

# A Look at the Gezi Park Protests through the Lens of Media

Süleyman Hakan Yılmaz, Yasemin Gülşen Yılmaz

**Abstract**—The Gezi Park protests of 2013 have significantly changed the Turkish agenda and its effects have been felt historically. The protests, which rapidly spread throughout the country, were triggered by the proposal to recreate the Ottoman Army Barracks to function as a shopping mall on Gezi Park located in Istanbul's Taksim neighbourhood despite the oppositions of several NGOs and when trees were cut in the park for this purpose.

Once the news that the construction vehicles entered the park on May 27 spread on social media, activists moved into the park to stop the demolition, against whom the police used disproportioned force. With this police intervention and the then prime-minister Tayyip Erdoğan's insistent statements about the construction plans, the protests turned into anti-government demonstrations, which then spread to the rest of the country, mainly in big cities like Ankara and İzmir. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs' June 23rd reports, 2.5 million people joined the demonstrations in 79 provinces, that is all of them, except for the provinces of Bayburt and Bingöl, while even more people shared their opinions via social networks. As a result of these events, 8 civilians and 2 security personnel lost their lives, namely police chief Mustafa Sarı, police officer Ahmet Küçükdağ, citizens Mehmet Ayvaltaş, Abdullah Cömert, Ethem Sarıslülük, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, Ahmet Atakan, Berkin Elvan, Burak Can Karamanoğlu, Mehmet İstif, and Elif Çermik, and 8163 more were injured. Besides being a turning point in Turkish history, the Gezi Park protests also had broad repercussions in both in Turkish and in global media, which focused on Turkey throughout the events.

Our study conducts content analysis of three Turkish reporting newspapers with varying ideological standpoints, *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* ve *Yeni Şafak*, in order to reveal their basic approach to news casting in context of the Gezi Park protests. Headlines, news segments, and news content relating to the Gezi protests were treated and analysed for this purpose. The aim of this study is to understand the social effects of the Gezi Park protests through media samples with varying political attitudes towards news casting.

**Keywords**—Gezi Park, media, news casting, tree.

## I. INTRODUCTION

WHEN talking about Gezi Park protests, the mass protests which started İstanbul-Taksim centered then spread throughout Turkey between 28th May 2013 and 30th August 2013 are meant. Gezi Park incidents have many different characteristics in term of Turkey's history. The most distinct characteristic of these incidents is the attendance all across the country. According to official numbers, 3.6 million people, according unofficial numbers 7.5 million people attended the Gezi Park protests [1]. Also according to General Directorate

of Security's data, there have been 4,900 protests relating to Gezi Park in 80 provinces except in the provinces of Bayburt and Bingöl, and during these protests 5.300 people were taken into custody, 160 of which were arrested [2].

Participants come from a wide range of social backgrounds. They include, Alevis, anti-Capitalist Muslims, Revolutionist Muslims, with the Beşiktaş fan-lub ÇARŞI in the lead, supporters of Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray football teams, feminist organizations, Kemalist-Nationalist groups, Kurds, LGBT's, unions, socialist parties and idealist groups, besides Taksim Dayanışma (Taksim support group) as an uniting organization [3]. Of course, we should add that a huge portion of the participants were people who joined the protests in different parts of the country, spontaneously and through their own will, without any group identity. Each group and individual had their own historical reasons for attending the protests. Here it should be underlined that for the first time in Turkish political history a protest brought together the aforementioned groups. It made them for the first time act together. Because of this, Gezi Park offers a beautiful example of ideological variety without a hierarchical order. What happened in Gezi Park was taking a stand against the government side-by-side and making the dream for a new life relevant no matter how short lived. At the same, it is the biggest civil disobedience case our country has ever seen [4]. Gezi Park protests were not made up of a singular form of protest, rather of different protests that developed throughout the process. It is possible to observe the evolution of creative protests such as marches, meetings, park forums, sharing through social media, and the 'standing man' protests. By sociologist Nilüfer Göle's observation, we were facing a rich protest repertoire [5].

2013 Gezi Park protests are one the biggest mass actions in Turkish history, similar to the 15-16 June worker movements or the 1st of May protests in 1977. The high number of participation made Gezi Park protests an important event recorded in Turkish history. Another important point that made Gezi Park protests and the related incidents interesting must be perceived through recent political history. Gezi Park protests have a place in history because of the fact that it is the biggest dissident movement against The Justice and Development Party which came to power with 2002 elections and changed the Turkish political balance with the politics they implement during their 12-years long rule.

