THE AKP HEGEMONY AND THE GEZİ PROTESTS: BETWEEN
RESISTANCE AND DISSIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

THE AKP HEGEMONY AND THE GEZİ PROTESTS: BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND DISSIDENCE

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In this thesis, I examine the Gezi uprising and the way in which it positions itself vis-a vis the AKP hegemony and its neoliberal policies. For this purpose, I trace the concept of hegemony in a Gramscian and post-Marxist sense since these approaches evaluate social movements and civic actions with respect to the hegemonic struggle. I criticize post-Marxist perspectives for their limitations in describing the components of social movements and the forms of struggle. I also problematize the transformation of capitalism and social movements especially after the capitalist crisis of the 1970's. In this sense, I examine the literature on new social movements and contemporary social movements from a class perspective. I argue that the Gezi protests of 2013 were directly related to the AKP hegemony within the framework of Gramscian 'hegemony'. For this purpose, I explore the notion of 'neoliberalism' with reference to the processes of commodification, flexibilization of labor, privatization of land and social policies that were directly related to the depoliticisation of poverty and the concept of neoliberal populism. Lastly, I problematize the Gezi uprising by exploring its

components, forms of protest and outcomes. All in all, this thesis mainly aims to understand the relationship between the AKP hegemony and the Gezi protests and problematizes the ways in which the protests were able to influence the AKP hegemony.

ÖZ

AKP HEGEMONYASI VE GEZİ PROTESTOLARI: DİRENİŞ VE MUHALEFET ARASINDA

Turhan, Yöntem

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tezde Gezi protestoları ve Gezi'nin AKP hegemonyası ve onun neoliberal politikaları karşısında nasıl konumlandığı incelenmiştir. Bu amaçla, hegemonya kavramı Gramsci ve Post-Marksizm hattında ele alınmıştır; çünkü bu iki yaklaşım, toplumsal hareketleri ve kitlesel eylemleri hegemonya mücadeleler kapsamında incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada Post-Marksist yaklaşım toplumsal hareketlerin bileşenlerini ve mücadele biçimlerini açıklamadaki kısıtlılıkları üzerinden eleştirilmiştir. Bunun yanında, bu tezde kapitalizmin ve toplumsal hareketlerin özellikle 1970'lerdeki kapitalist kriz sonrasındaki dönüşümü de sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Bu anlamda, yeni toplumsal hareketler literatürüyle birlikte güncel toplumsal hareketler de incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmada 2013'teki Gezi protestolarının Gramsci'nin 'hegemonya' kavramı bağlamında, doğrudan AKP hegemonyasıyla ilişkili olduğu savunulmuştur. Bu amaçla, 'neoliberalizm' kavramı metalaşma, emeğin esnekleşmesi, mekânın ve sosyal politikaların özelleşmesi, yoksulluğun depolitikleştirilmesi ve neoliberal popülizm bağlamında değerlendirilmiştir. Son olarak, tezde Gezi ayaklanmasını bileşenleri, protesto biçimleri ve sonuçları tartışılmıştır. Bu

bağlamda, bu tez esas olarak AKP hegemonyası ve Gezi protestoları arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamayı ve protestoların AKP hegemonyasını ne şekilde etkilediğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gezi protestoları, hegemonya, AKP hegemonyası, neoliberal popülizm

To Paco de Lucía

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
CECs	Central European countries
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
ECB	European Central Bank
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EPU	The European Payments Union
ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism
ESCB	European System of Central Banks
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EU	European Union
EUREKA	European Research Co-ordinating Agency
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GP	Gezi Party
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PT	Workers' Party
RACE	Research in Advanced Communications for Europe

R&D   Research and Development

SEA   Single European Act

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2013, one of the most important challenges occurred against the rule of the AKP[1] government. In late May 2013, a certain number of people protested against the privatization and devastation of the historic Gezi Park[2] in Taksim Square[3] in İstanbul; which by time extended as to include thousands of people over the country. The protests initially showed characteristics of typical urban social movements and the protestors had no common political affiliation. However, after a severe police intervention and its dissemination on social media, the protests quickly turned into anti-government protests at the national level (80 out of 81 cities[4]). Although the Ministry of the Interior reported that approximately 2.5 million people participated in the protests, unofficial reports estimated more than 6 million participants (Amnesty International, 2013:). In the protests, twelve people were killed[5], and numerous people were injured due to police brutality during the movement, and in this

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[1] The Justice and Development Party, acronym in Turkish is AKP.

[2] Gezi Park, a historic urban park in Taksim Square, is one of the last green areas in Beyoğlu and is one of the smallest parks in İstanbul.

[3] Taksim as the heart of İstanbul, has a historical significance especially for the leftist tradition in Turkey. Labor movements and student protests in 1960's were occurred in Taksim, such as 1 May Worker's Day in 1977, Bloody Sunday in 1969 which symbolizes anti-imperialist uprising, etc.

[4] With the exception of Bayburt

[5] During the protests, eight civilians who lost their lives are Ethem Sarısülük, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, Abdullah Cömert, Ahmet Atakan, Medeni Yıldırım, Hasan Ferit Gedik and Berkin Elvan.

process, the specific demands of protestors about Gezi Park had been intertwined with political demands such as individual rights and freedoms, protection of public spaces and so on. It means that the struggle to protect trees in the Gezi Park had been transformed into a political struggle to the AKP's expansive hegemony[6]. As the protests evolved, some factors and events also came into play such as the limitations of (social) media, police violence, politicians' explanations and so on. Although there were also similar protests against the policies of the AKP government before the Gezi movement, the Gezi uprising has differently formed its own repertoire of social movements with respect to a new language of action, new forms of protest such as a critical and humorous usage of social media.

When the Gezi movement occurred, the AKP, had been in power since 2002 both at the local and the national level. Although the Party promised an overall liberalization in the economic, political and social areas from the start, it started to show authoritarian tendencies especially after 2011 (Akçay, 2014). Since then, the AKP imposed serious prohibitions in social life, restrictions of basic rights and the right to freedom of expression and a certain lifestyle in line with neoliberal and neoconservative policies (Alonso, 2015). It is explicit that authoritarianism cannot be evaluated independently from the course of neoliberal policies, as this thesis will argue. Authoritarianism as an extension and a consequence of neoliberalism also displays its own forms of government. Since the AKP government came to power, it had adopted neoliberal policies and reforms generally in the framework of flexibilization of labor, privatization of land and depoliticizing of impoverishment. Thus, in line with the general argument of this thesis, authoritarianism is not only about coercion, but also is ideological, as a certain type of political and cultural imposition becomes the most important apparatus of the implementation of neoliberal policies. With the

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[6] In the protests, there was a popular slogan, "the matter is never about trees", which indicated that the protests were not only related to protecting the green space of Gezi Park, but also to organizing a more inclusionary political struggle.

improvement of all these apparatus and policies, the Party by time established its hegemonic power by articulating classes in line with its political agenda (Bozkurt, 2015; Löwy, 2013; Özden, 2015; Tuğal, 2013d). In this sense, this thesis argues that the Gezi movement with its repertoire of action was a reaction to the authoritative implementation of neoliberal policies and imposition of a certain lifestyle in line with this hegemony. For this aim, I will first examine the concept of hegemony with its historical development in order to understand the AKP government and its capability of imposing neoliberal policies I argue that the Gezi protests should be read as a reaction to this hegemony.

In the second chapter of the thesis, *Hegemony, Social Movements and the Potential for Change*, the concept of 'hegemony' is discussed within a certain historicity, in line with the aim of examining the Gezi protests as a social movement and understanding what it is really what is protested. As this thesis claims, the emergence of the Gezi protests is closely associated with the notion of 'hegemony', and therefore, I examine the notion of 'hegemony' in the context of Turkish political structure. The concept of hegemony is generally about the process of reproduction of power relations which is shaped with a political, cultural or ideological predominance of one group over the others, stemmed from economic superiority (Yetiş, 2012: 87). Although the concept had been used in many theories which mainly associated the concept with a political alliance of social groups or states (polis) for militaristic and political superiority, it acquired a new content with Lenin's and Gramsci's writings. Especially the Gramscian understanding of hegemony contributes to the comprehension of a hegemonic project with its reorganization of wealth within capitalist classes by articulating oppressed classes and groups in this project. At this point, it is revealed that moral and intellectual leadership of a class or group improves its political power practices with gaining 'consent'. Gramsci briefly problematizes how the bourgeoisie maintains its dominations and power relations in spite of economic depression in Western countries and briefly argues that class domination is not only dependent to coercive apparatus of power and it is directly

related to a specific combination of consent and coercion in the condition of capitalism (Gramsci, 1992). In this framework, he brings forward some concepts, like the historical bloc which is an organic integration of economic and superstructural relations or common sense which is hegemonic class' ideology, spreading with spontaneous consent relations. Additionally, Gramsci defines the hegemonic crisis, as a result of disruption of reproduction of hegemonic relations between state and civil society at the point of reconstructing historical bloc; and he claims strategies and tactics, like 'the war of position', 'the war of maneuver' and the formation of counter-hegemonic dynamics. These relations and processes can be observed also in Turkey with respect to AKP's regime with its capability to direct and control civil society and masses in a certain economic regime, as Chapter 3 will aim to demonstrate. And for this reason, the concept of 'hegemony' will be taken as an object of analysis to understand the power relations and the Gezi protests against these power relations. The multipartite and disorganized structure of the protestors in the Gezi movement is evaluated as a component of this new counter-hegemonic struggle in these theories. Similarly, new social movement theories see the Gezi protests as a part of social change in the power/hegemony struggle.

These approaches that problematize contemporary social movements like the Gezi protests take its methodological sources from the structural change of the crisis in the 1970s. Hence, in order to understand the Gezi protests, the transformation of capitalism and its effects on social movements are also scrutinized in the second chapter of the thesis. After the crisis in the 1970s, the capitalist accumulation strategy has quantitatively changed due to a decline in the real production (Wood, 1998); and with the increase of the scope of service sectors, there has been a search in political sociology for 'new' classes and political subjects and many theories associated the protests all over the world with the so-called 'new middle class' or 'middle-class radicalism' (Buechler, 1995; Eder, 1985; Offe, 1985) In this sense, these approaches mostly stemmed from the Weberian interpretative point of view (Johnson, Laraña & Gusfield,

1994), which problematized the class background and common features of the protestors of the Gezi movement. This perspective would contribute to my identification of 'the *çapulcu*' as the common political identity of the protests through a class-based analysis in later parts of the thesis. Moreover, in this chapter, I examine anti-globalization movement with occupying protests and uprisings because there are common aspects between the Gezi protests and social movements that emerged in the same period of time, and in relation to that, reactions and interventions of the governments resembled each other. The Gezi movement also resembled anti-globalization movements and occupy protests in that period in terms of the political demands, the class background of the protesters and the potential consequences of the movements.

I then turn to the Turkish political context in Chapter 3 and I examine the establishment of the AKP hegemony through its neoliberal projects, mainly based on privatization of land, flexibilization of labor, reorganization of social policies, depoliticizing of impoverishment and neoliberal populism with its discourses, political/ideological/cultural codes and symbols.

One of the most significant parts of the thesis is the third chapter, *the AKP Hegemony*. In this chapter, I examine the period before AKP came to power and the first years of the government. With IMF programmes that contained structural reforms in the economy, the inflation rate had been declined to the single digit level, had controlled the budget deficit and had tightened the fiscal discipline which enhanced the economic indicators, relatively. In time the hegemony with a neoliberal regime that was directly about the reorganization of the relations of land/labor/money flow, had increased its capability to articulate the subordinated classes and masses in a neoliberal project with the interests of the bourgeoisie (Özden & Bekmen, 2015; Yıldırım, 2009). In the first part of this chapter, the AKP government as the pioneer of the hegemony are examined in terms of its policies about the privatization of land, flexibilization of labor and de-politicization of the question of poverty. At this point, I use some economic indicators, graphics and statistical data which show the transformation of a

relative welfare state and the economic course of the neoliberal regime in Turkey. In the second part of the chapter, in addition to economic policies, I scrutinize neoliberal populism of the hegemony at the point of gaining consent. Neoliberal populism briefly refers to a hegemony strategy of the power bloc for consolidating the articulation relations with a pursing of neoliberal economy policies and using of particular discourses, methods and certain ideological/political/cultural codes. Personalistic ties with impoverished masses, AKP's pro-marketist and developmentalist discourses and 'economic growth' promises are also evaluated in this framework. The AKP populism made a basic separation between 'the people' and 'the other', and the Gezi protests as the movement of 'the other' were also against authoritarian neoliberal populism of the AKP hegemony, and in this sense, ideological sources of the hegemony and its intelligentsia are problematized in this chapter. Moreover, especially after 2011, the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism is also examined because the hegemony had gradually implemented prohibitions and restrictions on daily life and started to impose a certain lifestyle with the effects of economic instabilities. There was a close relationship between the occurrence of the Gezi uprising and authoritarianism of the hegemony with its coercive apparatus and its neo-conservative impositions on social life. On the other hand, the AKP government used the means of neoliberal populism during the Gezi protests as an accusing language, which means that Prime Minister Erdoğan's explanations about the protesters, seen as 'the pawn of external forces' or 'interest lobby' were directly related to populist maneuver (Akçay, 2013). For this reason, the populist discourses and ideological/symbolic apparatus of the hegemony are problematized in detail in this chapter.

Then, in Chapter 4, I problematize the Gezi protest and its position vis-à-vis the AKP hegemony. In order to do this, I examine the Gezi protests with its global background, the common identity of 'the *çapulcu*', its new forms of protest, and its position to the AKP hegemony in the fourth chapter of the thesis. There were many common aspects between the Gezi protests and recent social movements

in the world; and thus, the global background of the movement is analyzed with other social movements in terms of what these protests actually protest and whether there are common aspects of these movements with the Gezi protests, or not. The question whether the t neoliberal order was the main/embedded target in these movements, is discussed in the first part of the chapter. In relation to that, I try to sketch out the 'the *çapulcu'* as the common identity of the Gezi protesters, with its class background, its relation to the neoliberal hegemonic regime and the limitations of interpretative approaches that define the çapulcu. The distinct repertoire of action of the Gezi protests and the new forms of protest in the movement are also examined in this chapter. The Gezi movement had its own distinct form of protest and was differentiated with traditional social movements in Turkish political structure with respect to the extensive use of both critical and humorous discourses, slogans, street writings, the use of social media, new forms of resistance and so on. In this chapter, I examine the new and different forms of action of the protests, its position in the hegemony struggle and its consequences. On the other hand, the questions like whether the Gezi uprising contained examples of the anarchist forms of protest and whether it displayed features of resistance or dissidence are addressed to by giving some famous examples in the protests. The most important part of this chapter is about the question, '*What did the Protestors Actually Protest?*' in the Gezi movement. Here, I critically discuss the protesters' aims and political demands to the hegemony and the position of the protests against the AKP hegemony. Forms of protest, , slogans, street writings, discourses, social media posts and statements of different organizations that participated in the protests are problematized in this chapter. Chapter 4 also focuses on the fading out of the protests I argue that the fading out of the protests was closely associated with the counter-strategies of the AKP hegemony against the uprising; and therefore, I also try to show the different strategies of the AKP hegemony during and after the protests. It is argued that after fading of the Gezi protests, the hegemony had been resurged especially with the electoral victory in 2014 (Bozkurt, 2015). I also examine the

resurgence process of the AKP hegemony in the aftermath of the Gezi demonstrations and critically discuss the success, failures and limitations of the protests against the AKP hegemony. In this framework, understanding the resurgence of the AKP hegemony is important to comprehend why the Gezi movement had lost its potential to mobilize a counter-hegemonic t struggle. To sum up, the Gezi protests are examined with respect to the concept of 'hegemony' and the paradigm shift of this concept, to the contemporary social movements theories which focus on newly emerged collective actions like anti-globalization movement and occupy initiatives, and mainly to the AKP hegemony.

In this framework, my research question is which social dynamics constituted the Gezi protests and how these social dynamics affected the course of the protests and the AKP hegemony, and also, I opt to examine some sub-questions in order to sketch out and explain these questions.

1. What were the main features of the AKP hegemony with respect to the Gezi protests?
2. Were there any common aspects of the protestors? What did 'the *çapulcu'* represent against the AKP hegemony?
3. What differentiated the Gezi protests from other social movements in the political context of Turkey?
4. Did the Gezi protests display features of resistance or dissidence in terms of the repertoire of action?
5. What did the protestors actually protest? In what ways did the protestors challenge the AKP hegemony?
6. What were the reasons for the fading out of the protests? What was the reason for the resurgence of the AKP hegemony?

CHAPTER 2

HEGEMONY, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

As one of the main aims of this thesis is to understand what the participants of the Gezi protests actually protested and what kind of a power relation framework the Gezi protests occurred within, it is necessary to scrutinize the notion of 'hegemony' as a form of domination. By this way, we can understand the meaning and limitations of the notion. In this chapter, I examine theories on the notion of 'hegemony' with respect to its historical development, the reinterpretation of this concept by the Gramscian perspective and by - contemporary- social movements theories.

Hegemony is a concept that explains formation and reproduction of power relations in the political science and philosophy. Although there are different explanations for the concept, it has frequently been used to denote the dominance of one social group over the others (Yetiş, 2012). With the paradigm shift in the social sciences after 1970's, hegemony has mostly been used for an ideological/intellectual/cultural predominance of a social group over the others in addition to economic power, which is also historical. Due to its functionality to explain the domination process of powers, this concept frequently used by the theoreticians and politicians with different contents, as this chapter will aim to find out.

Especially after the economic crisis of the 1970s, debates on 'hegemony' focused on the reasons for and identity of social movements and the extent to which the social movements were able to generate change (Hunter, 1988). In this respect, the concept of 'power' is crucial for the analysis of social movements.

for the very aims of this thesis, in the context of the Gezi protests, the concept of 'hegemony' indicates what the protesters actually struggled against and what kind of a power relation framework that the participants faced. Also, the 'hegemony' concept also contributes to understanding the forms and strategies against the protests that were used before and during the protests. The different approaches to 'hegemony' especially after the late 1960s also provide a wider perspective to understand the relations between the AKP rule and the Gezi protests. Thus, in this section, I examine the 'hegemony' concept in detail in its certain historicity.

2.1. The Question of Hegemony from a Historical Viewpoint

The conceptual origin of the notion 'hegemony' stems from the Ancient Greek philosophy and it was first used in Herodotus in order to designate 'the leadership of an alliance of city-states for common military end' (Anderson, 2017). As Wilkinson states, "Greek words deriving from the root hêge- refers to leadership, guidance, governance, and command, especially in war and hêgemoneuô means to lead the way, lead in war, rule, command, govern" (2008: 121), the concept of 'hegemony' was mostly used for supremacy, militarist leadership or diplomatic superiority between states or poleis and the notion 'hegemon' refers to the dominant state or poleis in Ancient Greek. In many languages, the concept of 'hegemony' is translated in a similar way such as in Italian "(egemonia)" (Italian), and in Turkish ("egemen"). What makes the power hegemonic is mostly related to military force and to coercive diplomacy in Ancient Greek philosophy. Considering hegemony as the diplomatic and militaristic control of one state over the others limits the concept to the scope of military power, which excludes the economic, cultural, social and ethical aspects of the domination. In terms of international relations, it is argued that the unification of Greek city-states, Spartans and Athens against Persians established the first hegemony during the period between the Persian Wars and Peloponessian War (Karatzogianni, 2012, :3) Therefore, 'hegemony' can also be understood as a forced union between states and poleis. On the other hand,

economic power is also historically considered as an important source of hegemony. According to Cohn, Thucydides -as the writer of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*- viewed wealth as a critical source of military strength, and he wrote that "war is a matter not so much of arms as of money, which makes arms of use" (2012: 57), which means wealth is also important for military force since economic power brings a powerful army in some writings in Ancient Greek philosophy. Briefly, the discussion of hegemony had been considered within the framework of economic and military power in the Ancient Greek[7].

Machiavelli is another thinker of political philosophy who refers to the 'hegemony' differently than was used in Ancient Greek and brings a new conceptual explanation about the power relations which affects the subsequent theories of the hegemony in his book, The Prince (citation needed here) He mentions the requirements of being a good ruler and makes some didactic proposals to Lorenzo in adapting various conditions in administration. In chapter XVIII, Machiavelli's reference is very significant to understand his take on 'hegemony':

> Therefore you ought to know that there are two ways to fight: by using laws, and by using force. The former is characteristic of man; the latter, of animals. But frequently the former is inadequate and one must resort to the latter. Consequently a prince must perfect his knowledge of how to use the attributes of both animals and men. Ancient writers have taught princes this use allegorically: they write that Achilles and many other ancient princes were brought up by the centaur Chiron, who was to nurture and instruct them. Having a teacher who is half animal and half man can only mean that a

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[7] Moreover, there is a conceptual confusion about 'hegemony' that is sometimes used as 'empire' in some writings. 'Hegemony' mostly refers to the struggles between the hegemonic powers within the multipolar system, while empire means one powerful sovereignty in a territory of an aggregate of nations/peoples. In an empire, there is no dominative form of power based on a political consensus; contrarily, it is based on unilateral irregular dominative administration. Social movements are interpreted with the analysis of empire, as in the texts of Negri and Hardt. According to them, 'empire' is "a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule" and "manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command" and the multitude as a new constituent power of 'empire' is "capable of autonomously constructing a counter-empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges" (Negri and Hardt, 2000: 15). The difference between 'hegemony' and 'empire' introduces a different interpretation of the social movements in terms of the subjects involved and the forms of protest their subject, struggle way, and so on. As the notion of 'empire' exceeds the limits of the thesis, this concept is not discussed in detail.

prince must know how to use both natures; he who has the one without the other is not likely to survive (2008: 279)

Machiavelli's definition of 'two ways to fight' and an example of Chiron[8] indicates coercive power and consent which also refers to brute force politics and moral leadership. On the other hand, Machiavelli does not associate the economy with politics and rather emphasizes military power that brings economic welfare eventually for him. Therefore, wars as an apparatus of being hegemonic power are considered in line with military strength and territorial security in these texts, rather than as an economic strategy of growth. With the emerge of capitalism especially after the 16th century, the economy as a constituent of hegemony is included especially in the analysis of 'hegemony'. analysis.

The concept of 'hegemony' gained a new meaning with the emergence and elaboration of socialist theories after the 19th century Theoreticians like Lenin and Plekhanov used this concept in order to define the strategies of political struggles against Tsarist regime (Lenin, 1969). These theories mostly make an emphasis on the leadership of the proletariat for toppling the Tsarist regime.

> It (*social democracy*) insists categorically on the need for complete class independence for the party of the proletariat. But it divides the "people" into "classes," not in order that the advanced class may become shut up within itself, confine itself to narrow aims and emasculate its activity for fear that the economic rulers of the world will recoil, but in order that the advanced class, which does not suffer from the half-heartedness, vacillation and indecision of the intermediate classes, may with all the greater energy and enthusiasm fight for the cause of the whole of the people, at the head of the whole of the people. (Lenin, 1965: 122)

According to Lenin, the proletariat's 'hegemony' is shaped by the inclusionary struggle for democratic demands of oppressed groups. In the class struggle, the proletariat's ideological and political leadership with revolutionary strategies and radical democratic demands of other classes/groups/masses constitute successful hegemonic power. The concept of 'hegemony' here is evaluated as

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[8] Chiron or Cheiron or Kheiron is a kind of centaur that is a mythological creature with human head and horse body. However, Chrion is different than other centaurs. It has a human head and front legs and lower body of horse. It seems more humanitarian and civilized according to Ancient Greek mythologies.

an alliance of demands of oppressed classes through socialist arguments which expands the scope of the concept through uniting economic and political power in addition to military power. In line with the aims of this thesis, Lenin's conceptualization of the 'hegemony' contributes to questioning whether democratic demands of the participants of the Gezi protests changed the course of the 'hegemony' or not.

In terms of the relationship between the AKP government and the Gezi protests, Gramscian understanding of the hegemony is very significant since the Gezi protests as a social movement are considered in this thesis as an attempt against the neoliberal authoritarianism of the AKP hegemony, as will be argued in the following chapters. In this chapter, I rather focus on Gramsci's concepts that are descriptive and explanatory for the Gezi protests, such as 'coercion and consent', 'the crisis of hegemony' and 'the war of position' and 'the war of maneuver'.

2.1.1. Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony

The hegemony question has gained a new context in Antonio Gramsci's writings. Gramsci adds 'gaining of consent' to the features of hegemony, which means that hegemonic power must have the consent of oppressed/ruled groups/classes/masses, also. Hegemony is directly related to getting consent capability of power. Consequently, it articulates these groups into its political agenda and these groups are forced to be resembled by the power's itself. Gramsci, in his book, *Prison Notebooks*, explains the reproduction of power relations and class sovereignty with the concept of hegemony. Although there occur many structural economic crises in capitalist countries, the question of how the capitalist order could be maintained is the main problematic in Gramsci's theory. In this respect, the notion of 'coercion' cannot adequately explain the perpetuation of the capitalist order. Rather, the relations between the bourgeoisie and oppressed classes as a dialectic articulation of 'coercion and consent' must be taken into consideration for him because the coercion cannot be enough to sustain domination in crisis conditions, caused by capital

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accumulation strategies of the bourgeoisie. Additionally, hegemony with consent apparatus legitimizes and implements economy policies for the benefit of the bourgeoisie by repressing objections of subordinated classes. At this point of articulation of consent and coercion, it can be argued that Gramsci's hegemony is the re-formulation of Machiavelli's Chiron as 'The New Prince'.

> "…Machiavelli's Centaur as a symbol of the "dual perspective" which must characterise the revolutionary party (and State). The party must hold together in a dialectical unity the two levels "of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy." (Gramsci, 1992: 124)

Moreover, he emphasized more on the superstructures, since hegemony functions in the superstructure level with its ideologies that articulates heterogeneous class fractions each other. At this point, he criticizes economist and ideologist approaches, since economist determination reduces superstructures like state, ideologies, law in a reflection of economic structures and ideologist theories externalizes economic and structural relations from ideologies. In a praxis viewpoint, economic structure and superstructures indicate an 'organic union' in a historical bloc. Gramsci argues "In what sense can one identify politics with history, and hence all of life with politics?... The concept of 'historical bloc', i.e. unity between nature and spirit (structure and superstructure), the unity of opposites and of distinct." (1992: 137) In this sense, the concept of hegemony should not be evaluated only with political persuasion or as independent from economic structures, because it is directly related to the economic privileged position of ruling class. In this framework, consent is spontaneously organized with privileged ruling class' ideological/intellectual leadership which becomes 'common sense' in the social formation. Ideology functions as cement between ruling and ruled classes in terms of domination, which means it is not simply 'false-consciousness', but a material existence with its contradictions or inconsistencies (1992: 328). Ruling class becomes truly hegemonic when it makes its class interests national-popular by articulating them into other social classes/groups' interests.

In his writings, Gramsci emphasizes the interrelations between civil society and political society (state) as the superstructure of the historical bloc. Civil society is the field of constituting hegemony while the state is an administration area of coercion and oppression. This separation ought to be thought in a dialectical perspective and not to be forgotten that the state' power has an important role of forming od ideological leadership in political praxis. There is an organic union between the state and civil society with respect to forming consent processes. Intellectuals have roles of (re)production of new ideological perspective and class consciousness on masses. Organic relations between the state and civil society are constituted via intellectuals. If the relations between intellectuals and its representing groups are started to corrupt in a degree, the hegemonic crisis occurs. In actual, hegemonic crisis mostly starts with serious political failure and revolutionary or radical reformer demands of passive groups/masses and intellectuals or political parties cannot meet the needs of their grassroots. When these representational or political crisis cannot be overcome, the crisis transforms into hegemonic, even organic crisis in time and affects the structural and superstructural characteristics of the historical bloc (Yetiş, 2012: 92). In this condition, ruling class can reproduce a new hegemonic order or alternative dynamics can spontaneously establish hegemony in the process of struggle. At this point, Gramsci mentions 'war of position' and 'war of maneuver' for challenging hegemony. The first one is based on inclusive hegemonic activities in the civil society, while the second one is directly related to capturing state power. Briefly, Gramsci's concept on hegemony has been enormously affected theoreticians in terms of political struggle and strategies in many ways and Gramscian understanding of hegemony with these explanations contributes to understand what the power relations that caused the emergence of social movements are and what the relations between the hegemonic crisis and social movements. Hence, the question of what participants of the Gezi protests actually protested can be answered with this perspective which will be examined in the next sections in detail.

2.1.1.1. Coercion and Consent

The problematic about how the state maintains its domination and power relations with the interests of the bourgeoisie necessitated new theoretical perspectives about the state in Marxism (Yetiş, 2012) since especially with the occurrence of severe economic depressions and crises and the rise of fascist regimes in the first quarter of the 20th century, the argument had been advanced that classical Marxism focused too narrowly upon the state as the coercive instrument of the ruling class (Hoffman, 1984). At this point, Antonio Gramsci's works on hegemony provided an expanded view of the state that is based on *coercion* and *consent* analysis of politics.

The concept of hegemony first appeared in Gramsci's works, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question* in 1926 (Mouffe, 1979: 178) and Gramsci considered hegemony as the system of class corporatism and alliance:

> The Turin communists posed concretely the question of the 'hegemony of the proletariat': i.e. of the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and the workers' State. The proletariat can become the leading (*dirigent*) and the dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and the bourgeois State. In Italy, in the real class relations which exists there, this means to the extent that it succeeds in gaining the consent of the broad peasant masses. (Gramsci, 1978: 443)

Gramsci mentions in this passage the proletariat's hegemony that exercises political leadership over other classes and peasant masses by gaining consent. This explanation is significant for two reasons. Firstly, there is a presupposition of the hegemonic class which articulates the interests of subordinated classes and masses, and secondly, the hegemonic class is forced to make some sacrifices in order to maintain alliances and interest corporations. It means that the hegemonic class, as one of the fundamental classes in relations of production necessarily and strategically sacrifice some of its interests at the point of its execution of political and moral leadership role in order to facilitate its vanguard role (Ramos, 1982). Being a hegemonic class with its sacrifice situation, therefore, entails the balanced relation of coercion (force) and consent (consensus), which means that the constitutive elements of interest corporatism of the subaltern classes and

masses are basically based on the strategic balance of coercion and consent. According to Gramsci, there must be a reciprocal balance between force and consent.

> The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority (1992: 80)

The balance situation provides an organic integrity within the class coalition. At the point of the state rule by the hegemony class, consent predominates over coercion since hegemony represents the balance between "political society" and "civil society" with a particular economic structure (Ramos, 1982). The state as one of the constitutive elements of the historical bloc that consists of organic integrity of infrastructure and superstructure is more related to coercive organizations of the hegemony with its bureaucracy, the police/military, its courts and so on. In this sense, Gramsci defines the states as "hegemony protected by the armor of coercion" (1992: 263). As Gramsci's works is traced from Machiavelli's reference to Centaur, half animal and half human as mentioned above, he formulates the state also with the equilibrium of dominance and consensus by stating "…the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules" (Ibid: 244). Additionally, civil society as the sphere of the predominance of the hegemonic class over the society is more related to private organizations and superstructural moments like educational and cultural institutions, the church, the media and so on.

Although Gramsci considers on the equilibrium situation of force and consensus, at the point of reproduction of power relations, consent -rather than force- is more emphasized in terms of power relations and hegemonic legitimacy. Except that there occurs an organic crisis that threatens the ruling position of the hegemonic class, consensus in all levels of civil society must be gained for the

establishment of the hegemony system. Coercion is not enough to maintain the power relations for the hegemonic class; and actually, if the political rule can be only exercised by force, there cannot be mentioned the political leadership of hegemonic class and the hegemonic crisis emerges there. Therefore, 'consent' is the most important element for the hegemonic class and also maintaining the hegemony system.

