idea of embodiment. As the victor of last five elections, JDP’s discourse has always had certain degree of arrogance and claim of being the embodiment of the people. Any attempt of criticizing the government has been perceived and reflected by the government and pro-government media as questioning the democracy’s itself, which is itself reduced to a very superficial, majoritarian reading of self-rule, according to which winners of the election receive practically unconstrained mandate to rule. By frequently referring to

elections through sand vote casts, Prime-Minister states that they are “the honor and virtue of the democracy, they are the mechanism of accountability in democracies. Elections are the foundation of the democracy... victor of the election is the government of the all country” (milliyet.com.tr). In this regard, one who questions the legitimacy of the government, also questions the will of the nation. Populist essence of this discourse often manifested itself as what I call *normalization of the tyranny of the majority* with the legitimacy derived from the idea of popular sovereignty. JDP’s discourse successfully established a new form of belonging that manifests the Schmittian concept of the friendship as the constitutive feature of the nation. In this regard, the ones who challenge the legitimacy of the government automatically become the strangers, the enemies of the regime, and of the whole nation. Regime-led project of demonization of the protesters as enemies, looters and terrorists, opened the pathway for their inhuman treatment by the police for the sake of the order, which is itself presented as the embodiment of the nation’s unity. The media constantly emphasized on the damages on public goods and the ways in which the protests are harming the economy and small business owners. Erdoğan stated that “whenever the Turkish economy shows signs of growth, we always face with ‘tensions, which are artificially crafted’”, which gives reference to external and internal enemies of the Turkish nation (sabahhaber.com). Ali İsmail Korkmaz, nineteen years old university student lost his life after group of police and locals attacked and beat him brutally in a dark alley in Eskişehir June 2013. During the court case held against the attackers, one of them stated that “President, Prime-Minister, Ministry of Interior argued that the Gezi Movement was an attempt of coup d’etat and I was assigned to put an end to this attempt. I did whatever the state ordered me” (cumhuriyetgazetesi.com.tr). Propaganda videos on heroic stand of the police against the public enemies circulated the pro-JDP media while police oppression and attacks were missing from the records.

This depiction of the protesters as an existential threat to nation is based on two main themes. First one was the argument that they were acting against the national will by disturbing the order. Second theme was their depiction as actors who commit immoral acts based on their estrangement from traditional Turkish values and customs. Schmittian nuance in this discourse is the portrait of protesters. The depiction of “them” was not only based on their “looting” nature as the enemies of the nation, but also portraying them as atheists and terrorists or simply foreign to the Turkish society’s norms. The protesters posed a threat to nation by virtue of their actions, protesting and also by their very nature. Within this forged existential distinction of protesters and the nation, the Turkish society sunk into deep polarization among the segments of the society.

Giving reference to popular sovereignty was often used as an anchor by the JDP in their political agenda. JDP’s discourse established a ground for almost unlimited action, presented as the implementation of the national will. Now as the first popularly elected President of the Republic of Turkey, Erdoğan is travelling the country and propagating for his former party, JDP. Against the criticisms, which are based on the unconstitutionality of his actions -since President should be independent from all political parties- and his open support for one particular party, he responded that “in this country there are people who are against the millet and there are people who are on the side of the millet and national-will. As the President, I am only on the side of the *millet*” (dailymotion.com). The JDP’s hegemonic claim over the sovereignty as the embodiment of the people crafted a political domain in which no action can be possibly taken if it is not compatible with the discourse, promoted as will of the nation. As a reaction to this political trap, the Gezi Movement emerged as an alternative and challenged the discourse on who the people are and what popular sovereignty means. The Gezi Movement was a roar against this hegemonic claim, directed towards the conceptualization of

the people with an alternative in its mind: We the people are more than only this very specific understanding of the nation, we are the multitude.

Chapter 3- How to Think About Social Movements?

3.1 The concept of the Multitude

In this chapter, the notion of the multitude, conceptualized by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt will be investigated in order to understand the concept's novelty, and how it can help us to understand the constituent practices in the Gezi Movement. To do that, this chapter will be focusing on those parts of the theoretical framework that are applicable to the Gezi Movement. Certain parts of the theoretical framework, which proposed by Hardt and Negri remain ambiguous and underdeveloped. Therefore I believe that the issues of the common and the organization of the multitude can be best understood in real life practices. These concepts will be explained in the practical terms in the analysis of the Gezi Movement in the following chapter.

The first and the most important aspect of the multitude and the insight it provides in the case of social movements as constituent power is the way in which the concept rejects and criticizes the concept of the people. The people can be considered as one of the most influential political concepts of the traditional western political thought in the last two centuries. As the source of legitimacy of the rule, the concept of the people plays an essential role for the modern nation state. The modern nation state and the traditional Western political thought require a political body, which in itself, crafts a unity. The idea of the unity is the first point that the concept of the multitude challenges. "The people is always represented as a unity" (Negri, "Approximations towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude" 2), where this unity indicates a political body whose members homogeneously gathered. The unity of the people eliminates the differences. On the other hand the multitude embraces the singularities. Multitude does not require the process of reduction. Therefore singularities remain as they are. Their qualities are preserved while they come together and emerge as the

multitude, which is “neither an identity nor uniform; the internal differences of the multitude must discover the common that allows them to communicate and act together” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” xv). Unlike the concepts of people and nation, the multitude is free from the necessity of unifying entitlements. Therefore the multitude remains intact in accordance to the common that it creates through the process, while the concept of the people represents a unity and a whole. Within this representation, the concept of the people requires a process of reduction. The critical engagement of the concept of the multitude as an alternative is its refusal of such reduction. The idea behind the multitude is to understand a collective as gathering point of singularities, not in the terms of unified individuals. The avoidance of the wholeness in the multitude is done by the shift in the focus when it comes to understanding the society since “the singular social differences that constitute the multitude must always be expressed and can never be flattened into sameness, unity, identity, or indifference” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 104).