In *TIME* magazine's 2013 June issue analysing the Gezi Park protests, Piotr Zalweski states: "*In Turkey, there have been many protests until now against Prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan because of his attitude towards press*

Süleyman Hakan Yılmaz is with Selçuk University, Communication Faculty, Konya, Turkey (e-mail: shakany@yahoo.com).

Yasemin Gülşen Yılmaz is with Selçuk University, Communication Faculty, Konya, Turkey (e-mail: yasegulsen@hotmail.com).

*freedom, against new regulations on the abortion law, AK Party government's attitude towards the Syrian issue, the incarceration of Chief of Defence and several generals, the negotiations and relations with PKK and the regulations on alcohol consumption and sales."*

It has been pointed out in this article in *TIME* magazine that the protest in Taksim Gezi Park are distinct and bear other dimensions compared to these [6].

In this study, Gezi Park incidents have been examined through content analysis of the news and publications appearing in Turkish press since the first week of the protests, together with an analysis of the ideologies of the newspapers selected.

Gezi Park is located in Taksim, which can be considered the center of Istanbul. The park was opened with an official ceremony on September 4th, 1942. Back then it was named "İnönü Gezisi," which means that the Taksim Gezi Park carried the name of the "National Chief" İsmet İnönü's name when it first opened [7]. Taksim Gezi Park is a historical center for both Beyoğlu and Istanbul, as well as nowadays, a cultural, entertainment, trade and tourism center for modern Istanbul. Being the center of a global metropolis like Istanbul makes Taksim and its surroundings both important and precious because of the profit to be made from urbanization projects.

In the recent winds of globalization, Istanbul underwent drastic changes; while rapid construction brought along by urban transformation projects turned historical Istanbul into a global metropolis, this process also caused major problems in the terms of urban planning. The biggest complaint from Istanbul residents against this transformation is the rapid loss of the city's green spaces due to constructions. The silhouette of Istanbul changed quickly from blue of the sea and the green of nature to grey of the concrete.

Furthermore, this urban transformation includes the "banishment" of the struggling poor from the old neighborhoods in the center to the remote parts on the outskirts of the city.

This process was hard for the working poor both in the sense of commuting to their jobs and generally as far as their settlement was concerned. However, the removal of poor people from the center meant that very profitable construction zones were created for corporate capital. Parallel to this, the highly populated important centers of Taksim and Beyoğlu, experience an intense reconstruction. Gezi Park has an important function with its trees and greenery for city's residents for taking a breath and relaxing among all of this, away from the intensity of city. According to A. from Ankara who joined the Gezi Park protests and defines himself as an Anti-Capitalist Muslim, Gezi Park is the only place around *İstiklal Caddesi* to which people can go without paying money [3]. Moreover, Mahir Öztaş who was born in 1951, describes Taksim Gezi as "everyone's leisurely touring space" in his book called *Taksim Bir Senliği Yaşamak*, in which he describes the 1950s. This shows Gezi Park is not just important for the city today but it is a part of its historical heritage [8].

The park, which is important for the city, is also one of the precious areas that can create significant profit once it is open to construction. The main conflict behind the Gezi Park protests is these two contradictory points of view. Taksim Gezi Park which affected Turkish history and both incited and hosted the mass incidents, is located in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district, northeast of Taksim Square and between Cumhuriyet and Asker Ocağı Mete streets [9].

As a part of making Taksim Square more suitable for pedestrians, a project prepared by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality proposed to rebuild the Topçu Barracks (Ottoman Army) to function as a shopping mall, a hotel, and luxury residence on top of Gezi Park. The original Topçu Barracks, stood in the place of today's Taksim Gezi Park between the years of 1780 and 1940. Although he didn't witness the construction of the Topçu Barracks, Öztaş wrote in his memoir these lines about the constructions of the barracks; "*In year 1780, there have been constructions of military buildings in the area because of the need for a modern army. In year 1806, Topcu Barracks were built by III. Selim, the empty plot on the west side of the barracks were used as a drill area*" [8]."

Barracks were torn down upon Lutfi Kirdar's, the Istanbul Governor and Mayor then, request and with the advice of Henri Prost, a European city planner [10].

The proposal to rebuild the Topçu Barracks combined with the fact that it would be used as luxury residences and a shopping mall, and the fact that this plan would harm the greenery of Gezi Park, created a reaction among the public. Taksim Platform was formed by non-governmental organizations who joint forces with an interest in the subject.