2.1.1.2. The Crisis of Hegemony

There are many claims that the Gezi protests caused the crisis of hegemony, or the protests emerged within the crisis of hegemony (Bozkurt, 2015; Özden & Bekmen, 2015) and Gramscian understanding of the 'crisis' contributes to understanding the course of the AKP rule before/after the protests in this framework. According to Gramsci, hegemony as 'predominance obtained by consent' is 'the condition that one of the fundamental classes gained a political, intellectual, and moral leadership via by a common world-view or "organic ideology" as the cement element of the hegemonic articulation'. Thus, the ideology of the hegemonic class becomes 'common sense' which is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, in the process of obtaining consent of masses (Gramsci, 1971: 326). It is closely related to the exercise of political/moral leadership with a certain economic background that forces the hegemonic class to make reforms through redefining and transforming the previous ideologies, structures and institutions in order to rearticulate ideological elements into a new worldview and achieve new 'collective will' (Ramos, 1982). At this point, the 'hegemonic crisis' is about discrediting of the 'common sense' coupled with the deterioration of material conditions.

Thus, it is not possible to reproduce the ethno-political leadership of the hegemonic class within the unity of historical bloc continuously. If the hegemonic superiority cannot be maintained for certain reasons, a 'crisis' emerges when:

> [If]the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer 'leading' but only 'dominant', exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. (1971: 276)

As the quotation states, the 'hegemonic crisis' starts with the loss of consensus within the articulated masses, and therefore, the ruling class has lost its leading position and the coercive power has executed. This 'crisis' does not stem from the deterioration of economic conditions only. It also involves the discrediting of hegemonic ideas and institutional deterioration, which combines with "the crisis of representation that is an irreconciled dissonance in the way that subjects identify themselves and their conditions, and the way in which these are represented in the paradigms of state and dominant civil societal institutions" (Healy, 2006: 185). It means that 'the crisis' challenges to 'common sense' and hegemonic consensus with its ideological basis e is questioned by subaltern classes and masses. In Gramsci's works, the hegemonic crisis emerges in two conjunctures, one of which is a failure of a political attempt that is supported by articulated masses (i.e.war), and the other is the political activity of people with revolutionary demands:

> And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially of peasants and petit-bourgeois intellectuals) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A "crisis of authority" is spoken of: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the State. (Gramsci, 1971: 210)

As Gramsci stated, the hegemonic crisis emerges at particular moments, one of which is directly related to the international context such as war, basically based on economic sharing, resource war or global economic crisis, and the other is associated with inner political activity in national context. The hegemonic class's capability to rearticulate the *historical bloc* against these two moments is determinant for the maintenance of the 'hegemony'. Otherwise, the hegemonic crisis coupled with the representational crisis can turn into a 'organic crisis' that is more structural and might deepen social conflicts (Yetiş, 2012: 92). One of

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the most basic indicators of the hegemony crisis is that the traditional power relations between the class and the representatives becomes unsustainable. Hegemony crisis is different than the representation crisis which makes the social and political conflicts of articulated masses more visible and increases the gap between masses and the political parties due to political impasse. Hegemony crisis cannot be limited to the political sphere, which means that it affects the course of all levels of super-structural level of politics, including the political regime, ideological apparatus and even the parliamentarian system.

The crisis of hegemony does not have to lead to the toppling of the hegemonic system. It does not have to lead to the spontaneous establishment of an alternative hegemony, which means that while the balance of power between classes is restored in accordance with the new conditions in the moment of crisis, it may be limited only to the partial transformation or revision of the relations between civil society and the state (Yetiş, 2012: 93). The ruling class tends to reconstruct the hegemony since it has more economic, political and ideological opportunities than the subordinated class. What is important here, for the very aims of this thesis, is the struggle against hegemony; and at this point, Gramsci mentions two main forms of struggle.

2.1.1.3. The War of Position and The War of Maneuver

The 'hegemony' in its Gramscian sense is not unchangeable; on the contrary it is about an ongoing political and ideological process of struggle. Although 'hegemony' is a dynamic process, it dialectically involves counter-hegemonic elements in itself in dynamic and everchanging conditions (Im, 1991). When the reproduction of the consent is challenged, a counter-hegemonic project might aim to neutralize hegemonic power relations in order to obtain ideological and political leadership. Thus, a Counter-hegemonic bloc can change the structure of the historical bloc under the rule of intellectual and moral leadership with a vast majority of masses (Yetiş, 2012: 94). 'The war of position' and the 'war of

maneuver' are two strategies of class war that can lead to the abolishment of the 'hegemony'.

These political strategies mainly stem d from the presupposed difference between the East and the West, which is related to the development of civil society in the capitalist countries.

> In Russia, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying— but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country. (Gramsci, 1971: 238)

As the quotation argues, the relation between the state and civil society is very significant for counter-hegemonic strategies against the hegemony. Gramsci argues that in the West where there is a hegemonic balance between the state and civil society, the main aim of the counter-hegemonic struggle is the construction of a new historical bloc through an ideological, cultural and political struggle rather than through a Leninist revolution. In this framework, while the 'war of position' involves long-term activities, which aim the superstructure of social formation and ideological, political and cultural forms of hegemony, the 'war of maneuver' is about capturing the state power (Gramsci, 1971: 207).

The war of maneuver is a more simple strategy in the East with a relatively underdeveloped civil society, and its revolutionary strategy requires direct frontal attacks to bureaucracy and the state as the most important form of political power by necessary troops and cadres. On the other hand, in the West, the revolutionary strategy must be a more protracted process, in which subordinate classes wear away the current civil society according to Gramsci:

> …in politics the 'war of position', once won, is decisive definitively. In politics, in other words, the war of maneuver subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the State's hegemony cannot be mobilized. But when, for one reason or another, these positions have lost their value and only the decisive positions are at stake, then one passes over to siege warfare; this

is concentrated, difficult, and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness. (Gramsci, 1971: 239)

As Gramsci argues, being "decisive" is closely associated with establishing the legitimacy of a revolutionary force in order to concretize the counter-hegemony in a new condition. At this point, the key point of the war of position is the effects of organic intellectual. Gramsci emphasizes that counter-hegemonic ideology is formed with the spread of new ideological perspectives and values of organic intelligentsia that represents subaltern class and groups with their own language, feelings, experiences, and briefly common sense; and also, as a part of the war of position, organic intellectuals within the working class contributes to organize and improve alternative ideologies and values (Gramsci, 1971: 4). At this point, Gramsci refers the party of the working class as 'collective intellectual' as the *'Modern Prince'* which organizes and expresses the national-popular collective will in the process of establishment of counter-hegemony (Gramsci, 1971: 123). Modern Prince consolidates the dialectical relation between the proletariat and organic intellectuals, meaning that counter-hegemonic struggle is possible with the improvement of the articulation of political war and intellectual leadership, which is the unity of theory and practice, the *praxis* (Yetiş, 2012).

The main aim of the counter-hegemony which requires the ideological, political and cultural struggles in all levels of structure and superstructures of the society is to establish a new historical bloc. And then, there can be a transition to the war of maneuver from the war of position. Lastly, the war of position also gains importance at the point of consolidation of a new historical bloc with the reconstruction of class relations in the economic sphere.

Moreover, Gramsci emphasizes on new apparatus and strategies against the state, by stating "in political struggle, one should not ape the methods of the ruling classes, or one will fall into easy ambushes" (1971: 232). It means that remaining within the boundaries of the state legitimacy causes the loss of counter-hegemonic struggle against the ruling class. This issue that is more related to cultural hegemony will be held in detail in the fourth chapter, *the Gezi*

Protests, since the protests created a new language of protesting and its own political agenda.

Briefly, Gramsci's works on hegemony contribute to understanding power relations and their reproduction n this context, Gramsci does not only interpret the reproduction of hegemonic superiority, but also puts forward strategies for the counter-hegemonic struggles. In the context of the Gezi protests, this framework enables us to employ a broad analysis about the AKP rule, its tools of domination the emergence of Gezi uprising which aims to change the neoliberal course of the hegemony, which will be scrutinized in the next chapter.

2.2. Social Movement Theories with the Transformation of Neoliberal Hegemony

In the previous section, the concept of 'hegemony' is examined from a Gramscian perspective and in this chapter, social movement theories are explored by claiming that different forms of hegemonic struggle have mostly emerged as a result of the capitalist crisis in the 1970s. This chapter also aims to understand the Gezi protests as a struggle for change against the neoliberal hegemony by exploring social movement theories. Therefore, examining these theories contributes to understanding the Gezi protests in terms of its components, its forms of protest and its relation to the notion of 'hegemony'.

The discussion on social movements gained importance after the 1960s when student movements occurred in Europe, in France particularly. Before that, social movements were seen as a 'pathology' or cases of 'anomie' and considered as 'crowd' movements, which is similar to the AKP government's evaluation of the Gezi protests, as discussed in the next chapter. For example, Gustave Le Bon in his book, The Crowd, defines active masses as a 'microbe' of the society:

> Civilisations as yet have only been created and directed by a small intellectual aristocracy, never by crowds. Crowds are only powerful for destruction. Their rule is always tantamount to a barbarian phase. A civilisation involves fixed rules, discipline, a passing from the instinctive to the rational state, forethought for the future, an elevated

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degree of culture — all of them conditions that crowds, left to themselves, have invariably shown themselves incapable of realising. In consequence of the purely destructive nature of their power crowds act like those microbes which hasten the dissolution of enfeebled or dead bodies. When the structure of a civilisation is rotten, it is always the masses that bring about its downfall. (1896: 10)

In this passage, Le Bon's emphasis on rules, discipline and rational state is directly related to the Weberian definition of rationality[9] and modernity and Durkheim's functionalism[10], and also, it is not a coincidence that Fordist type of production had spread in that time, meaning that society was evaluated as the human body which each part of the body has a function like specialized workers and division of labor in the Fordist type of production. This viewpoint had been elaborated by many sociologists in order to explain the revolutionary stages all over the world. Similarly, some theories also examine social movements as collective behavior and consider them in the psychological ground as noninstitutional outbursts of individuals who are isolated from the societal integration dynamics in the structural strain and differentiation process. (Smelser, 1965: 8) It means that structural strain at the social level brings exclusion of some normative dynamics of structure like authority, rules, institutions or common norms, and thus, this exclusion and disunity causes the feelings of anxiety, fantasy or hostility on some individuals, and these masses attempt to reconstitute the institutions of the social order and reintegrate these exclusions with objective character of the order with these movements (Smelser, 1965: 6). Especially early collective behavior approaches considered social movements as crowd behavior, more focused on irrationally and psychologically react to structural conditions and these theories in the structuralist/functionalist framework have a negation tendency of social movements (Couch, 1968; Marx & Wood, 1975).

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[9] According to Weber, the state with rationality is characterized by formal regulations and its institutionalized structure is based on dependability, precision, efficiency, punctuality, discipline, stability, and reliability, etc. (Kalberg, 1980)

[10] Durkheim sees the society as a large living organism, and for him, a powerful, self-conscious society mandates individual behavior consistent with its own needs (Pope, 1975)

On the other hand, there is a literature about social movements and change, in which conflict-based analyses are considered, mostly based on Classical Marxist approach that there are constant and continuous conflicts in social dynamics. In order understand these analyses, it is needed to explain Classical Marxist arguments which evaluate social conflicts as the result of the class structure of modern capitalist society and social movements can be a pioneer of the social change to the extent that they are class-based movement. As Marx and Engels state in the Communist Manifesto, "*The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles*." (2008: 33), the main struggle in the society is stemmed from class conflicts or antagonism between two main classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the capitalist societies, class differentiation is simply different than pre-capitalist social stratification and the power of change is directly and only associated with the working class' revolutionist power. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels also mention the (lower) middle class and lumpenproletariat:

> Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. (…) The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat. (2008: 48)

These classes are reactionary to change 'the wheel of history' since they tend to protect their existence against the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the members of intermediate classes become more proletarianized, economically; and thus, they can transform into a subject of the history to the extent that proletarianized classes articulate themselves into the revolutionist politics of the working class. Against the functionalist approaches that envisage the modern society as a unity, formed and determined by the 'absolute essence' or the isolated structure, classical Marxism reveals the dynamics of change in the course of history as class struggle. In this thesis, I opt to mention theories of Claus Offe, Ernesto

Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Alain Touraine, etc. since there have been contradictive issues in contemporary social movement theories in Marxism.

With the spread of social movements throughout Europe especially towards the end of the 1960s, social movements as an object of analysis had started to be reexamined in e social sciences through re-interpretation of the early approaches of social movements and social conflicts in order to understand and explain dynamics of movements, participants and public dissent. In this chapter, I rather focus on the analysis of 'new social movements' (NSM's) since these analyses stemmed from student movements in 1968 which show similarities with the Gezi protests and have methodologically used for the explanations of the Gezi protests. In line with the aims of this thesis, questioning of New Social Movements theories and their criticisms contributes to understanding the Gezi protests.

2.2.1. The Capitalist Crisis in the 1970's and Transformation of Capitalism

In terms of social movements studies, the capitalist crisis in the 1970's and its consequences are very crucial to understand. It is no doubt that the economic crises effected previous social movements as in the case of student movements in the late 1960's. However, most of the analysis in political sociology are somehow associated with capitalism. Especially Laclau and Mouffe's Post-Marxist approaches, Negri's explanation of Empire as new world order, Offe's "new social movements", Eder's "middle-class radicalism" or arguments about the Gezi protests are directly related to the capitalist crisis and the challenges it poses to the existing system. of power relations. These scholars mention capitalist transformation and "new" dynamics of the capitalism in their publications and they struggle to identify "new" subjects of the social movements. In this sense, in a certain historical perspective, capitalist transformation and "new" dynamics of the social order should be examined in order to understand the main claims of these theories, which also helps comprehend the dynamics of the of the Gezi protests.

In order to understand the new social movements and their relevance to capitalism, we need to capture what is 'new' with the new social movements and how this 'new' is related to the contemporary manifestations of the capitalist order. In those days, discovering "new" dynamics of the society like "new capitalism", "new/post modernity", "new social movements" and so on had been an important analytical venture in political sociology (Akbulut, 2011: 19). All of these theories advocate that capitalism had entered a new era, in which forms of exploitation and labor-capital relations changed drastically (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987), new cultural/political/identical representations gained more importance than old macro highly institutionalized identities like class or the worker (Laclau, 2015), and so on. The concept of 'new' is used as a reference for the change observed in capitalism and its social reflections, generally. In the analyses of the Gezi protest, similar approaches are also used [11].

These debates on social movement theories has started approximately in the late of 60's when the welfare state relatively prospered the social investment and social movements had spread. It means that welfare state provided a relative prosperity for the oppressed classes in that period and the state had the role of demand booster in order to prevent a structural crisis of capitalism by balancing oversupply with demand (Akbulut, 2013: 170). On the other hand, Soviet socialism and wars also affected the economic course of countries and triggered social struggles in capitalist countries. War economy caused an increase in costs and tax incidence and thus raised social mobilizations. In political sociology, after the crisis of 1929, European theoreticians had already started to discuss Soviet regime with frustration and even some socialist thinkers questioned class-based struggle (Wood, 1983). Especially after the protests of 1968, new social movements theoreticians problematized whether the dynamics of emancipation or revolution had been changing, or not. In the academia, many thinkers (even

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[11] See Çağlar Keyder's interview, '*New middle class, risen in Turkey changed the course of the Gezi Protest*' at http://t24.com.tr/haber/keyder-gezi-olaylarinin-seyrini-turkiyede-yukselmekte-olan-yeni-orta-sinif-degistirmistir,238849

Marxists[12]) limited capitalism to "economic sphere" as a determinant power "in the last instance". With the crisis in the 1970's, the 'class' issue was reexamined in terms of social movements.
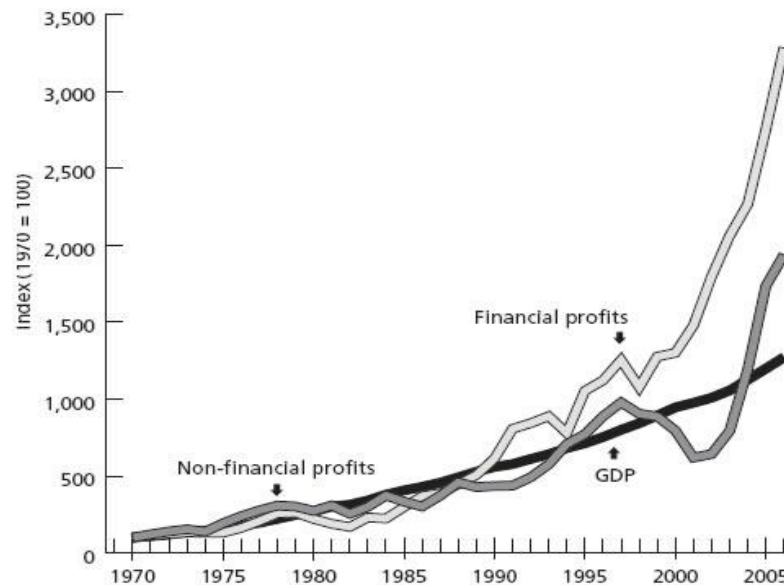
Figure 1. The growth of financial and nonfinancial profits relative to GDP (1970 = 100)

(Source: Foster & Magdoff, 2008)

Scholars like Mouffe and Laclau advocate that the transformation of capitalism in the 1970s is mainly characterized by changing the labor-capital relations and forms of exploitation; and however, this graph indicates the outcomes of the crisis that did not make a qualitative change in the capitalist relations. According to this figure, with the crisis in the 1970s, differentiation between the financial and non-financial profits had started to increase and manufacture sector was faced with the crisis because decreasing real production in the manufacturing industry in the 1970's brought balloons in GDP indicators due to not the realization of financial profits with real production. According to Yeldan, "financial activities do not create new values, but admit a revaluation of the

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[12] See Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses by Louis Althusser, 1970.

values created elsewhere in the real sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, or construction" (2009a: 11), and in the 1970's, increasing the differentiation between the financial and non-financial profits brought the crisis and as Brenner argued, "manufacturing's descent into crisis meant a crisis for the whole economy" (2005: 220). In order to overcome this crisis, with the improvement of information technologies (IT's), financialization and borrowing were put into effect and the service sector was enormously involved in the chain of exploitation. Because real production was constant and the service sector increased for facilitating the distribution of capital, the members of middle classes especially in the service sector (whatever it calls white collars or new middle class) were become more proletarianized and in parallel with this situation, social movements had significantly risen in that period (Lash & Urry, 1987: 161). However, capitalism has not changed qualitatively because capital flow also needed real production in the factory and exploitation was increased. On the other hand, the mode of accumulation strategy of capitalism has been changed with financialization. For this reason, there are inadequacies in new social movements theories that mentioned the 'new' capitalist order and its 'new' subjects. With globalization and financial transformation, middle class were more proletarianized due to increasing exploitation, insecurity and futurelessness; and with this aspect, it can be considered as the potential working class in terms of that they do not anymore possess the means of production, also have to sell their labor due to marketization of fundamental needs, their surplus values are seized in the exploitation relations and so on. Additionally, the separation between intellectual labor and hand labor has been blurred and disappeared in the labor market of the global capitalism. Briefly, debates about social movements, the discussion of class and identity had shaped with epistemological and ontological suppositions about the crisis in the 1970's and the capitalist transformation.

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2.2.1.1. Post-Marxist Approaches to Hegemony

There have been also very different interpretations of thinkers in the understanding the concept of hegemony. After the 1970's, debates on hegemony have been reconsidered by theoreticians in different perspectives, especially in the arguments of social movements. In Neo-Gramscian approaches, the Gramscian concept of the 'historical bloc' that takes into account national, international and transnational aspects of the class relations. Neo-Gramscian viewpoints also focus on the structure of relations of production relations and their transnational dimension by looking at finance, money flow, transnational production and so on.

> Historically, hegemonies of this kind are founded by powerful states which have undergone a thorough social and economic revolution. The revolution not only modifies the internal economic and political structures of the state in question but also unleashes energies which expand beyond the state's boundaries. A world hegemony is thus in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant social class. The economic and social institutions, the culture, the technology associated with this national hegemony become patterns for emulation abroad. (Cox, 1983: 171)

In the Neo-Gramscian framework, the state is not seen as the most determinant institution; instead many other actors and institutions are involved in the capitalist system. Stephen Gill and Robert Cox are the most famous theoreticians of Neo-Gramscian tradition. They advocate internationalization and transnationalization of state with organic crisis and structural change in capitalism and focuses on the hegemonic role of the institutions and actors in changing the world order. Hegemony as the composition of the class, ideology, gender, ethnicity, economy, culture contains social relations, the structure of state and the world order. (Gökten, 2013: 54).

On the other hand, Post-Marxist theories also form a frame for the relation between hegemony and social movements. They emphasize more on ideological/political/discoursal aspects of hegemony rather than political economy perspective. In this sense, theoreticians like Laclau and Mouffe try to comprise a social theory with the criticism of essentiality of class antagonism.

> …an antagonism presupposes two heterogeneous spaces of representation which are not dialectically mediated there is no reason to assume that locations within the relations of production are going to be privileged points to antagonistic confrontation. Capitalist development creates many others: ecological crises, imbalances between different sectors of the economy, imperialist exploitation, etc. In that case, the subjects of an 'anti-capitalist' struggle are many and cannot be reduced to a category as simple as that of 'class'. We are going to have a plurality of struggles (Laclau, 2015: 105)

According to Laclau, 'new' era of capitalism cannot simply be considered and reduced in an antagonism between two fundamental classes, and the plurality of struggles is necessarily taken into consideration in this social structure.

Moreover, 'Empire' gains a new perspective in these argumentations. Hardt and Negri use these terms for identifying the 'new' world order and this term exceeds the capacity of hegemony due to its non-centralized structure and its new form of domination that is the result of the demise of the nation-state.

> In Empire, no subjectivity is outside, and all places have been subsumed in a general 'non-place.' The transcendental fiction of politics can no longer stand up and has no argumentative utility because we all exist entirely within the realm of the social and the political. (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 353)

'Existing within the realm of the social and the political' directs these theoreticians to the analysis of 'multitude'. The capitalist transformation creates a non-material labor due to the reduction of industrial production, and with the improvement of the service sector, new identities have emerged. It can be said that multitude refers to an organized social subject with these kinds of different singularities and has a potential power for changing Empire. In this sense, globalization and world-systems theories will be examined in order to understand the discussions of the world order in the next sections.

Briefly, the concept of hegemony and interpretations about the concept has been changed and this change's itself is historical. Especially after the crisis of 1970's, the transformation of capitalism has triggered seeking for new subject against the power relations in the academia. In 1978, Althusser announced that Marxism is in crisis. In these periods, Europe Marxists were disappointed in Stalin and Soviet Socialism, Marxist parties discussed class-based struggle and its ineffectiveness. After the 1968 movements, theoreticians started to question the

revolutionary potential of the movements. And in this conjuncture, Gramsci's arguments were reconsidered, for example. Post-Marxist theories use arguments, stemmed from the result of capitalism's transformation, like that improvement of information technologies have changed the forms of social relations. In this sense, understanding of hegemony with its transformation contributes to the interpretation of social movements like Gezi protests, since they have been made against the domination relations of power to a certain degree. Briefly, contemporary theories, developed especially after the 1970s provide a holistic analysis of power with its dominative apparatus and indicates new forms of social struggle with actors, issues and structures. Especially new social movements theories and also the criticisms of that contributes to comprehend what kind of domination form of the power the Gezi protesters faced with.

2.2.2. New Social Movements

The arguments of new social movements are often used in examining the Gezi protests, and the participants of the protests are defined with the concepts and social categories of these theories. Some aspects of the Gezi protests (especially disorganized and fragmented structure of participants and groups) are compatible with the arguments of demonstrations; however, there are many incompatible points between the protests and NSM-based arguments. In this title, I opted to explain the NSM theories with the central claims by associating with the Gezi uprising.

The concept of new social movements is initially used for understanding and explaining social opposition that emerged in West Europe especially after the protests of 1968 (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2016: 241). New social movements (NSM) theories are used to define mostly ecologist, citizen's initiatives, queer politics and feminist, anti-racist and urban movements in the Western societies. The most important aspect of these movements is that they reject bureaucratic, elitist, centralist and authoritative way of action of parliamentarian politics; and thus, they are characterized with more participatory, non-violent, decentralized,

pluralist and grassroots movements (Simitis, 2002: 38). The Gezi protests involve many different groups and organizations, and there was a claim that the protests had the non-leadership, decentralized and horizontal type of structure[13].

The main claim of the NSM theories is based on a criticism of two types of 'reductionism' of Classical Marxism about collective action, firstly that economic reductionism derives social actions from capitalist production relations, and secondly that the most important participants of social action were defined with class relationship and other social identities are secondary which means that privileged place of the working class excluded other social identities in collective action (Buechler, 1995; Canel, 1992). Therefore, NSM theoreticians look to other political spheres that are based on ideology and culture, and other social identities like gender, ethnicity and ecology. At this point, the term, 'new', refers to the displacement of collective action of old social movements especially in Classical Marxism since two polarized class understanding of Marxism remains deficient to comprehend contemporary social protests with their new dynamics, according to NSM theories.

The 'new' is also about the transition to a new era of capitalism, as mentioned above. The fundamental claims of the NSM theories are a product of the shift to the postindustrial economy and different from social movements of the industrial age (Buechler, 1995; Melucci, 1980; Pichardo, 1997; Touraine, 1971). In this sense, NSM theoreticians give references to define a new era of capitalism, such as postindustrial society, advanced capitalism, information society and so on. This claim is examined in detail in the previous titled. In addition to that, most of NSM theories are derived from Weberian concept of 'status' (Amin, Arrighi, Frank & Wallerstein, 1990) and its 'service class' definition (Lash & Urry, 1987). This argument is also used in the context of the Gezi protests (Keyder, 2013a). NSM theories especially with Weberian perspective implies 'new middle class' or 'new service class' as 'new' social category.

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[13] See the manifestation of Gezi Party from http://www.gezipartisi.org.tr/yatay-orgutlenme/

> …to a twenty first century experience in which a social structure based on massive industrial core working classes, huge industrial cities, the capital–labor relationship structuring society, a minor and insignificant service class, have all been left far behind. The world of a 'disorganized capitalism' is one in which the 'fixed, fast-frozen relations' of organized capitalist relations have been swept away. Societies are being transformed from above, from below, and from within. All that is solid about organized capitalism, class, industry, cities, collectivity, nation-state, even the world, melts into air. (Lash & Urry, 1987: 313)

Lash and Urry argues the end of 'organized capitalism', and thus, social collectives have been structurally transformed into disorganized and fragmented collectives. NSM theories mostly use similar arguments at the point of defining a new era of capitalism and its effects on collective actions with new dynamics of movements. Klaus Eder and Chantal Mouffe exceed the 'class boundaries' of Classical Marxism by providing new social collectives to a changing power of capitalist relations and structures (Eder, 1995; Offe, 1985). Touraine also argues that social actors were not defined with the old concepts of Classical Marxism by stating "We observe that social actors are no longer characterized by social or economic categories, by class, skill, level of education, by which they were defined, and which were supposed to give a central meaning to their behavior" (2005: 201). Briefly, NSM theoreticians criticize the fundamental class polarization of Classical Marxism in the period of 'new era' of capitalism.

In addition to a new era of capitalism, NSM theories examine the 'newness' also in the context of new characteristics of social movements. At this point, Claus Offe in his famous writings, *New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics,* makes a categorization between structural compositions between old and new social movements. This analytical separation is also used in interpreting the Gezi protests especially at the point of the actors of the protests (Karadağ, 2013; Keyder, 2013b; Wacquant, 2014)

Table 1. The Main Characteristics of the "Old" and "New" Paradigms of Politics[14]

	Old paradigm	New paradigm
Actors	socioeconomic groups acting *as* groups (in the groups' interest) and involved in distributive conflict	socioeconomic groups acting not *as* such, but on behalf of ascriptive collectives
Issues	economic growth and distribution; military and social security, social control	preservation of peace, environment, human rights, and unalienated forms of work
Values	freedom and security of private consumption and material progress	Personal autonomy and identity, as opposed to centralized control, etc.
Modes of Action	a) internal: formal organization, large-scale representative associations b) external: pluralist or corporatist interest intermediation; political party competition, majority rule	a) internal: informality, spontaneity, low degree of horizontal and vertical differentiation b) external: protest politics based on demands formulated in predominantly negative terms

As this table pointed out, the main differences between the old and new paradigm are an actor with modes of action, issues and values, and also, the separation is

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[14] Offe, C. (1985). *New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics.* p. 832

mostly based on the structure of collectives with autonomy, informality and economic or social concerns. In the context of the Gezi protests, there are some arguments that associated the uprising with NSM theories in this perspective, which emphasize on identity, gender and ecologist groups in the protests and especially advocate the new middle-class characteristics of movement (Göle, 2013; Keyder, 2013b). Although Cihan Tuğal does not claim that the protests can be considered entirely as new social movements, he uses NSM's arguments with the protests' new middle-class characteristics with sharing of values or the pleasure of social ties in his article, *"Resistance Everywhere"* (Tuğal, 2013c).

In this framework, it is important that in most NSM theories, the class-based analysis is not entirely disregarded. Even if it is not the working class as the subject of socialist change, the new middle-class is seen as the subject of transformative struggle. Offe argues that the new middle class is "class-aware" but not "class-conscious" (1985: 833). However, theoreticians such as Laclau & Mouffe criticize NSM theories due to the use of the concept of 'class' as the actor of anti-capitalist struggle in itself. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their book, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: *Towards a Radical Democratic Politics,* criticize class essentialism of Marxism. In criticism of NSM theories, they argue that social agents of new social movements are considered as 'revolutionary substitute' for the working class, and however, "the era of 'privileged subjects' - in the ontological, not practical sense - of the anti-capitalist struggle has been definitively superseded" (1985: 87). The struggle of social agents depends on its articulation forms with social objectives of 'collective will' in a given the hegemonic context, according to them. Therefore, they criticize the use of class as the social actor in NSM theories. In this sense, Laclau advocates the social protests within the plurality of struggle cannot be evaluated with the class category; and contrarily, a plurality of struggles with their articulation into each other in a hegemonic context ought to be questioned (Laclau, 2015).

> The unsatisfactory term 'new social movements' groups together a series of highly diverse struggles: urban, ecological, anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional, feminist, anti-racist, ethnic, regional or that of sexual minorities. The common denominator of all of them would be their differentiation from workers' struggles, considered as 'class' struggles. It is pointless to insist upon the problematic nature of this latter notion: it amalgamates a series of very different struggles at the level of the relations of production, which are set apart from the 'new antagonisms' for reasons that display all too clearly the persistence of a discourse founded upon the privileged status of 'classes'. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 159)

> Once the conception of the working class as a 'universal class' is rejected, it becomes possible to recognize the plurality of the antagonisms which take place in the field of what is arbitrarily grouped under the label of' workers 'struggles', and the inestimable importance of the great majority of them for the deepening of the democratic process (1985: 167)

Despite criticisms of Laclau and Mouffe to NSM theories, there is a common point between NSM approaches and radical democracy theory. They both emphasize on a plurality of struggle; however, the theory of radical democracy focuses on the non-class relationship in social movements while NSM theories consider class-based essence in social protests. Laclau and Mouffe also see components of radical democracy as an alternative for a new left (1985: 176); and therefore, it can be argued that they try to revise the 'Modern Prince' to the 'Postmodern Prince' in this framework.

On the other hand, Marxist theories evaluate contemporary social movements with a class-based perspective. Ellen Meiksins Wood in her book, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*, criticizes "postmodern" fragmentation of Post-Marxist social movement theories and examines *extra-economic goods* with struggles, like gender emancipation, anti-racism and ecologist movements.