The second challenge that is presented by the multitude is questioning the hierarchy, which is embedded into the idea of unity. In relation to unity, the multitude challenges the traditional understanding of the sovereign people since this very sovereignty recalls a segmented authority. Hardt and Negri’s critique strikes this very political structure, the political body, which is established through the unity of the people.

“Every sovereign power, in other words, necessarily forms a political body of which there is a head that commands, limbs that obey, and organs that function together to support the ruler. The concept of the multitude challenges this accepted truth of sovereignty. The multitude, although it remains multiple and internally different, is able to act in common and thus rule itself.” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 100)

The body, under the control of the head, manifests itself as a whole, a unity. The parts are meaningful only in their relation to the body. After all an arm is just a bundle of meat without its relation to the body.

One of the most important challenges of the multitude is the way in which it presents an alternative to the idea of the sovereign body. The conceptualization of the alternative is presented in the claim that “the multitude is the living flesh” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 100). This simple statement repeatedly encounters the readers of the *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. The flesh is independent from the taken for granted hierarchy and the segmented authority over the notion of people. The flesh is the product of the ones who gathered instead of the fusion of the unity of people. The singularities forge the flesh through the common that they created which according to Hardt and Negri, is the society itself. “The post-modern society is characterized by the dissolution of traditional social bodies” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 190) in which the multitude is representing a community without unification and homogeneity. The multitude cannot be sovereign in the traditional sense since it is not producing a body - it produces flesh through the communication without unity.

The multitude is not only challenging the concept of the people but also it exceeds it. When the authors define the multitude as common, they give reference to the concept of habit, which borrowed from American pragmatism. In this theoretical framework “habit is the common in practice: the common that we continually produce and the common that serves as the basis of our actions” (Hardt & Negri “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 197). Yet this definition remains quite ambiguous and underdeveloped. Therefore the best way to identify and understand the common will be focusing on real life practices, which can serve as an empirical ground for making sense of the concept. In this regard, the common will be evaluated in the coming chapters as a communicative practice, which

individuals and organizations joined together produced throughout the Gezi Movement, in relation to the practices of resistance. In the traditional modern reading, the people are bounded with its own limitations through the process of reduction by negation. Absence of the head and the body in the case of multitude does not mean that it is a plain for chaos or disorder because “unlike the people, the multitude is not a unity, but as opposed to the masses and the plebs, we can see something as organized” (Negri, “Approximations towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude” 2). In its expansiveness, the multitude produces a common through communication. This very common “serves as the basis for future production, in a spiral, expansive relationship” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 197), which it is produced and productive at the same time. “Singularities interact and communicate socially on the basis of common, and their social communication in turn produces the common” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 198). The common, as a result, is the engine of the flesh. With this engine “the multitude is not merely a fragmented and dispersed multiplicity” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 105). The common is the point of differentiation of the multitude from the masses or crowd. While the masses and crowds need to be led, controlled or directed by certain authority, the multitude is acting through the common that it manifested. The common is the sole anchor of the actions of the multitude and “the production of subjectivity and the production of the common can together form a spiral, symbiotic relationship” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 189). In this framework decision making process of the multitude, resembles language, “just as expression emerges from language, then, a decision emerges from the multitude in such a way as to give meaning to the whole and name an event” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 339). Their emphasis on the swarm intelligence of the multitude is crucial in the case of the decision making process of the

multitude. The multitude decides in a way which is compatible with the common that ties the singularities. Therefore, the way in which the multitude acts can never be directed or ordered by another party or by segmented authority. It decides in line with its own common. Establishing the common can be the way of self-actualization of the multitude; in this regard the expression of the swarm intelligence is the discourse crafted by the common.

The crucial aspect that is introduced by the multitude, regarding the relationship between social movements and an active constituent power, is the idea of resistance, which is embedded in the challenge posed by the multitude to the classical understanding of the sovereignty. Hardt and Negri lay out one of the key tendencies in the classical political thinking regarding the necessity of unity. On the case of decision making, Hardt and Negri assault the traditional tendency on the decision making capacity of the multitude. “The multitude, by contrast, is not unified but remains plural and multiple. This is why, according to the dominant tradition of political philosophy, the people can rule as a sovereign power and the multitude cannot” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 99). Since they lack the fundamental ingredient of the ability of being the sovereign one, which is the unity of the people, they cannot act or make decision. In this point, they pose a critique regarding the Schmitt’s understanding of the sovereign, which he focuses on the “total state, which poses the sovereign above all” (Hardt & Negri “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 331). The way in which they identify the sovereign is two sided, a dual relationship. “Sovereign power is not an autonomous substance and it is never absolute” (Hardt & Negri, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire” 331) since the sovereignty is based on the relationship between rulers and ruled. In Schmittian terms, the all above nature of the sovereign power makes it absolute and therefore misses the dual nature of the relationship between the ruled ones and the rulers. Because of its non-autonomous nature, the sovereignty is a terrain of constant struggle. Conceptualization of the idea of

sovereignty, in this manner creates the possibility of resistance in Hardt and Negri's argument.