On May 27th, 2013, after construction machines entered Gezi Park and started pulling out trees, activists started camping out on Gezi Park and with the help of social media the number of activists increased into massive amounts. While the numbers of people who camped out on Taksim Gezi Park grew, an intense time for both sides kicked off.

The waiting at Taksim Gezi Park combined with the fact that police and İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality guards disproportionate intervention, caused people from different parts of Istanbul to gather at Gezi Park. Once the news from Gezi Park spread through the country with the help of social media, the public reactions rapidly grew as well. During the course of the events, Gezi Park and Taksim Square stayed under the control of protestors for more than two weeks but during the incidents between security forces and protestors 8 civilians and 2 security agents lost their lives and many people were injured. Gezi Park and Taksim Square became the center of the many other protests across the country [11].

The requests of the mass that joined Gezi Park protests were summarized in this way in the *Gezi Park Incidents through the Perspective of Politics and Social Science* report prepared by *Science Academy*; "*Social requests that can be identified as post-materialist include environmental awareness or recognition of different identities, beyond material gains. Especially the last few years women's right of ownership of their own bodies was questioned, alcohol consumption was*

limited, LGBT rights were nullified, HES and nuclear plant initiatives and auctions made with income worries destroyed the environment, statues, theatres and movie theatres were demolished and generally any focal points that might criticise the government were weakened. The purpose of Gezi meetings wasn't to overthrow government, make a revolution according to a certain ideology or make an aspired ideology dominant, it was to give voice to the requests that differences and different life styles should be respected" [12].

Once again, in a research conducted by Istanbul Bilgi University, 70% of the attendees of Gezi Park say that they do not feel close to any political party. 81,2% of the protestors defined themselves as "freedomists" while 64,5% defined themselves as "secular" [13]. In the research conducted by Konda during Gezi Park protests (6-7 June 2013) by interviewing 4411 individuals, majority of the protestors stated their "sensitivities" especially regarding the broadening of social freedoms. Another important result of the research was the usage frequency of social networks by the protestors. In the research, 58,1% of the attendees answered the question "Why are you at Gezi Park?" by saying "I think the freedoms are being restricted." "Why are you in the park and what do you request?" question was answered "freedom" by a majority of 34,1% [14].

There have been many different interpretations regarding the Taksim Gezi Park incidents, incidents themselves and the social, economic, cultural and political courses behind the incidents were analysed by different ideological approaches. However, two different base ideological views caused two different centered interpretations to emerge. Shortly, the first of these interpretations represent the dissenter standing against the AKP government, second one presents a view that sides with the government, criticises the incidents while keeping their distance.

Science Academy, asked a study group which includes Yeşim Arat, Zeynep Aynacı, Ayşe Buğra, Refet Gürkaynak, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Çağlar Keyder, to prepare a report which summarizes the aforementioned situation this way; *"The chain of incidents which started on 28 May at Taksim Gezi Park and the reactions arose from 79 provinces of Turkey to these incidents caused the emergence of two opposing explanation efforts. One of these explanations is that these incidents are results of games orchestrated by maybe inside maybe outside forces or maybe the combination of both in order to overthrow a democratically chosen government through unofficial ways. The other approach is that these developments are the belated democratisation and democracy request of upper status groups. Other than these two dominant views, protection of secularity, conversation of Atatürk's values, environmentalism and so on. A series of alternatives were voiced as well."* [12].

These two different approaches form towards Gezi incidents also effect the subject of our study below, which is the media's way of producing and choosing publication elements on Gezi protests such, as news, interpretations and photographs. While news content analysis reveals the different

archaic ideologies behind the publications process, these differences determine the publishing choices.

Gezi Park incidents caused significant debates within the media. Different form and content of media-centered arguments appeared during the process and after the process. These media centered arguments occupied the social agenda. Main stream media's failure to broadcast the incidents on 27th May, the day incidents started, pushed a major part of society to follow the developments on Taksim Gezi Park on global media agents. For instance, during the hours when the incidents wound up, CNN Türk news channel continued to air a documentary on Penguins, which caused them to be the focus of media-centered criticisms. Moreover, penguins became a symbol during the incidents and through this symbolism, sometimes openly sometimes subtly, mainstream media was criticised. What is significant is that during Gezi Park incidents "new media" or social media were used intensely as well as normal media publications, which is befitting to the age we live in.