> …capitalism does have a structural tendency away from extra-economic inequalities, but that this is a two-edged sword. The strategic implications are that struggles conceived in purely extra-economic terms -as purely against racism or gender oppression, for example- are not in themselves fatally dangerous to capitalism, that they could succeed without dismantling the capitalist system, but that at the same time, they are probably unlikely to succeed if they remain detached from an anti-capitalist struggle. (Wood, 1995: 270)

According to Wood, the capitalism is not reproduced itself with social identities of people. The main tendency of capitalism is actually to lessen specific identities like gender or race in order to make people 'interchangeable units' in

the exploitation process of the labor market. On the other hand, in the ideological hegemony of the capitalist system, extra-economic identities are perceived as natural differences or inequalities; and thus, unequal segments in the working class are formed in order to separate the working class into fractions and to conceal structural inequalities. It means that if a social movement remained in the boundaries of a purely extra-economic struggle, or if a social movement cannot articulate its social objectives with anti-capitalist demands, it will necessarily fail at the point of change the course of the hegemony.

NSM theories are often used in the analysis of the Gezi protests; and especially, the concept of (new) middle-class is considered as the new social category with its transformative power. In the next title, NSM analysis of the Gezi context is examined with Klaus Eder's concept of '*middle-class radicalism*'.

2.2.2.1. Middle-Class Radicalism

A remarkable proportion of new social movements theories have tried to explain shifts from the old paradigm to a new paradigm of social existence, and thus, the main concern of these theories is discovering the relevance of class in the social protests and introducing new social cleavages in the new era of capitalism, as mentioned above. In this framework, the analysis of the middle-class is often used in these theories (Offe, 1985; Eder, 1995). While Offe uses to the middle-class to explain dissolution class-antagonistic conception of movement with post-ideological nature, Klaus Eder analyzes and identifies the middle class as a social class in the social construction of the field of class conflict and collective identity in his theory of *middle-class radicalism* (1995). Eder offers culture-centered aspects of the middle class as the major social agent of NSM and argues social movements has transformed into culture-oriented struggles in new capitalism.

According to Eder, social construction in advanced capitalism prevails structural determinism of collectives, which means that class and collective action have been decoupled in a new era and with the increasingly intervening role of culture,

collective actors are socially constructed rather than structurally determined (Buechler, 1995). This social construction is related to the collective acquisition of *habitus* in the reproduction of objective and subjective conditions since the social system has been reproduced through new subjective and objective structures, and social actors comply themselves with the new social system with traditional and post-traditional values and norms (Eder, 1985). At this point, Eder takes 'life-world' into consideration because life-world is objectively structured and also a prerequisite for the construction of a collective consciousness at the same time. For this reason, new social movements are the protests by the   middle-class for him.

To start with, the middle class has an intermediate position between upper and lower social classes, according to Eder:

> It can be interpreted as a mixture of bourgeois universalism and plebeian particularism. Torn between these two directions, the petit bourgeois looks for norms and values which are hard to justify within the model of universalistic reasoning and which at the same time are not merely the outcome of the constraints of daily life. The so-called 'post-materialistic' values fit the bill perfectly: not to be materialistic and at the same time to compete with the norms and values of the bourgeois high culture. They are not part of the moral economy of the lower classes. And at the same time, they set themselves apart from the time-honored bourgeois ethic by 'refusing to participate in the rational discourse of understanding.' They appear to be less susceptible to theorizing. They do not have any criteria which can be made equally binding for everyone. (1985: 877)

As the quotation stated, 'class-specific defense of individualization' is seen in middle-class lifeworld, and also, culture with its control over the means of creating an 'identity' is considered as 'the mediating variable' between class and collective action. Therefore, cultural and identitarian characteristics which involve lifestyle defense, identity assertion, lifeworld demands have played a significant role in new social movements. Social actors or participants of these protests, thus, are evaluated in terms of their occupation with income status, educational attainment or lifestyle.

The analysis of (new) middle-class[15] is often used in the context of the Gezi uprising. A common aspect of this analysis is the emphasis on the occupational

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[15] The matter of middle-class is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter, *The Gezi Protests*.

and highly educated background of the participants of the protests. According to Ali Şimşek, the new middle class has been adversely affected precarization and become increasingly aware of a downward trend in their economic conditions in the face of the neoliberal policies. In the Gezi protests, a new middle class which cannot be considered as the part of the working class was politicized and had the possibility to express itself with political demands. 'New language' in the protests belonged to a new middle class, for instance (2014). Meltem Karadağ also argues that high proportion of the participants were the members of the new middle class which involved well-educated people like doctors, lawyers, artists, academicians, and also, street writings, humorous slogans, etc. were products of new middle class with a high level of cultural capital (2013). Another theoretician, Loic Wacquant, also considers that the participants were "the new cultural bourgeoisie of intellectuals, urban professionals and the urban middle class, rising to assert the rights of cultural capital against an incipient alliance of economic capital – commercial interests- and political capital – the state deciding to transform this park into a mall" (Çavdar, 2014). Lastly, Çağlar Keyder advocates that Gezi activist are the members of a newly emerging middle class, involving people who work in relatively "modern workplaces, with leisure time and consumption habits much like their global counterparts" (2013a, 2013b). In these theories, the cultural capital of the protestors is considered as the major distinctive feature of the membership of (new) middle-class; and thus, they have similar methodological points with Eder's arguments about middle-class radicalism. In this framework, the Gezi protests are associated with the movement of new middle class by theoreticians above and in the fourth chapter, the matter of (new) middle class will be examined in detail.

2.2.3 Anti-Globalization Movements

The recent rise of activism related to anti-globalization have emerged with the institutionalization of neoliberal regimes around the world. Anti-globalization movements are considered as social protests (or collective action) against neoliberal globalization (Ayres, 2004; Day, 2004). As the world's economy has

been undergoing a neoliberal transformation, these internationally-represented protests achieved a transnational characteristic and started challenging neoliberal policies and institutions. At this point, the concept of neoliberalism should be well-understood with its effects on people since neoliberalism has been identified as the central 'problem' for protestors, according to theoreticians.

According to Ayres, that Bretton Woods economic management system with government regulation, social welfare systems and full employment policies broke in the 1970s pushed governments for tax cuts and cuts in public spending on social services, deregulation of the labor market and the privatization of state-owned industries or services (Ayres, 2014: 12). Neoliberalism causes that the gap between the richest and poorest segments of society has grown enormously, poverty has significantly increased in most countries and the average per capita income growth rate significantly declined, and thus, it makes easier for activists to protest the global course of neoliberal. With the neoliberal turn in the global economy brought rising protests against neoliberal policies and institutions like WTO[16] and IMF[17] in the global level especially in the 1990s. On the other hand, some theoreticians like Hardt & Negri and Day refers to the concept of hegemony in understanding neoliberal global system and they assert that in globalizing era of capitalism creates new possibilities for the construction of alternative movements and anti-globalization movements ought to be seen as the part of hegemonic struggle in globalizing world (Day, 2004), and there is a 'constituent power of multitudes' in the context of Empire. (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 402). In this sense, we can exemplify 'alter-globalization movements'. Participants of these movements also reject functioning forms of globalization, and however, they aim 'actively' creating an 'alternative world'[18] (Halvorsen,

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[16] The World Trade Organization

[17] International Monetary Fund

[18] Creating an alternative world is actually a slogan of alter-globalization initiatives in the World Social Forum, an annual meeting of civil society organizations. The original slogan is *'another world is possible'*. For more detail, see Sam Halvorsen's article (2012).

2012). In the meanwhile, Wallerstein's "anti-systemic movements" should not be evaluated in this context. Wallerstein argues that "the modern world-system is in a structural crisis, and we have entered an 'age of transition' -a period of bifurcation and chaos-" and anti-systemic movements have been emerged mostly in the mid-1970s as a result of this structural crisis. It can be said that Wallerstein considers 'new social movements' of NSM theoreticians as anti-systemic movements such as the student protests in Japan, Mexico and Europe, antiwar movements in the United States; the labor movements in Europe; the Cultural Revolution in China; and Black and feminist movements, and so on.

Activists of anti-globalization movements have a 'transnationally-shared' understanding of adverse effects of neoliberal globalization; and some new platforms like the new media and internet have advanced anti-neoliberal collective action frames, according to this perspective. For example, the autumn protests in 1999 in Seattle disrupted the meeting of WTO bureaucrats and prevented Clinton Administration to implement neoliberal agenda, and Seattle protests had stirred a widespread public debate about the benefits of neoliberal policies (Ayres, 2014: 21). In these protests, the strategic use of alternative media tools, Internet web sites, activist listservs and books contributed to the failure of implementing the neoliberal policies. The Zapatista guerrilla movements in Mexico can be also seen as an example of anti-neoliberal movements against NAFTA[19] ratification that prescribed neoliberal economic agreements for continentally liberalized investment, and also, the Zapatismo aimed to change the world without taking power, or with the rejection of state-centered politics (Holloway, 2002).

Moreover, these movements have to face important challenges while constructing collective action against anti-neoliberal globalization. As powerful and wealthy states, multi-national corporations, media outlets and other social actors and institutions like WTO, IMF or World Bank are in favor of

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[19] North American Free Trade Agreement

neoliberalism, more inclusive strategies are needed for both binding differentiated actors due to the diversity of different regions, states, cultures, etc. and gaining momentum with a general transnational consensus, according to Ayres (2014).

In this sense, the Gezi protests have anti-globalization aspects with respect to its opposition to neoliberal policies like privatization of land and deregulation of social policies, will be held in the fourth chapter. However, arguing that the Gezi protests were a kind of anti-globalization movements is deficient since the protests did not aim any international institutions like IMF or World Bank, and also, according to Cihan Tuğal (2013b), contemporary social movements in the global level have an anarchist characteristic although the Gezi protests were not an anarchist form of protesting. In the context of anti-neoliberalism, neoliberal political agenda of the AKP government was criticized especially with occupying the Gezi Park; however, the state-centered politics were not rejected by a high proportion of participants, which will be also discussed in the fourth chapter.

2.2.3.1. Occupy Movements

Occupy movements have mostly emerged in the 2000s. Although these movements have many different scopes and focus, the common aspect of occupy movements is that they aim for the social and economic inequalities of capitalism (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012). There is a defensive territorial strategy in occupy movements, which involve the preservation activism of spaces with historical and symbolic importance. Protestors generally occupy and camp the public spaces in order to make social and economic inequalities visible in these movements. During the Gezi protests, activists occupied the historical Gezi Park in order for both preventing devastation of trees in the park and raising awareness about problems of neoliberal privatization policies of the government, held in the fourth chapter. Therefore, occupy movements are significant to understand the Gezi protests with new forms of collective action.

> Occupy puts the issue of space at the core of its agenda: by using spatial strategies of disruption (marching and camping in unpermitted places); by articulating the symbolic significance of particular spaces and by challenging the privatization of our cities, and thus its reinvigoration of the 'right to the city' debates. (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012: 280)

As the quotation pointed out, occupy initiative is about the physical disruption of places. It involves a physical encampment, sit-in act, an attempt to prevent construction (road or building), occupational disruption and also hacking activism in my opinion that despite it is not physical, it disrupts services like commerce or state services and it occupies the website with wallpaper, involving informative slogans or emblem. As Pickerill and Krinsky argued, there is a symbolic significance behind occupy movement, which people/public can claim ownership of space or square that has generally a historical significance.

The occupy of Wall Street, Spanish Indignados movement, the occupy of the London Stock Exchange are the most well-known examples of occupy movements. These movements have anti-capitalist characteristics with respect to indicating social and economic inequalities of capitalism in countries. In addition to the course of capitalism, the authoritarian policies of governments like internet censorship also affect the emergence of these movements. For instance, Indignados as a social movement in Spain was the response to the new neoliberal policies of the Spanish government after the global economic crisis, as Castañeda argues:

> The term Indignados could be loosely translated into English as 'The Outraged'. They are outraged, indignant at the cuts to education, welfare and social programmes put in place first by the government of Socialist Prime Minister Jose´ Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and later by that of the right-wing Popular Party under Mariano Rajoy. The Indignados is a social movement response to the global economic crisis and the approaches taken by the European Union and the Spanish government to handle it in general. In particular, it is a venue for the discontented college-educated youth who cannot find jobs that pay enough to cover rent and basic expenses. (2012: 309)

According to Castañeda, Indignados movement was also the result of structural adjustment measures of the government to international financial system since high unemployment, neoliberal educational and social programmes adversely affect especially young people, like the Gezi protesters. The activists also were opposed to neoliberal policies, and also, the mainstream Spanish media declared

that camps were dirty and dangerous like statements of AKP officials about the Gezi Park. Another similarity is the Indignados was not related to a specific political party and there is a partial rejection of advocating a party politics for Castañeda (2012: 310)

The slogans are very significant in occupy movement for identifying the political inclination of movement. "We are the 99 percent" in Occupy Wall Street, "a real democracy now" in the Indignados movement, "Everywhere Taksim, everywhere resistance" in the Gezi protests are, for instance, had a powerful effect on masses during the protests. On the other hand, in occupy movements, alternative media tools are used for announcements and communication. The social media is a very effective tool for the protestors during occupy movements. The most important point about occupy attempts is the question of 'what is next' in my opinion. Occupying is a very significant resistance in order to make inequalities more visible; however, its continuation with concrete political steps is also important, which will be discussed in detail in the context of the Gezi protests, in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER 3

THE AKP HEGEMONY

As the main aim of this chapter is to understand the AKP rule regarding its hegemonic aspects which are e mostly related to the party's economic policies in favor of the bourgeoisie and its capability to articulate classes into the hegemony project, it is necessary to examine neoliberalism in Turkey under the AKP rule with neoliberal economic policies and hegemonic effects of populism employed by the government with a view to gaining consent. Hence, we can understand under which conditions the Gezi uprising took place and the influence of the protests on the course of the AKP's hegemony.

The AKP's hegemony stems from its capability to articulate classes and masses under neoliberalism which involves neoliberal economy policies and neoliberal populism. While neoliberal economy included re-organization of the land, the labor and money flow within a labor regime, neoliberal populism was connected to the political agenda, ideological discourses, cultural policies, imposition of a certain lifestyle, symbols and so on (Bozkurt, 2015). In this chapter, I will seek to explain the AKP's type of hegemony and its transformation into authoritarianism, since an understanding of the AKP hegemony helps to comprehend characteristics of the Gezi's protests and demonstrators. A Historical viewpoint is very significant in understanding the underlying conditions of the Gezi protests and what the protestors protested. In this chapter, I am going to categorize the neoliberal policies of the AKP with regards to money flow, land and labor relations, ideological and symbolic sources of the AKP hegemony, and discuss the political conjuncture before AKP came to power, and lastly political and ideological sources of the party.

Constitution of consent from classes or masses has an economic aspect as well as the ideological leadership as mentioned in the second chapter. AKP gained economic power through its neoliberal economy policies regarding the money-land-labor relations and the handling of poverty and grounded its ideological/political base with its liberal conservative tradition of center-right with marketist discourses about privatization, flexibilization of labor, and neoliberal populism. I will examine the AKP hegemony within the political economy framework and a discourse analysis. It is obvious that hegemony is based on the relationality and integrity of discourse and action. Moreover, the AKP's type of neoliberal populism had its own substantial practices that spread across all areas of life.

3.1. The Conditions Before AKP Came to Power

First of all, AKP came to power on the 1st of November 2002 during one of the most severe economic crises in the Turkish history. In this period, employing macroeconomic decisions was tough due to high inflation, current account deficits, lack of international investment and fragile coalition governments in the political conjuncture; thus, businesses also did not make any private investment because of prevailing uncertainty and insecurity of political and economic conditions. Economic measures led to adverse impacts on the large segments of society. In order to apply the structural reforms, a strong government was needed to balance the economic disruption.

Before AKP came to power, the banking and currency crisis had severely affected the macroeconomic table of Turkey especially in the late 2000's, as can be seen in the table. High inflation rates, a decline in the GDP growth and a large budget deficit indicated one of the most severe economic crises in the history of Turkey. One of the most important reasons for the crisis was the political instability of the coalition government especially after the February 28 coup

attempt[20] which had disrupted the economic order and amplified the economic instability which affected foreign investments.

Table 2. Macroeconomic Indicators of Turkey

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Inflation *(annual %)[21]*	49.3	52.9	37.5	23.3	12.4	7.1
GDP growth *(annual %)[22]*	6.64	-5.96	6.43	5.60	9.64	9.01
Poverty headcount ratio[23]	-	-	30.3	23.8	20.9	16.4
GDP per capita *(US$)[24]*	4316	3119	3660	4718	6040	7384
Unemployment rate[25]	6.49	8.38	10.36	10.54	10.84	10.64

Furthermore, the coalition government could not make radical decisions in overcoming the economic challenges. As the coup d'état of September 12 paved the way for conservatism as a constituent of neoliberalism, the February 28 coup attempt had strengthened the need for a strong government in a society with different political interventions. At this point, very brief analysis of the coup attempt is needed in order to understand the historicity of the AKP's hegemony.

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[20] February 28 coup, also known as postmodern coup, refers to the decisions taken by military on National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997.

[21] Source: World Bank Group national accounts data, Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)

[22] World Bank, GDP growth (annual %)

[23] World Bank, Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population). It is the ratio of the population living below poverty lines in the nation

[24] World Bank, GDP per capita (current US$)

[25] World Bank, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (national estimate)

Junta attempts in 1980 and 1997 contributed to the establishment of hegemony within the framework of neoliberalism. After the January 24 decisions[26], Turkey adopted a neoliberal economic regime with economic transformations and certain interventions to labor market and collective labor agreements. Moreover, the governments that came to power during this period had tried to maintain this neoliberal regime with the military's coercive power to a certain extent. Kenan Evren as the chief of the coup d'état mentioned in one of his speeches that if coup attempt were not executed, 24 January decisions could not be implemented successfully (Özsever, 2010, para. 4) The junta rule in the 1980's took the vested rights of the working class away in the aftermath of the coup d'état which had stepped up neoliberal transformation. Motherland Party[27] with Turgut Özal as its founder was the leading party of this regime as a hegemonic power with respect to economic implementations and the discourse of capability to consent.

In response to this transformation, workers' movements occurred after the coup d'état in 1980. Spring Actions[28], general strikes with a large turnout, establishment of socialist parties such as "Labor Party" or "Freedom and Solidarity Party"[29] were reactions against the 'new regime in Turkey. Islamic organizations were positioned behind the Welfare Party[30]. Kurdish political

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[26] Economic policies that were based on welfare state, public investment and subsidies were allowed to completely leave aside with these decisions. The discourse of 'free market' become widespread in politics. Privatizations were enormously increased and support for agriculture and husbandry was restricted and public investments was reduced with these decisions. Workers' vested rights and regulatory laws in favor of workers were regarded as obstacles to free market and private investment, and also, these laws were flexibilized or lifted with the power of September 12 coup. Some argue that September 12 coup was executed for implying these decisions. See also: Karpat, 2004

[27] See also, Tunay, 1993

[28] The protests, known as Spring Actions, were launched by public sector workers in March, April and May 1989, were the first major labor movement since September 12, 1980. Nearly 600,000 public workers protested the failure of the negotiations on the collective bargaining between Türk-İş and the three public employers' unions.

[29] 'Emek Partisi' and 'Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi' in Turkish

[30] 'Refah Partisi' in Turkish was an Islamist party. In its program, party policies were based on competitive market economy, industrial development, improvement of public and private

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struggles also gained leverage as a civil society movement. Especially with the refreshment and massification of left movements and social oppositions, implying neoliberal economic measures were now harder for governments which resorted to the use of force against those oppositional waves. There surely was a conflict between the new Islamic bourgeoisie and İstanbul bourgeoisie with status quo, militarism and this conflict caused a political instability. Although February 28 attempt prevented the Islamist party and movements to an extent political instability was not overcome, and the coalition government did not resolve the economic difficulties stemming from the economic crisis/conjuncture in the international market. As seen in the table 2, inflation increased to 60 percent and the current account balance, too, enormously increased. Briefly, macroeconomic indicators could not be handled by the coalition governments given the its political instability on the eve of the 2000's. After the severe banking crisis of the 1998's, AKP with the heritage of Welfare Party's ideological accumulation, appeared with the slogan of 'justice' and 'development', hence the name the party's discourse and proposed economic model were associated and integrated with the neoliberal developmentalist and the center-rightist tradition in the Turkish political history. In the November 2002 elections, AKP came to power as result of this party program. After coming to power, the party became a hegemonic power by adopting neoliberal policies by articulating the classes into its neoliberal project, which is discussed in the following sections. In this section of the thesis, the reasons for the hegemonic transition of the AKP government is examined by scrutinizing AKP's type of neoliberalism in Turkey with transformation of labor, land and money flow and social policies, symbolic codes of hegemony and neoliberal populism discussions, and the status of youth in order to comprehend the constituents of hegemony and its reproduction processes with particular strategies. At this point, it should not be forgotten that the AKP hegemony was not solely about the

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investment in addition to Islamist and conservative emphasis on family, education and so on. See also: *Refah Partisi Tüzüğü*, 1985

neoliberal economic policies for the privileged classes' own interests, but also it contained ideological and symbolic codes that nourished these political economy relations and reproduced consent of classes/groups/masses at the same time. The Gezi protests were closely associated with the neoliberal populism of the party, examined in the next chapter.

3.2. Neoliberalism in Turkey under the AKP Rule

Examining the neoliberal policies of the AKP rule, the period between 2002 and 2008 and post-2008 ought to be well analyzed because the global economic crisis in 2008 had changed macroeconomic balances and administration inclination of the government. Furthermore, the occurrence of the Gezi protests was directly associated with the hegemonic crisis resulting from the economic crisis in Turkey.

Firstly, after coming to power in 2002, the AKP government started to follow IMF programs for economy with Kemal Derviş's[31] austerity policies, and in time, as the world economy recovered, the AKP succeeded in reducing the high inflation level to a single digit level, stabilizing macroeconomy, controlling budget deficit, tightening fiscal discipline and improving conditions relatively until 2008. It can be argued that the first seven years of AKP rule was considered as 'successful governing' in terms of solving the economic dimension of the crisis and providing a relative economic stability. Although the AKP government could not overcome well-known structural problems of capitalism in Turkey and did not produce a considerable economic growth, it brought the dynamics of the crisis under control and delayed the crisis a few years thanks to a regular inflow of foreign capital in the country. (Yaşlı, 2013) The Turkish people used to live under hyperinflation and high prices, and therefore, they saw the government more reliable for the reason of this relative economic stability,

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[31] Kemal Derviş was a bureaucrat in the World Bank. After the banking crisis, he was invited for the management of the economy and given himself a ministry as a rep of IMF.

although there was not a considerable decline in the unemployment rate and the scope of poverty during this period. Furthermore, since the rate of imports were comparatively higher than exports and production with high added value was quite low, an increase in the foreign capital flow in Turkey was needed and it contributed to meet the current account deficit for some time during this period, which means that the economy between 2002 and 2008 was handled through cash inflows and not real production or investments. Therefore, economic growth did not translate into employment and indicated a '*jobless growth*' pattern. (Telli, Voyvoda & Yeldan, 2006: 257). It can be summarized that after the AKP came to power, the government approved IMF-led policies and was determined to strengthen and implement fundamental structural reforms[32] and consequently, a stable macroeconomic environment was relatively provided with reducing inflation rates, tightening fiscal discipline and accelerating privatization. (Civelekoğlu, 2015: 108). After the global crisis in 2008, these economic policies and measures were transformed into more neoliberal policies especially for cash flow, privatization and flexibilization of labor market, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

AKP, as a party of the conservative-liberal alliance, consolidated the neoliberal hegemony after they came to power. It represented a historical bloc as a hegemonic project which was constituted by EU[33]-centered integration into the global capitalism, IMF-centered neoliberal policies that include an enhancement of the relations of other neoliberal countries, a hot capital flow, and a strong alliance with the USA (Sümer and Yaşlı, 2010: 21). Relations with the European Union was among the fundamental promises of AKP, which will be analyzed in the section titled "Ideological and Symbolic Sources of the Hegemony". In the election bulletin, it was stated that "AK Party is a democratic, conservative, innovative and contemporary party." (AK Parti, 2002a: 11) It contained a

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[32] See also: https://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2003/tur/01/index.htm

[33] European Union

fundamental contradiction that; it "conserved" the past ideological/hegemonic discourse, a heritage from the Motherland Party as a conservative party and also, at the same time it was innovative and reformist due to advocating for a world in which "information, capital, goods and services circulate freely throughout the world" (AK Parti, 2002a: 13). In the section titled "Continuous and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy" of the party program, the significance of foreign capital, privatization, globalization was frequently emphasized (AK Parti, 2002b: 34). Moreover, strengthening the civil society was approved as the main purpose of the party because:

> …civil culture and institutions should remain outside the intervention area of the state. As result of contemporary developments, as the state attracts the economy, the control over civil culture and society will necessarily decrease (2002b: 12)

The focus of 'civil society' in the party program became meaningful with the (neo)liberal intelligentsia and their discourses, which will also be examined in the next sections. In a certain period of time, the AKP had achieved active and spontaneous consents of the classes/masses/groups with the improvement of macroeconomic table and 'conservative and liberal' background in Gramscian framework and established an expansive hegemony on the conservatism of the free market economy. In this sense, a historical shift in the paradigm became visible in the first months of the year 2002, in the Turkish political history and at this moment, this paradigm shift was accompanied with the process of liberal-conservative hegemony as integration waves in the world system where 'leftist' values about enlightenment, secularism or socialism[34] had been abandoned in a certain historicity. However, the period especially after the global crisis of 2008 when relative economic growth and hot money flow were incrementally cut off, those massive groups had started to mobilize to an extent and 'had suddenly went from a state of political passivity to a certain activity' (Bozkurt, 2015: 79) and acrisis of hegemony started to appear in the society. The Gezi Protests were a result of 'the crisis of authority' that is "if the ruling class has lost its consensus,

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[34] "Kamuculuk" in Turkish.

it is no longer 'leading' but only 'dominant', exercising coercive force alone, which means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe." (Gramsci, 1971: 275)

3.2.1. Commodification of Labor

> *It has emerged clearly that job insecurity is now everywhere… the de structuring of existence, which is deprived among other things of its temporal structures, and the ensuing deterioration of the whole relationship to the world, time and space. Casualization profoundly affects the person who suffers it: by making the whole future uncertain, it prevents all rational anticipation and, in particular, the basic belief and hope in the future that one needs in order to rebel, especially collectively, against present conditions, even the most intolerable.*

> *Bourdieu, Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now*[35]

Precarity adversely affects the entire life of a worker, for example the sense of uncertainty is enhanced in the workplace with neoliberal policy of flexibilization; thus, all of the daily practices and future envision of the workers are controlled in the endless chain of exploitation. The Gezi Protests was also a reaction of people whose future, hope or dreams were obscured and uncertain due to neoliberalism, which will be examined in the fifth chapter. For this reason, understanding the deregulation of labor relations, disorganization of labor and its political outcomes ought to be questioned by flexibilization level, data of unregistered labor, de-unionization policies of the AKP and the condition of precarity with an uncertain future.

Neoliberalism in Turkey after 1980's had diversely adjusted the structure of labor market. Flexibilization, disorganization and deregulation of labor structure were the fundamental aims of the governments in this period. The gap between the rates of informal/marginal labor and rates of formal/registered labor increased progressively. In the post-1980 period, with the neoliberal inclination of governments, the Turkish economy was faced with a further opening of the

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[35] Bourdieu (1998b: 82) in his book Acts of Resistance

gap between the wages of the well-off and the low-paid segments of the urban working class, as Boratav, Yeldan & Köse stated (2000: 23). In the post-1990 period, the picture deteriorated for the labor, and approximately 60% of the total labor force was employed under the informal/marginal labor. Furthermore, the structure of labor market got disorganized, fragmented and segmented during this time. Bourdieu defines neoliberalism as "a program for destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic." (1998a). Neoliberalism in Turkey also tried to destroy the collectiveness of labor, unions, associations, as well as the collective rights of workers. After the AKP came to power, the increase in the growth rates did not translate into improved job opportunities as macroeconomic indicators in the table 2 and the rates of unregistered and unsecured workers reached approximately 53% in 2004. (Özden and Bekmen, 2015: 94) The labor market was deregulated and flexibilization of labor was increased by the government with a new labor law, enacted in 2003. With the Labor Law, employers were provided the rights to determine the working types and forms such as continuous/discontinuous or certain/uncertain period of works. Certain and uncertain types of works also included partial jobs and full-time jobs, call work and trial work according to the Labor Law[36]. (Resmî Gazete, 2003). The law promoted temporary work relationships, reduced job security, made the dismissal of workers easier for employers who employ more than thirty laborers on such grounds as union activities, work accidents or pregnancy. On the other hand, vested rights of workers in smaller businesses were totally excluded by the new law. For example, unemployment pay and seniority indemnity of temporary workers were suspended and abolished according to the Labor Law in 2003. Consequently, the AKP government aimed to gain the support of small and medium-sized employers to control and prevent demands of wage increase from workers and unions. Being a member of a certain trade

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[36] See: http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/06/20030610.htm

union could be counted as a reason for dismissal and the collectiveness of labors and unionization rates rapidly declined[37] as can be seen in the table 3.

Table 3. Unionization Rates in Turkey[38]

	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Wage earners *(thousand)*	10.770	11.344	12.360	12.999	13.573	12.937
Unionization rate *(%)*	8.9	8.1	7.6	7	6.1	5.8

Unification of laborers became more difficult in this conjuncture; and therefore, 'non-class forms of identity' were formed and depoliticizing of workers increased due to the structures of unorganized and unsegmented labor. The increase of unsecured conditions aimed at depoliticizing the working class. Moreover, the depoliticizing inclination of the government was a part of the neoliberal order. Insecurity forced fragmentation and individualization of workers pursuing futureless career objectives, and as the effectiveness of unions decreased, it was attempted to question the legitimacy of unions in the social context.

Unemployment rate and informal employment continued to rise until the global crisis in 2008 when the crisis adversely changed all macroeconomic table, and the unemployment rate suddenly increased by approximately 3% accompanied by a sharp decline in GDP.