As an act of resistance, they present the idea of *the exodus*. This exodus is the act of moving away from the sovereign, the rejection of the enforced relationship between the rulers and the ruled. In this sense the ruled ones have one crucial weapon against the sovereign: disobedience. Disobedience is based on the rejection of the relationship with the sovereign, and it is an exodus from the oppression derived from this very relationship. Since "every exodus requires an active resistance" (Hardt & Negri, "Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire" 342), the multitude's exodus from the sovereign and the resistance derived from this exodus are based on the rejection of the sovereign and the enforcement of an alternative relationship. In this regard the resistance does not aim at taking the power or at becoming the sovereign, but rather destroying the very possibility of emergence of such thing. The resistance and exodus is directed towards an establishment of a new realm, rather than possessing the old relics of the sovereign. In this exodus, "the concept of the multitude rests on the fact, however, that our political alternatives are not limited to a choice between central leadership and anarchy (Hardt & Negri, "Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire" 222). Power of the multitude is its ability to craft a new possibility for politics, which is freed from these two different ends of the classical spectrum of the political. The idea is then "the multitude as a whole and singularities as a multitude are nothing but struggles, movements and desires of transformation" (Negri, "Approximations towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude" 3). In this exodus the constituent power of the multitude portrays itself. In this sense "the constituent power exists only insofar as it resists institutionalized representation" (Loughlin 16) in which the sovereignty of the people enjoys its dominium. The multitude, than, is against the people's sovereignty and one of the most important tools of this sovereignty, the idea of representation.

On the issue of constituent power, what multitude is offering is quite different than the constituent power of the people. In the case of the multitude's constituent power, "there are no distinction between normal and constitutional politics" (Barshack, 218). The constituent power is "a dynamic totality that casts itself constantly toward an unknown future, dissolving on its way distinctions between time and space and between the social and the political" (Barshack, 219). Openness of the constituent power of the multitude is the novelty of the idea, in which it is not a mean to a certain end but rather an unfinished state. As the result of "the marriage of the multitude and strength" (Barshack, 219) the constituent power is independent from any institutional boundaries. The constituent power, instead of producing constitutional norms,

"takes the form of a permanent revolution, in other words, a process in which the subject's independence is affirmed at the moment when it continually rolls back the enemy's oppression and simultaneously expresses, accumulates, and organizes its own power" (Negri, "Insurgencies" 31).

This open power mobilizes itself depending on the specific events, rather than binding itself with contractual and transcendental norms. It constructs its own ontology through the struggle in which it is engaged. The active state of the constituent power defies the end projects such as constitution, which is the captivation of constituent power and democracy in Negri's evaluation (Barshack 219). In this sense Negri's conceptualization of the constituent power is the cooperation of the free persons, in other words, singularities. The constituent power is the expression of the multitude itself. Its relationship with the constitution is a constant resistance in which "strength hidden in constituent power refuses to be fully integrated in hierarchical system of competencies...constituent power always remains alien to the law" (Negri, "Insurgencies" 1). Instead of fixed realm of sovereignty of the people/nation with its institutions, the multitude presents a fluid realm of an active constituent power. Crucial aspect of the constituent power in these terms is its ability to resist to be captured by the constitution. The constituent power cannot to be constitutionalized: "there is no goal - there is only the

radical continuity of the discontinuities, the continual reappearance of the time of strength as alternative, but at the same time as resistance, to the ‘realistic’ and ‘sovereign’ dissipation of time” (Negri, “Insurgencies” 320).

In this fluid state, the constituent power is stripped down from its limited and finalized understanding. Since the constituent power of the multitude is alien to law and constitution what it challenges is the pre-constituted limitations. In its unfinalized form in which “absence of pre-constituted and finalized principles is combined with the subjective strength of the multitude, thus constituting the social in the aleatory materiality of a universal relationship, in the possibility of freedom” (Negri, “Insurgencies” 13). The challenge in this case is the refusal of reduction of the constituent power into constitutional norm production. If we strip down the constituent power from its expansive nature and eliminate the strength that embodied in it, the result is that a constituent power that can be understood as a means to an end. Negri’s critique is that this kind of reading of the concept is suffocation of its true potential and of course, possibility of freedom, which will derive from the empty space created between the anarchy and sovereignty by the multitude.