However, the most important development about the Gezi Park protests is that social media channels were used as the main communication device or rather platform by the protestors. For instance, between 31st May and 2nd June when the incidents took place, there have been 49 million tweets under the title of Gezi Park Protests [15]. On Twitter, following tags were opened about Gezi Park protests; #direngeziparki, #occupygezi, #direnankara, #taksim, #direngezi. The countries that tweeted the most were; Turkey, U.S.A., U.K. and France. Most used languages were; Turkish, English, Spanish and German [16].

Protestors that gathered in the Taksim Gezi Park and people living in different parts of Istanbul or Turkey, who are sensitive towards the developments, connected through social media and organized protests throughout the country starting with Istanbul with the help of social media. Furthermore, to support the protestors in Taksim Gezi Park, many different needs such as shelter, food, and human networks, and so on, were resolved by organizations through social media communication. In some ways, the Gezi Park incidents were a modern mass movement shaped by social media. What should be underlined here is that the crowds attending the Gezi Park protests weren't organised in the classic sense. During the Gezi Park protests and afterwards, analysis shows that protests did not happen by the motivation of any political party rather emerged naturally. This has been underlined and emphasized frequently. Twenty-first century individualism and personal characteristics are based on the search for freedom projected upon life [17].

These outstanding characteristics of Gezi Park protest make them on par with global protests. With global protests we mean the recent, post-modern protest forms, such as there has been a link created between Gezi Park and Egypt's Tahrir Square events, a reference to the revolt happened in 2011 against Hüsnü Mübarek. On January 25th, 2011, the protests started against Hüsnü Mübarek brought together different political groups of the country which fired up a political process that ended the 31 years long Hüsnü Mübarek

rulership. Moreover, another massive protest identified with a square, Tiananmen Square, happened in 1989 June in China's capitol Beijing. While the students, academics and intellectuals gathered in the square wanted more freedom of speech, protests were suppressed by government violence; in global memory the symbolic photograph of the protestor who stood in front of a tank to prevent it from passing remained [13]. Square-based movements give life to a communal revolt in the modern sense as well as pointing to an image of an island torn away from the system.

Furthermore, there have been analogies made between Gezi Park and Occupy Wall Street protests. It is a reference to the civil protests and social movements initiated by a Canadian activist group Adbusters on September 17th, 2011 in U.S.A.'s financial centre Wall Street, New York. Social media function as a substitute for the classic sense of mass organizations. The shares made over the social networks, sent messages, dialogues that developed mutually, image, sound, information and document sharing enabled large masses to come together in direction of mutual goals in a short span of time and helped to them to move together.

This togetherness caused a new way of communication to emerge and develop, which is modern compared to prior forms and full of new possibilities. It is possible to express this whole process of the Gezi protests as a social media centered organization [3].

Social media, especially Facebook, Twitter and similar communication networks with their instant reaction, transactionality, increasing the speed of thought, features of joining a social discussion network, and the usage of mobile devices with internet access came with the the power to mobilize masses and provided political dissenters with new possibilities [18]. After Gezi Park protests, social media became a topic to consider for the government and there have been legal steps taken to regulate these new forms of communication. Social media changed the classical way of doing politics, while creating a space of dissent that is hard to control. Although this phenomenon started with Gezi Park protests is new in the history of Turkey, for the world it is part of an ongoing global process.

Once again, in relation to social media, another observation to be made was the new political language, the humour, that manifested during Gezi Park protests within social media, and in urban areas where protests took place, on the banners of the protestors, graffiti, slogans etc. This language is both political, but at the same time it is distinct from the classical political language as we know it. The new political language, manifested during Gezi Park as humour, is the language of the generation Y, which possess "nonproportional intelligence" as it is referred to nowadays. This language, which feeds upon humour and daily life, is new but it is also full of associations and references. It is the first time in Turkish political history that a language full of humorous content was used for mass communication. First time in the history of the Republic this language, which can be described as popular urban humour, is reflected onto politics within a scope of creativity [4].

Especially in the creation of this language, social media usage, new communication forms that manifested within social media and new worlds technology opened up especially for younger generations have a very important place. From this aspect "newlife" is crucial for the formation of the "new political language." The young generation gathered in Gezi Park, used a language enriched with humour and satire so they were more "pleasant" in the eyes of the public, also they made their voice heard with the help of a smile. This was hopeful for the social factions, which were weary of discourse of classical politics. The prime minister at the time Tayyip Erdoğan coined the term "marauders" during Gezi Park incidents; these "marauders" rapidly drew both attention and sympathy from the world and the country because of their humorous way of voicing politics and creativity.