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[37] The percentage of unionization in Turkey was the lowest level in OECD average in the post-2002.
See: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TUD#

[38] Source: DİSK/Sosyal-İş Union, 2012.
See also: http://www.sosyal-is.org.tr/yayinlar/trkiyede_sendikal_rgtlenme_raporu.pdf

Table 4. Macroeconomic Indicators of Turkey[39]

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Inflation *(annual %)*	6.217	12.037	5.402	7.013	8.189	7.418
GDP growth *(annual %)*	5.03	0.845	-4.704	8.487	11.113	4.79
GDP per capita *(US$)*	9709	10850	9036	10672	11341	11720
Unemployment rate	8.87	9.71	12.55	10.66	8.8	8.15

The global crisis influenced the entire balance of economy which resulted in an increase in the inflation rate and unemployment rate. Growth rates was also expressed in negative terms, as shown in the table 4. GDP growth rate affected wage growth, and thus a recession started. In this table it is shown that the welfare and development promises of the AKP were abandoned, at the expense of alleviating the implications of the economic crisis. The government accelerated the neoliberal policies, based on the strategies of privatization and flexibilization of labor and a decrease in the labor costs. In the meantime, the AKP won the election with the % of the votes, which made it easier to employ new policies about labor. To alleviate the negative implications of the crisis, AKP with social legitimacy, as a driving force, introduced a new labor enactment in 2008. This omnibus bill introduced the 'hire of subcontractor' relationship to reduce labor costs; thus, the subcontractor contracts put price pressure on the labor market and vested rights, job security and wages of the workers were abolished while profits of the employers were increased. Moreover, employment package marketized work safety since workplaces where less than 50 workers were employed were exempted from the obligation of occupational health and safety; however, work accidents mostly took place in small businesses and with

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[39] Source: World Bank Group national accounts data, inflation, GDP deflator (annual %), GDP growth, poverty headcount ratio, GDP per capita and unemployment rate.

this new arrangement, employers' obligations such as establishing health and safety unit in the workplace, operating workplace doctors, and assigning technical personnel responsible for job security were removed. (Resmî Gazete, 2008)[40] Moreover, the government attempted to offer additional support mechanisms to the employers and began paying one-year premiums now to two workers, not only one. Additionally, the government reduced social security taxes by 5 percent; however, neither unemployment, nor informal employment significantly went down since "informal employment had already become an important form of flexibility for the employers due to the incentives it offers, such as exemptions from social security contributions" as Civelekoğlu argued (2015: 108). In this sense, although Erdoğan as the Prime Minister said the crisis would not affect the country[41] and the country recovered quickly in terms of employment rates, Ömer Dinçer as the Minister of Labor accepted failure and ineffectiveness of the new enactment with regards to the increasing rate of employment[42]. This new employment law also contributed to unionization and politization of the workers. Furthermore, new regulations and enactments were introduced in this period. Flexibilization was also supported with privatization in the public sector. Government's measures to oppress the workers occasionally led to resistances and at this point, government had to resort the coercive power of hegemony. For instance, a large group of workers protesting the insecure working conditions and privatization of TEKEL[43] were subjected to police violence in 2010. At the same time, it was a recent example of the counter-hegemonic struggle of class-based movement. The resistance which lasted for approximately two and a half months was against deprivation of social rights

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[40] See also: http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2008/05/20080526-5.htm

[41] Erdoğan in a speech said 'The crisis will pass at a tangent to Turkey' in 2009. See also, Öniş and Güven, 2010, at https://eaf.ku.edu.tr/sites/eaf.ku.edu.tr/files/erf_wp_1013.pdf

[42] For more information about AKP's policies after 2008 crisis, see Yeldan (2009b) at http://yeldane.bilkent.edu.tr/2009ILO_G20CountryBrief_Turkey.pdf

[43] Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises Incorporation.

and job status on 4/C that refers to temporary work relationship, and the resistance turned into a general opposition against neoliberalism and even capitalism in terms of claims for social rights, socialist demands and so on. In this period, government resorted to harsh police violence in this period; however, this resistance indicated the possibilities of social collective actions and working class's 'dangerous' potential to change the order.[44] Briefly, the AKP government's basic aim was commodification, flexibilization and (in)securitization of labor through controlling the working class by segmenting, fragmenting and depoliticizing it, marketizing its security and safety and finally reducing the labor costs with an aim to garner the support of the small and middle-sized employers as a necessity of neoliberal hegemony. These strategies of the government created insecurity and precarity, therefore, the AKP hegemony was perceived a threat for the future by various masses comprised of working and middle class. Financialization aspects of neoliberalism, and the rise in people's debts made people find alternative tactics of existence and thus increased the resistance inclination of people.

3.2.2. Commercialization of Land

Recent social movements can be associated with preservation of space to an extent, as many theoreticians have already argued, since urban planning projects of governments with neoliberal policies might contain features of symbolic and historical attacks, in addition to the economic significance of commercialization of land. The conjuncture that occurred during the Gezi protests was directly associated with the commercialization of land, since urbanization projects of the state (with local government) and its private entrepreneurs undermined and destroyed the living spaces of people and other living creatures with their rant projects, mega-urbanization, mega-projects, urban transformation and gentrification, energy plants, constructions and so on. They were just not about

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[44] See also Topal, 2018, "From Tekel to Gezi Resistance in Turkey: Possibilities for a United Collective Social Rights Movement" at: https://www.academia.edu/36513375

economic relations, benefits or rants, but they were also symbolic attacks to historical, ideological and cultural existences of the spaces. It was not a coincidence that the Gezi demonstrations first emerged in İstanbul. Taksim had great importance for people in many ways. When preserving trees of the Gezi Park and showing resistance, protestors also protected their own values, common history and cultural existences. For this reason, a grasp of the protest is also possible with understanding attacks and spatial policies of the AKP in this sense.

Commercialization of land which was the main policy of the AKP government ought to be well-understood for comprehending the Gezi protests. As Tuğal claimed, the urban transformation was briefly based on 'the demolition of public places, green areas, and historical sites, as well as the displacement of poor populations, in order to rebuild the city in the image of capital. All these unwanted spaces (and people) are being replaced by malls, skyscrapers, office spaces, and glossy remakes of historical buildings' (2013d). HES[45] projects, gold mining, mega-projects were multiplied in number under the AKP rule in Turkey.

Construction sector was one of the most profitable economic activities especially for bourgeoisie. There was a construction boom under the AKP rule. Projects were undertaken mostly through either the state or local governments if the private sector was not involved. There surely was a direct relationship between construction and economic structure. In many countries that experience economic shrinkage, investment expenditures in the construction sector are seen as solutions to recession due to not producing high added value assets, and thus, enhancing the economic mobility was attempted with circulation of hot money in the market. Construction was also directly related to cement/glass and metal/iron industry, and indirectly related to energy, transportation and communication. Highway-building was the main election promise of the government in the elections of 2007 and 2011.

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[45] Hydroelectric power plants.

> The most important projects of our party, building divided roads (double road), increasing the quality of the road infrastructure and road safety. We will continue to work on development. Our goal for the upcoming period is to increase the total length of the divided road network to 15,000 km. (AK Parti, 2015a: 216)

Like in 2007, construction of highways, double roads, airports and areas, high-speed train lines, sea ports and shipyards were primary promises of AKP in the general election of 2011.[46] It should not be forgotten that highway-building affects the circulation of goods, which provides economic profits and gains, as is known. During the period of AKP government; constructions, skyscrapers, new urban transformation projects, etc. significantly rose. As shown in the table below, construction sectors enormously rose in number, after the AKP came to power. It should not be forgotten that the related project owners were also close supporters of the AKP government and mostly had an organic relation with AKP's cadres. These AKP-backed groups were in charge of many projects from energy plants to bridge projects in Turkey and their assets increased significantly in the meantime.

Table 5. Macroeconomic Indicators on Construction Sectors in Turkey[47]

Years	Construction Sector	Annual Growth Rate of Construction Industry (%)	The Share of Construction Sector in GDP (%)
2001	3.426.908	−5.70	5.02
2002	3.903.516	6.16	5.38
2003	4.207.040	5.27	5.51
2004	4.801.693	9.36	5.75
2005	5.250.284	8.40	5.80
2006	6.220.955	6.89	6.43

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[46] General election declaration of AKP (2011b).
See also: http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2011-beyanname.pdf

[47] See: Karatepe, İ. D. 2016, "The State, Islamists, Discourses, and Bourgeoisie: The Construction Industry in Turkey", p. 3

Table 5. Continued

2007	6.573.647	4.67	6.49
2008	6.040.811	0.66	5.93
2009	5.067.196	−4.83	5.22
2010	5.996.258	9.16	5.66
2011	6.688.257	8.77	5.81
2012	6.726.224	2.13	5.72
2013	7.202.169	4.05	5.88

Source[48]: Karatepe, İ. D.

As indicated in the table 5, construction sector in Turkey has shown an upward trend since 2002 and the share of construction in GDP has grown consistently, with the exception of the global crisis in 2008 and 2009. The growth rate in the share of construction was higher than growth rate in GDP at times, as shown in the table 2.

On the other hand, the concept of 'mega-project' began to be frequently mentioned by the members of the government. As David Harvey argued, absurd mega-urbanization projects are a common feature of re-urbanization especially in the Middle East (2008: 7). For instance, Marmaray, The Third Bridge, Eurasia Tunnel were presented as mega-projects by the government. These projects were used particularly for the elections. For example, Canal Istanbul[49] project was one of the promises of the elections in 2011 and it was presented as a "crazy project" by Erdoğan.

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[48] See: Karatepe, İ. D. 2016, "The State, Islamists, Discourses, and Bourgeoisie: The Construction Industry in Turkey", p. 3

[49] It was planned to be an artificial waterway connecting the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea to bypass the Bosporus strait

These projects were also known as the project of natural massacre and devastation, since in the process of building these projects, millions of trees were ruthlessly cut, soil and lakes were polluted, and the habitats of animals were invaded for the benefit of rent-seeking henchmen[50]. For example, 2 million 330 thousand trees for the Third Airport Project in İstanbul and 381 thousand trees for North Marmara Highway project were planned to cut according to the official response to the opposition parties regarding their parliamentary question (TBMM, 2013: 2)

Although a type of 'development' that protects the nature can be possible to a certain extent, the AKP's understanding of development translates more to pillage and destruction of the nature. Therefore, the AKP's perception of 'project-based development' provoked environmentalist sensation in the opponents. One of the most important reasons for the emergence of the Gezi protests was the decision to destruct Taksim Gezi Park as a result of the AKP's development type Destruction of the green spaces and parks in the city was a result of urban transformation. At this point, construction of shopping malls is one of the good examples of this policy. The number of shopping malls increased at a record level. In the first 13 years of the AKP rule, there were more than 200 shopping centers only in İstanbul. The rental income of the shopping malls was also significant for local government at this point.

One of the most significant aspects of these devastation projects was the project owners. Construction sector was the most profitable sector for the Islamic bourgeoisie[51], such as İhlas, Çalık, Cengiz and Kombassan which are "the backbone of the AKP's electoral coalition." (Civelekoğlu, 2015: 110). It should not go unnoticed that occupational accidents and deaths occurred in this industry

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[50] 'Henchmen' was mostly used for the supporters of Erdoğan's regime, who have economic gains somehow or makes large amount of profits due to 'rant projects' of government.

[51] Islamic bourgeoisie was mostly organized in the Independent Businessmen and Industrialists Association (MÜSİAD) in this period. The entrepreneurs in MÜSİAD used the patronage relationship particularly in the period of AKP government. See also: Karatepe, 2016, p. 11.

mostly because of inadequate security measures in the workplace and there were no serious and effective precautions and sanctions about workplace security in Turkey. In addition, it should be kept in mind that construction companies in Turkey were generally small and medium-sized enterprises, which means that the ratio of unregistered workers in such enterprises is higher than that of large enterprises, and those workers were not included in the records of social security institution. (Ceylan, 2014: 2) Consequently, it can be argued in a way that there was also a relation of partnership in crime between the government and the Islamic bourgeoisie in the construction industry besides an organic economic relation Housing Development Administration of Turkey, called TOKİ in Turkish, is the main institution, responsible for gentrification. It was the political and economic reflection of displacement of poor populations, gentrified areas were rebuilt in favor of bourgeoisie with the incentives of the government.

During the period of AKP rule; energy companies, specifically working mines, hydroelectric power plants and thermal power plants made a huge profit with the demolition of nature. There were numerous power plants that endangered the natural and social life. Notwithstanding the fact that the state actively supported these projects, there were social reaction and resistance against the government. At this point, the state's coercive power came into play where the protestors were exposed to police violence in the demonstrations in many parts of the country. There were many protests especially against the energy and mining plant projects of the government and its supported entrepreneurs such as HES projects, gold mining and coal-fired thermal power plant projects. To meet the electric energy demands of the country, many plants were constructed by private companies especially in the north of the country. For example, HES projects destroyed the nature, caused desertification, and therefore, the local people were forced to leave their living space. The protests against the HES projects became popular and spread across the country, especially to the countryside of the Black Sea region. People did not express political demands, explicitly. Protestors only advocated their constitutional right to live in a healthy environment in Tortum,

Fındıklı, Solaklı, Arhavi, Hopa, Kazdağları and so on. Private companies, promoted by the government, also attacked the historical and cultural values of people such as the Peri Valley in Munzur which is a sacred place for the Alevis, especially with the lake. Similarly, the gold mining venture in Bergama brought about serious protests due to the devastation of natural area. In these demonstrations, security units used disproportionate force to the people; for instance, a teacher, Metin Lokumcu, lost his life due to a gas bomb thrown by police during the protest in Artvin in 2011.The Ministry of the Interior did not make any explanation or apologies regarding the harsh violence. Numerous projects and instances of resistance against them occurred during the period of the AKP government. In the sense of producing consent, Erdoğan used a pro-market and 'developmentalist' discourse during the protests by emphasizing the requirements for the projects on economic growth and rural development and blamed the protestors for being power groups who did not want Turkey to develop and grow, which will be analyzed in the next section. Briefly, it can be argued that these space-defense protests were results of the neoliberal attacks of the government on land and the Gezi protests also contained an aspect of preservation of space in this sense.

3.2.3. Social Policies and the Question of Poverty

AKP government had used social policies for producing consent of the public opinion in terms of maintaining neoliberal policies. The fundamental aim behind this logic was depoliticization of the oppressed classes/groups/masses. During the AKP government, marketization of public services of welfare state has gradually risen and deepened as a result of neoliberal policies that envisage privatization and reduction of public expenditures. At the point of struggle against poverty, instead of welfare state's envisagement of citizens' rights, there was an explosion of social assistance programs meaning that social assistance was considered as a substitution of welfare state's functions. Moreover, "charity groups and philanthropic associations were taking over some state functions and the state was subcontracting its welfare provision duties to the private sector."

(Bozkurt, 2013: 375) In this sense, Islamic-based associations and charitable initiatives were highly supported by the government. AKP-supported civil society, therefore, reached the poor segments of society via local governments, and then, impoverished people started to be depended on assistance programs, and thus, the poverty could be reproduced, and social conflict was solved within the civil society.
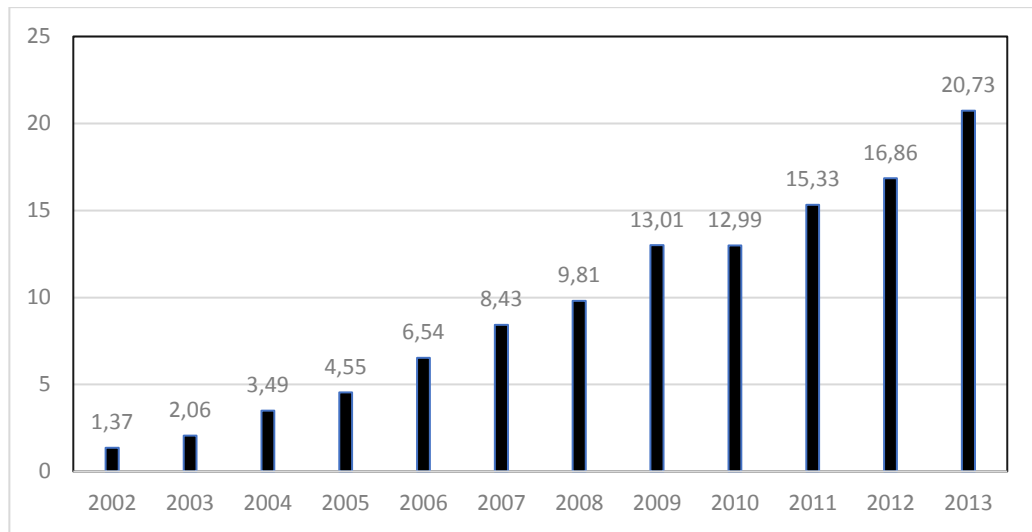
Figure 2. The Amount of Social Assistance Expenditure (billion TL)

Source: SETA, 2015 & Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2014[52]

As seen in the figure, social assistances have gradually increased, and at the end of ten years, the rate of assistances rose approximately by fifteen times. According to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the proportion of social assistances in the budget also rose about one and a half time under the AKP rule in the first decade. (SETA, 2015: 19) However, the remarkable point is that although the global crisis in 2008 adversely affected the macroeconomic indicators, the social assistances budget did not change, seriously, which means

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[52] See SETA, 2015 at http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20151216161419_139_web.pdf and Annual Activity Report 2013 by Ministry of Family and Social Policies

that the government tried to obscure and suppress the influence of the crisis on the poor that was an important part of the electoral bases of the party.

Social assistances programs contributed to restructuring of neoliberal hegemony due to their power to meet the short-term needs of subordinated masses and the poor. For example, households that benefited from cash aids during Ramadan[53] or coal allowances gave electoral support to the government.

Table 6. Indicators on the Amount of Coal Aids[54]

Years	The Number of Households	Coal Aid (ton)
2003	1.096.488	649.818
2004	1.610.170	1.052.379
2005	1.831.234	1.329.676
2006	1.797.083	1.363.288
2007	1.894.555	1.434.163
2008	2.347.728	1.852.278
2009	2.256.265	1.910.778
2010	2.237.423	1.957.495
2011	2.060.213	1.921.771
2012	2.103.324	1.992.546
2013	2.106.015	2.142.316

Source: Ministry of Family and Social Policies

As seen in the table 6, coal aids from the ministry were inclined to increase year by year; and the number of households that benefited from the aid also increased

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[53] Ramadan is seen as the most holy month in Islamic religion and in this month, alms and fitre, special form of Islamic alms-charity, were given to poor people who need financial assistance. For this reason, government's cash aids in Ramadan had a symbolic significance at the point of earning consent of masses.

[54] See data of Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Annual Activity Report 2013 at http://www.aile.gov.tr/data/53fe1465369dc3053ccd5500/aile_ve_sosyal_politikalar_bakanligi_2013_yili_idare_faaliyet_raporu.pdf

by the government. At this point, it should not be forgotten that these aids were made by the government, as if they were blessing, not one of the most significant duties of the state, which was also helpful in earning the consent. For this matter, Erdoğan in one speech in 2009 said "Charity is a part of our culture"[55] as the response to the opposition parties' critics about social assistance.

Institutionally, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity[56] as the main institution responsible for social assistance policies was established by AKP in 2004. Here, one of the most remarkable points is that social assistance has been provided mostly in the form of conditional cash transfers to poor people for health charges or school expenses and "by 2011, these transfers were reaching approximately 10 million people per year" (Özden and Bekmen, 2015: 93). It can be argued that the government pursued the strategy to alleviate poverty by 'increasing the extent of social assistance' which made poor people more addicted to the assistance and thus, it helped to create an image of AK Party as 'the party of waifs and strays'.[57] Thus, AKP articulated its interests with subordinated classes' interests via depoliticization and pauperization of the masses with neoliberal and Islamic populism. Here, it should be considered that there was an explosion of social assistance programs as well as an incredible increase in the number of faith-based charity associations that also contributed to producing consent within the civil society. Meanwhile, some of these associations were blamed for bribery an example of which could be that Deniz Feneri Association which is one of the most well-known associations, was indicted for bribery in Germany, which means that the relations of 'charity' sometimes turned into the relationship of 'mutual interests' and illegal activities. (Eder, 2010: 178) It can be summarized that AKP differentiated the problem of

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[55] Habertürk, see at http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/118538-sadaka-bizim-kulturumuzde-var

[56] It actually established as a fund program in 1986, however it was turned into a directorate by AKP government. See also: Bozkurt, 2015, p. 81.

[57] See Erdoğan's tweet: https://twitter.com/rt_erdogan/status/171282309599870977

poverty from its political context and reproduced the poverty itself via social assistance programs, Neoliberal populism, with these policies, achieved a certain degree of success in terms of electoral gain for the government, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.3. Neoliberal Populism of the AKP Hegemony

It could be precisely argued that that the Gezi protests were mostly a reaction against the substantial reflection of the AKP government's ideological discourses and symbolic codes. Looking at the repertoire of the Gezi protests and protestors' self-expression methods, it could be seen that the protestors mostly targeted the neoliberal populism of the AKP hegemony, which will be discussed in the latter chapter. Comprehending the dimensions of neoliberal populism, its (re)production of consent in different political contexts is therefore crucial,

Despite the issue of populism has already been discussed in recent political discussions and analysis, there is no precise and explicit definition of populism since it is a phenomenon that does not belong to a certain ideology, class or group and can appear in each socio-political level. It has also been held by many different theoreticians and perspectives in many ways. On the other hand, populism is a highly complicated concept since it is considered in a different perspective than ideology, movement, strategy and so on. Also, Laclau underlined difficulties of defining populism since it has a peculiar and unique feature with the change in an ideological-political formation of each society which is about the uneven and combined development. (1977: 147) On the other hand, at the point of neoliberal populism, there has been also conceptual ambiguities and nested definitions. For example, the discussion of 'authoritarian populism'[58] of Stuart Hall and Bob Jessop which is about Thatcherism and its

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[58] In the book, *State, Power, Socialism*, Poulantzas conceptualized 'authoritarian statism' as a new 'moment' and exceptional form of the state, mentioning the state's new form with its coercion and consent. And Stuart Hall discusses the reasons behind the success of Thatcher and defines this conjuncture of the state's inclination as 'authoritarian populism' in his books,

hegemonic project can be associated with the concept of 'neoliberal populism' in many ways, because there is a direct and organic relationship between Thatcherism and neoliberalism, as is known. Since the argumentations of populism are very complicated, and the issue of populism exceeds the boundaries of this thesis, I do not prefer to make an extensive discussion about classical populism or the history of populism in Turkish political structure; and however, a general frame for populism should be formed in order to understand the source of discourse and symbolic codes of the AKP hegemony. At the point of examining the issue of populism, I opt to sketch out two categorizations; first, populism as a form and functioning, and second, populism as a content in order to make this subject more analytical.

Initially, approaching populism as a form and functioning, it can be argued that classical and neoliberal populism have common features in terms of forming antagonistic poles, having paternalistic and charismatic leadership, advocating of the sovereignty of the people, mass mobilization that is about 'the constitution of the people as a political actor' (Panizza, 2005: 3)

One of the most important aspects of populism as a form is a populist envisagement of society that constitutes two antagonisms, two poles or camps that are homogenous and mutually exclusive from each other in the society.

> …populism as an anti-status quo discourse that simplifies the political space by symbolically dividing society between *'the people*' (as the 'underdogs') and its *'other'*. Needless to say, the identity of both *'the people'* and 'the *other'* are political constructs, symbolically constituted through the relation of antagonism, rather than sociological categories. Antagonism is thus a mode of identification in which the relation between its form (the people as signifier) and its content (the people as signified) is given by the very process of naming - that is, of establishing who the enemies of the people (and therefore the people itself) are. An anti-status quo dimension is essential to populism, as the full constitution of popular identities necessitates the political defeat of the other

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Policing the Crisis and *The Politics of Thatcherism*. Bob Jessop criticizes Hall's conceptualization of authoritarian populism by arguing that this conceptualization mystifies sources of Thatcher's hegemony, ignores the potential inner dynamics and contradictions in Thatcherism and exaggerates its power of reproducing consent and expansive hegemony. In this framework, there was an important discussion between Jessop and Hall. See also: Jessop, Bob & Bonnett, Kevin & Bromley, Simon & Ling, Tom, 1984. And see also: Hall, Stuart, 1985, Authoritarian Populism: A Reply to Jessop et al

that is deemed to oppress or exploit the people and therefore to impede its full presence. (Panizza, 2005: 4)

Populism needs an irreconcilable 'other' as a political actor as Panizza states. The other generally represents the elites and the oligarchy.

> An antagonism is thus constructed between two poles: the 'people', which includes all those who defend the traditional values and freedom of enterprise; and their adversaries: the state and all the subversives (feminists, blacks, young people and 'permissives' of every type). An attempt is thus made to construct a new historic bloc in which a plurality of economic, social and cultural aspects are articulated. Stuart Hall has pointed out, for example, how Thatcherite populism 'combines the resonant themes of organic Toryism - nation, family, duty, authority, standards, traditionalism - with the aggressive themes of a revived neoliberalism- self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 170)

As Laclau stated, populism mostly coexists with antagonism and as a discourse, it identifies socio-political sphere by constructing antagonistic relationships between the popular and ruling segments of the society; and thus, neoliberal populism establishes a hegemonic relation by articulating the popular segments into itself with the use of traditions, religions, 'common values' for consolidating and mobilizing masses against these ruling segments. In Turkey, neoliberal populism aims to constitute 'a non-class form of identity' to dissolve class conflicts and to conceal the concrete structures behind the power relations in the society. (Özden and Bekmen, 2015: 90). In this sense, neoliberal populist discourse's use of 'common values' and symbols creates a non-class form of identity and disorganizes the unity of the oppressed classes or masses and strengthens the consent by disarticulating class conflicts in the political area. Erdoğan as the Prime Minister have used the phrase "these are…" in almost all of his speeches. The phrase "these are" refers to the potential enemy of the AKP hegemony as a neoliberal populist discourse. In addition to this phrase, Erdoğan sometimes has underestimated and humiliated 'the enemy' of his envisagement of society with the question of 'Who are you?' in many speeches. At this point, the slogan of "Dude, don't be scared. It's us. The people."[59] in the Gezi protests, is an attempt to reject and neglect the antagonistic dichotomy of the AKP

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[59] This slogan was one of the most challenging slogans in the Gezi demonstrations, which is "Korkma la, biziz halk" in Turkish. It targeted both the paternalistic leadership figure of Erdoğan with humoristic emphasis on fear.

hegemony. On the other hand, the dichotomy of 'New Turkey' and 'Old Turkey' can be an example of the populist antagonism with respect to the fact that the 'Old Turkey' phrase is identified with the status quo of Kemalist elite, militaristic, oligarchic governing in the jargon of the AKP hegemony, while New Turkey describes a developing and growing country in the real sovereignty of the people, according to the neoliberal populism of the hegemony.

Moreover, populism is based on charismatic and mostly paternalistic leadership who establishes unmediated relationship with the masses. In Turkish politics, this kind of leadership is identified with the stereotype of 'the paternal, fatherly state', which is also about functionalist and conservative viewpoint of society. Erdoğan has several titles such as 'the Chief', 'the Tall Man', 'the Master' and 'Man of the Nation', each of which has an emphasis on paternalistic and patriarchal points.[60] In the sense of neoliberal populism, Erdoğan's repetitive emphasis on knowledge is important in his speeches, especially the phrase 'we know' and 'we know very well', which constitute a hegemonic relation as far as the technical knowledge goes (neoliberal developmentalist logic). In addition to forming an antagonism and having a paternalist leadership, advocating the real sovereignty of the people and mass mobilization were the most remarkable features of populism.

Secondly, examining populism as a content, it indicates that populism may be nourished in a certain ideological perspective. However, it does not point to a single ideology because of the changing socio-political conjuncture in society and it is based on eclectic and articulating hegemonic discourse. Most importantly, it materializes itself in changing socio-political practices. Therefore, populism as a content, is not basically based on a set of integrated ideas or ideology. It can be articulated sometimes in a religious discourse,

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[60] See: Orçun Selçuk, 2016, "Strong presidents and weak institutions: populism in Turkey, Venezuela and Ecuador"

sometimes in fascist or racist doctrines, or even leftist arguments or codes.[61] In the sense of the AKP hegemony, it can be argued that the AKP populism is directly related to neoliberalism and its inner contradictory and eclectic structure. For this reason, it sometimes has appeared next to conservatism, sometimes with the liberal democrat ideology, sometimes even with the Kemalist traditional viewpoint, especially at the point of developmentalism and marketization. At this point, I consider AKP's neoliberal populism both as an ideological/superstructural code in terms of its references to 'development' or 'national will' and as a 'moment' that is steadily and spontaneously reconstructed in terms of changing conditions of the political conjuncture.

The difference between neoliberal populism and classical populism directly lies in neoliberal populism's struggle to establish a non-class form of identity to dissolve the class conflicts, its emphasis on developmentalism with privatization and jobless growth, and "building personalistic ties to the impoverished masses while pursuing neoliberal economic policies" (Barr, 2003: 1161) In this framework, AKP hegemony has taken its unifying power with its ability to articulate the outcomes of neoliberal economic policies mostly about the re-organization of the land, the labor and money flow for the benefits of certain classes with demands of subordinated classes and masses owing to neoliberal populism, cultural policies, imposition of a certain lifestyle, ideologies, symbols and so on. Therefore, neoliberal populism was one of the most significant pillars of the AKP hegemony in the sense of consolidation and (re)production of consent of greater masses. Hegemony has a feature at the point of consent producing in that it subjects its opponents into its own agenda, resembles its opponents to itself in time. In this sense, AKP government with neoliberal populism succeeded in forcing its opponents to think and use its own discourses, methods and relations to an extent in the parliamentary political context. Neoliberal populism forced its opponents to stay within the lines, poles or the

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[61] See also Necmi Erdoğan's article (1998) about left populism in the 1970's.

framework determined by the AKP hegemony. Neoliberal populism was surely and directly associated with neoliberal economic order with respect to AKP's pro-marketist discourse, 'economic growth' promises and increasement of 'efficiency' discourse, examined in the former section. However, AKP also benefited from the symbolic, ideological, cultural codes to expand its hegemony. In this framework, neoliberal populism refers to a hegemonic strategy of the power bloc over the masses, seen as 'the people' and the subordinated classes, mostly formed by precarious, fragmented, informal segments of the working class. At this point, neoliberalism consolidates itself with economic policies for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and articulates the interests of bourgeoisie with the consent of the subordinated classes, seen as 'the people' by using populist arguments. (Yıldırım, 2009: 69) Gezi protests was also a reaction against the neoliberal populism of the AKP hegemony. Expansive hegemony's attempt to suppress and alleviate the subordinated masses and the working class through neoliberal populism resulted in a huge social reaction from the masses and the potential member of the subordinated classes as Boratav argued. (2013)

3.3.1. 'Conservative' and 'Democratic' Party

In the first election declaration in 2002, AKP defined itself as a conservative democratic party:

> AK Party which regards the national experience and accumulation as a solid ground for our future, is conservative. The civil culture and institutions that society has produced in its long history should stay out of the state intervention. As a result of contemporary developments that assert the state's not intervening the economy, the society's control over the civil culture will necessarily be reduced. The society is a living organism, renewing itself in cultural environment that is formed by the rooted institutions such as family, school, property, religion, morality. Our party believes that the interference of the state with the institutions and values that the society creates with its own experience will cause turmoil and social unrest. (AK Party, 2002a: 12)

This definition in the election declaration summarizes the AKP hegemony's conservative democratic viewpoint. In other words, the emphasis on 'national experience', 'family', 'property', 'religion', 'morality' and 'society as a living organism' in this declaration indicates the functionalist and conservative perspective of the AKP hegemony. These words are not only about discourse,

but also include a certain functionality and actuality in the period of AKP government. The AKP government especially in the period of authorization, tried to realize its social envisagement with radical implications and prohibitions. For this reason, Gezi protests established its actuality on the result of imposition of the conservative lifestyle to an extent. As result of the imposition of a certain lifestyle, insisting on at least three children, prohibiting the purchase of alcohol after ten o'clock or implying some conservative limitations of everyday life were highly protested in the Gezi demonstrations, for example. The ideological and symbolic codes of the AKP hegemony, therefore, should be well-understood and examined with the political economy ground of its neoliberal populism.

It could precisely be argued that AKP has taken its ideological sources from the New Right tradition after 1980's when supply-sided economy policies started to be implied by the neo-conservative governments especially in the advanced capitalist countries while peripheral countries had initially been forced to these policies by such coercive ways as a coup d'état or military power, and then, they necessarily started to be implemented willingly as a result of the global economic integration. Therefore, neo-conservatism is not about preserving traditions, or the reaction to modernism basically. It ought to be perceived as a way of modern conservatism instead of traditionalism. It is an attempt to harmonize neoliberal economic policies with conservative and authoritative administration. (Balaban, 2010: 31) At the end of the September 12 regime, January 24 decisions were successfully implemented 4 in terms of a conservative democratic governing of neoliberalism as also mentioned in the former section. It can be said that the AKP government established an expansive hegemony with a conservative democratic ideological background in Turkish politics.