3.2. Social Movements as Constituent Power

The constituent power as a concept presents a paradox. This paradox mainly derives from the classical constitutional theory, which “designates the capacity for constituent power to the people through the concept of popular sovereignty, however it is assumed that it is only legitimately exercised through representative democracy” (Bailey & Mattei 3). The paradox is the tautology, which embedded into the positivist legal theory as the problem of foundations. Bailey and Mattei argue that this tautology might be the cause of exclusion of civil society from the constituent power, while only focusing on the people. In this regard the paradox lies between constituent power and constitution: the people is supposed to be the ultimate author of the constitution, at the same time the people is a constitutionally defined category; the

author of the constitution is appeared as constitutional creation. The way out is to present the people as an entity that exists both before and after the formation, as the “product of constitution itself, a unified political entity constituted by the constitutional form, not as something which has an apriori existence” (Bailey & Matter 3). By giving reference to Hardt and Negri, Bailey and Mattei argue that “political entity of the people facilitates the cancellation of the pre-political subjectivity of the multitude, which in turn is functional to the merger of the popular political will into the will of the sovereign” (3). On this basis, the main question in their assessment of social movements as constituent power is: “Can we interpret the Multitude, the pre-political form of people, as civil society? Can civil society, autonomous and free from the liberal constitutional form renew constituent power and the idea of popular sovereignty?” (6).

Social movements’ role is often ignored in the case of the constituent practices, which can be discovered in them. Often social movements play a crucial role in representing the political will of the people or particular groups in society, in a much more precise sense than representative democracy. Without the limitations of institutionalized politics, social movements often emerge as an open space for manifestation of ideas, problems, or different agendas. In this manifestation, constituent power can become in a new way, pushing the limitations of the legal, political and societal structures. “Social movements are expanding our understanding of politics as something more than set of actions taken in formal political arenas” (Bailey & Mattei 8), which are often pre-determined by the paradoxical claims of sovereignty of people in the classical constitutional thinking. The expanding impacts of social movements redefine people’s understanding of the politics by “reuniting the idea of constitution with constituent power” (Bailey & Mattei 8). This expansion can be understood in terms of social movements’ capacity to form networks in which solidarity and new forms of politics are possible.

Within these networks, the constituent practices are actively engaging with the legal and political settings, demanding or enforcing change. Through this constitutive capacity, social movements “are expanding the concept of the constituent power beyond the liberal constitutional form of representative democracy and they are filling crucial vacuum where representative politics has failed by offering alternative channels for political engagement” (Bailey & Mattei 8). These alternative channels of political engagement are possible only when the limitations of the sovereign nation or people are challenged, eliminated or waived. In this regard, we can evaluate the social movements as a form of exodus from the sovereign’s claim over its subjects. In this exodus subject is free from the unified entitlements and narrowed down space for the political action.

Chapter 4- The Multitude for Alternative Politics: the Novelty of the Gezi Movement

The wave started with protests against the government in Gezi Park, evolved into something massive, powerful and at the same time unprecedented: it was not a totality, not a synchronized movement. It was rather a process of gathering triggered by series of different causes. In this part I will try to evaluate the emergence of the discourse of multitude through the Gezi Movement as a demand of an alternative politics, to see how and in what ways by analyzing this demand we can understand the relationship between constituent power and social movements. The argument is that the Gezi Movement, with its discourse of multitude, can be understood as the constituent power in Negri's terms. The demand of alternative politics with emphasis on the multitude, the common, and most importantly its unfinalized state, (and its ambitious resistance against becoming finalized) will be the focus of this chapter, in order to understand the constituent practices within the social movements.

4.1- Emergence of the Multitude

The evolution of the Gezi Movement from a local concern to nation-wide protest has already been discussed in the previous pages. What is deliberately left until now is the issue of how to understand the idea of being more than the nation defined by the discourse of the JDP. What was the reason for gathering of the three major football teams' fanatic supporters who were usually sworn enemies throughout the protests under the banner of Istanbul United? How and in what ways Nationalist Action Party and Labor Party shoulder to shoulder carried their party banners without involving their traditional attitudes towards each other and dragged into a turmoil which is historically fed by both parties through years? What broadcast from the Gezi Park protests at the end of the June spread the calls for solidarity with the protesters in the park? Initially what drove the participants of the movement into forging the solidarity was the very specific distrust of their own about the JDP rule. As an opening for all to join who are

already not quite satisfied with the government, anger and distrust against the government fuelled the masses. Yet the interesting part is that the process of these all unique cases of critiques forged an alignment. This alignment was not a place for cohabitation of set of interests who found beneficial cooperation with each other. This alignment was for all to have the right to *be* side by side. The demand of the protest was in this regards right to be active in political domain, right to be not dominated by single discourse of the government and ruling party.

The calls for resigning of the government because of their unjust acts against the environmental protest and mistreatment of the protesters transformed into the claim based on the illegitimacy of the JDP rule. The trajectory of the movement from local to mass protests is also fed by the attitude of the government to protesters. As the target of the Schmittian friend–enemy distinction in governmental discourse, the Gezi Movement was an experience of the exclusion of the protesters, not only because of their presentation as the existential threat but also due to their interaction with the embodiment of the government’s will. Especially in the case of enjoying the rights to protest and gathering, the results of the act of clashing with assumed national were clear. The way in which JDP government acted throughout the protests can be seen as embodiment of their political discourse. The police forces as the protectors of the order and therefore the political body were usually involved in misusing of their legal power, violating protesters constitutional rights and even their bodily integrity in many different ways. These violations’ legitimization by the governmental discourse was always giving reference to protection of the order. The discourse of the protecting order can be evaluated as JDP’s aspirations as being the single voice over the national will.