Banners, graffiti, notices and texts of speech which were created with this language, swiftly fed the popular culture through social media shares and new Gezi Park centered popular culture elements swiftly got into circulation.

If we return to the classical media publications, we can say that they fulfill an important function of creating data. In the scope of the study, *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Yeni Şafak* newspapers, which have different ideologies, the news they have prepared and published during the first week of Gezi Park protests on their first pages, news titles, news texts were analysed and examined through a content analysis technique.

TABLE I  
CUMHURİYET, HÜRRIYET AND YENİ ŞAFAK NEWSPAPERS' NEWS COUNT ON  
NEWS ABOUT TAKSİM GEZİ PARK ON THEIR FIRST PAGES BETWEEN THE  
DATES OF 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

	Cumhuriyet	Hürriyet	Yeni Şafak	Total
29.5.2013	1	1	0	2
30.5.2013	0	1	0	1
31.5.2013	1	1	0	2
1.6.2013	10	5	1	16
2.6.2013	4	6	7	17
3.6.2013	6	4	4	14
4.6.2013	8	12	12	32
TOTAL	30	30	24	84

Taksim Gezi Park on their first pages between the dates of 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013 is shown. As it is shown in Table1, *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers are on equal grounds with both of them having 30 news items on Gezi within a week's period. *Yeni Şafak* newspaper however only has 27 news item because it didn't publish anything on Gezi Park on their pages for the first three days.

*Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers followed the agenda by publishing news about to Gezi Park incidents' others on their first pages by 36%. *Yeni Şafak* newspaper only had a rate of 28%.

While *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers' headline count is respectively 5 and 6, *Yeni Şafak* newspaper follows them with 3 headlines. *Yeni Şafak* newspaper is indecisive about publishing the news on the first few days of incidents, then on the following days it takes an oppositional attitude towards the incidents.

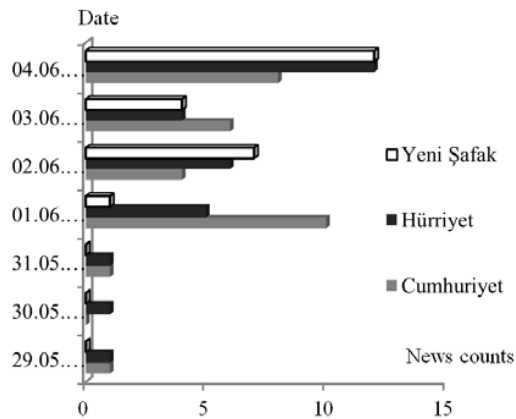


Fig. 1 Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet and Yeni Şafak newspapers' news count on news about Taksim Gezi Park on their first pages between the dates of 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

TABLE II  
CUMHURİYET, HÜRRIYET AND YENİ ŞAFK NEWSPAPERS' TOTAL NEWS COUNT ON NEWS ABOUT TAKSİM GEZİ PARK ON THEIR FIRST PAGES BETWEEN THE DATES OF 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

Newspapers	Total news count
Cumhuriyet	30
Hürriyet	30
Yeni Şafak	24
TOTAL	84

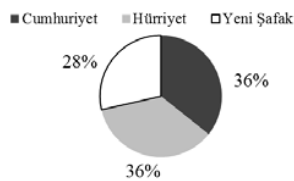


Fig. 2 Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet and Yeni Şafak newspapers' total news count on news about Taksim Gezi Park on their first pages between the dates of 29.05.2013 - 4.6.2013

TABLE III  
CUMHURİYET, HÜRRIYET AND YENİ ŞAFK NEWSPAPERS' NEWS COUNT ON HEADLINE ABOUT TAKSİM GEZİ PARK ON THEIR FIRST PAGES BETWEEN THE DATES OF 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

Newspapers	News count on headline
Cumhuriyet	5
Hürriyet	6
Yeni Şafak	3
TOTAL	14

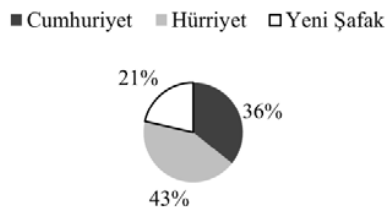


Fig. 3 Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet and Yeni Şafak newspapers' news count on headline about Taksim Gezi Park on their first pages between the dates of 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