The concept of 'nation' is an empty signifier of the (neoliberal) populism, which stemmed from the reactionary stance to 'populism of Kemalism'[62] in the earlier republican period. The Kemalist populism proposes the transformation of the values for the will of people and 'despite the people', and consequently, there has been a main dichotomy in Turkish politics: 'with the people' or 'despite the people' which led to a critique of the principles of Ataturk for being Jacobean and elitist by the center-right tradition. In this sense, the discourse of 'national will' is a key concept, considered as an apparatus of legitimization of these policies. The nation is sometimes seen as a constitutive dynamic of the ambiguous history and sometimes thought as the quantitative majority of the society. In the Gezi protests, Erdoğan's words, "I hardly keep the 50 percent of people at home"[63], is one of the examples of the majoritarian viewpoint. In the nationalist framework, it is difficult to advocate that AKP had a strong militaristic and nationalist aspects in the early period of governing, for they wanted to maintain the status-quo and the strong influence of military[64] in the political area, willingness to resolve the Kurdish problem for various pragmatical and tactical reasons and some religious justifications. However, AKP could not stay outside the militarist tradition for they wanted to preserve their electoral base. In the Gezi protests, there was also a consciousness that the populist discourses such as nation or religion or morality were considered and even disclosed as 'empty signifiers' by most of the protestors. It means that the Gezi protests were also the attempt to reject the appellations of the hegemony and also Kemalist tradition. For example, "we are the soldiers of Mustafa Keser"

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[62] Populism in early republican period, '*halkçılık*' in Turkish, was very different than the classical populism in Western political thought. It refuses any political domination of privileged groups and social or class conflicts in the society.

[63] 'Erdoğan's response to the protestors in the Gezi protests, "*yüzde 50'yi evinde zor tutuyorum*" in Turkish, was a reflection of majoritarian viewpoint.

[64] Approximately in the first decade of AKP government, there had been a strong militarist influences in Turkish political area. Republic protests in 2007 or closure trial of AKP on the plea of being 'a center of anti-secular activities' in 2008 was examples of militarist influences.

as one of the most well-known slogans in the protest was a response to both the hegemony's and Kemalizm's nationalist discourse, actually.

On the other hand, 'the state's not intervening in the economy' is another neo-conservative emphasis of the AKP hegemony. The essential point of the AKP's neoliberal populism was grounded on the pro-marketist and developmentalist discourse, stemming from center-right tradition of Turkish politics. Developmentalism of the government included huge incentives to foreign investors, privatizations and capital accumulation of the bourgeoisie by flexibilization and disorganization of the working class. For this reason, Erdoğan presented the Gezi protests as the compass of external forces and interest rate lobby who did not want the Turkish economy to improve and grow according to the government, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Religion was also an important constitution of the conservative democratic populism of the AKP hegemony. Many neoliberal projects were made by giving religious references, used clearly as the legitimization apparatus of capital accumulation. The religion was frequently emphasized in the neoliberal projects of the government, such as social policies (especially as an attempt to alleviate poverty), urban transformations, opening ceremonies of some investments, and so on. At this point, the rise of capital accumulation across the Anatolian bourgeoisie is significant in understanding the influence of religion. Especially the share of the construction sector in GDP enormously increased with incentives to the Anatolian bourgeoisie. In the Gezi protests, even the national assembly was an empty signifier in the eyes of the protestors due to irritative emphasis on the national will. It was identified with shopping malls as an important base for the construction. For example, one of the most well-known slogans of the Gezi protest was "The national assembly is demolished, and a shopping mall has been

built, instead"[65], which was also related to Kadir Topbaş's[66] announcement that a shopping mall could be built in place of the Gezi Park. In relation to religion, family and morality were transformed into an apparatus of neoliberal populism. Legitimizing inequality of women and men[67] was the social reflection of AKP's type of Islamism.

As for the family, AKP pursued and imposed the policy of 'at least three children' targeting women's rights. In the Gezi protests, the slogan, "Do you want three kids like us?"[68] was a response to AKP's neoliberal populism of family. In this period, violence to women seriously increased with the attacks to women's rights and Erdoğan explained "this was only because more murders were being reported, and that there are basically few acts of violence against women" on the International Women's Day in 2011. (Der Spiegel, 2012, para. 6). Education policies were also shaped by neo-conservative viewpoint of the hegemony and directly related to religion and family junctures of populism. The discourse, 'raising a religious generation' was one of the most contradictive issues of neoliberal populism. (Hürriyet, 2012). Briefly, neoliberal populism was transformed into the intervention of daily life of 'the others' and their values, specifically after the global crisis. One of the most important reasons for the Gezi protests was directly associated with the restrictive attitudes of the AKP's neo-conservativism; particularly about abortion, alcoholic drinks, even mixed-gender student housing, and so on.

In this period, the civil society the exclusion of which the government initially advocated for started to be shaped by the power relations under the domination

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[65] This slogan, *Meclis yıkılsın, yerine AVM yapılsın*" in Turkish, was the ironic and humorous criticism to huge concretion in Turkey.

[66] Kadir Topbaş was the metropolitan municipality mayor of İstanbul during the Gezi protests.

[67] Erdoğan in one of his speech said "women not equal to men and what women need is to be able to be equivalent, rather than equal" and in another speech, he said "I don't believe in equality between men and women" in 2010.

[68] "*Bizim gibi üç çocuk ister misin?*" in Turkish.

of the state. As the authoritarian inclination of the regime increased and the hegemony over social and cultural area extended, the organic relationship between the state and the civil society also consolidated itself through the more coercive attitudes of the state, especially after the global crisis. It should not be forgotten that neoliberal populism of the hegemony stemmed from a certain point of the political economy. In other words, conservative values like religion, morality, family, school had its own political economic perspective in the AKP hegemony.

3.3.2. Ideological Sources of the AKP Hegemony

Looking at the historical dynamics of the modern Turkish politics in terms of populism, there has been two essential inclinations. One of them is populism as one of the principles[69] of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic; and the other one is also populism as one of the most fundamental dynamics of center-right tradition in Turkish politics. Although the AKP hegemony represented a new coalition of the bourgeoisie and the articulation of subordinated classes into the hegemony, the party could not break off its ideological background and traditional strategies of (new) right populism. During the Gezi protests, we saw that the AKP government used the hegemonic discourses, related to ideological sources of the right populism.

Ideological sources of the AKP hegemony as a center right party started with the 1950 elections when Democrat Party came to power. The ruling party advocated for economic liberty against the bureaucratic control, and religious liberty against the Kemalist ideological pressure. The DP's economic liberalization was promised against the statist tradition which hints monopoly prices, seized products via gendarmerie and levied heavy taxes. Thus, the ideological hegemony ideal for the bourgeoisie was attempted to construct with economic liberalism, enforced from above. (Keyder, 2014:164) The party's populism was

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[69] *Halkçılık'* in Turkish, is more different than the classical understanding of populism in which any political domination of privileged groups and class are rejected in the society.

mostly based on certain groups, small traders, the petite bourgeois and pro-marketist farmers, and mostly, religious liberty pattern was used by the government. 'Economic growth in free market' promises were supported with international hegemony during that period; and Democrat Party also implied the economic policies that the USA proposed. The political dualism of 'the nation' and 'the people' as empty signifiers stemmed from the political antagonism between the bourgeoisie hegemony and the state elites/bureaucrats during that period. After the 1960 coup d'état, Justice Party sustained its policy that in addition to the petite bourgeoisie, industrial bourgeoisie was also attempted to be strengthened with the economic model of import substitution industrialization. The Justice Party government also used the similar populist discourses, mostly based on developmentalism and industrialization. Furthermore; they, too, associated democracy with 'national will' (Mert, 2002: 48). The emphasis on 'national will' generally reduces social conflicts in the political field, and the AKP government resorted to this reference in the time of the Gezi protests.

In the framework of new right and the hegemony struggle, the AKP government is more similar to the Motherland Party. The 1983 election is crucial since it marks the launching of a campaign under the leadership of ANAP[70] to resolve the ongoing hegemony crisis in the country. Ideologically; Islam, which was controlled and not allowed to be an organized movement by the Kemalist governments, was the reaction against the rapid social transformation in 1960'sHowever, with the coup d'état in 1980, the militarist regime supported Islamic movements in order to prevent strengthening of the revolutionary left, despite its secularist rhetoric. (Tünay, 2002: 187) In addition to Islam, ANAP tried to articulate liberals and social democrats with Pan-Turkist nationalists and radical right movements to construct an organic ideology for the expansive hegemony. This nationalist-conservative perspective as a cement of different and

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[70] Its acronym in Turkish is ANAP

conflicting ideologies was attempted to remove class-based forms of politics like Thatcherism. Furthermore, the ideology was manipulated and used as a reconciliation apparatus of anti-statism (Tünay, 2002: 189). In this sense, Prime Minister Turgut Özal advocated that the economy be considered with its 'technical' contents, excluded from the politics, similar to Erdoğan's statements about economic development.

To sum up, the AKP hegemony takes its ideological source from the (new) right tradition in Turkish politics, which is easily understandable, especially given that the slogans and mottos of these parties are generally based on the emphasis of developmentalism, on the concept of 'nation' as an empty signifier and on the economic growth promises. They all resemble the ideological discourse of the AKP hegemony. In the Gezi protests, Erdoğan's explanations about 'interest lobby' or 'external forces' as the provocateurs of the protests, had an ideological and populist background. Also, Erdoğan's calling for referendum during the demonstrations was an attempt to depoliticize the protests, stemming from new right tradition. Meanwhile, the intelligentsia of the hegemony, especially the media and civil society also used similar arguments of the government and claimed the Gezi protests were an attempt of the external forces, trying to prevent the economic development of Turkey[71]. Therefore, the AKP government utilized nationalist-conservative perspective as a cement ideology of the hegemony with the interest of the bourgeoisie in order to depoliticize the oppressed classes and the impoverished masses against neoliberal policies, which will be also discussed in the fifth chapter.

3.4. The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism

The transformation process of the land, labor and money flow (and the means of neoliberal populism) was oppressively changed by the AKP administration after the global crisis in 2008. The process that led to the Gezi protests started with

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[71] See http://haber.sol.org.tr/turkiye/anayasa-askida-diyen-zamanin-haziran-direnisini-itibarsizlastiran-mansetleri-unutulmadi

the 2008 crisis and its outcomes for the neoliberal regime of the AKP government. The crisis led to an increase in the unemployment rate while the government's efforts to manage the increasing unemployment rates failed in short term. Eventually, the government introduced a new employment package in 2008 which expanded the scope of flexibility in labor market with new definitions such as 'hiring subsidies', vocational training programs and temporary public employment, mentioned in the former section. Despite these policy instruments, informal employment gained significance in the labor market by the employers. In the meantime, despite the high rate of youth unemployment, Erdoğan's son, Bilal Erdoğan, announced his ownership of a little vessel. Among other things, it should be noted that during the Gezi protests, Bilal Erdoğan was seen as the symbolic character of the patronage relationship and numerous slogans were produced about him during the demonstrations. On the other hand, the commodification of the land was used for financing the deficit by increasing construction and consequently, destruction of the nature. Especially İstanbul and strategic areas in the city started to be transformed in a way appropriate for the AKP regime. Even the silhouette of İstanbul changed because of skyscrapers. A mosque project was planned in Taksim and Çamlıca. Moreover, Erdoğan as the Prime Minister said during a speech at the Capital Markets Congress in Istanbul "I then said the [global financial crisis of 2008-09] would only slightly touch our economy (Hürriyet Daily News, 2009). Despite his explanations about the outcomes of the crisis, the economic data indicated the exact opposite situation, according to the World Bank statistics. Due to the economy's external dependence, current account deficit and fragile structure, the economy was adversely affected during this period.

In 2011, AKP won the election with 49.9% of all votes, taking 325 seats in parliament. AKP's support for the middle and small-sized entrepreneurships thanks to the legal regulations about the structure of labor had an important role at the point of election victory. With the legitimization of the election, neoliberal populism increased seriously during this period. In order to alleviate the

influence of the global crisis, the hegemonic bloc was inclined to a more authoritarian stance and increased their imposition of a certain lifestyle. In the meantime, there were many actions and demonstrations targeting the AKP government at universities. In 2012, approximately 2000 police officers intervened drastically in a student gathering at METU[72], for instance. On the other hand, the limitations of abortion were discussed and Erdoğan said, "Every abortion is like an Uludere"[73] in 2012. Similarly, Erdoğan urged Turkish women to have at least three children, saying a woman's life was "incomplete" if she failed to have offspring, mentioned above. Besides, there was a discussion of restrictions of the usage of alcohol and Erdoğan underlined that religion commanded "what was right" in 2013. Furthermore, the freedom of media was limited for the opponent columnists. The monopolization of the media started under the AKP rule. In the Gezi protests, the mainstream media was highly criticized due to not showing demonstrations during the protests. Similarly, CNN Türk's airing of a penguin documentary was a symbol of the Gezi protests implying the monopoly of media. There were many slogans and graffiti about the relationship between media, journalism/reporting and the power, which is discussed in the next chapter. On the other hand, the Information Technologies and Communication Board (BTK) took a decision, establishing a countrywide mandatory filtering system with the aim of protecting the citizens from the so-called "harmful content" in 2011According to Freedom House, there were more than 15.000 blocked websites in 2012 by the reason of Law No. 5651[74] which laid down the regulations and restrictions on the internet. (2012: 528) Social

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[72] The intervention to universities had enormously increased in this period. Police intervened to the students, protesting the ceremony held due to the throwing of the Göktürk-2 suit at METU.

[73] Uludere airstrike or Roboski Massacre, took place in Şırnak in 2011 and 38 people, mostly teenagers, were killed by the Turkish Armed Forces for the reason of being smugglers and transporting illegal materials from the border to the terrorist organization, according to official sources.

[74] Law No. 5651, titled "Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by Means of Such Publication", was enacted by the government in 2007.

media outlets like YouTube and Twitter was blocked off for arbitrary reasons or some ideological causes. Twitter became a main tool for reporting and informing about the protests. Certain hashtags were used for dissemination of information, communication and online reporting, such as #GeziParki, #DirenGeziParki, #HerYerTaksim. In the meantime, despite serious prohibitions and limitations, people succeed in creating alternative tools in order to overcome restrictions on the internet access, like VPN[75] usage and proxy change. Prohibitions and impositions affected especially the Gezi generation who had the sense of having no future for themselves.

In this sense, the discussion of 'the future' under the AKP hegemony is significant to understand the Gezi protests' occurrence. After 2011, AKP revealed the envisagement of the future, the 2023 vision, and the youth got the feeling of insecurity due to new conditions in the labor market. Future of the youth was also attempted to be determined by the government. Therefore, particularly young people who were mostly university students or fresh graduates, could not make out their future under the agenda of the government. Opposition parties in the parliament could not stand as alternatives against the AKP government in terms of their electoral power. Furthermore, during this period, many columnists, politicians and members of the army were blamed for being a member of terrorist organizations and were faced with criminal cases. On the other hand, although there were some actions, protests and social challenges against the authoritarian inclinations of the hegemony, they were quelled by coercive power of the government. Coercion could turn into (and be used for) an apparatus of consent in this sense. To sum up, there was a hopeless condition for (public) opposition and especially for the young people who had a higher possibility of being 'potentially unemployed' or unemployable. Briefly, neoliberal populism as an ideological aspect of the AKP hegemony shaped the

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[75] Virtual Private Network was used in order to circumvent restrictions in the internet access.

social life in an authoritarian way. The Gezi Protests occurred in this conjuncture.

CHAPTER 4

THE GEZİ PROTESTS

During the summer of 2013, one of the most important challenges took place against the rule of the AKP government. In the late 2013 May, a certain number of people protested against the privatization and devastation of the historic Gezi Park[76], in Taksim Square[77]in İstanbul; and in time hundreds of thousands of people started making demonstrations and protests with a huge turnout all over the country. The protests initially were like a typical urban defending movement and there was no common political affiliation. However, after severe police interventions and after it spread on the social media, the protests quickly turned into mass mobilization and anti-government protests at the national level (80 out of 81 cities[78]). Although the Ministry of the Interior reported that approximately 2.5 million people participated in the actions (Amnesty International, 2013: 56), unofficial reports estimated more than 6 million people joined the protests. In the protests, twelve people were killed, and numerous people were injured due to police brutality and in this process, specific demands of the protestors about Gezi Park were improved with political demands in such a way to claim individual rights and freedoms, protecting public spaces and so on. It means that

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[76] Gezi Park, a historic urban park in Taksim Square, is one of the last green areas in Beyoğlu and is one of the smallest parks in İstanbul.

[77] Taksim as the heart of İstanbul, has a historical significance especially for the leftist tradition in Turkey. Labor movements and student protests in 1960's were occurred in Taksim, such as 1 May Worker's Day in 1977, Bloody Sunday in 1969 which symbolizes anti-imperialist uprising, etc.

[78] With the exception of Bayburt.

the struggle to protect trees in Gezi Park was transformed into a political struggle against the AKP's expanded hegemony[79]. As the movement spread across the country, certain factors and events also came into play such as limitations on the (social) media, police violence, politicians' explanations and so on.

The Gezi project was initially developed in 2009 by the government and 'unanimously' approved by the İstanbul Municipality Council in 2011. The project was criticized by some professional associations like 'İstanbul Chamber of Architects' with regards to the Construction Zoning Law. In this process, opponent groups and associations were united under Taksim Solidarity and there were many small and large-scale demonstrations against the Gezi project. The labor organizations, chamber associations and Taksim Solidarity, separately made demonstrations, launched signature campaigns and initiated certain festivals during this time. The construction initiatives of the municipality were partially prevented by the activism of Taksim Solidarity and the people's (especially students) contributions. On the other hand, two different courts rejected the Gezi project in which coincides with the time the devastation just began. Briefly, when the clashes started, civic organizations, associations, groups and people were already in coordination, using social media to make public calls for the space to be guarded (Toktamış, 2015: 18). And by 27th May, police had attempted to evacuate the park with use of excessive force against peaceful protestors as it seemed on the social media.

The demonstrations had a different kind of action repertoire during the first two weeks. The park turned into a festival-like public area with forums, concerts, classes, theatres, kitchens, libraries and people with different ideas and priorities such as football fans, Muslims, students, environmentalists, Kemalists, LGBT, Kurds, Alevis and of course women. Some people even argued that a "commune" was constructed in the Gezi Park, which will be discussed in the

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[79] In the protests, there was a popular slogan, "the matter is never about trees", indicates the protests were not only related to protecting green space of Gezi Park, but also implies more inclusionary political struggle.

next section. As the police intervened in with the excessive use of police force, as published on the social media, protests were one of the unprecedented and biggest collective actions in the modern political history of Turkey. Other cities also expressed their support for the demonstrators. The protests suddenly turned into an expression of freedoms and rights, secularism, uprising to AKP's kind of politics and its oppression of life itself. In this sense, the popular slogan of the protests, "Everywhere Taksim" was meaningful as the analogy summarizes that before Gezi protests, everywhere was like Taksim in terms of intervention and invasion of power; and after the protests, everywhere became Taksim again, in terms of resistance to the power. One of the most important elements which helped the local protest turn into a massive social action of democratic demands was harsh police intervention. According to the Interior Minister Güler, nearly 1,000 people were taken into custody, 26 security officers and 53 civilians were injured during these 'incidents' (TRT Haber, 2013). Although officials advocated the police interventions' compliance with democratic rules and laws, in the next few days and months, serious injuries and even deaths occurred during demonstrations due to police violence. According to the Turkish Medical Association, in the first two months of the protests, police violence resulted in five people being killed with firearms and gas capsules, about 10,000 people injured, and much more exposed to pepper gas (TTB, 2013) In the next days, eight people were killed, the number of serious head injuries was over one hundred Eleven people lost an eye due to plastic bullets fired by the police.[80] Particularly in the first three months, the protests shaped the political agenda with demonstrators' gradual struggle and resistance, and then, protests started to fade especially with the media manipulation and extreme police violence. At this point, it is obvious that there was a hegemonic struggle and the protests' affected the course of expanded hegemony, discussed in next sections. The strategies of

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[80] In the Gezi protests, eight civilians who lost their lives are Ethem Sarısülük, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, Abdullah Cömert, Ahmet Atakan, Medeni Yıldırım, Hasan Ferit Gedik and Berkin Elvan.

hegemony affected the course of the protests, which means that administration of consent and coercion by the hegemony prevented protestors from integrating around a single discourse and action, and fighting in a co-organized way against the hegemony. In addition to the police violence, there were strong evidence and claims that serious crimes were committed such as sexual harassment, torture, illegal custody, animal killings and so on. In the meantime, Prime Minister Erdoğan praised the police for killing dozens of people or getting them injured and disabled by saying, "I gave the order to the police" and "Our police wrote a heroic saga."[81] Demonstrators expressed their reactions against the police violence in various forms during the protests. The police violence should also be evaluated with the coercive power of the hegemony which contributed to the resurgence of the AKP hegemony after the protests, which will be discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Moreover, the slogans, grafitti and social media posts are maybe the most remarkable and distinctive feature of the protest in terms of action repertoire, which gave clues of what was protested and also what characterized the intellectual/ideological and political background of the Gezi protests. In the title of the thesis, '*What did the protestors actually protest?*' Those slogans, posts and the protests like 'standing man' will be discussed with regards to the protests' repertoire. Two main viewpoints about the demands of the demonstrators were predominant. One of these viewpoints argues that demonstrators protested authoritarianism, lack of democracy and conservative intervention of the government, which were associated especially with restriction of use of alcohol, abortion ban, other some conservative impositions. On the other hand, people protested the neoliberal policies of the government, including urban policies, privatization, flexibilization of labor and insecurity (Bozkurt, 2015: 84). AKP's type of neoliberalism and authoritarianism were interrelated and thus they cannot be separated from each other. It can be argued

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[81] See: Erdoğan's speech about deaths in the Gezi protests, from
http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/429496/Erdogan__Polise_talimati_ben_verdim.html

that neoliberalism and its authoritarian practices trigger the protests' occurrence and enlargement. The demonstrators protested directly and indirectly neoliberalism. However, in my opinion, claiming that all repertoire of the protests and demands of protestors were constructed against neoliberalism as an economic regime and ideology is very assertive. At this point, I argue that the Gezi protestors targeted the neoliberal populism more than neoliberal economic order which I will discuss in the second part of this chapter.

Increasing unemployment rate and insecurity in the labor market, neoliberal populism and authoritarianist interventions, prohibitions and imposition of a certain lifestyle, influence of the global crisis especially after 2010 and economy policies related to urban transformation, huge concretion, privatization affected the occurrence and enlargement of the protests. In addition to the inner dynamics, there was a global background of the protests which will be discussed in the next part of the chapter. Especially with the global crisis; social movements, uprisings, occupy protests were increasing in number against the economic inequality across the world. Furthermore, there were some common points between the Gezi protests and other movements like anti-globalization movements and occupy protests. Similarly, according to some sources, protests in Spain, Greece, USA and even Arab Spring were the result of neoliberal policies of commoditization and flexibilization, and thus; the Gezi protests can be compared with them in terms of democratic demands (Polat & Subay, 2016: 115). Therefore, the Gezi protests ought to be discussed with anti-globalization movements and the uprisings related to the crisis of neoliberalism in such approaches. In this chapter, I will summarize the discussions, discussed in the previous chapters, and other related issues such as the 'class' matter, protests against neoliberal populism, the resurgence of the AKP hegemony after the Gezi protests, resistance and dissidence and the '*çapulcu*' and political subjectification processes.

4.1. Global Background of the Gezi Protests

There has been a wave of protest over the world in recent years and they have certain common points in terms of their underlying reasons and the ways to protest. Particularly in the last twenty years, it can be said that anti-globalization and anti-neoliberalism have been the motor dynamic of these protests since these protests have been unified against social inequality, unfair distribution of income, unemployment/insecurity, marketization/privatization and governments' related repressive policies. In this section, the common points behind the recent social movements are examined associatively since the Gezi Protests cannot be considered separately from other social movements in Spain, Brazil and USA.

The local dynamics are certainly significant at the point of occurrence of these protests; and however, local dynamics cannot explain the reasons for these protests which have emerged suddenly all over the world. The common background of these protests was directly related to the limitations of the neoliberal project that commodifies all kinds of labor, land and social policies and impoverish peoples (Tuğal, 2013b: 9). Especially after the crisis in 2008, with increase of commoditization of land and spreading of property market due to the increase in the profit margin, housing rights and the right to live in a healthy environment were captured by the finance capital. In the Gezi protest, the sentence, "It is not only about the trees", was directly related to this seizure policy of the government. The Gezi protests were not only about the crisis of democracy or authoritarian exercising of power. Neoliberal course of the hegemony had to carry on capital accumulation with the seizure of gained rights. Precarity in labor, privatization and commoditization of land and gradual abolishment of the social rights and the social state in the Turkish political context were the results of a neoliberal regime in the world. Demonstrators in social movements have protested all these implications of neoliberalism in some way, and protestors were the subjects or potential victims of neoliberalism in this sense.

One of the main discourses of the hegemony against the protests was that the government attempted to put the blame on the 'interest lobby' as responsible for the protests, which is to say that the government also tried to show as if the protests had a global background and these external forces triggered and supported the protests. Prime Minister Erdoğan, in a speech during the protests, said "Unfortunately, they -demonstrators- were deceived, they were victims of a game. They said 'We are Mustafa Kemal's soldiers', now they are voluntary soldiers of the interest rate. The same game is played in Brazil. Symbols are the same, banners are the same, Twitter, Facebook is the same, international media is the same. These are managed from the same center. In Turkey they failed, they are now doing their best to succeed in Brazil." (NTV, 2013). Erdoğan's discourse was compatible with his neoliberal populist approach in that it targets an enemy that is vague, outside and presents the protestors as if they were opposed to the development of the country; and thus, the government tries to re-establish the consent of the people by implying that the protestors seriously damaged the country's economy. There were also some similar piece of news in the pro-government media, which asserted that 'The Gezi protests caused fluctuation in the exchange rate and made the Stock Exchange Istanbul, tourism sector and İETT[82] suffer greatly[83]. Erdoğan's example of Brazil is another interesting point. As Erdoğan argued, in both countries, massive protests occurred with similar motivations and reasons about neoliberal policies related to the abolishment of social rights due to neoliberal policies and global urban inequalities. As Özden and Bekmen argued, "The policies and the programs instituted by the AKP and the PT[84] represent a new form of politics combining disciplinary neoliberalism with populist forms of governing" (2015: 89). Also, Erdoğan's complaints about 'certain global centers' indicate that those governments which came to power or

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[82] İstanbul Electric Tramway and Tunnel Establishments

[83] See also http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ozel-haber/haber/1034547-gezi-parki-olaylarinin-ekonomik-faturasi-agir-oldu

[84] Workers' Party in Brazil

maintained their power thanks to neoliberal policies can sometimes present these centers as an enemy or as a necessity for populism. Therefore, for both governments and protestors, these protests had a global background directly associated with the neoliberal regime and its social and economic outcomes.

Social movements in each country in one way or another have been based on an embedded objection to the recent neoliberal policies. These uprisings have sometimes occurred in reaction to cutting trees, sometimes against the transportation hikes and sometimes against precariousness in these countries. Thus, the Gezi protests cannot be considered only with regards to the AKP's authoritarian and anti-democratic policies, since authoritarianism itself is directly and necessarily associated with neoliberal types of governing especially in such countries as Turkey, Spain or Brazil.

4.2. The Effects of the AKP Hegemony on the Gezi Protests

In the previous chapter, the AKP hegemony with its economic agenda and neoliberal populism is examined. One of the main arguments of the thesis is that the Gezi protests were the result of the neoliberal implementations of the hegemony; and therefore, the relation between the hegemony and the protests ought to be well-understood. In this sense, I emphasize two main aspects of the hegemony, explained in the previous chapter.

In the framework of neoliberal economic agenda, there are three basic dynamics of the hegemonic functioning; privatization of land, flexibilization of labor and depoliticizing of the poverty matter. As is known, the Gezi protests started with the occupation of the historic Gezi Park. Privatization and neoliberal commodification of land enormously increased with the AKP government. Mega urban projects, (gold) mining projects, road constructions and bridge designs and urban transformation projects were widely criticized and attempted to be prevented by the local communities and environmentalists; however, AKP government presented these projects as an essential condition of 'developmentalism'. In a patronage relationship, the bids of these projects were

tendered via Ministry of Environment and Urbanization to the companies supporting the governments. Meanwhile, Public Procurement Law was changed several times and the conditions of participating in and winning of a bid and was ambiguated by the legislation (TEPAV, 2009). Hence, the companies with the support of the government carried out these neoliberal projects without any control or inspection and caused permanent damages on the environment and the living areas. In the Gezi Park, people protected the historic park and one of the smallest green spaces in Taksim. It was not only about the green spaces, but also historic and symbolic places were attempted to be preserved against the attacks of these companies and the government. In 2012, the protests at METU against the road building had both a symbolic and an environmentalist resistance against the local authority, for instance.

Secondly, the flexibilization of the labor market caused precarity and insecurity in the neoliberal regime of the hegemony. Part time working, temporary and ad-hoc types of work strengthened the middle and small-scaled firms due to their unilateral contract on behalf of the employers, their lack of control by the state authority and unions. Therefore, the subordinated classes had great difficulties in finding a permanent and secure job, and were severely exploited in the contemporary labor market. The participants of the Gezi protests were also involved in this chain of flexibilization, precarity and exploitation to such an extent that they were considered a part of the working class even if they were white collar workers. And the futureless and precarious conditions of life increased their motivation to protest, and the Gezi uprising unified the 'futureless' people who were unemployed or unemployable in the dream of an alternative future.

Thirdly, one of the functioning aspects of the hegemony was depoliticization of the masses and the question of poverty. The AKP government was controlling the masses via social assistance programs and cash aids by transforming the social state. As the economic instabilities deepened, the unfair distribution of income enormously increased, and the impoverished masses became too

dependent on these aids. In the Gezi protests, the street writings about Bilal Erdoğan, for example, were the expression of this conflict.

Moreover, coercion and consent apparatus of the hegemony were targeted in the Gezi protests. The police violence, arbitrary arresting of people and investigating of opponents were strongly criticized by the people. On the other hand, impoverishment and repressing of the social life were the other aspects affecting the emergence of the Gezi protests. Prohibitions, restrictions and neoconservative intervention on life were targeted by the participants during the protests. Actually, "*the çapulcu*" mostly struggled to protect their own social lifestyle against the hegemonic attacks in the protests. For example, slogans and graffiti about 'at least three children', 'prohibition of alcoholic beverages', bans of websites were the indicators of that displeasure in the protests. Furthermore, neoliberal populism as the consent apparatus of the hegemony was targeted by the protesters. Ideological references, discourses and 'empty signifiers' of the hegemony were critically and humorously protested in the Gezi uprisings, as is discussed in the next sections. Briefly, the Gezi protests were an attempt against the AKP hegemony and its authoritative implementations on the life itself.

4.3. Who is 'the Çapulcu'

On June 2 2013, Prime Minister Erdoğan in one speech stated "…Hopefully, AKM[85] will be demolished and yes, we will also build a mosque in Taksim… I will clearly stress that we will not allow a few looters[86] to provoke our people". After seven days, Erdoğan also said "…We won't do what a few looters have done. They burn and destroy" (Hürriyet, 2013a). After this reference to 'çapulcu', protestors started to describe themselves as the çapulcu, and this word became a unified epithet among the participants of the protests during the demonstrations. Also, during the protests, this word was used by

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[85] Ataturk Culture Center in Taksim

[86] It means '*çapulcu*' in Turkish.

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reappropriation[87] especially in graffiti and street writings as a noun and as a verb, like *chapulling* or *chapuller*. Even if it reminds of the concept "lumper-proletariat", this epithet connotates more different meanings that should be discussed especially in class context.

One of the most contradictive issues about the Gezi uprising is identifying the protestors with respect to understanding common points and features of demonstrators, class background and common demands of the protests. In this thesis, occurrence of the Gezi protests is associated with neoliberalism and the outcomes of neoliberal policies, mainly about commodification of land and labor, precarity and neoliberal shift in social policies; and therefore, the protestors are considered as the victims of this regime and regime's targeted masses who are unsecured in the labor market, futureless in every sense, deprived of their social rights and so on. These cannot be thought independently from class relations; and thus, when describing "the çapulcu" as the victim of neoliberalism, the class perspective begs a questioning in this sense.

