THE POLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE: SOLIDARITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

AND SQUATTING IN AN ISTANBUL NEIGHBORHOOD

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The Politics of Everyday Life: Solidarity-Based Organization and Squatting in an

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The Politics of Everyday Life: Solidarity-Based Organization

and Squatting in an Istanbul Neighborhood

This thesis aims to explore emerging political action repertoires that interact in both public and private arenas, through multiple forms of both institutionalized, state oriented forms of political participation and more recently emerging the politics of everyday life. To this end, through a single case study, this thesis examines Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity which is one of the neighborhood organizations in Istanbul established in the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance in 2013. This thesis finds that in terms of its organizational structure, its targets and its goals, the case of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity provides an example for the multi-dimensional (including both institutional and non-institutional activities for political engagement) and multi-targeted (aiming to affect politics both in public and private spheres) modes of political participation. Therefore unlike the studies on institutionalized forms of political participation which measure the level of engagement in governmental politics, this thesis contributes to the literature on political participation by providing detailed explanations regarding political preferences of citizens, their reasons to engage in non-institutional political activities, the interaction between institutional and non-institutional modes of political participation, the potentiality of non-institutional activities in promoting social change and the effects of the neighborhood as a socially constructed space on the residents' choices regarding engaging in both institutional and non-institutional activities.

ÖZET

Gündelik Hayatın Politikası: Bir Istanbul Mahallesinde Dayanışma Temelli

Örgütlenme ve İşgal

Bu tez, hem kurumsallaşmış hem de devlet odaklı çok sayıda siyasal katılım şekli üzerinden kamusal alanlar ve özel alanlar ile etkileşimde bulunan ve gelişmekte olan siyasal eylem dağarcığının yanı sıra, son zamanlarda ortaya çıkan gündelik hayatın politikasını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çerçevede, tek bir vaka çalışması üzerinden bu tez, 2013 yılında Gezi Direnişi'nin hemen ardından Istanbul'da oluşturulan mahalle örgütlenmelerinden biri olan Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nı konu edinmektedir. Bu çalışma, Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması vakasının örgütsel yapısı, hedefleri ve amaçları bağlamında, siyasal katılım için çok boyutlu (siyasal katılım için kurumsal ve kurumsal olmayan) ve çok amaçlı (siyaseti hem kamusal hem de özel alanlarda etkilemeyi amaçlama) yöntemler sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sebeple, devlet odaklı siyasete katılım düzeyini ölçen kurumsallaşmış yöntemlerle ilgili çalışmaların aksine bu tez, vatandaşların siyasi tercihleri, kurumsal olmayan siyasi eylemlere dahil olma nedenleri, siyasal katılımın kurumsal ve kurumsal olmayan biçimleri arasındaki etkileşim, kurumsal olmayan eylemlerin sosyal değişimi teşvik etme potansiyeli ve sosyal olarak inşa edilen komşuluğun ikamet eden kişilerin hem kurumsal hem de kurumsal olmayan eylemlere ilişkin tercihleri üzerine etkileri hakkında ayrıntılı açıklamalar sunarak gündelik hayatın politikası literatürüne katkı sağlamaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2013, Turkey witnessed a nationwide protest that began against the cutting down of trees at Gezi Park with the aim of the implementation of an urban development project launched as 'Project for the Pedestrianization of Taksim'. The uprising spread to the whole country and turned into a nationwide protest that questioned the accountability of the government and the quality of the democracy in Turkey. The Gezi Resistance has seemed to affect the political life in Turkey in various ways. One of the implications of the resistance was the realization of the more direct and horizontal ways of engagement in political decision-making process. During the resistance different conceptions of democracy based on participation and deliberation, which highly differ from the representative democracy were employed and consensus techniques such as the general assemblies/public forums and solidarity based neighborhood organizations were established.[1] The first public forum held in the Gezi Park in order to make a decision on the future of the Gezi Resistance, decided to move the resistance to the parks located in different neighborhoods around Istanbul. Right after the eviction of the Gezi Resistance from the Gezi Park on June 15, 2013, thousands of people began to gather in park forums to discuss local and national issues affecting their lives. This decision on gathering in local parks contributed to the resistance in terms of localizing and developing more intense interactions with the rest of the city and the citizens.