TABLE IV  
CUMHURİYET, HÜRRIYET AND YENİ ŞAFK NEWSPAPERS' FREQUENTLY USED WORDS' COUNT IN NEWS ON HEADLINE ABOUT TAKSİM GEZİ PARK ON THEIR FIRST PAGES BETWEEN THE DATES OF 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

	Cumhuriyet	Hürriyet	Yeni Şafak	TOTAL
AKP	5	0	0	5
BDP	2	2	1	5
CHP	11	3	12	26
MHP	1	1	2	4
Prime Minister	11	7	9	27
President	2	1	0	3
Government	5	1	0	6
Erdoğan	16	3	12	31
Kılıçdaroğlu	7	1	0	8
Taksim Gezi Park	2	4	3	9
Taksim	13	20	20	53
Police	25	37	15	77
Tree	2	5	6	13
Bepper spray	5	7	4	16
Activist	5	5	3	13
TOTAL	112	97	87	296

#### Frequently used words

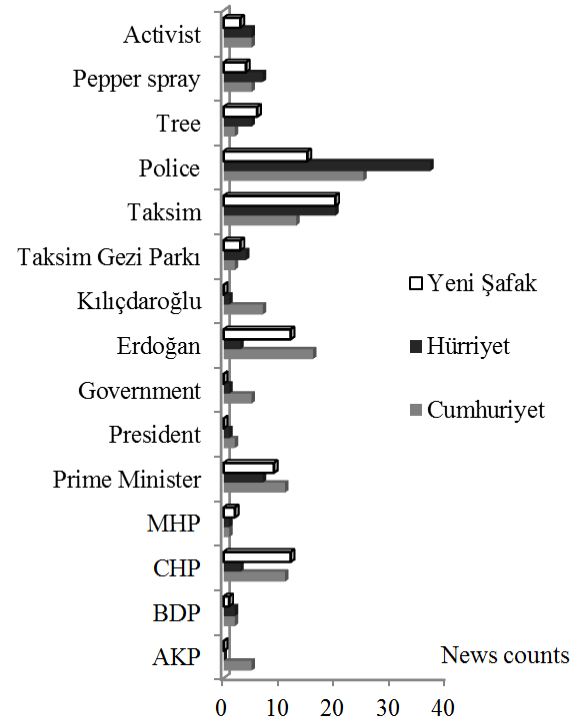


Fig. 4 Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet and Yeni Şafak newspapers' frequently used words' count in news on headline about Taksim Gezi Park on their first pages between the dates of 29.5.2013 - 4.6.2013

*Cumhuriyet* newspaper is one of the three newspapers whose news were examined in our study, it is also one of the most essential newspapers of Turkish press which represents the Kemalist left tradition. As a result of its ideological line, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper is also one of the most powerful dissenting publication organs against the AKP government. It continued its dissenting attitude against AKP government

during Gezi Park protests, supported Gezi Park protestors with its news and news headlines, and criticised the government's attitude towards the protestors and the police violence towards the protestors. The headlines *Cumhuriyet* newspaper used on the first week of the incidents are the greatest indicators of its publication policy. Starting from May 29th, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper used the following headlines: "*Resistance Against Gezi Slaughter*," "*The People are Resisting*," "*The People are Revolting*," "*This tyranny is one of a kind*," "*World Press 'Turkish Spring is Coming'*," "*Everywhere is Gezi*," "*The People are clashing*," "*Everywhere is Taksim*" and "*The Imam is also a marauder*," etc. In fact, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in the following periods got affected by the political atmosphere of the Gezi Park incidents and as a result adopted a more liberal attitude by renewing its publication policy and staff.

*Hürriyet* newspaper is one of Turkey's most essential organizations just like *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. The "Turkish Press's Admiral Ship" definition is used for *Hürriyet* newspaper, which reminds us that it is a press organization that is "in the center." However, the aforementioned "center" definition has been changed because of AKP government and its suppressive policies towards the media. Yet, *Hürriyet* newspaper, even though, the corporation that it is owned by had some trouble with AKP government previously, followed a balanced publication policy during Gezi Park protests and was sensitive to publish news that formed a bridge between protestors and the government officials. The open support that *Cumhuriyet* newspaper provided the Gezi Park protestors with, cannot be found among the publications of the *Hürriyet* newspaper. Starting from May 29th, *Hürriyet* newspaper used these headlines: "*There was something wrong with the gas, eyvallah*," "*Police be proportionate and listen to the government*," "*They burned down police vehicle*," "*Internal Affairs, within 48 provinces 90 protests 53 people were injured and 939 were arrests*," "*Almost got crushed in Taksim*," "*The Gezi Clean up*," "*In 67 Provinces 235 protests, 135 vehicles burned down, 1730 people were arrested*," "*Balance sheet is heavy*," "*Kılıçdaroğlu: The Prime Minister needs to apologize to the people*," "*Bahçeli: Turkey is at the last phase of confrontation*," "*The Message has been received*," "*7th day of the protest*," "*Police did not stop using gas*," "*Let's stop this while it is still okay*," "*The statement should have come from The Prime Minister not Gül*," "*I could not understand what the dear president wanted to say*," "*There is a 50% that is hard to contain*," "*Markets did not resist Gezi*," "*2 day-long strike in Taksim*," "*We are worried, disproportionate force should be investigated*," "*Gezi Park question at a quiz show*," "*Izmir Bar Association Inquires*."