In the matter of class background, approaches are generally based on two different methodological viewpoints. The issues such as division of labor, wage, the separation between hand and intellectual labor, differences between productive and unproductive labor are the sources of discussion, proposed by the theoreticians. Class is an abstractive and objective category, relating to the positioning of oneself in the relations of production in Marxism. Class as an abstraction must be related to certain concreteness; and thus, social groups with certain educational level, usage of information technologies, post-industrial values or cultural background cannot be considered as a class which is about the positioning of oneself in the relations of production in Marxism, which is also mentioned in second chapter of thesis. On the other hand, especially in the new social movements theories, 'new' or 'dangerous' classes, having uncertain

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[87] One of the most well-known graffities was "Every day I'm chapulling" in the demonstrations.

categories are sought, and capitalism is reduced to only an economic sphere; however, the production relations are directly related to the holistic transformation of the life itself[88]. Concepts like precarity, cultural domination and spatial exclusion are all about class relations and alienation. These approaches relating to the Weberian interpretative methodology are grounded on the culture as a separate ontological entity. Class, based on a separate ontology of culture, does not have constitutive power, stemming from production. Therefore, evaluating social movements with the ideological configuration of "post-modernism" or cultural fragmentation causes false-subjectification. Moreover, evaluating the Gezi protests with these 'new' theories using participants' occupational background next to some statistics in order to identify the movement causes defective and incorrect inferences. Characteristics of a movement cannot be comprehended by the number of the participants and their occupational or cultural background. It is about the interpretation of results with respect to realization of the demands. As for the Gezi protests, interpretative approaches concealed the embedded essence of participants who were proletarianized people, given the necessity of the labor sale, their position with regards to the means of production and being deprived of any control over their own labor or having potential possession of all these features. In this sense, Korkut Boratav's famous analysis about the Gezi protests is significant:

> Once, important part of the participants in the revolt is comprised of university and high schools students. For them, the label of "middle-class" has no meaning. We should talk no further if we do not know anything about their class roots (social profile of their parents). But, we must point out that; the objective configuration of the students, in the broadest of aspects, is a belonging to the working-class as a potential. Their schools are training them to become a component of the qualified elements in the supply of workforce in the near future. Also, capitalism offers them unemployment. Hence, in the first stage they will be admitted to the army of the reserved workforce and with their objective configuration, they will become elements of the working-class in its broadest understanding. (2013)

As Boratav argued, it is obvious that the working class organizations did not participate in the protests with all their organizations and programs even if there

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[88] For the discussion of class and infrastructure/superstructure separation, see Sayer's article about "Productive Forces" and "the Relations of Production" (1987).

were some support from the working class organizations such as the strike action for one day and the small-scale participation in demonstrations[89]. As stated above, a social movement cannot be identified with the numbers of participants or with their occupations or identity background. The quality of demonstrators' demands develops the identity of a given social movement. As for the Gezi protests, looking at its underlying reasons, objective class relations behind the protestors and their anti-neoliberal demands, it can be argued that "the çapulcu" was a victim of neoliberalism of the AKP hegemony and had the oppressed class background which can be qualified as a potential working class, thinking that people "who have no means of livelihood other than the sale of labor", "who lack control over their own labor" and who are exposed to exploitation, insecurity and poorly paid" are the members of working class (Jones, 2011: 144).

On the other hand, there are many arguments based on the middle class analysis in the context of the Gezi, which mostly identify the çapulcu with new middle class, 'the precariat' or even petty bourgeoisie. The most frequently used argument is that the çapulcu belongs to the 'new middle class':

> In my opinion, it is the 'new middle class', especially in Istanbul, which is the main pioneer of the Gezi events. …If we look at how people in the new middle class see themselves and how they perceive it in the society, we can say that the position of the members of the new middle class is mostly highly-educated due to their status in the society. Of course, it is not hard to imagine that this segment is also dismantled: those who went to better schools, those who speak more languages, and those with overseas experience have higher status. In order to protect cultural capital that enables high status, they follow the lifestyle of consumption and entertainment/vacation habits of people who are in the same position at the global level. (Keyder, 2013a)

Keyder's class definition is related to the status, education level, lifestyle, social life and cultural capital. Highly educated and professional segments of society have faced with proletarianization, as mentioned in the AKP's hegemony section. On the other hand, the state frequently uses its coercive apparatus more harshly in poor neighborhoods (Yonucu, 2018) such as Okmeydanı or Armutlu

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[89] For instance, DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) participated in demonstrations approximately with three thousand people in early days of protests. For more detail http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/gezi-protestosu-icin-sendikalar-sivil-toplum-orgutleri-is-birakti-23437835

in the Gezi and looking at the people who lost their lives in the protests, these were not people with a higher status, for instance. On the other hand, even if these middle-class arguments were true, then we should question why professionals and white collars intensively participated in the protests.

> The Gezi movement provided a non-commodified space (the barricades, the public park, the shared meals) where this class momentarily tasted the fruits of a solidarist life. Whichever social ties existed in the life of these professionals was transparently 'social capital': these social ties were not only convertible to economic capital and upward mobility in their professions; they were established with the semi-explicit goal of being converted to such 'cash' at some point. What the revolt provided was the pleasure of social ties for the sake of social ties; that is, the revolt starkly demonstrated to these sectors that a different world, in which pleasure was not based on commodities but interpersonal ties, was possible. (Tuğal, 2013c: 157)

Cihan Tuğal argued that middle-class professionals who faced with the impoverishment of social life experienced different pleasure in the Gezi movement, which is interpersonal ties. At this point, we should also problematize why professionals exposed to individualistic, careerist and capitalist relations in their professions need these solidarist ties. One of the most important reasons for that is the neoliberal imposition of a certain lifestyle, in my opinion. 'Revolt' against commoditized relationships in the professions is not only related to social capital, but it also includes a class-based essence in this sense, since not being able to adapt to the commoditized relationships in the 'middle-class' professions can result in vital problems or even 'unemployment' for those people. The revolt of those professionals who 'have no means other than the sale of labor' against individualistic and commoditized capitalist relations is directly associated with the reaction of the working class in today's world. The same condition is also valid for the precariat.

Moreover, some scholars used the term 'petty bourgeoisie' instead of the middle class in their arguments. As known, Poulantzas makes a distinction between manual labor as productive labor and other mental labor as unproductive labor within the social division of labor in the capitalist mode of production (1975). He excludes the laborers, working in non-productive sectors from the working class due to their working field of industry, such as banking, in the field of capital

circulation. Briefly, he defines working class only with productive labor, which is also a contradictive issue and has some methodological problems.[90] In this framework, Savran's arguments about petty bourgeoisie also important:

> The petty bourgeoisie is not 'small bourgeoisie' because the petty bourgeoisie is not the bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie is a class, bringing together the bourgeoisie and the working class in the sense that it has its means of production and produces with its own labor, (such as) small farmers who work with the family effort; groceries; auto repair workshops; carpenter workshops; shoe repairers; dry cleaning shops; newspaper fairs; stationery shops; small cook shops; caravans, drivers who have their own minibus, or the owner of the car, etc. (2008: 21)

In the context of the Gezi protest, in terms of characterization of the petty bourgeoisie as Savran defined, the petty bourgeoisie did not give any support to the demonstrations or participate in the demonstrations. Moreover, the protests were not welcomed especially by tradesmen wishing to preserve protect their economic and politic existence, since AKP government had supported small and medium-sized employers with legal initiatives like the Labor Law. Hence, the members of the petty bourgeoisie (whatever it is defined as a middle class or not) kept their distance from the Gezi protests (Tonak, 2013: 34). All in all, "the çapulcu" as the victim of neoliberalism can be characterized as a (potential) member of the working class in a way that they must sell their labor, were exploited and had no control over their own production or they were unemployed or unemployable, and thus, unsecured and futureless. At this point, it should not be forgotten that the Gezi protests were not a class movement, even if they were class-relevance. Neoliberal populism of the hegemony constituted and designated its own opponents in the protests, and the çapulcu objected to be a part of the national-popular will of the hegemony.

4.4. New Forms of Protesting

New forms of protesting emerged in the Gezi uprising since inclusive hegemony controlled public spaces that provided the freedom of political expression for people and the organizations with the rise of authoritarianism, as mentioned in

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[90] See E. M. Wood's article, "*The Forerunner: Nicos Poulantzas*" in the book, The Retreat from Class: A New 'True' Socialism, p. 25-47 (1999)

the previous chapter. Moreover, due to the disorganized and fragmented structure of the mass of protestors, groups, organizations and people who identified themselves with different identities in the protests tried to differentiate themselves from the others in terms of language at the point of politics of self-expression. Hence, the protestors turned to alternative means of expression. Interesting street writings, humorous slogans, effective usage of social media, resistance forms against police violence and solidarity in the protests brought in new and different kinds of features in the repertoire of social movements in Turkey. These new forms contributed to the enlargement of the protest throughout the country, and it also affected the ways the hegemony intervened Especially in the first weeks of the protests, police violence was harshly criticized by the civil society and even pro-government people, and also, peaceful and nonviolent type of protesting forced the state to change its classical intervention models, such as police violence and criminalization.

In the protests, the most remarkable action was the occupying of the Gezi Park on 28 May 2013. After the occupation, a 'commune' was established in the Gezi Park, which is asserted in a number of writings:

> The Occupy movement in the Gezi Park was self-proclaimed as the Taksim Gezi Commune since the first days of the occupation of the park. People of this commune met all their needs within the park's boundaries: eating, sleeping, cleaning, healthcare, entertainment, etc. All these services were provided at no monetary cost; people were expected to contribute to the commune based on their capabilities. Exchange was conducted through goods and services rather than money. As a physical space, Gezi Park also accommodated a range of activities of collective character, including a public library for sharing books; public gardens; a performance stage for concerts, theater, and ballet; provision of child care, and spaces for group prayers and yoga groups in designated areas of the park. All sorts of material, public, and social needs were met within the park by the residents of the park in exchange for contributions from others. Hence, the settlement in the park was rightfully referred to as Taksim Gezi Commune. (Ay & Miraftab, 2016: 8)

With the influence of socialist thinkers who consider the Gezi protests as an anti-capitalist movement, many people assert that   the occupation period was in fact an attempt to establish the commune. According to Ay and Miraftab, meeting one's fundamental needs without any costs, collectiveness and complimentary sharing of physical and social needs were indicators of commune characteristics.

Like Ay and Miraftab, the occupation of the Gezi Park was sometimes compared even to Paris Commune[91]. Initially, the 'commune' example is a more romantic and overly exaggerated metaphor in my opinion in the context of the Gezi. The commune is not only about meeting and sharing one's needs or a costless life. At this point, it ought to be reminded that commune is a political form of governing against the bourgeoisie, as Marx stated:

> Its -commune's- true secret was this: It was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labor. (2009: 41)

In the Gezi Park, it can be said that there was no unified organizational model, which had a claim of the seizure of power with one common demand and political leadership of the working class. As argued, there was a horizontal type of organization without any leader or hierarchy to a certain extent, and hence, this kind of organization cannot be reduced to a single form of action or political inclination. Moreover, sharing social needs may have an anti-capitalist essential; and however, it was not totally out of consumption relations of capitalism and it did not set forth a new form of the political and economic model. Hence, the commune metaphor is very romantic.

Moreover, one of the most attractive modes of protest was street writings and slogans during the Gezi demonstrations[92]. They sometimes contained political ironic messages, sometimes humorous response to Erdoğan's discourses, sometimes criticism of the contemporary political agenda and the media order, and sometimes strategies and tactics about the protests. There were also some writings without any specific content like "I could not find a slogan". These writings and slogans were frequently shared in social media, especially on Twitter in which videos from demonstrations, location and time information for

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[91] See Mustafa Sönmez's explanation from http://sendika62.org/2013/07/mustafa-sonmez-gezi-direnisini-degerlendirdi-tam-da-paris-komunu-tadinda-125678/

[92] For some of them, see http://listelist.com/gezi-parki-direnisini-anlatan-83-duvar-yazisi/ and http://geziparkgraffiti.blogspot.com.tr/

the protests, requirement lists etc. were also shared and spread via hashtags. Political messages were given ironically and critically. For instance, the slogan, "We are the soldiers of Mustafa Keser" and repainting of the street writings, "*ülkücü hareket*" as "*türkücü hareket*" was a response to the nationalist viewpoints of protestors. In addition, protestors made humorous criticism of Erdoğan's discourse and police violence. "We are kissing all the time, Tayyip", "Recop Tazyik Gazdoğan", "Tayyip, winter is coming", "We, all the drunks gather here", "3-5 trees do it for you", "Chemical Tayyip" etc. were examples of such writings against the neoliberal government's prohibitive practices and violence apparatus of the state, such as pepper gas, agent orange, water cannon vehicle (TOMA). There were also criticisms to the contemporary political agenda, like "We advocate religion without AKP, Atatürk without CHP, the motherland without MHP and Kurdish people without BDP" and criticism to the media order, like "Revolution will not be televised, "Antarctica[93] is resisting". In addition, protestors developed some strategies and tactics against the police violence, and this was reflected onto the street writings, like "Rennie if it is a girl, Talcid if it is a boy[94]". As stated, there were numerous slogans, street writings, social media posts shared in the protests and this was a new repertoire in terms of the new discourse usage or reappropriation of the classical discourse of protests.

New forms of action also emerged during the demonstrations. Protesting with pots and pans (cacerolazo), the standing man, usage of football chants etc. were also a part of this new repertoire in the Gezi protests. The fundamental reason for this new form of protesting is directly associated with the structure of constituents of the protests. The Gezi uprising of its own was one of the most

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[93] During the Gezi protest, one of the biggest media company in Turkey, CNN TÜRK, showed the documentary on penguins, and thus, penguins were identified with the media by demonstrators.

[94] Medicines, like Rennie and Talcid were often used by protestors in order to neutralize pepper gas.

unique examples of the horizontal type of organization which is autonomous, leaderless and non-hierarchical, and rejecting its own power relations. It was also about spontaneously organized structure of the protests. Although there was an umbrella organization and political groups and parties, there was no unified organizational structure in the protests. And for this reason, initiatives trying to unify constituents of the protests, like Gezi Party, failed[95]. In addition to all these features, the ideological and political characteristics of the protests are still contradictive, which is to say that it is questionable whether protests had anarchist forms or were resistant or dissident.

4.4.1. Anarchism?

In the Gezi uprising, there was an anarchist way of protesting in many ways and some characteristics of the protests, like a rejection of the vertical hierarchical organizational model and leaderless structure, paved the way for the anarchist type of protesting. In addition, anarchist groups participated in the protests and there were many graffiti and slogans chanted in the demonstrations. However, when looking at the protestors' demands and relations with the government, the Gezi protests cannot be reduced to an anarchist action or protesting. At this point, fundamental claims of anarchism should be briefly explained in order to understand the political position of anarchism.

Although there are many fractions in the anarchism such as individualist anarchism, social-collective anarchism, modern anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, anarchism[96] can be summarized as "being in opposition to authority" in the simplest term[97]. According to Proudhon, "Whatever form it

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[95] Gezi Party was founded right after the protests on 1 October 2013, and then, was closed due to Political Parties Act that ruled political parties must establish central and local party organizations at least half of all Turkish cities.

[96] The word of 'anarchy' is Ancient Greek term with combination of 'an' (a/an) and 'archon' (ruler); and it can be thought as 'lack of leader/ruler'.

[97] In this title, I do not make a detailed explanation about anarchism, since it exceeds the boundaries of thesis.

takes, -monarchic, oligarchic, or democratic- royalty, or the government of man by man, is illegal and absurd" (1994: 207) and for Kropotkin, anarchism targets not only the capital, also the source of capitalism, law and the state authority (2005). In this sense, anarchism is similar to Marxism with respect to class radicalism for revolution, and to libertarianism with respect to the abolishment of the state for opposing of restriction of freedom and it rejects all kinds of representative institutions and organizations (Zileli, 2012). For social movements and civic actions, anarchist movements were seen in the 1968 protests in France, Punk movements in 1980's especially in England and anti-globalization movements after the September 11 attacks.

In the context of the Gezi protests, we see radical and revolutionary movements and demands. However, with the exception of socialist groups, these movements were mostly Erdoğan-centered protests, which means that the demand of 'change' coming from the protestors was most of the time closely related to the 'change' of executive power. Moreover, negotiations of Taksim Solidarity as an umbrella organization with the state, submission of demands[98] to the state and dealing with the state as the authority were not compatible with the anarchist approaches because anarchism is essentially based on fighting and struggling against the state, not negotiating or dealing with the state.

Despite these reasons, there were examples of anarchist resistance in the Gezi demonstrations. 'The standing man', 'The woman in red' and some protestors' unresponsive stance against the authority can be considered as an action of civil disobedience. Also, they can be perceived as a passive-anarchist form of protesting. Therefore, considering the Gezi protests as an anarchist resistance is deficient and incorrect. Furthermore, ignoring anarchists and their resistance model is also incorrect, particularly for the first few weeks of the protests.

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[98] Some demands of Taksim Solidarity were relieving governors from their duties, removal of restrictions on freedom of expression.

4.4.2. Resistance or Dissidence?

This question is based on the assumption about the separation between resistance and dissidence, therefore, it should be considered as a question of anarchism mentioned above. In the context of the Gezi, two basic protesting forms were seen in the protests, in my opinion., resistance and dissidence. I do not make a hierarchical superiority order between them, which is a matter of the political theory. In order to understand this separation, Ulus Baker's quotation would be useful:

> In other words, we should avoid thinking that 'party' and 'political organization' are able to form a 'resistance'. Because resistance, in essence, does not aim for power; because resistance is, rather a response (that is, opposition) 'against' the domination, precisely the sum of the characteristics that generate this domination. (1997)

According to this passage, resistance is not about the struggle in the 'political area' which necessitates aiming for power within a certain organization, a program and so on; on the contrary, it is about resisting against the functioning form of power. These two forms of protesting were encountered in the Gezi demonstrations. Initially, the Gezi was the constituent of particular certain movements, coming from the past. The struggle for Taksim Square for May 1, Hopa events, 4+4+4 protests, anti-war demonstrations in Hatay, Alevis people's actions, METU resistance, local-scaled movements against HES and nuclear power plants, gold mining companies, worker's struggles against subcontracting, protests of urban transformation and so on were among those certain civic actions, taking place before the Gezi protests. These 'particular' issues and struggles were transformed in a collective anger and these reactions were concretized with Erdoğan's personality as an exposed face of the power. The separation between two forms of protests appeared in this framework. While dissidence was more related to a challenge against the government, resistance was associated with existence per se.

It should not be forgotten that one of the characteristics of the hegemony is subjugating its opponents to its own agenda. Therefore, I think resistance is a

rejection of this kind of subjugation and is more related to writing one's own story, as Tanıl Bora stated:

> Is the struggle with hegemony (or counter-hegemony) about being able to act as if there is no power? I do not talk about forgetting the power completely; we cannot forget. I am talking about saving our minds, our dreams, our slice, our work from the mark of power. (Bora, 2014)

On the other hand, dissidence is briefly the situation of being 'anti-' and the struggle with hegemony includes stepping out of such kind of power relations in terms of resistance. In the context of the Gezi, both forms of protesting emerged in the demonstrations. In the meantime, resistance should not be considered as a mode of political passivity since this kind of protesting contributes to spreading the protests and strengthening the political effects in terms of limiting the state's legitimacy of the use of violence.

The Gezi uprising were collective protests of particular certain movements and actions, where dissidence and resistance emerge together. Both forms of protesting provided some advantages and disadvantages during the demonstrations. While resistance provided protestors with massification and popularization, it also prevented the continuation of the protests with common political demands to such an extent that it becomes individual and disorganized. On the other hand, since dissidence necessarily requires the organizing of a singularized structure of protestors and groups within a common integrated organization and demands against the state as the highest form of organization, this aim could not be achieved due to the fragmented and divided structure of the protests. Therefore, the dialectical correlation between dissidence and resistance or organized and disorganized/fragmented structures affected the course of the protests with respect to how the protests spread and faded.

4.4.2.1. Standing Man vs. Moving Man

The standing man was one of the most famous resistance examples of the protests, creating attraction towards the Gezi Uprising around the world. On June 17 2013, a performance artist, Erdem Gündüz began standing still, facing the

Atatürk Convention Center in Taksim Square at six o'clock pm. He stood silently, persistently and passively for hours. After the police took notice and started looking for him, a hastag, #duranadam, appeared among the trend topics on Twitter and more than a hundred protestors began taking part in this action with him. And then, this action spread across the country and became a symbol of passive resistance in the Gezi protests. Erdem Gündüz made an explanation about the standing protest:

> I actually expressed what millions of people could not say and could not do. When people saw a man just standing, they suddenly realized that they were also doing nothing… I thought, 'one has to support any person who protests, and one has to make a stand against the violence of police. I just went to Taksim Square that day and stood still. So simple. Actually, I say 'I', but it was my body that thought of it. Because I believe that body has a different intelligence and reason. The police had no idea what I was doing at first, nor did I in fact. (Dagyte, 2014)

Because this resistance is non-violent and peaceful, the state's legitimacy of coercion against the protestors started to be questioned during the protests. Erdem Gündüz said that with the silent protest, the resistance gained a new momentum and civil disobedience was inspired. It seemed that the government affected the symbolic force of this action. Prime Minister Erdoğan on 21 June 2013 tweeted[99] that "As we say; there will be no stop, we will continue in our path. What are they saying: Standing man!"[100]. On the other hand, this form of protest was criticized by some protestors who also began standing still against other standing people by turning their back towards the Atatürk Convention Center for thirty minutes. They wore a t-shirt, which read "the standing man against the standing man". Such series of protests indicated "the deepening polarization between the conservative and secular dispositions in Turkey" (Topal, 2016).

The discussion about this protest is a comparison of the standing man and moving man, which is also about the separation between resistance and dissidence. The standing action was directly associated with the nonstop

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[99] In a TV programme, Erdoğan said "There is now a menace, called Twitter"

[100] See https://twitter.com/rt_erdogan/status/348058441094406144

continuation of the hegemony, as Erdoğan said. The Gezi protests essentially were a reaction against the crisis of neoliberalism, neoconservative social engineering and the course of hegemony with coercion and discourses, as also argued in previous chapters. Panagiotis Sotiris in his article, "From resistance to hegemony", proposes a construction of hegemonic policy actively, instead of resistance in recent social movements:

> What is needed is strategy for hegemony, a strategy for power and a radical alternative. The Left has not the luxury of simply being the most active part of the resistance movement... This means that we think not simply in terms of movements, but also of social alliances and the level of an entire society, of a strategy for political power, of a program of social transformation… That is why I suggest that we must think in terms of a potential new historical bloc, the articulation between a social alliance, a political program and new forms of organization. (2014)

Resistance against commodification, privatization, flexibilization or impoverishment is of great significance; and however, the struggle should go beyond the resistance in order to construct a 'new order'. It means that a counter-hegemonic bloc cannot be established through reproducing a political or cultural polarization as was the case in Taksim Square. A hegemonic struggle is about finding and building ways, being realized at the practical level, not at the discursive or exhibitive level. Hegemony with Gramscian term is entirely about the new forms of politics, news forms of organization and an alternative narrative, as mentioned in the second chapter. According to Gramsci, there cannot be a hegemonic transformation without an integrative political struggle of an alliance of classes led by the working class. In the Gezi protests, this kind of an alliance was not established with strategic social alliances on a class basis, although there was a common class identity and synergy, mentioned in the previous title. And in my opinion, that was why the protestors' objectives could not be achieved in this movement.

4.5. What did the Protestors Actually Protest?

The Gezi Park uprising was one of the most massive challenges against the neoliberal regime in Turkey. It was the response of a few activists to the government's plan to devastate the historic Gezi Park in İstanbul in order to

construct a shopping mall and a skyscraper, Afterwards, this was transformed into a mass demonstration against the expanded hegemony with demands for democratic rights and freedom[101]. Protestors actually protested neoliberal populism for two reasons. Initially, they objected to the consequences of neoliberal policies which were about plundering the environment to make a profit in the economic crisis, unemployment and insecurity as a result of flexibilization in the labor market, privatization/commodification and impoverishment. Secondly, neoliberal and neoconservative populism were targeted in terms of the prohibitions, impositions of a certain lifestyle, hegemonic discourses and the use of police violence. With the exception of anarchist and socialist groups, protestors mostly were not concerned about the capitalist system; instead, they focused on the authoritarian courses of the AKP government as the common enemy, as Mouffe argued in her theory of new social movements. Even though there was a class-based integrity behind the protests, people targeted neoliberal authoritarian populism rather than the functioning of neoliberalism as the prime reason for inequalities, impoverishment, privatizations, etc. Moreover, it is possible to claim that the protestors who were unemployed or unemployable in the neoliberal capitalist system in Turkey were of the following opinion: "Demand from the government is not a specific right but the 'right to have rights' in social sphere" (Civelekoğlu, 2015: 113). In other words, the protestors demanded this right and the protests was not mostly related to the economic functioning of the neoliberal regime in the country with the exception of objections from a few anarchists and socialist groups.

There was an 'explosion of expression' in the protests with posts on social media, graffiti, slogans, posters, forums, Guy Fawkes masks[102], t-shirts, painting

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[101] The matter was never about trees, as protestors remarked.

[102] It is a popular mask, symbolizes the struggle against the state authority, which stems from Guy Fawkes's plan to blow up the Parliament House in England. This mask becomes widespread especially with a popular film, *V for Vendetta*, and recently, a hacker group, Anonymous used this makes in its protests.

of street stairs and so on. In this perspective, many theoreticians evaluate the protests with a viewpoint of Bakhtian interpretation of 'carnivalesque', which is related to political heterogeneity and the "çapulcu's" inaugurating critical politics of fun (Walton, 2015: 50). These protests were mainly against the populist discourses of the government, particularly of Erdoğan's statements. Examples could be: "Even Edison regrets it", "As the sun rises, light bulbs[103] dim", "We came with our mother, where are you?"[104], "Tayyip-free[105] airspace". Moreover, during the demonstrations, people especially protested violence and police brutality with humorous slogans and street writings, such as "Recop Tazyik Erdoğan", "I am not saying 'don't squeeze', squeeze again but only as a hobby", "Enough! I'm calling the police", "This pepper gas is a wonderful dude", "We are together with TOMA for eight days, this is a committed relationship", "TOMA for sale[106]", "TOMAtes, biber, patlıCOP"[107]. The neoconservative prohibitions of the government were also protested on the streets. For instance, "At least three beers[108]", "You have banned alcohol, the nation has sobered up", "Do you want three children like us, Tayyip" were well-known examples in this manner. Also, protestors used popular-cultural elements during the protests, like "Tayyip, winter is coming", a reference to a widely-known TV series called Game of Thrones or "You are messing with the generation that beats cops in GTA" which stands for a famous computer game, Grand Theft Auto. Most importantly, there were also political slogans chanted in the Gezi demonstrations, which is a classical repertoire of the center-left. For

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[103] Light bulb refers to the party symbol of AKP.

[104] On 11 February 2006, Erdoğan reprehended a farmer by saying "Go and take your mother with you"

[105] It was a criticism of restriction of smoking in closed area, called "smoke-free air space"

[106] A sport fan group, çArşı, put an ad of TOMA on website, tayyibinden.com that was reappropriation of the sahibinden.com, a shopping website.

[107] It is a reappriproation song of Barış Manço, famous singer.

[108] Erdoğan urged women to have at least three kids in his speeches.

example, "Turkey is secular, will remain secular", "No salvation alone, all of us together, or none of us", "Police, sell bagel and live with your honor", "We have rented the house, but the neighborhood belongs to us". Political organizations and groups made demonstrations appropriate to their political views. For instance, anti-capitalist Muslims shouted slogans likr, "Property belongs to Allah" and they brought people together during the Holy Ramadan with for an iftar dinner during the protests. The humor was defined as 'disproportionate intelligence' and 'laughing' was considered as a 'revolutionary action' against the power. Humor revealed the ridiculousness of the means of domination of the hegemony; while, 'laughing' could not stand as a revolutionary action to the extent that it was the reflection of passive resistance.

The protests continued for approximately six months in an active way; and eventually, the resistance faded away. There is no doubt that the fading process of the resistance is related to the government's oppression, the position of media and so on. However, the characteristics of the protestors were determinative in the last instance. At the beginning of the chapter, I underlined that the protests were mainly made against populism, not functioning of the neoliberal regime. At this point, the romantic analysis remains deficient and incorrect. As Tuğal argued, turning these protests into an all-out class war has never been a priority of the protests' political agenda (2013a and 2013c), since there was an explicit middle-class reflex which is not concerned with the courses of the hegemonic relations.

Looking at protests and identities that defined the protests, it can be argued that the aim or issue of resistance is associated with the elements of neoliberal populism. Although the common identity of protestors concentrated mainly on being potentially unemployed, the protestors targeted symbols, codes, populist characteristics of AKP government more than privatizations, the flexibilization of labor or the power bloc. Since demonstrators targeted the neoliberal populist codes or symbols, they were disorganized, fragmented and nonintegrated structures. I can summarize my thoughts in the following way: Actually, the

power targeted the protestors on one common ground. However, they identified themselves with different symbolic points that the power targeted. They targeted the power with these symbolic points. Therefore, the Gezi was initiated as a reaction against neoliberal economic order while it faded due to neoliberal populism with its symbols, codes, cultural backgrounds that disorganized and fractionated people. There are many examples of that argumentation in the repertoire of the Gezi. I can turn to two instances that I first-handedly witnessed in the demonstrations in Ankara. First, during the clash with the police force, a person threw a rock at the ATM of Garanti Bank in Kızılay and people nearby immediately intervened in the protestor and blamed him for being a vandal and not-peaceful. Then, he yelled at them, saying "Everything that we are exposed stems from these banks". Afterwards, people led him away from the area. It means the protestors, in fact, also protested people who protested the systematic and anti-capitalist order. With criticisms of vandalism, protestors missed the fundamental problem in the protests. Second, during the Gezi, professional wage earners did not abandon their normal working hours and there was a famous slogan in the protests, "Work in the morning, resistance in the evening". As Özden and Bekmen stated, "Those who are able to participate in daytime clashes continuously checked their watches, waiting for the after-work participants to arrive… On the other hand, their avoidance of radicalization in their workplaces, such as missing working time and articulating into street radicalism was revealed after work" (2015: 101). At this point, Deutscher's famous quotation to American students in 1960's is explanatory:

> "You are effervescently active on the margin of social life, and the workers are passive right at the core of it. That is a tragedy of our society. If you do not deal with this contrast, you will be defeated." That warning may be no less apposite today than it was then. There are strong and promising emancipatory impulses at work today, but they may not be active at the core of social life, in the heart of capitalist society. (Wood, 2003: 264)

Gezi uprising with a common class-based essential could not be reflected even in workplaces as the center of flexibilization, insecurity and exploitation of

(neoliberal) capitalist imposition and protestors sought 'emancipation' within the boundaries of neoliberal populism.

As targeting neoliberal populism, the protestors were mainly not objective to the course of neoliberalism and they were peaceful. At this point, the issue of with what they were really at 'peace' was questionable in my view. The protestors' statement, 'Clark Kent in the morning, Superman in the evening', is very explanatory. Superman catches people who are guilty of robbery, vandalism and breach of the public order in movies and similarly it is again the peaceful people leading away the protestors who was also guilty of breach of the order. In my opinion, being peaceful is not only about preventing vandalism, but also about being at peace with the course of the order. Furthermore, laughing was perceived as laughing away, not as a revolutionary action in this sense. The Gezi protests were in a tight situation between humorous and peaceful attribution and a few radical armed actions that the media showed on purpose.