The Gezi Movement’s multi-voiced character presents different forms of politicization of the participants and the forms of resistance. This plurality introduces many different ways to evaluate the ontology of the events of June 2013. Tayfun Atay’s article on Gezi Movement

simply suggests that the Gezi Movement “cannot be understood without taking into account of the notion of culture” (Atay 39). The reference to culture points to the clash between religious-conservative strata of the society and secular ones. Conservative constituents of the Republic of Turkey heavily supported the JDP rule due to their discourse of “conservative democracy” and their policies and statements, which declare their commitment to the traditional values of Turkish society and the Sunni Islam. In this regard, the discourse of national will in JDP’s account is mingled with conservative tendencies. Rise of the political Islam, coupled with clientelistic attitude of the state led to a clash of the segments of the society, in which “the driving force behind the demonstrations, which turned into an extensive social outburst, is cultural and rooted in the worries of the secular people of the country about the shrinking ground of their lifestyle” (Atay 39). The national-will discourse is also a part of the JDP’s aspirations of construction of new identity. This construction is evident in JDP’s policies concerning everyday life such “new codes related to education, or attempts to bring new regulations over very private matters such as abortion, alcohol consumption, and even public displays of affection” (Atay 40). The secular segments of the Turkish society -leftists, environmentalist, feminists, liberals and Kemalists- had already have worries about the JDP’s decade of constructing a new Turkey since “moralizing discourses have aroused the suspicion that government was intending to intervene in secular ways of life and reorganize public life to align with Islamic values” (Göle 10). As a result, the reaction, and “the protection of the park is not merely metaphorical. The park signifies the physicality of public sphere. It is the concrete space, open space for citizens to manifest themselves” (Göle 9).

Demand for plurality is the translation of the movement itself into a discourse. Throughout its evolution, the protests gradually evolved into a complex movement with its own plurality, first experienced by the participants who may have never intersected before, and then manifested in a set of new demands. In this experience, the discourse of the multitude

established. This has been done by several steps throughout the June 2013. I believe that we can realize the certain concepts of Hardt and Negri by looking at different aspects of evaluation of the movement evolution, such as the process of politicization of the depotentialized ones, creation of the common, and organization of the multitude.

The secular-conservative clash is clearly evident in the Gezi Movement's emergence yet it is not the sole consideration. One of the movement's main aspirations is the creation of a plural political-social sphere. "The Gezi movement marked a new threshold for democracy. As every new event unfolded, there is a date before and after Gezi" (Göle 8). Another important aspect of the Gezi Movement is the "politics of the body". In her conceptualization, Zeynep Gambetti states that "I call it a politics of body, literally speaking. Any body who was discontented or outraged by police violence or felt choked by the authoritarian regime was out in the streets" (Gambetti 95). In the moment of clash, every participant was actively engaged in the opposition against the national-will by its own means. In this engagement, in the streets, in social media, in work-places, or even from their balconies with pans and slogans from youth to their parents, thousands of bodies, which cannot be categorized or evaluated in a homogenous sense, crafted a hub. In this hub the ones who came together established a network of communication, which resembles "an open-air newspaper where groups become aware of many problems of Turkish society" (Gambetti 96). In this network, the Gezi Movement established its *common*.

The calls for solidarity attracted many people to participate into the protests. Yet these calls by themselves often have little meanings, and they were not quite powerful to establish a discourse of an alternative politics. The creation of the common in the Gezi Movement derived from the communicative practices between participants. The occupation of the Gezi Park was not the only occupied space throughout the process. From the social media to mainstream media, boycotts in universities, waves of people walking in the streets and even

crossing the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul within the occupation of everyday life, an interesting dialogue started. In this dialogue, people come together and able discuss, learn and share without any censorship. The network that established in this dialogue reached beyond the scope of main stream media on the issue of providing information. One of the most striking statements of the Gezi Movement was echoed by many, stating that “All those years, we have learned what was happening in the East Anatolia, from this media” (insanhaber.com). This statement was giving reference to media’s manipulation of public opinion throughout the Gezi Movement and how and in what ways Turkish society might have been manipulated on the issues of Kurdish population and continuous unrest in Eastern Anatolian cities. The solidarity of the movement preserved in this dialogue since it was open to everyone without any dictating discourses and any hierarchy.

This dialogue was also crucial in the development of resistance practices and preserving solidarity. Many people who could not participate to the protests were helping protesters on the street by establishing a network of communication for crucial information such as whereabouts of police, safe spots if you are having medical emergencies and even places for hideout. People who have never met before started to help each other in the time of need. Manuel Castell’s evaluation of the events of Occupy Wall Street, indicates a similar tendency of crafting hub for the people. While “the movement was born on the Internet, diffused by the internet, and maintained its presence on the Internet”, it had its material form in the shape of “occupation of public space. A space where the protestors could come together and form a community beyond their differences” (Castells 168). The Occupy Wall Street, unlike the Gezi Movement, emerged as a result of a call, intentional establishment of a decentralized movement in which direct democracy can be found. The Gezi Movement on the other hand, emerged as a result of series of events that led to a mass movement. What is common in both events is the creation of a space or hub, which communication is possible for different people.