While *Cumhuriyet* newspaper used Taksim Gezi Park protestors as a news source in many of its news, *Hürriyet* newspaper used and gave huge coverage to government officials, AKP's prominent people and the President's statements about Gezi Park. From this respect, *Hürriyet* newspaper followed a careful publication policy, which took into account relations with and within the government during Gezi Park.

On the other hand, *Yeni Şafak* newspaper follows a very different publication policy in its reporting than *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers. *Yeni Şafak* newspaper as a representative of the liberal-Islamic ideology adapted a publication strategy that supported the AKP government. During Gezi Park protests, it has been one of the most important publication organizations, which defended the government while making news that sided with the government.

*Yeni Şafak* newspaper, refused to see the Taksim-centered incidents happened on the 29th, 30th and 31st of May, did not contain any news about Gezi Park protests on its pages. The absence of these news is tantamount to running away from the Professional responsibilities of journalistic ethics. For the subsequent four days, in which *Yeni Şafak* newspaper published the Gezi Park news, it followed a more balanced journalism ethics; however, with the spreading of the incidents to the whole country, *Yeni Şafak* newspaper adopted an attitude against the Gezi Park protestors and made publications supportive of the government. Yet again, the newspaper interpreted the Gezi Park protests as conspiracy against AKP government and an undemocratic movement originating from abroad. Moreover, the newspaper associated the incidents with 367 crisis, the April 27th e-manifesto, attack on the Turkish Council of State and Operation Sledgehammer. The newspaper took an active stance alongside the government against the political and social polarization, which appeared by way of Gezi Park. As a result of this stance, the newspaper defined many different formations and organization as "the other" because they were critical of AKP government and made statements against them. The formations and organizations which the newspaper took a stance against include, CHP, protestors, TUSİAD, USA, Western press, KESK, DİSK, Twitter and Facebook users, artists who supported Gezi protests, international advertisement agencies, foreign news agencies, legal and illegal left organizations.

*Yeni Şafak* newspaper reported many conspiracy theories on its pages during the time of the incidents. For instance, it wrote that Gezi Park protestors will make provocations on Miraj night and will harass citizens who go to the mosques. *Yeni Şafak* newspaper made a swift transformation from journalism to Gezi Park opposition, at the same time provided samples of strategic publishing.

## II. CONCLUSION

- According to German political scientist Hannah Arendt, who lived between the years 1906-1975, "Doing politics" means "people who share the same time and space and a mutual life, all of whom have the same level of humanity, therefore, all of whom are equal; But because of this exact reason none of whom are identical, hence, all of whom are different people, by exchanging views with each other, showing themselves to others with their actions, trying to convince each other with their discourses, being active with the purposed of creating a mutual agency will in the direction of a mutual view about the problems that

interest their mutual life” [5]. “Public Sphere” is define as such the sphere of “political agency.” Taksim Gezi Park protests form great examples for Arendt's definition of “doing politics.” This is a first in Turkish political history.