4.6. AKP's Response to the Protests

The government responded to the protest in three strategical ways, which were about ideological polarization, cultural hegemonic using of intellectuals and artists, neoliberal populism, depoliticizing of protests with electoralism and threating/using of police violence in general.

When looking at chronological responses of the government, it could be seen that although the government denied and underestimated the protests of just a few activist groups in the first days of the demonstrations, they caught up with different strategic moves as the rebellion spread in the forthcoming days. After the first protest in the Gezi Park, Erdoğan in his speeches on 29 May, stated:

> Whatever you do, we made a decision. If you have a reverence of history, first look at the history of the Gezi Park. We will renovate the history there. We will present it to the humankind by pedestrianizing it (Hürriyet, 2013d)

One day later, Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Kadir Topbaş also said that in the Gezi Park, the environmental campaign was provoked by some political

groups and agendas. As the protests spread, discourses of the government got rough and Erdoğan threatened the protestors in a television speech by saying "If this is a social protest, where they gather 20, I will gather 200,000 people. Where they gather 100,000, I will bring one million people from my party" (Huffington Post, 2013). Turkish President Abdullah Gül[109] and Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç gave moderate messages by criticizing the police brutality. In the meantime, Erdoğan left the country due to three days of diplomatic tour in North African countries. As protests grew up, government officials and municipality mayor made explanations that they did not consider constructing a shopping mall or residence and they might build an exhibition center there[110], and then, Erdoğan, Gül and some ministers stated, "message received" during the period when protests got massive. These reactions were instantaneous explanations against the enormous growth of protests. Lastly, with the fading of the protests, the government criminalized the protestors with the claim of being a pawn of external enemies and terrorist organizations.

Apart from the discursive strategies, one of the most important strategies of the government was to benefit from f ideological polarization. Traditional ideological/political differentiations in Turkish political history were manipulated by the government and its intelligentsia. For example, Erdoğan claimed that protestors threatened clergymen and muezzins during the protests. In addition, Elif Çakır, acolumnist claimed that "A veiled woman was assaulted by a group of 80 to 100 people who had no top clothing and were wearing black leather gloves, and the group urinated on her in Kabataş" (Bianet, 2015), and right after, few columnists in the pro-government media supported this claim. It was also claimed that the protestors entered the mosque while wearing shoes. These claims cannot be proven, and they were refuted even by the authoritarians.

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[109] Abdullah Gül tweeted about the right to protest and said "Democracy does not mean elections alone" on 3 June. Also, Bülent Arınç apologized for the disproportionate use of force.

[110] See https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4389736,00.html

At this point, the emphasis on 'veiled woman', 'muezzin', 'mosque' is an indicator of benefiting from ideological polarization within the framework of pious and secular antagonism. Similarly, Erdoğan in one of his speeches claimed that the protestors burned the Turkish flag and 'Mustafa Kemal' and 'İmralı' photographs were used side by side during the protests.[111] Here, this ideological separation was attempted to be deepened with antagonism of nationalism.

Moreover, cultural hegemonic strategies were used by the government in order to repress the protests. Initially, Erdoğan held a meeting with the participation of certain well-selected artists, intellectuals and celebrities on June 13, 2013, like Hasan Kaçan, a cartoonist and artist, Necati Şaşmaz, known as Polat Alemdar[112] in the media, etc. In this period, Erdoğan also met some famous people like Acun Ilıcalı, Hülya Avşar, and Şafak Sezer[113]. Apart from meetings with the celebrities, a documentary, "Story of the Usta" about the life of Erdoğan was televised in the media. In this documentary, there were opinions of famous people, some animations and interviews with children about the prime minister's life story. It also included clips where the artists praised the prime minister such as Ajda Pekkan, Kenan İmirzalıoğlu, Orhan Gencebay, Acun Ilıcalı, Fatih Terim and Hidayet Türkoğlu. In the documentary, Erdogan used populist discourses by saying like "I have earned money by selling bagels and water". The program that the documentary introduced was a trend topic on Twitter with several different hashtags. In addition, columnists as one part of the intelligentsia of the hegemony harshly criticized the protests and in the news channels, protestors were presented as vandal terrorists by benefiting from ideological and religious polarization.

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[111] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-bu-tayyip-erdogan-degismez-23479966
[112] He is a character in the famous series, Kurtlar Vadisi, and 'save the nation' from foreign forces by using of mafiatic relations.

[113] He, an artist and scenarist, participated in the protests; and then, criticized the protestors and apologized to Erdoğan for participation.

During the protests, neoliberal populist discourses were used several times. AKP's populist responses to the protests were generally shaped by the arguments, 'interest lobby' and 'foreign forces'. The AKP government and some columnists argued that there was a conspiracy of interest rate lobby behind the protests and Erdoğan referred to the demonstrators as 'internal collaborators of external forces' and 'the soldiers of the interest lobby'[114]. As mentioned in the third chapter, creation of the enemy and consolidating the polarization are among the well-known features of the populism; and on the other hand, associating this enemy with economic development is related to neoliberal populism. Statements and piece of news about the currency exchange rate and interest rates significantly increased with the Gezi protests and they were demonstrated as the indicators of using neoliberal populism as a strategy. Another populist strategy was that the AKP hegemony tried to reduce the protests to electoral politics. Initially, Erdoğan tried to associate the protests with Republican People's Party through benefiting from the ideological differentiation in Turkish political structure. And then, he came up with the idea of a referendum in a meeting with celebrities. Similarly, he stated in his speech, "There is this 50 percent of the people that we are having difficulty keeping at home"[115] and also, he led people to the elections on March 2014[116]. Lastly, they decided to hold massive rallies in İstanbul and Ankara and in these rallies, Erdoğan emphasized their slogan, "one nation, one flag, one homeland, one state"[117]

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[114] See https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-faiz-lobisinin-neferi-oldular,hRBnD9YIYkehfPQCWqTF4g

[115] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-yuzde-50-yi-evinde-zor-tutuyorum-23429709

[116] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-erdogan-gezi-parki-mesaji-alinmistir-23505720

[117] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-recep-tayyip-erdogan-altinparkta-konustu-23469770

In my opinion, the most important response to the protests was class-based explanations, made by the government. Erdoğan's question is very significant in understanding the hegemonic viewpoint of the ruling body:

> Now, they -protestors- started to command to the government, by saying 'discharge the governor and state officers from the duties. Know your place, first. The tail is wagging the dog?[118] (Hürriyet, 2013b)

Before this statement, Erdoğan had also used the same sentence in 2008 when labor unions demanded that 1 May Day would be deemed national public holiday and unions would celebrate it in Taksim Square and stated that if the tail began to manage the dog, it would be mayhem[119]. The statement in the Gezi protests indicates that when the hegemony considered the protestors as "a group of Çapulcu", It associated the protestors with the working-class membership in a kind of way. It is also related to the functionalist viewpoint of the society in conservatism; and Erdoğan's emphasis on 'mayhem' is another indicator of the sense of fear of change/revolution, stemming from conservatism. Secondly, the members of the government began to make explanations about the non-interest income of banks and suggested that people not get a credit card during the protests:

> Do not get credit cards. The income of one of those banks that you pay for and put money in is 600 trillion in one year with the exception of interest income, for example. Who pays for this? Not wealthy people, my poor little brother. His salary is over before the end of the month. The game that they are playing is great and we have to disrupt this game altogether. (Hürriyet, 2013c)

Erdoğan's explanations about credit cards were contradictory since financialization policies and credit system were one the main constituents of the neoliberal regime that the government had implied. During the protests, the call for 'not getting credit cards' was also a populist strategy in order to produce consent of the oppressed classes. As the police violence increased with the

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[118] See also https://twitter.com/rt_erdogan/status/349463965350367232

[119] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/turk-unions-firm-on-may-1-celebration-in-taksim-8788445

influence of media manipulation and protestors' disorganized and fragmented structure, those strategies started to fade out in time.

4.6.1. The Fading of the Protests

The Gezi protests began to fade approximately after two into the beginning of the protests. With the coercive apparatus of the hegemony and excessive use of police force, the protesters started to withdraw from their places. Additionally, the media manipulation enormously affected the course of the protests. Demonstrations turned into struggles of the political area in time. In September, people protested the murders of people as a result of the police violence and there were a few civic actions, including more traditional political actions.

Eight civilians were killed and tens of thousands got injured due to the police violence including hitting the protesters with gas canisters, brutality and physical torture. In the meantime, Prime Minister Erdoğan praised the police organization. On 23 June, Erdoğan admitted giving the order to the police: "I told the Minister of the Interior, 'You will clear the place in 24 hours, then you will clean the park,' I said. They say, 'Who gave the order?' I gave it, yes I gave it" (Radikal, 2013). In another speech, Erdoğan said, the police forces had written a 'heroic saga' when intervening in the Gezi Park.[120] Erdoğan also associated Berkin Elvan[121] with certain terrorist organizations. Similarly, in the media and in the speeches of state officers, deaths were presented as accidental or the blame was put on the demonstrators. The excessive use of force and statements blaming people for terrorism affected the protesters.

During the first weeks of the protests, the government differentiated demonstrators as those with 'innocent' and rightful demands and those with terrorist and putschist aims. In the last months of the protests, some radical

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[120] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/polis-destan-yazdi-siyaset-1727367/

[121] He was 14 years old. The police shot him at the Okmeydanı with a gas canister during the protests. He was in intensive care for 269 days. At age 15, he lost 16 kilos and lost his life.

groups with armed actions were continually televised in the media; hence, the protests were attempted to be marginalized and criminalized during the protests. In this sense, the media focused on armed conflicts especially in the Gazi and Gülsuyu Neighborhood where Hasan Ferit Gedik was killed by drug dealers. By trying to associate protesters with terrorist organizations, the media presentation of the armed groups caused the loss of legitimacy and 'peaceful' perception of the demonstrations in the eyes of the Gezi uprising supporters.

On the other hand, evaluating the protests with a resistance perspective, speaking of ending point is actually deficient. With Alain Badiou's interpretation of the 'event', many scholars argue that the Gezi cannot be incarcerated to a certain temporality. According to Şükrü Argın, the 'moment' that the Gezi protests happened, and the 'neighborhood' where the 'moment' was experienced was still there, since the Gezi referred to a different moment, Kairos[122] (2014: 24). And when thinking about the Gezi, opportunities that made it possible to recurrence of the moment should be considered, instead of focusing on potential consequences of the protests. In addition to Kairos, 'the Gezi spirit' was also mentioned with respect to that the Gezi event cannot be incarcerated to a historical course and the spirit had changed the political courses and constituents. These approaches consider the protests mostly with the post-political perspective. Moreover, it can be argued that the Gezi spirit affected the political area with its new language, its solidarity, its creation of an alternative apparatus of expression and both humorous and critical disclosure revealing blatantly the truth of apparatus and the discourses of power. Therefore, the uprising might have faded for some reasons. However, its effects and its language still continue

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[122] In the philosophy of Ancient Greece, there are two different concepts of time, chronos and kairos. While chronos refers to chronological and consecutive understanding of time, kairos refers to time in time that full of 'event' and special moment that exceeds the boundaries of chronology. See Atmaca's article, "Kairopolitics: Towards a Temporal Critique of Capitalism" (2018)

shaping the political struggles and it can even limit the hegemony's expansiveness in a certain degree.

4.7. The Resurgence of the AKP Hegemony after the Gezi Protests

It is obvious that the March 30 elections[123] made the most significant contribution to the government with respect to the resurgence of the hegemony; however, in the earlier period, the Gezi protests adversely affected the hegemony with certain political affairs. Initially, there is an argumentation about the transformation of the hegemony. According to Bozkurt, mobilizations of millions of people indicated the hegemonic crisis and the Gezi protests transformed the expanded hegemony into a limited hegemony (2015: 84). AKP lost the support of the West because of its reactions against the demonstrations. Particularly, the representatives of the European Union and the United States made serious criticism of the government due to the excessive use of force and anti-democratic attitudes, affecting the capital flow and foreign investments. With the protests, the effects of the crisis in 2008 become more visible, which is related to income inequality and unemployment. Liberal supporters of the government and some constituents of civil society of the hegemony started to heavily criticize the government. Most importantly, the anti-corruption operations made by a significant supporter of the government on 17-25 December 2013 should be noted. Some bankers, bureaucrats and relatives of the politicians were arrested on accusation of bribery. This group[124] that carried out the operation had been the biggest significant supporter of the hegemony in civil society. Facing a bribery operation heavily damaged the religious perception of the government back then. Therefore, it can be argued that there was a hegemonic crisis, stemming from the disturbance of internal and foreign relations during that time. However, the electoral victory of the government is

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[123] AKP won the election with gaining 45.5 percent of votes as the first party.
[124] This group, known as Gulenists, had conglomerated in the state via nepotism and had been the most important supporter of the government in that period.

not enough to explain the resurgence of the AKP hegemony after the Gezi protests.

Constituents of the protests could not be unified in a common political demand and organization for certain reasons, argued above. It means that the Gezi spirit could not be materialized in the political area, although there were some initiatives like the establishment of a political party. In spite of those political affairs, an alternative opposition could not be formed, meaning that the people and the groups protesting the restrictions, oppressions and policies of the government could not canalize their efforts into a common oppositional organization in the field of politics. In the protests, most people had already criticized the courses of the political parties. Thus, the absence of a political leadership in the political area contributed to the AKP government at the point of the resurgence of the hegemony. Even if there was a decrease in the political and electoral support to the government, AKP won the election and gained the consent of a majority of people. Electoralism is not the most significant part of hegemonic struggle; however, a Gramscian understanding of the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc following the political struggles is very important for gaining the consent of the oppressed classes. In this sense, an alternative hegemony with its political organization and its class-based integration could not be established in the Gezi protests.

At the point of the resurgence of the hegemony during and after the protests, the AKP government maintained their neoliberal policies, relating to depoliticizing of the poverty, spreading social assistance programs, using neoliberal populism with ideological polarization and developmentalist discourses, flexibilization of the labor and so on. However, it should not be forgotten that the Gezi movement indicated the capacity to mobilize millions of people with its political apparatus and to challenge the AKP's hegemony with effective strategies and resistance.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Gezi movement was one of the most significant challenges to the AKP rule; for this reason, understanding the Gezi protest with the conditions that the protests occurred the class basis and practices of its participants, its position and challenges to the AKP hegemony, and the reasons of fading of the protests is very significant to examine the AKP hegemony with its limitations on the socio-political area and to comprehend the fundamental dynamics of the protests as a resistance and dissidence against the hegemony in Turkish context. Hence, this thesis has examined the Gezi uprising with the reasons for its occurrence, its global background, its political subjects, its forms of protesting and the resurgence of the hegemony after the protests. By doing this, the concept of hegemony and its transformation in the course of time, the AKP hegemony with the apparatus of it neoliberal policies and neoliberal populism and lastly, the emergence, progress and fading process are examined via dialectical methodology. With the framework of research questions of the thesis, I have reached some conclusions about the Gezi protests.

The second chapter provided an overview of the hegemony in the context of contemporary social movements. After late 1960, there has been a paradigm change in social movements theories and especially with 1968 movements, many theoreticians problematized whether the dynamics of emancipation/salvation/revolution had been changing, or not. After the crisis of 1970's when decreasing real production in the manufacture industry brought balloons in GDP indicators and with the improvement of information

technologies (IT), financialization and indebtment were put into effect and the service sector was enormously involved in the chain of exploitation, social movement theories that defined the capitalist transformation as 'new' capitalism, tried to explain social movement through reducing capitalist production relations in the economic sphere and taking 'the culture' as a separate ontology; and for this reason, the participants of (new) social movements have been evaluated with cultural identification (Akbulut, 2014: 39). In this thesis, the concept of hegemony is not considered within the boundaries of 'new capitalism', since real production was constant and the service sector increased for facilitating the distribution of capital in the late capitalism and laborers in the service sector become more proletarianized due to increasing exploitation, insecurity and flexibilization; and also, laborers as a part of the working class do not anymore possess the means of production, also have to sell their labor due to marketization of fundamental needs and their surplus values are decreased in the exploitation relations as argued in the second and fourth chapter. In this regard, the conditions that caused the emergence of the Gezi protests is associated with the concept of hegemony to the extent that the AKP government has articulated subordinated classes with its class interests that is directly related to implementation of neoliberal policies through gaining consent via neoliberal populism which had been used with developmentalist discourses that were related to capitalist and marketist viewpoint, ideological codes that stemmed from traditional ideological polarization in Turkish politics and creation of an enemy which the hegemony subjected it into its own political agenda. With all these aspects in addition to electoral victories in the political field, the control of civil society and interrelated support of the government to economically privileged classes, the AKP hegemony had been constructed and was aimed by the Gezi protestors.

Secondly, the thesis shows that the Gezi protests and contemporary public demonstrations like in Brazil or Spain which emerged due to the devastation of the park or fare hikes targeted the hegemony in an embedded way. As known,

the Gezi protests started with the purpose of preservation of trees in the Gezi Park, and protestors stated that 'the matter was not about trees'; however, actually the matter was totally related to trees in terms of privatization of land, urban transformation for the interests of a certain class and neoconservative attacks on life's itself. Gramsci states, "the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (1971: 556) and the Gezi protests occurred as a result of 'dying' neoliberal project within the potential of the hegemony crisis; and therefore, with the massification of the protests, demands and protests of the participants had turned into the opposition to outcomes of the neoliberal authoritarianism of the hegemony.

The participants of the Gezi protests were the victims of neoliberal order in one way or another, which means transformation the protests of few environmentalists into massive demonstrations was closely associated with neoliberal commodification of land, flexibilization of labor, increasing impoverishment and unemployment, economic and social inequalities and restrictions of rights and freedom as a result of the AKP hegemony. Thirdly, this thesis indicates that the çapulcu, as the common identity of the protesters which was given by Erdoğan in one speech, suffered from the neoliberal order of the hegemony in which there are flexible type of work with harsh exploitation, a subcontractor system, dismissal of work without any justification and thus insecurity, increase of disorganized structure of workers and futureless life. At this point, the participants of the Gezi protests, the çapulcu, were the (potential) members of the working class, as argued in the fourth chapter. Students or white collars were not excluded from the chain of the labor market of neoliberal order in terms of employment security, and also, making a separation between hand and mental labor is invalid since the level of exploitation and proletarianization have continuously maintained in terms of working conditions[125]. Moreover, argumentations, associating the Gezi protests with 'new middle class' movement

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[125] See Yücesan's book, *İnatçı Köstebek*, about call-center workers (2014) and Boratav's article about diplomaed proletarians (2015) which mention the working conditions of 'mental laborers'.

based on the class definition with status, education level, lifestyle, social life and cultural capital (Keyder, 2013a) and this causes deficient analysis and endless categorization at the point of class definition that must be related to certain concreteness as an abstractive and objective category, which mentioned in the second and fourth chapter. Therefore, the common aspects of the çapulcu are unified into the membership of the working class (Boratav, 2013; Tonak, 2013).

This thesis also indicates that although there was a class-based integrity in the movement, the Gezi protesters targeted more neoliberal populism than the outcomes and functioning of neoliberalism. There were predominately criticisms of the neoliberal populism of the hegemony with critical and humorous protests or slogans, street writings, social media posts and so on. Besides harsh police violence, especially Erdoğan's discourses, prohibitions like alcohol or abortion, restrictions on media and bans of certain websites were criticized by the protestors with humorous and popular cultural elements. This kind of protests contributed to the spreading of the movements across the country; and however, these protests were not to be directed to the fundamental functioning sources of neoliberalism. For instance, the discourse about Bilal Erdoğan with his vessels and ships prevailed over the reality of 'unemployment' and the unfair distribution of income during the protests. Also, discourses like 'turn off the lamb' or 'no Recep no cry' reduced the protests in the political and electoral opposition of populist leadership. Additionally, the protests were not be reflected in the workplaces, meaning that the logic, 'work in the morning, resistance in the evening' or 'Clark Kent in the morning, Superman in the evening' and the protesters' fear of missing work time prevented questioning of flexible work relations as an outcome of neoliberal regime, for example. The situation of 'avoidance of radicalization' in the workplaces was an important obstacle for the protesters in order to change the course of the hegemony. This avoidance situation also showed itself during the demonstrations. The emphasis on 'peaceful action' in the protests turned into a fetishism that prevented the emergence of class anger. Here, I do not mean the radical armed actions or

vandalism. The fetishism of non-violent and peaceful action incarcerated the protests within the boundaries of the liberal political action that the government desired. For instance, occupying a municipality bus or throwing stones at the bank had an embedded class anger against the neoliberal functioning of the hegemony; however, protestors deliberately avoided from reflecting class anger through manipulations and directions of the government and media. The protests were made mostly with populist discourses and elements which were detached from its own class context; and thus, the protests remained as the massive opposition to neoliberal populism which will be held in the fourth chapter.

This thesis also indicates that two different forms of protesting had emerged in the Gezi movement, resistance and dissidence. This separation is related to 'aiming for power', which means that the resistance, in essence, does not a response to power or aiming for power; on the other hand, dissidence is about being an opposition and 'being an anti-' (Baker, 1997). The separation between 'standing man' and 'moving man' is a well-understood example of these different forms of protesting. The standing man with civil disobedience brought new momentum in the protests. It was not political passivity; contrarily, it was a silent and strong political action against the domination apparatus of the power. Its symbolic force affected the viewpoint of the state and civil society, as mentioned in the fourth chapter. On the other hand, dissidence was more organizational and systematic at the point of discourses, demands and ideological background. Both forms of protests had some advantages and disadvantages. While resistance contributed to massification and popularization, it hindered the continuation of the protests with common political demands to the extent that it was individual; and on the other hand, since dissidence forced to organizing of masses and groups in a common integrated demands and organization, it could not be achieved this aim due to the fragmented structure of the protestors in the demonstrations.

Moreover, the separation between resistance and dissidence is shown in theoretical viewpoints about the Gezi movement. Especially in the discussions

about fading of the Gezi protests, some approaches that associated the protests with 'event' of Badiou's term see the movement as a resistance, and thus, claim that the Gezi uprising cannot be incarcerated in a certain historical temporality[126], and the Gezi spirit have opened horizon with its resistance, its new language, its creation of alternative apparatus of expression (Argın, 2014: 24). On the other hand, some approaches evaluate the protests as a part of the hegemonic struggle that was lost since it did not change the course of the hegemony in the political level and did not established a counter-hegemony and so on. These approaches are controversial even in these days.

These approaches about the Gezi protests' effects on the course of the AKP hegemony are controversial even in these days; and this thesis indicates that as explained previously, before the Gezi uprising emerged, there was a global crisis and its effects on macroeconomic indicators could not be overcome, and also, the disruption between the state and civil society had gradually increased in that period when authoritative inclination of the government had increased and been criticized by liberal democrats, a crisis started between the state and Gulenists as the most important supporter of the government in civil society, and so on. Despite all these conditions, the party had sustained its expansive hegemony with economic growth, some infrastructure projects and neoliberal populist discourses. However, with the Gezi protests, the AKP's hegemony had turned into a limited hegemony for quite a while, and the hegemonic power had to resort to authoritarian and coercive apparatus in order to enforce its rule (Bozkurt, 2015). Additionally, the AKP government had to retreat its neoliberal courses during the protests. For instance, Erdoğan's callings for 'not getting credit cards' or his aiming of non-interest income of banks or the government's suspending the Gezi Park plan during the protests is some of the indicators of this retreating. However, after the fading of the protests due to the extreme use of violence and criminalizing protesters via the media manipulation in addition to the

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[126] This separation is directly related to the different viewpoints about time, Kairos and Kronos, held in the fourth chapter.

disorganized and fragmented structure of the protestors, the party's capability to articulate masses and electoral victory in 2014 had contributed to the resurgence of the hegemony. In this sense, it is very significant that the participants could not be unified in a common political demand and organization, meaning that the Gezi spirit could not be concretized in the political area and an alternative opposition could not be established. Therefore, the absence of a political organization and leadership in the political area contributed the AKP government to the resurgence of the hegemony. It is not only about electoralism, but also a Gramscian understanding of the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc after the political struggles is very significant for gaining the consent of subordinated classes. The Gezi movement with its protestors, demands and actions has transformed into 'the Gezi Spirit'. In this sense, a political organization could not be constructed in the Gezi protests in terms of being an alternative hegemony, which is not examined in this thesis and should be the subject of future studies.

With the resurgence of the hegemony, the government had continued neoliberal policies, related to privatization of land via neoliberal projects with the interests of the bourgeoisie, flexibilization and insecurity of the labor, depoliticizing of the poverty matter, extending the scope of social assistance programmes and neoliberal populism with using of developmentalist discourses and ideological polarization and creation of an imaginary enemy, and so on. However, it should not be forgotten that the Gezi movement showed the potential capacity of mobilizing millions of people with its political apparatus and to challenge the AKP's hegemony with effective strategies and resistance, and also, the Gezi protests have changed the language and forms of the civic actions and created a new ground for the political area with its solidarity of diversities.

To sum up, the findings of the thesis can be summarized as follows:

- The Gezi movement was the result of neoliberal authoritarianism of the AKP hegemony. Although it started with the preservation of the historic

Gezi Park in Taksim, it turned into massive protests against the hegemony's neoconservative restrictions, ideological impositions and neoliberal projects like in the Gezi Park with devastating of the green areas in the urban spaces. The matter was totally about trees since trees symbolized the attacks of the hegemony, taking the life's itself as an aim with its coercive and authoritative apparatus, conservative impositions of a certain lifestyle, controlling and repressing on alternative means of politicizing and socializing.

- The political subject of the Gezi protests, *the çapulcu*, was the victim of neoliberalism. The *çapulcu* was futureless in terms of not being able to reveal a future imagination due to economic[127] and political alternatives, and the *çapulcu* was excluded from the benefits of social state and impoverished, his/her life spaces were exposed to harsh commodification and privatization via neoliberal projects, and the most importantly, the *çapulcu* was the (potential) member of the working class because of necessity of selling the labor, being exploited and no controlling over his/her own production, as Boratav and Tonak argued.

- There was a class-based integrity behind the background of the participants and the protests targeted the course of the hegemony; and however, the protestors aimed more neoliberal populism than the functioning of neoliberal order. Although there was an embedded opposition to neoliberal policies of the hegemony, the protests were generally incarcerated in Erdoğan-centered opposition. The class background could not be associated with protests, discourse or slogans. On the other hand, the protests could not be directed in the workplaces as the steering wheels of the neoliberal regime; and also, the class anger

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[127] The futureless situation is closely related to insecurity, unemployment (unemployed/unemployable) or indebtedness which is not only about revealing economic alternative, but also all social and political alternatives.

behind the protests was not reflected due to a strong emphasis on the non-violent way of protesting as explained above.

- In the Gezi demonstrations, even if some anarchist groups participated in the protests, the Gezi movement was not anarchist due to the recognition of the authority for negotiating and demanding the rights and freedom. Moreover, the protests had two different forms of protesting. resistance and dissidence which had both advantages and disadvantages. The resistance provided massification and popularization of the protests all over the country, and however, it prevented the continuation of the protests and unification of masses with common political demands and organization to the extent that it was individual. On the other hand, even though dissidence necessarily forced to politically organizing of particularized structure of protestors in common political demands, dissident groups with certain ideological perspectives could not be achieved the unification against the hegemony due to the fragmented and disorganized structure of the participant groups and masses.

- Despite all these limitations, the Gezi protests had weakened the expansive hegemony and deepened the hegemonic crisis, although it could not establish an alternative political bloc in the aftermath of the protests. The hegemonic articulation in the political field and civil society was shaken and split with the Gezi movement. However, the protests could not prevent the resurgence of the hegemony due to certain reasons as mentioned above. Furthermore, the protests changed the oppositional policymaking apparatus of the contemporary politics with its new language that critical and humorous disclosure of the power, its solidarity of diversities, its creation of alternative means of expression and so on.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezde 2013 yılında Gezi protestolarını ortaya çıkaran dinamikler, Gezi protestolarının bu dinamiklere göre şekillenen eylem repertuarı, bu protestoların AKP hegemonyasıyla ilişkiselliği, protestolar esnasında bu ilişkiselliğin nasıl yeniden kurulduğu, protestoların AKP hegemonyasını nasıl ve hangi şekillerde etkilediği ve protestoların sönümlenme süreci incelenmektedir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, Gezi hareketinin AKP hegemonyasının neoliberal politikaları sonucunda ortaya çıktığı, Gezi'nin özellikle hegemonyanın neoliberal popülist stratejilerini hedef aldığı ve aynı nedenle sönümlendiğini ifade etmektedir. Çalışmada özellikle Gramsci'nin yeni bir anlam kazandırdığı hegemonya kavramı başta olmak üzere, toplumsal hareketler literatürü ve özellikle 1960'ların sonlarında yaygınlaşan 'yeni toplumsal hareketler' paradigması, AKP hegemonyası ve hegemonyanın izlediği neoliberal politika ve stratejiler Gezi hareketiyle ilişkilendirilerek ele alınmış; en son Gezi hareketinin ortaya çıkış, yayılma ve sönümlenme süreçleri bu bağlamda sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Çalışmada asıl amaç, Gezi hareketinin AKP hegemonyasına karşı nasıl konumlandığını anlamak ve bu konumlanışı muhalefet ve direniş perspektifleri çerçevesinde açıklamaktır. Bu tezde Gezi'yi anlama çabası, bir toplumsal hareketi salt sosyolojik bir olgu olarak açıklama gayretinin ötesinde, farklı bir siyasallığı mümkün kılan koşulları ve bu koşulların nasıl sürdürülebilir olduğunu anlama çabası olarak görülmektedir.

2013 yılının Mayıs ayı, AKP iktidarının kurulduğu günden itibaren karşılaştığı en büyük kitlesel protestolardan birinin başlangıç ayı olmuştur.

Tarihi Gezi Parkı'nı özelleştirme ve yıkma planlarına karşı birkaç eylemcinin çevreci hassasiyetle parka sahip çıkma gayreti sonucu başlayan ve daha sonra polisin eylemcilere yönelik sert müdahaleleri sonucu eylemin özellikle sosyal medya aracılığıyla duyurulmasıyla kitleselleşen Gezi hareketi, birkaç gün içerisinde ülkenin neredeyse tamamında milyonlarca insanın katıldığı büyük bir toplumsal harekete dönüşmüştür. Gezi protestoları esnasında Ethem Sarısülük, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, Abdullah Cömert, Ahmet Atakan, Medeni Yıldırım, Hasan Ferit Gedik ve Berkin Elvan hayatını kaybetmiş ve binlerce insan bir kısmı ağır olmak üzere yaralanmıştır. Kısaca başta birkaç eylemcinin Gezi Parkı'nı koruma amacıyla başlattığı protesto, özellikle polis müdahalesi sonucu kitlesel politik bir eyleme dönüşmüştür.

Gezi Parkı projesi AKP iktidarı tarafından ilk olarak 2009 yılında planlanmış, daha sonra İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Meclisi tarafından 2011 yılında onaylanmış, bu süreçte İstanbul Mimarlar Odası gibi meslek kuruluşları, sivil toplum örgütleri ve birtakım organizasyonlar tarafından sıklıkla eleştirilmiş bir proje olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Yine bu süreçte yerel mahkemeler tarafından projenin yasaya aykırı olduğu gerekçesiyle reddedildiği de görülmektedir. Bu süreçte sendikalar, meslek örgütleri, çeşitli siyasal organizasyonlar tarafından Gezi Parkı projesine karşı birçok eylem ve gösteriler yapılmıştır. Bu süreçte birçok sivil toplum örgütü, meslek örgütleri, çevreci inisiyatifler ve özellikle öğrenciler tarafından sıklıkla protesto edilen, imza kampanyaları gibi çeşitli girişimlerle durdurulması için seferberlik başlatılan projenin, neden 2013 yılında kitlesel bir eyleme dönüştüğü sorusu bu noktada önem arz etmektedir. "AKP iktidarının iktidara geldiği günden itibaren sürdürdüğü özelleştirme stratejisi, neden 2013'te bu kadar büyük bir kitlesel tepkiye neden olmuştur" sorusu, bu noktada bir iktidar ve tahakküm ilişkisini tanımlama zorunluluğu doğurmuştur; çünkü her toplumsal hareket öyle ya da böyle bir iktidar ilişkisini hedef almaktadır. Burada, Gezi'nin hedef aldığı iktidar ilişkisi

'hegemonya' olarak adlandırılmıştır. Peki Gezi'yi ortaya çıkaran iktidar ilişkisi olarak hegemonya nasıl tanımlanmalıdır ve hegemonya eylemciler tarafından nasıl ve hangi yönleriyle hedef alınmıştır?