In Castells' words it is "a space of autonomy" (168). In the Turkish case, with its bans on internet, mainstream and social media, imprisoned journalists and very narrow space for people to be politically active, the creation of such place was long due. The space functioned as a ground for a new language of communication emerged among participants. The aspiration, which started with the aim of not alienating anyone who wishes to be part of the movement, for the purposes of mobilization, evolved into an all-welcoming, plural condition of being together. The aggressive-sexist language used in the early days of the protests was abandoned because of a demand from a twitter account of an organization called Istanbul LGBT: "A kindly reminder: the ones you insulted as *faggots* are us, we must resist against every form of repression" (<https://twitter.com/istanbulLGBT/status/341375243555840000>). The aim was the establishment of a safe haven for everyone who wanted to join. The common, created in the Gezi Movement, was the autonomous space in which everyone can be herself.

The core challenge of the Gezi's common was its denial of JDP's definition of the nation and the sovereignty from a normative point of view. It included demands for free public space, justice for the victims of police brutality, stopping the clientelistic and neoliberal policies, and discrimination against minorities, from ethnic, religious groups to LGBT community. In a rather romantic manner, the demand was for a space liberated of hegemony of the JDP discourse. The common of the Gezi Movement refused the distinction between social and political spheres and the limited space of the party-politics and election based manifestation of public opinion. Hardt and Negri's underdeveloped concept of the common can be realized in these practices. The common was the communication between the participants and preservation of its normative grounds such as plurality and equal rights for an autonomous existence. At this moment, with the establishment of the common, the multitude emerged. The multitude is independent from the governmental discourse of the nation and from the

every constituent segment inside the movement. Each singularity has its right to exist. The Gezi Movement's discourse of alternative politics embedded these dynamics. The prime reason that it is called as a discourse is its rather fluid nature. These demands have never manifested themselves as blueprints but they were rather communicative norms, which produced in the dialogue of the participants, throughout the movement. These norms were necessitated for the preservation of the multitude in which one can remain herself. The issue of preservation is bringing us to the other aspect of the multitude, which can be realized in practice: Its *organization*.

The multitude as the hub of singularities, which emerged from their common, can be realized in the Gezi Movement. Its difference from the concept of the nation and masses makes it a novel concept. The multitude in the Gezi Movement was a collectivity, which gathered around the notion of cherishing their plurality. Its best feature was its realization of the ways in which they *can* and *should* remain as a plural group. This realization later manifested as one of the founding features of the demand for alternative politics. Plural condition can be preserved, without any unifying entitlement. Through the common, the multitude of the Gezi Movement was able and willing to decide, act on its own terms without the need of forming a political body. Participants acted in accordance with the "spirit" of the movement, carried by the re-discovery of the plurality. Therefore, this spirit did not require a head or hierarchy in which the movement should be organized. Certain organization attempted to establish themselves as the speakers of the movement, yet often they lacked the support for their actions. Taksim Dayanışması as an example, was even considered by the government as the speaker of the movement. Yet, no matter the degree of the support they received in Istanbul, no other city acknowledged their position. Gezi Party as a political party was a failure as a project starting with its beginning, when the avant –garde attitude of the party manifested itself by the members' claim that "this party is established for the purpose of becoming the

ruling party. We will change the system by becoming the ruling party” (gezipartisi.org.tr). This attitude is indeed based on misinterpretation of the movement’s narrative (more precisely - the countless layers of different narratives in which the only anchor was the commitment to preservation of the multi-voiced essence), as evident in the lack of popular support to the idea. The movement rather organized in its ability to act in accordance with its multi-voice essence, in continuing resistance. The practice of the multitude in everyday life and in resistance, translated into discourse of an alternative politics, which may promote and preserve the alternative life style, which has been found in the Gezi Movement.

One of the most important features that almost all of the participants shared and also one of the initial gathering points was the “depotentialized” state of citizens in the political domain. Exclusion from not only the assumed definition of the nation and the people but also from the institutionalized political settings, left the citizens in an inactive state, not being able to act freely and autonomously. In this sense, Hardt and Negri evaluate this very state of the subjects as crippling of their potentials to act (Hardt & Negri, “Declaration” 2012). It is important to note that the process of depotentialization held in different levels of the political life. One of its crucial aspects is the forced passivity of those who are one way or the other excluded from the nation, and who have no possible arena of influence. As a result, the act of constituting is possible only by the nation for itself. In the JDP’s discourse, the political action narrowed down to a mere representation through the party politics. In this limited space, only those can *actually* act who accepted dominant discourse of the national will and the regime as its embodiment. The Gezi Movement was an attempt to reach outside of this narrow state of depotentialization, to awaken the active constituent power in which the true potential of the multitude can be discovered. As a multitude, the way in which Gezi Movement practiced its constituent power was the establishment of its common and its political engagement with sovereign through the discourse for an alternative politics. Within the new life-style, which is

discovered in the movement, the new kind of solidarity and the new type of political action became possible. The potential of the participants of the movement manifested through their active resistance in different levels. The potential within the multitude was realized in humor and art, in different paths of lives or professions such as lawyers, bankers, journalists, artists, doctors, which all of them participated and actively engaged with the governmental discourse. Acting in the multitude, the participants transformed their everyday lives into practices of resistance. In these practices, the constituent power of the multitude is realized through its ability to exist in an active state in confrontation with the political domain, dominated by the JDP's national-will discourse. On the face of such hegemonic political and social sphere, the Gezi Movement was the realization of the possibility of alternatives.