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[1] It should be noted that student movement in 1968 is the first movement in which students gather together in forums to discuss their demands regarding university structure in Turkey. However it was the Gezi Resistance that this type of gathering was popularized and even localized.

By creating local dynamics, the park forums recruited or attracted many people and sympathizers of the resistance who could not remain unresponsive to the local mobilization. Within a relatively short time, solidarity-based neighborhood organizations emerged from the park forums and the neighborhood forums began to convene. In some places, the resistance intertwined with the daily life in the neighborhood context and led to the emergence of experiences worth studying in terms of their impacts on the social and political life of the residents. For instance, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, one of the neighborhood solidarities in Kadıköy, occupied an abandoned property in the neighborhood and attempted to improve it in order to establish a social center for coming together and organizing activities that are open to public.

Therefore Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity represents an interesting case of emerging political action repertoires that typically interact in both public and private arenas, through multiple forms of both institutionalized, state-oriented forms of political participation and more recently emerging the politics of everyday life. In terms of its organizational structure, its targets and its goals, the case of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity provides an example for the multi-dimensional (including both institutionalized and non-institutional activities for political engagement) and multi-targeted (aiming to affect politics both in public and private spheres) modes of political participation.

First of all, in terms of the organizational structure, solidarity with the residents in the neighborhood context, and with the oppressed in a more global context represents the principal rationale behind the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity while horizontal structure of decision-making, self-management, and volunteering constitute other aspects of this kind of organizing and combine both individual and collective level of activism. Secondly in terms of the targets, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity

has aimed to both influence the public and private spheres. On the one hand, it seeks to have an impact on state decision-making. This goal requires institutionalized forms of participation such as voting, contacting public officials or supporting a candidate by organizing a campaign etc. On the other hand, the solidarity also aims to influence the daily life in the neighborhood, which includes the private lives of the residents. This goal includes variety forms of political action in both individual and collective level such as alternative consumption activities, charity events, and campaigns for improving the neighborhood's physical conditions as well as activities for strengthen the solidarity among the residents. Finally, in terms of their goals, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity aims to foster social change through both direct and indirect strategies of lifestyle politics such as occupying an abandoned property that represents a strategy for prefigurative politics that refers to providing a model for how the society could be reorganized.

Hence the first aim of this thesis is to examine the case of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity as a solidarity-based neighborhood organization through the lenses of political participation by primarily focusing on the organization, targets and goals of the activists and the kinds of political activities they engage in. Specifically, this thesis aims to reveal the relationship between institutionalized and non-institutional forms of political participation and seeks to understand whether these two forms of political participation complement or substitute each other. Moreover this thesis also seeks to analyze the effectiveness of the "politics of everyday life" in promoting social change. Unlike the studies on institutionalized forms of political participation which measure the level of engagement in the governmental politics, through a single-case study, this thesis contributes to the literature on political participation by providing detailed explanations regarding political preferences of the citizens, their

reasons to engage in non-institutional political activities, the interaction between institutionalized and non-institutional modes of political participation, the potentiality of non-institutional activities in promoting social change and the effects of the neighborhood as a socially constructed space on the residents' choices regarding engaging in both institutionalized and non-institutional activities.

Therefore the second chapter is primarily aimed at critically introducing approaches and methodological tools for exploring specific forms of political participation by primarily focusing on the forms of political participation that fall outside of the institutionalized organization of the state. The second chapter also seeks to examine the lifestyle politics as a form of multi-dimensional and multi-targeted forms of political participation in the context of the neighborhood. The third chapter aims to examine the Gezi Resistance in the contexts of the social movements of the 2010s and to clarify its potentiality in terms of its effects on the politics of everyday life in the aftermath of the resistance. The fourth chapter presents the methodology and the findings of the case study followed by a discussion and conclusion in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Beyond any doubt, citizen engagement in politics is central to democracy. For this reason, empirical research on political participation provides insights about the state of democracy (Hosh-Dayican, 2014). However what counts as political participation and what does not have been one of the ongoing debates. Today decision-making process is not limited with the nation state, rather it has become "much more diffuse, with tendencies toward horizontal governance structures and networks, globalization and multilayered government" (Hooghe, 2014, p. 341). This diffusion has multiplied the channels for affecting decision-making and therefore citizens have required broadening their repertoire of action in order to have an impact on the political system. This requirement has resulted in the emergence of various activities targeted at affecting the more diffused decision-making processes which includes supra-national governments and global organizations. As a result, on the one hand, political participation focusing on elections and voting behavior have received a wide range of research, on the other hand, studies on diverse manifestations and forms associated with political engagement have also attracted the attention of many political scientists.