Tezin ikinci bölümünde "hegemonya" kavramı tarihsel bir perspektifle ve özellikle Gramsci'nin yeni bir anlam kazandırdığı teorik zeminle tezin ana eksenini oluşturmaktadır. Hegemonya kavramına tarihsel olarak bakıldığında, kökünün Antik Yunan'da bir kent devletinin diğer *polis*'ler karşısında elde ettiği askeri ve siyasal egemenlik olduğu görülmektedir (Anderson, 2017; Wilkinson, 2008). Thucydides'in Atina ile Sparta arasındaki süren Peloponez Savaşı'nı tasvir ettiği metinde, hegemonya kavramı güç birlikteliği olarak da ele alınmasına rağmen (Karatzogianni, 2012), hegemonya kavramı bu dönemde daha çok askeri ve ekonomik üstünlük bağlamında kullanılmıştır. Daha sonra Machiavelli'nin 'ideal yöneticiyi' tanımladığı "Prens" kitabında, iktidar ilişkilerini tasvir ederken kullandığı *Chiron* metaforu, hegemonya kavramsallaştırmasında ekonomik ve askeri üstünlüğün yanında hukuk ve kültürel mücadele stratejilerinin de önem kazanmasına katkı sunmuştur. 1900'lü yıllara gelindiğinde Lenin'in sınıflararası bir siyasal ittifak stratejisi olarak kullandığı kavram, proletaryanın öncülüğünde bütün ezilen sınıf, katman ve grupları devletin karşısında devrim sürecine kazandırmak olarak yeni bir içeriğe kavuşmuştur (Lenin, 1969). Lenin'in hegemonya kavramsallaştırması, kapitalizmin henüz gelişmediği toplumlarda izlenecek siyasal stratejilere ilişkin tartışmalarda da kullanılmıştır. Bu süreçte özellikle Gramsci'nin bu tezin ana eksenini de oluşturan hegemonya kavramsallaştırması ise yine Marksist kuram içerisinde iktidar ilişkilerinin tanımlanmasında önemli bir çalışma teşkil etmektedir. Gramsci, *Hapishane Defterleri*'nde hegemonya kavramını iktidar ilişkilerinin yeniden üretimi noktasında açıklamak amacıyla işlevselleştirmiştir. Özellikle kapitalizmin ve sivil toplumun görece daha da geliştiği Batı toplumlarında büyük ekonomik buhranlara ve krizlere karşın burjuva egemenliğinin nasıl devam ettiğini sorunsallaştıran Gramsci, iktidar

ilişkilerinin salt tahakküm üzerinden sürdürülemeyeceğini, burjuvazi ve ezilen sınıflar arasında '*zor*'un yanında kendiliğinden '*rıza*'ya dayalı bir ilişkinin de söz konusu olduğunu açıklamıştır (Gramsci, 1978). Zor ve rızanın diyalektik bir ilişki biçimiyle birbirine eklemlendiğini ifade eden bu yaklaşımda, hegemonya, "egemen sınıfın ideoloji kertesinde görünümleri açığa çıkan sosyo-kültürel üstünlüğünün, kendiliğinden rızaya dayalı oydaşma süreçleri üzerinde etkili olduğu bir yönlendirme ilişkisi" olarak tanımlanmıştır (Yetiş, 2012). Bu noktada, Gramsci ekonomizm ve ideolojiyi baz alan kuramları eleştirerek, hegemonyayı egemen üretim ilişkisini içeren ekonomik yapı ile toplumsallığı oluşturan üstyapıların organik bütünlüğü savunmuş ve bu organik birliği 'tarihsel blok" olarak tanımlamıştır. Gramsci, hegemonyayı her ne kadar rıza süreçleriyle açıklamaya çalışsa da, sadece temel sınıfların üretim sürecindeki ayrıcalıklı konumları itibariyle hegemonya kurabilme yetisine sahip olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu anlamda, hegemonya sınıfsal çıkar ilişkisi taşıması nedeniyle salt siyasal ikna sürecine indirgenmemelidir. Kendiliğinden rıza süreçleriyle toplumda yaygınlık kazanan egemen sınıf ideolojisinin, 'ortak duyu' haline gelmesi bu noktada egemen sınıfın entelektüel önderlik yeteneğiyle doğrudan ilişkilidir. Gramsci'nin metinlerinde bir diğer önemli nokta, tarihsel blokun üstyapısında yer alan ve tahakküm ve rıza ilişkilerinin kurulduğu sivil toplum ve politik toplum veya devlet ayrımıdır. Sivil toplum hegemonyanın işlevsellik kazandığı örgütlenme alanı iken, politik toplum daha çok devlet işlerini kapsayan zorun kurumsallaştığı yönetim alanı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu ayrım, yine karşılıklı ilişkisellik çerçevesinde düşünülmüş bir ayrım olmakla birlikte, rıza üretiminin politik toplumla ilişkisi olmadığı gibi sınırları çizilmiş analitik bir ayrım değildir. Nitekim Gramsci'nin entegral devlet modeli, politik toplum ve sivil toplumun organik bütünlük içerisinde hegemonyayı nasıl yeniden ürettiğini de tanımlamaktadır. Hegemonyanın yeniden üretimi noktasında da Gramsci, aydınların rolünden ve Machiavelli'den aldığı Prens kavramına atıfla siyasi partinin -*Modern*

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Prens- nasıl alternatif bir blok olarak işlev kazanabileceğinden bahsetmektedir.

Egemen sınıfın hegemonik üstünlüğünün, siyasi süreçlerin süreklilik arz eden dinamizmi içerisinde sonsuza kadar yeniden üretilmesi olanaklı değildir. Egemen sınıf hegemonyasının kesintiye uğradığı noktalarda, hegemonya krizi baş göstermekte ve yapısal düzeydeki çelişkiler derinleştiği ölçüde organik krizle de eklemlenebilmektedir. Gramsci'nin sunduğu kuramsal çerçevede, hegemonya krizi egemen sınıfın yöneticilik yeteneğine bağlı olarak tarihsel blokun yeniden yapılanması noktasında kararlaştırıcı etkiye sahip olmaktadır (Gramsci, 1971; Ramos, 1982). Hegemonya krizi, alternatif hegemonik blokların mücadeleleri sonucu toplumsallığın topyekûn dönüşmesiyle sonuçlanabileceği gibi devlet ve sivil toplum ilişkilerinin kısmî dönüşümüyle de sınırlı kalabilmektedir. Alternatif hegemonya tartışması noktasında, Gramsci egemen sınıfın ahlaki entelektüel önderliğine karşı iki ayrı savaş stratejisi önermektedir. Bunlardan ilki *mevzi savaşı*, sivil toplum alanında sürdürülen hegemonya mücadelelerini içerirken; *manevra savaşı* devlet iktidarını ele geçirmeye yönelik yine devrimci hamleleri kapsamaktadır. Bu noktada, Gramsci, sivil toplumun görece daha gelişmiş olduğu toplumlar için mevzi savaşı stratejisinin gerekliliğini vurgulanmaktadır. İşçi sınıfının ve onun organik aydınlarının siyasal partisi *Modern Prens*'in görevi ulusal kolektif iradenin yaratılmasında kendi teorik-pratik (*praksis*) yönelimi geliştirmektir.

Gramsci'nin hegemonya kavramsallaştırması, Marksist literatürde iktidar ilişkilerini tanımlama noktasında önemli bir model oluşturmuş; daha sonra 1960'larda yaygınlaşmaya başlayan öğrenci hareketlerinin etkisiyle özellikle siyaset sosyolojisi alanında "revize edilerek" kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. 1929 Buhranı'ndan sonra faşizmin yükseldiği, refah devletinin işçilere görece bir refah sağladığı, Avrupalı Marksistlerin Sovyet deneyimini tartışmaya açtığı, komünist partilerin sınıf temelli siyaseti sorgulamaya başladığı bir dönemde, 1960'larla birlikte yaygınlaşmaya başlayan öğrenci

hareketleri, siyaset sosyolojisi alanında çalışmalar yapan kimi Marksist teorisyenleri "yeni" mücadele araçları ve stratejilerine yöneltmiştir. Özellikle 1968 öğrenci hareketleri, beraberinde dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerinde yaygınlaşan kimlik hareketleri, siyaset sosyolojisinin toplumsal hareketler literatüründe yeni paradigmaların geliştirilmesine zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu tezde, refah devleti krizinin etkisiyle siyaset sosyolojisinde geliştirilen "Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler" literatürü incelenmiş ve bu yaklaşım çerçevesinde geliştirilen argümanların Gezi protestolarını açıklama noktasında da kullanıldığı belirtilmiştir. 1970'lerle birlikte başlayan "yeni kapitalizm", "yeni dünya düzeni", "yeni toplumsal hareketler" gibi kavramsallaştırmalar, 'kapitalizmin refah devleti kriziyle birlikte niteliksel dönüşüme uğradığı ön kabulüyle' yeni teorik tartışmaların başlamasına zemin hazırlamıştır (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987). Özellikle Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler literatürü, Weberci metodolojinin etkisiyle kültürü ayrı bir ontolojik olgu olarak ele almış ve kapitalizmi salt ekonomik alana içkin gören bakış açısıyla toplumsal hareketleri de benzer argümanlarla açıklamaya çalışmıştır. Özellikle Post-Marksist literatürde hegemonya kavramı, üretim süreçlerine bağlı içeriğinden koparılarak salt ideolojik ve kültürel boyutta yeniden ele alınmıştır. Laclau'ya göre kapitalizmin içinde bulunduğu "yeni" dönemde, toplumsal antagonizmalar sadece iki temel sınıfların çelişkisine indirgenemeyeceği gibi, sınıfsal temelden bağımsız olarak farklı siyasal öznelerin çok katmanlı mücadeleleriyle tanımlanmak durumundadır (Laclau, 2015). Yeni toplumsal hareketler (YHT) literatürü, toplumsal ilişkilerin temel iki sınıfın üretim ilişkilerinden kaynaklanan çelişkisinden ziyade, kültürel, ideolojik/politik ve kimliksel birtakım eşitsizliklerle şekillendiğini ileri sürerek, "yeni" kapitalist dönemde siyasal mücadelenin tek bir sınıfa öncülük atfederek açıklanamayacağını vurgulamaktadır. Bu noktada, YTH literatüründe her düşünürün kendi teorisi farklı olmakla birlikte, sınıflardan bağımsız olarak yeni özne arayış ve tanımlanmasının yapıldığı görülmektedir. Orta sınıf teorileri temelinde "yeni orta sınıf", "yeni

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proletarya" gibi öznelerin toplumsal hareketlerin yeni öznesi olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Yine bu özneler tanımlanırken, kültürel birtakım kodlar esas alınmakta, örneğin eğitim seviyesi, teknoloji bilgisi gibi özellikler bu öznelerin tanımlayıcı niteliği olarak sunulmaktadır. Gezi protestolarına ilişkin öne sürülen tezlerde de yine Gezi eylemcileri tanımlarken benzer şekilde eğitim, yaşam standardı gibi niteliklere sıklıkla atıf yapıldığı görülmektedir (Karadağ, 2013; Keyder, 2013b; Wacquant, 2014). Bu tezde, YHT'ler başvurduğu metodoloji ve ontolojik ön kabuller eleştirilmiş; "yeni" diye tanımlanan sistemin ne kadar "yeni" olduğu, özneler ve mücadele biçimleri üzerinden sorunsallaştırılmıştır.

Yeni toplumsal hareketler literatürü, kapitalizmin yeni bir aşamaya geçtiği ön kabulüyle toplumsal hareketlerin de yeni bir özne/aktör yapısına ve yönelime büründüğünü ifade etmektedir. Offe'nin tanımladığı yeni toplumsal hareketlerin yapısında, aktörler artık kurumsal/sınıfsal yapıdan ziyade, kimlik üzerinden şekillenmekte; sınıfsal/ekonomik talepler yerini hak arama, bireysel özgürlükler gibi konulara yöneltmektedir (Figure 1). YHT'lerin temel öznesi olarak 'yeni orta sınıf' da bu analizlerde, kapitalizmin bu yeni aşamasında üretim ilişkisindeki konumundan ziyade yaşam dünyasına ilişkin kodlarla sınıfsal karakter kazanmaktadır. Buechler'in Bourdieau'nun *habitus* kavramından hareketle *Orta Sınıf Radikalizmi*'ni anlattığı yazılarında, orta sınıfın kendisini burjuva ve alt sınıflardan ayırdığını, daha çok post-materyalistik değerlerle ve kültürel sermayeyle kendini tanımladığından söz etmektedir. Gezi protestoları bağlamında yeni orta sınıf analizi sıklıkla kullanılmış ve bu tezde bu analizlerin metodolojik eksiklikleri tartışılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada, 1990'lı yılların sonlarına doğru dünyada yaygınlaşan küreselleşme karşıtı hareketler ve özellikle 2008 krizinden sonra yaygınlaşan işgal hareketleri de Gezi protestolarıyla benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları üzerinden incelenmiştir. Neoliberal politikalara ve bu politikaların uygulayıcısı konumundaki küresel kurum, kuruluş ve şirketlere karşı gelişen

küreselleşme karşıtı hareketlerin niteliği ve talepleri, Gezi protestolarının yapısından farklı olmakla birlikte, neoliberalizm karşıtlığı noktasında belli bir ölçüde benzerlik de taşımaktadır. Gezi protestosu direkt olarak neoliberalizmi hedef almasa da hareketin ortaya çıkışı, protesto repertuarı ve protestoda ileri sürülen talepler dikkate alındığında neoliberal politikalara yönelik bir itirazın olduğu da görülmektedir; ancak küreselleşme karşıtı hareketler gibi bu itirazı WTO veya IMF gibi küresel kuruluşlara karşı değil, AKP hükûmetine karşı yine üstü örtük şekilde ifade etmiştir. Bu noktada küreselleşme karşıtı veya işgal et hareketlerinin görece anarşist yapısı, Gezi protestolarının eylemsellik biçimini oluşturmamaktadır. İşgal et hareketleri de benzer şekilde yine neoliberal politikalara karşı özellikle 2008 küresel krizden sonra yaygınlaşmakla birlikte mekân işgallerinden oluşan eylem repertuarına sahiptir. Yol kapatma, kamp kurma, hatta kurumsal işleyişi durdurma adına hackleme gibi işlemler bu kapsamda değerlendirilmektedir. Gezi protestoları da bilindiği üzere önce Gezi Parkı'nın işgaliyle başlamış, özelleştirme politikalarına karşı bu işgallerle parkın kamusal kimliğini ön plana çıkarmıştır.

1970 kriziyle birlikte kapitalizmin birikim stratejisinin niceliksel değişimi ve bunun toplumsal hareketler üzerindeki etkisinin incelenmesinin ardından bu tezin üçüncü bölümünde AKP hegemonyası ele alınmıştır. AKP iktidara gelmeden 2002 öncesi Türkiye'deki ekonomi-politik koşulların ve AKP'nin iktidar olmasıyla birlikte IMF destekli başlattığı yapısal reformların anlatıldığı ilk başlıkların ardından, AKP'nin uyguladığı neoliberal politikalar ve bu politikaları uygularken toplumsal rızayı nasıl yeniden ürettiği konuları tezde somutlaştırılmıştır. Tezde AKP'nin iktidar olduktan sonra ilk yıllarında enflasyonu tek haneli rakamlara indirmesi, işsizliği azaltması, yabancı yatırımları arttırmasıyla, ekonomi yönetiminde görece bir iyileşme sağladığı ve bu şekilde genel ve yerel seçimlerde başarı kazandığı belirtilmekte; ancak 2008 krizinin ardından özellikle 2011 yılıyla birlikte neoliberal popülist politikalarının neo-muhafazakâr tutumla birlikte giderek

daha da otoriterleşen bir rejim kurma çabalarına dönüştürdüğü gösterilmektedir. Bu anlamda, bu çalışmada Gezi protestolarını ortaya çıkaran sınıfsal etmenlerle birlikte AKP hegemonyasının muhafazakâr yaşam tarzını dayatan, birtakım yasakçı uygulamaları yaygınlaştıran ve özgürlükleri kısıtlayan bir politik zeminin olduğu da savunulmaktadır. AKP hegemonyası tezde ele alınırken bu nedenle emeğin giderek esnekleştirilmesi, özelleştirme ve serbestleştirme politikalarının artması, doğanın ve çevrenin birtakım projelerle talan edilmesi gibi neoliberal politikalarla birlikte, hegemonyanın neoliberal popülist stratejileri ve toplumsal rızayı üreten ideolojik söylemleri de incelenmiştir. AKP hegemonyasının işgücü piyasasını yasal düzenlemeler yoluyla güvencesizleştirdiği, özelleştirme yoluyla doğayı ve çevreyi sınıfsal çıkarlar uğruna yeniden düzenlediği ve sosyal yardımlar aracılığıyla yoksulluğun politik içeriğini boşalttığı görülmektedir. Bu süreçte AKP hegemonyasının Türkiye'nin siyasi tarihinde önemli bir yer tutan sağ popülizmin araçlarına başvurduğu, milliyetçi-muhafazakâr söylemi yaygınlaştırdığı, teknokrat, projeci ve piyasacı popülist argümanlarla toplumsal rızayı yeniden ürettiği savunulmuştur. Gezi protestoları ortaya çıktığında dönemin Başbakanı Erdoğan'ın eylemcilere ilişkin "dış güçlerin maşaları", "faiz lobisinin piyonları" veya "yüzde 50'yi evde zor tutuyorum" gibi söylemleri de yine popülist stratejilerin birer tezahürü olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Gezi protestocuları neoliberal popülist söylemleri sıklıkla hedef almıştır.

Tezin dördüncü bölümünde ise Gezi protestoları ortaya çıkışı, protestocuların sınıfsal arka planı, hareketin niteliği ve eylem repertuarı yönünden alınmış; daha sonra protestoların aslında neyi protesto ettiği, AKP hegemonyasının gidişatına yönelik etkileri ve AKP hegemonyasının Gezi'nin ardından kendini yeniden nasıl güçlendirdiği gibi konular sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Gezi protestoları ilk iki haftasında Türkiye'de süregelmiş toplumsal hareketlerden farklı bir eylem repertuarıyla devam etmiştir. Duvar yazıları, sloganlar, sosyal medya paylaşımları ve bu

paylaşımların mizahi eleştirel yönünün güçlü olması eylemin kitleselleşmesinde etkili olmuştur; aynı şekilde eylemin barışçıl yönünün ve polisin orantısız şiddetle eylemcilere karşılık vermesinin de toplumda tepkiselliğe neden olmasıyla eylemin kitleselleşmesinde etkisi bulunmaktadır. Gezi kalkışmasının Türkiye çapında yaygınlaşma nedenine ilişkin iki sav bulunmaktadır; birincisi, eylemin AKP iktidarının baskıcı politikalarına ve yasakçı uygulamalarına karşı politik bir tepki merkezi oluşturduğu savı ve ikincisi de eylemin oluşmasına zemin hazırlayan emeğin güvencesizleştirilmesi, artan işsizlik ve neoliberal politikaların özellikle gençler üzerinde yarattığı umutsuzluk tablosunun etkisine ilişkin iddiadır (Bozkurt, 2015). Bu tezde Gezi'nin ortaya çıkışı, AKP hegemonyasının politik alanda yarattığı alternatifsizliğe, kapsayıcı hegemonyasının yaşam tarzına giderek daha fazla otoriter müdahalelerine ve özellikle 2008 krizinden sonra kontrolsüzce uygulanan neoliberal politikaların etkisine bağlanmıştır. Tezde ayrıca ekonomik krizin ardından tüm hayatı hedef alacak şekilde artan güvencesizliğin küresel arka planına da vurgu yapılmıştır.

Gezi kalkışmasının aktörü olarak Erdoğan tarafından adlandırılan *çapulcu*'nun neoliberal rejimin mağduru olduğu tezi, çalışmanın ana eksenini oluşturmaktadır. Çapulcunun sınıfsal arka planı ise Boratav ve Tonak'ın tanımladığı haliyle *potansiyel* işçi sınıfı olarak nitelenmiştir. Bu niteleme, çapulcunun, hangi sektörde olursa olsun güvencesiz bir yaşama ve geleceksizliğe mahkûm edilmesi, sömürüye daha açık hale getirilmesi, üretim araçları ve emeği üzerinde herhangi bir kontrolünün olmaması gibi nedenlerle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bu anlamda çapulcunun yeni orta sınıfın veya küçük burjuvanın üyesi olduğu iddiaları, eğitim, kültürel sermaye, yaşam tarzı gibi niteliklerle özdeşleştirildiği ölçüde eleştirilmiştir. Çapulcu diğer taraftan AKP hegemonyasının yarattığı kolektif iradenin bir parçası olmayı da reddetmektedir.

Gezi'de yeni protesto biçimleri ortaya çıkmış; hatta Gezi'ye ilişkin literatürde bu eylemsellik biçimleri romantize edilerek ele alınmıştır. Örneğin, Gezi Parkı'nın işgalden sonra eylemciler tarafından kamusal alana dönüştürülmesiyle kimi yazılarda "komün" olarak nitelendirilmiştir (Ay & Miraftab, 2016). Bu tarz nitelemeler, Gezi'de farklı bir siyasallığı görme 'iyi niyetini' taşısa da, kavramın içeriği ve tarihsel gelişimiyle bağdaşmamaktadır. Diğer taraftan, Gezi hareketinin anarşist bir nitelik taşıdığını belirten iddialar da Gezi'de devletin gerek Taksim Dayanışması tarafından, gerek eylemciler tarafından sıklıkla muhatap alınması, taleplerin devlet merkezli olması ve eylemciler tarafından iletilen sorunların devlet eliyle çözüleceğine yönelik kanaatin oluşması bakımından eksik ve hatalı olmaktadır. Gezi'yi oluşturan bileşenler içerisinde anarşist veya sosyalist grupların olması, hareketin tümünün anarşist veya sosyalist olduğunu belirtmek için yeterli değildir. Bu bağlamda, bu tezde Gezi protestoları eylemcilerinin ortak sınıfsal aidiyeti olmakla birlikte bir sınıf hareketi olarak nitelendirilmemiştir. Bu çalışmada Gezi'nin eylem biçimi olarak muhalefet ve direniş perspektifleri ekseninde bir ayrım yapılmış; bu ayrıma göre hareketin eylemsel niteliği sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Muhalefet bu bağlamda, siyasi iktidarı hedefleyen ve iktidarın tahakküm girişimlerine karşı verilen yanıt olarak nitelenmiş; direniş ise iktidarın tahakküm girişimlerine neden olan özellikler olarak kategorize edilmiştir (Baker, 1997). Tezde Gezi protestolarının direniş ve muhalefet perspektiflerini taşıdığı belirtilmiş; her iki eylem biçiminin protestonun kitleselleşmesi veya taleplerini gerçekleştirmesi gibi noktalarda avantaj ve dezavantajlara neden olduğu savunulmuştur. Çalışmanın ana savını oluşturan "*protestocular aslında neyi proteste etti*" başlığında, Gezi eylemcilerinin 'daha çok' neoliberal popülizmi hedef aldığı, protestoların neoliberal rejimin somutlaştığı merkezlere, işyerlerine çok fazla yansıtılmadığı, AKP hegemonyasının ekonomik ajandasından çok popülist söylemlerinin hedef alındığı belirtmiştir. Bu çalışmada "sabah iş, akşam direniş" üzerinden gelişen

eylemselliğin, işyerlerini, bankaları, işsizliğe ve güvencesizliğe neden olan ekonomik ajandayı yeterince hedef almamanın ve eylemlerin özellikle Erdoğan'ın söylemlerine karşıtlık üzerinden gelişen bir eksende protestoya dönüşmesinin Gezi'nin kısa sürede sönümlenmesine neden olduğu savunulmuştur. Gezi hareketinin kısıtlılıklarıyla birlikte, ortaya çıkardığı toplumsal muhalefetle AKP hegemonyasını zayıflattığı da görülmektedir. Protesto sürecinde iktidarın eylemi sonlandırma noktasında izlediği hamleler, iktidar kanadından yapılan açıklamalar, sivil toplum ve toplumda tanınmış kişiler üzerinden yapılan hegemonik hamleler, eylem sonrasında hegemonyanın toplumsal rıza devşirme noktasında en önemli ittifaklarından biri olan Gülen cemaatiyle ayrışması, dünyada ve Avrupa'da yoğun eleştirilere ve uyarılara maruz kalması gibi durumlar AKP hegemonyasının gidişatını etkilemiş ve hegemonyayı zayıflatmıştır. Ancak en genel haliyle özetlenecek olursa, Gezi'nin çok parçalı ve örgütsüz yapısının siyasi bir alternatif blok yaratamaması, AKP hegemonyasının sivil toplum, medya ve burjuva desteğiyle sönümlenmesine, protestonun siyasi alanda etkisini yitirmesine ve eylemin 'Gezi Ruhu' olarak kalmasına yani politik alanda somutlaşamamasına neden olmuştur. Diğer taraftan, Gezi'nin ortaya koyduğu yeni protesto biçimi ve yeni eleştiri dili, politik alanda belli dönüşümleri de başarmış; muhalefet partilerinin siyaset yapma biçiminde kısmî değişimlerin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu nedenle bu tezde "Gezi'nin politik sonuçları, başarılı olup olmadığı" gibi bir tartışmaya, bir toplumsal hareketin kronolojik bir bakış açısıyla veya seçim sonuçları gibi kriterlerle değerlendirilemeyeceği düşünüldüğü için yanıt aranmamıştır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezde Gezi hareketini oluşturan dinamikler incelenmiş ve bu dinamiklerin eylem repertuarıyla AKP hegemonyasının gidişatına nasıl etki ettiği sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Gezi'yi oluşturan dinamiklerin daha iyi anlaşılması adına, özellikle Gramsci'nin hegemonya kavramından ve bu kavramın burjuva egemenliğinin ekonomik ve siyasal krizlere rağmen nasıl yeniden üretildiği noktasında zor ve rıza mekanizmalarını anlatan

teorilerinden yararlanılmıştır. Yine Gramsci'nin hegemonya krizinin oluşma nedenleri ve hegemonya mücadelesinin niteliklerine ilişkin çalışmaları ele alınmış ve toplumsal hareketler literatürü bu eksende tarihsel bakış açısıyla tartışılmıştır. Bu tartışma bağlamında özellikle Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler literatürü özellikle metodolojik altyapısı ve birtakım ontolojik ön kabulleriyle sorunsallaştırılmış ve bu literatürün Gezi protestolarını da açıklamaya girişen temel kavram setleri tek tek tartışılmıştır. Gezi hareketiyle ilişkilendirilmesi bakımından küreselleşme karşıtı ve işgal et hareketleri de aynı şekilde ele alınmıştır. Türkiye bağlamında, AKP hegemonyasının neoliberal rejimi, bu rejimin işgücü piyasası üzerinde esnekleştirme ve güvencesizleştirme politikaları, özelleştirme uygulamaları ve sosyal politikalarıyla birlikte toplumsal rızayı üretme noktasında geliştirdiği neoliberal popülist stratejileri incelenmiştir. Gezi protestoları bölümde ise, protestoların ortaya çıkış ve gelişimi, hareketin yeni eylem biçimi ve niteliği, eylemin aktörü olarak çapulcunun sınıfsal arka planı, protestocuların tam olarak neyi protesto ettiği ve son olarak AKP hegemonyasına yönelik etkisinin ne olduğu ele alınmıştır. Tezde, Gezi hareketinin, AKP hegemonyasının neoliberal otoriter rejiminin sonucu olarak ortaya çıktığı; her ne kadar tarihi Gezi Parkı'nın korunması amacıyla başlamış olsa da, özelleştirme, esnekleştirme, güvencesizleştirme gibi neoliberal politikaların etkisiyle kitlesel protestolara dönüştüğü savunulmuştur. Bu bağlamda mesele aslında tam da üç ağaç meselesidir. Üç ağacın kesilmesine karşı çıkış, salt Taksim'de küçük yeşil bir alana müdahaleye karşı çıkmak değil; muhafazakar saldırılarla bir tarihi/geçmişi, özelleştirmelerle tüm doğa ve yaşam alanlarını, güvencesizleştirmeyle insanların geleceğini yok etmeyi hedefleyen bir iktidar ilişkisine karşı çıkmak anlamına da gelmektedir. Gezi protestolarının siyasal öznesi olarak çapulcu, neoliberal rejimin mağduru olarak ekonomik ve politik alternatifsizlik nedeniyle bir gelecek tahayyülü ortaya koyamaması açısından geleceksiz; yaşam alanları neoliberal projeler nedeniyle yok

edilmek istenen ve en önemlisi, çapulcu güvencesizliği, her geçen gün daha fazla sömürülmesi, emeği ve üretimi üzerinde hiçbir kontrolü olmaması gibi nedenlerden dolayı potansiyel işçi sınıfının üyesidir. Diğer taraftan, Gezi eylemcilerinin sınıf temelli ortak bir aidiyeti olmasına rağmen, bu hareket bir sınıf hareketi olarak nitelenmemelidir. Protestocular eylem sürecinde neoliberal düzenin işleyişinden ve merkezlerinden daha fazla neoliberal popülizmi hedef almışlardır; anarşist, sosyalist grupların sistem karşıtı yönlendirmeleri olsa da protestolar daha çok Erdoğan merkezli bir muhalefette ilerlemiştir. Bir diğer nokta ise, Gezi eylemlerinde muhalefet ve direniş perspektifli iki farklı eylem biçimi ortaya çıkmış; bu perspektiflerin eylemin gidişatı ve eylemcilerin taleplerinin gerçekleşmesi noktasında avantajları ve dezavantajları olmuştur. Direniş, ülke çapında gösterilerin kitleselleşmesini ve yaygınlaşmasını sağlarken bireysel olduğu ölçüde hareketin ortak bir talep etrafında örgütlenmesini engellemiş; muhalefet nosyonu ise, eylemcilerin çok örgütlü ve dağınık yapısından dolayı ideolojik ayrışmayı önleyememiş ve alternatif bir siyasi blok ortaya koyamamıştır. Sonuç olarak Gezi protestoları tüm kısıtlılıklarına rağmen, AKP hegemonyasını zayıflatmış ve protestoların ardından alternatif bir siyasi blok oluşturamasa bile hegemonya krizini derinleştirmiştir. Gezi'yle birlikte AKP'nin siyasi alanda ve sivil toplumdaki hegemonik ittifakları bölünmüş ve diğer toplumsal kesimlerle kurduğu eklemlenmeleri kırılmıştır. Ancak, protestolar alternatif bir siyasi zemin ortaya çıkaramaması ve toplumsal muhalefetin içinde bulunduğu birtakım koşullar nedeniyle AKP hegemonyasının yeniden güç kazanmasını engelleyememiştir. Tüm bunlara rağmen Gezi protestoları, iktidarın eleştirel ve esprili bir şekilde ifşa edilmesi, kolektivizmin ve dayanışmanın güçlenmesi, alternatif iletişim, ifade ve medya araçlarının yaygınlaşması noktasında ve en önemlisi yeni eylem diliyle farklı bir siyasallaşma alanı yaratmıştır.

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