“Believing that only a constituent process based in the common can provide a real alternative, we thus hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are equal, that they have acquired through political struggle certain inalienable rights, that among these are not only life, liberty', and the pursuit of happiness but also free access to the common, equality in the distribution of wealth, and the sustainability of the common.” (Hardt and Negri, “Declaration” 47).

In this sense the Gezi Movement was the exodus of the people from the JDP's claim of popular sovereignty followed by the conceptualization of an alternative state of being together. It was the production of an alternative, which is embodied in the gathering of the singular struggles that have never been intersected with each other before in a movement. Hardt and Negri argue for a process in which participants become singularities, rather than remaining as individual subjects under the sovereign body. The impoverishment of the individual under the sovereign body and trapped state of the members in the representation (in the Turkish case, reduced democracy inflicted by JDP) can be avoided through the process of singularization. Instead of solitude of an individual “a process of singularization is thus incarnated: a self-affirmation, a self-valorization, and a subjective decision that all open toward a state of being together. All political movements are born this way: from a decision of rupture to a proposition of acting together.” (Hardt & Negri, “Declaration” 32).

4.2- Occupying and Resisting: Constituent Power in Action

The multitude is in this sense gathering of the singulars who reached their autonomy and act together for pluralistic state of existence (Hardt & Negri 2012). The Gezi Movement's agenda was never limited to demanding changes in laws, regulations, policies or attitudes. Rather, it aimed for alternative politics in which this very multitude can coexist without threat or constraints imposed by any single group's hegemony. Turkish institutionalized politics, including the fruitless opposition against autocratic and conservative discourse of a mass party, was and is not capable of responding to any demand from the multitude. It is fruitless since even the opposition is set by the pre-determined ideologies, which are most of the time incapable of translating the potential of the people in Hardt and Negri's terms. In the early days of the protests many opposition parties tried to lure the movement on their behalf, becoming the carriers of the discourse of the multitude, youth in the streets and relatively elderly in their houses. Yet the response was generally exclusion of the parties and party politics from the movement. Facebook and Twitter boiled with calls for "no banners" which was indicating anti-party position against the institutionalized politics, pointing to co-responsibility of the oppositional parties for the state of political domain. This vanguardism was also initially quite alien to very core "attitude" of the movement since it was sincerely critical towards top down attitude of the JDP government. Especially in this point, how and in what ways the Schmittian conceptualization of the constituent power in Turkish case has created its reaction is quite clear. The movement was an attempt at formulating a discourse which was declaring an alternative moral standpoint, a discourse which can overcome governmental criticisms but not by responding directly to it. One of the most important examples of this reacting without responding were "Earth Tables", established by a small group called Anti-Capitalist Muslims. Instead of responding to the propaganda and campaign of labelling the participants of the movement as unholy and corrupted in nature, this group

staged an elegantly crafted reaction against government. In the month of Ramadan, instead of participating in the governmental discourse about religious and traditional values of the Turkish society allegedly abandoned by the protesters, Earth Tables was set by the protesters for the ritual of fasting. It was open for practicing or non-practicing Muslims, non-Muslims and everyone who wished to join. Novelty of this act was not its uniqueness but how and in what ways the resistance and its character set in a dedication to be an alternative to its rival, the JDP discourse.

Instead of translation of the movement to party politics, the Gezi Movement tried to establish its own forums for debating, and deciding what to do and how to do it. Since it was an umbrella project, many former causes found it place in the movement. LGBT movement for instance, even though it was not an isolated movement for only LGBT community, actively fought in the Gezi Movement, not as free rider but rather because the cause was same, to be in the political realm. In Hardt and Negri's terms, a collective self is established through the tools of the media, the common language, the humor and the slogans. "Sometimes the creation and diffusion of political slogans in demonstrations constitute an act of truth making" (Hardt & Negri, "Declaration" 37).

The constituent power was indeed in action by virtue of establishing an alternative politics in positive terms. Non-exclusionary, more direct, and not bound by the limitations presented by the representative democracy, the movement was engaged in translation of the essence of the multitude into practice. This core of the new politics was the inclusion of the all, not defined by party, religious and ethnic identities but rather as a stand point, with the call for justice and life together without oppression. In this regard the multitude occupied and protested for the sake of its right to be free of forged and forced limitations, entitlements and most importantly identifications. Deriving its legitimacy from its pluralistic nature and deprivation of their basic rights to assemble, protests and participate, what has been attempted to be constituted is

a safe haven for the ones who are either marginalized by their orientations or simply because of their moral and political standpoints. Resisting became not simply fighting against police forces but also manifestation of who the people are. The multitude in Hannah Arendt's terms needed to be free and it fought by requiring an arena for the newly won freedom (Arendt 1965). Understanding with Arendt's liberation and freedom as theoretically distinct categories is indeed helpful to grasp the Gezi Movement as the constituent power in action. Occupying was the one and only remaining option for the self-manifestation of the movement since there was no other option to participate. The underlying idea in this statement is that political structure and governmental discourse necessitate an occupy movement as a form of protesting. Occupying the city center, the main hub of the city, is not only for manifestation of the cause's itself but also declaration of "we the people are standing". It was an attempt of liberation in Arendtian terms, declaring the underlying motto of this very current political domain has to be changed to the government throughout the Gezi Movement (Arendt 1965). Social movements as the constituent power in this sense is the activating the capacity of constituting by creation of the public sphere where the political is possible.