- Yet again, Gezi Park protests are a process formed by participant action, which grassroots, in the full meaning of the term, for the first time in Turkish political history. It is not a process that happened from top to bottom with the push of outside forces; rather it a community forming within itself with the social demands made from bottom to top. According to Nilüfer Göle's observation, “*While square movement keeps being independent from the political parties, keeps being autonomous, protects its innocence under the shadow of the trees, it renews democracy's social fancy and structure. On the other hand, if it puts itself in the place of a political movement and it moves away from democracy*” [5]. In this context, Gezi Park protests provide an opportunity for the enrichment of Turkish democracy.
- The most important infrastructural factor which fed Taksim Gezi Park protests' “spontaneity” is social media. Social media became both an area for communication and also evolved towards being a cyber-public sphere. This public sphere is the same public sphere Habermas or Arendt mention, in which equal citizens communicate with each other directly. In this context, Taksim Gezi Park protests are a form of communal existence starting out in cyber space then transforming into real life, into flesh and bone.
- Taksim Gezi Park protests express both the result of a global process and they are Turkey's way of articulation of that process within its own geography. The tools that were used, forms of the protests, political language and other element show parallels to “global time” in the sense of time.
- On the first days of Taksim Gezi Park protests, especially the main stream journalism failed the test of journalistic ethics. The documentary on the lives of penguins which CNN Türk channel aired during the late hours during the escalation of the events, later on became the symbol of failure of journalism and the mainstream media.
- Once again, news content of the *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet* and *Yeni Şafak* newspaper which we examined were determined by their ideological stances. The fact that AKP became the ruling government and the policies that followed after 2010 Constitution referendum, divided the society into a political polarization consisting of AKP supporters and AKP opponents. It can be seen as a result of our study that Turkish media displayed the results of this ideological polarization in Taksim Gezi Park protest as well as in every other area. While during such processes, the values that glue together a society erode away, every social reaction is determined by the social polarization it is situated in. The same polarizations can be seen again in the publications of the media as well.
- As the final word, we want to refer to Hannah Arendt's statement; “*Freedom is invited to every meal we eat together. The chair is empty but that space is always reserved.*” [19].

## REFERENCES

- [1] <http://www.cnntrk.com/2013/guncel/11/25/geziye-kac-kisi-katildi/732168.0/index.html>, 11.04.2015.
- [2] Ö. Göztepe, *Gezi Direnişi*, Notabene Publications, Ankara, 2013, pp. 10.
- [3] Ö. Uluğ, M. Acar, Y. G. Acar, *Bir Olmadan Biz Olmak*, dipnot Publications, Ankara, 2014, pp.10-48.
- [4] M. Özbak, *Gezi Ruhu ve Politik Teori*, Kollektif Book, İstanbul, 2013, pp18-23.
- [5] N. Göle, “Gezi: Bir kamusal meydan hareketinin anatomisi”, <http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/bilinmeyen/gezi-bir-kamusal-meydan-hareketinin-anatomisi,6824>, 6.6.2013, 11.04.2015.
- [6] <http://haberkibris.com/timedan-carpici-analiz-2013-06-03.html>, 11.04.2015.
- [7] <http://www.medyalens.com/gezi-parki-direnisi-nedir-nasilbasladi>, 03.04.2015.
- [8] M. Özataş, *Taksim Bir Şenliği Yaşamak*, Heyamola Publications, İstanbul, 2010, pp. 12-38.
- [9] <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/iste-gezi-parkinin-tarihcesi/haber-211346>
- [10] <http://www.tas-istanbul.com/portfolio-view/topcu-kislasi-tarihi/>, 11.04.2015.
- [11] [http://tr.sputniknews.com/trend/taksim\\_gezi\\_parki\\_olaylari/#ixzz3WHcxGXSO](http://tr.sputniknews.com/trend/taksim_gezi_parki_olaylari/#ixzz3WHcxGXSO), 04.03.2015.
- [12] <http://bilimakademisi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Siyaset-ve-Toplum-Bilim-Perspektifinden-Gezi-Parki-Olaylari.pdf>, p.1, 11.04.2015.
- [13] M.K. Erdemkol, *Gezi Parkı Direnişi*, Yazılama Publications, İstanbul, 2013, pp. 62-63.
- [14] “6-7 June, Who are they, why are they there and what do they want?” <http://www.konda.com.tr>
- [15] <http://www.gazeteciler.com/gundem/gezi-parki-cylemleri-sirasinda-kac-tweet-atildi-67345h.html>, 11.04.2015.
- [16] <http://www.cnntrk.com/2013/bilim.teknoloji/teknoloji/06/15/gezi.parki.tweetlerinin.linguistigi/711774.0/11.04.2015>
- [17] <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/147393-gezi-parkiturkiye-nin-demokrasi-atagi>, 08.04.2015
- [18] A. Avcı, *Ütopya Açığı Olarak Gezi'nin Mizahı*; <http://www.eskop.com/skopbulten/utopya-acigli-olarak-gezinin-mizahi/1719>
- [19] A. Hannah, *Geçmişle Gelecek Arasında*, İletişim Publications, İstanbul, 2012, pp. 15.