Struggle of the constituent power and the social movements is, in this context, liberation from the inactive state of participation (Hardt & Negri 2012). The Gezi Movement is indeed an act of constituting by its virtue of norm establishing, suggestion of an alternative politics of untouched by the populist, autocratic dictates of a so-called representative democracy. Its initial launch was derived from JDP discourse yet what it has been evolved into is an understanding of the people as multitude which it should possess its rightful channels of self-rule and its sovereignty.

Conclusion: Aftermath of the Multitude

The Gezi Movement's most active period started to fade away at the end of June 2013. In total ten people lost their lives either by direct assault of the police forces or long term injuries during the protests. However, its legacy still lives in another guise. The discourse of resistance changed its form and transformed itself into local forums, social media tools such as blogs and websites and most importantly vaguely defined yet strongly resistant political activism. One of the most crucial gains from the Gezi experience is an awakening of a generation which mostly entitled as 90's generation often perceived as apolitical group of people. The awakening of the spirit of the political activism echoed at the aftermath of the June Resistance. LGBT pride which held in Istanbul was one of the most crowded of its own history which supported and participated by many non-LGBT individuals who are yet shared the legacy of the Gezi Movement. In autumn while students of the Middle East Technical University was colliding with the police and trying to save the demolished green area in the university campus for a high road construction, many of the Gezi participants were either was on the streets or supporting the students from social media. Fenerbahçe Football team manufactured jerseys in the name of Ali İsmail Korkmaz and composed a march in his name since he was a devoted fan of the team. Many of the football games became scenes of protests against government in the name of Ali İsmail and often clashes with police forces. Judicial period of courts for attempted murder of ten victims of the Gezi Movement were attended by many, with their supports to the families and protests for call of justice for their names. Local forums are establishing campaigns against clientelistic policies of JDP government concerning their neighborhoods.

Traces of the discourse of the multitude are still in place and calling for further movement. Berkin Elvan who hit by tear gas cannon in the head and stayed in coma for near a year at the age of fifteen died in march and his funeral attended by thousands in İstanbul and thousands

more were in solidarity with his family all around Turkey. Yet JDP government and former prime minister and now the President of Turkish Republic, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his government is still in place with much more consolidated power, which is not damaged by any of the corruption accusations or legitimate claims of the government's involvement in manipulation of results of the local elections.

On the eve of the 2015 general elections, which the outcomes of it will play a crucial role in the future of the Turkish politics, pro-JDP media evaluated the 7th of June elections as “this election is the stand-off of the crescent (as reference to Islam) and cross (as reference to Christianity)” (evrensel.net). Many of the headlines were referring to anti-government media as the “alliance of the crusaders” (evrensel.net), again as reference to strangeness of the people who are not pro-JDP. The government passed a new set of laws concerning domestic security, including increment of the jurisdiction of police forces and new regulations concerning protests. With these new regulations, JDP government provided legal ground for police violence and extended rights to law enforcement. However, the parliamentary voting for these new regulations became a stage for unlikely alliance of Republican People's Party, Nationalist Action Party and People's Democratic Party. Three major opposing parties came together to stop the implementation of these regulation and protecting the rule of law.

The impact of the Gezi Movement on the political life in Turkey is undeniable when one looks at the process of reformation within these three parties. Discourse of the alternative politics is now echoing in the opposition parties' manifestation of their future policies. All parties gave emphasis on the individual rights and liberty as well as they underlined their interest in social and political justice. People's Democratic Party, once a Kurdish party, now transformed itself into a party for all constituents in the Turkish society with high emphasis on democracy, plurality and equality. Now the institutionalized politics is experiencing a shift in which the discourse is shaped the “peace”. In this peace, opponents of the JDP's discourse

are demanding the end of “us” and “them” distinction and establishment of pluralist political and social spheres. This election period showed the open channels of dialogue, which established throughout the Gezi Movement between different groups. In this dialogue, people are resisting against the JDP’s provocation, refusing to be antagonized. What has been constituted in the Gezi Park as an alternative politics was this dialogue. It is the basis of the solidarity and the multitude.

The Gezi Movement’s spirit still lingers around who were physically or spiritually participated in the biggest social movement in the history of the Republic of Turkey. It established the sense of activism, an alternative for people to use their potential in the political domain. The protests are over in the Gezi Movement but the discourse of resistance still lives among the ones who become part of the multitude. In this point I believe that the Gezi Movement was the manifestation of the constituent power with a dream in its mind which was constituting a political domain where the singularities can be free. The Gezi Movement simultaneously crafted its demand of alternative politics and practices of this very politics. Free and unlimited by the institutional politics, The Gezi Movement changed the way in which politics conceptualized in Turkey. The JDP government and its official discourse are still strong. Yet the resistance practices against their discourse are getting stronger and louder. Against all odds, the multitude remains still.

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