This chapter introduces approaches and methodological tools for exploring specific forms of political participation. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is threefold: (a) to discuss different conceptualizations and definitions of political participation by primarily focusing on the forms of political participation that fall outside of the institutionalized organization of the state, (b) to examine the politics of

everyday life and operationalize the concept of political participation for such forms

of political engagement (c) to present the theories that explain citizens' engagement

in non-institutional forms of political participation that refer to modes of engagement

that fall outside of the state.[2] This chapter argues that political participation has not

been declining as some studies suggest but instead manifested itself in new forms

such as the politics of everyday life through a variety of non-institutional political

activities such as occupation of public or private spaces or neighborhood organizing

which based on a horizontal organizational structure.

2.1 Conceptualizing political participation

2.1.1 Institutionalized forms of political participation and their decline

Within the literature on democracy, there is an agreed upon consensus on the

importance of political participation for a well-functioning democracy. However,

there is no consensus on the definition of the concept. Early studies on political

participation focused on voting and other activities that take place in the domain of

institutional decision-making such as political party support, membership and

contacting politicians etc. (van Deth, 2001; Quaranta, 2012). Therefore, older

conceptualizations of the term were mostly based on the institutional sphere of the

state. For instance, Verba and Nie, who proposed one of the first conceptualizations

of political participation, defined the concept as "those activities by private citizens

that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental

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[2] Non-institutional forms of political participation refer to van Deth's label for the activities that fall outside of the institutional structure of the state. For these activities 'unconventional forms of political participation' is also used. However since some forms of unconventional forms of political participation become conventional by time, I prefer to use 'non-instiutional forms of political participation' to refer such activities.

personnel and/or the actions they take" (Verba and Nie, 1972, p. 2). In a similar manner, Kaase and Marsh defined the term as "all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system (Kaase and Marsh, 1979, p. 42). These definitions recognized political participation as an activity that aims to influence the government or the state in a broader sense.

Other forms of participation had not been recognized or studied until the 1960s (as cited in Quaranta, 2012; Deth, 2001). The main reason for scholars to focus mainly on these conventional forms of political participation for decades was the importance of voting as the cornerstone of the democracy (Barber, 1984; Dahl, 1989; Milbrath, 1965; Putnam, 2000; Verba and Nie, 1972).

However political scientists who primarily focus on electoral turnout and voting have provided empirical evidence showing that institutionalized political participation forms ranging from voting to party support has been declining (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2003; Dalton, 2008). For instance, Wattenberg and Dalton (2002), and Inglehart and Catteberg (2002) observed a decline in the capacities of political parties in terms of citizen identification, loyalty and internal coherence. Rahn and Transue (1998) found a decline in social trust, national identification and voter turnout. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) observed public cynicism, dissatisfaction with the governments and political apathy. Habermas (1989) emphasized legitimation crisis of representative democracy. By drawing on these studies, many political scientists claim that there is a decline in political participation.

2.1.2 New perspectives and van Deth's conceptualization

In contrast to the studies arguing that political participation has been declining, other scholars have rather claimed a shift in the character of political participation (Bennet, 1998; 2012; Stolle and Hooghe, 2011; Hooghe, 2014; Ekman and Amnå, 2012). Political changes in the world context (globalization) and technological developments (widespread internet use) have allowed citizens to expand their repertoire of action to have an impact on political decision-making (Hooghe, 2014; Hosch-Dayican, 2014; Ekman and Amnå, 2012; Fox, 2014). In addition to these developments, the academic interest in citizen participation in-between elections has also required political scientists to expand the scope of the concept of political participation (Ekman and Amnå, 2012).

Therefore a considerable amount of study in the literature has focused on new and emerging practices and modes of political participation that fall outside of the traditional forms (Kaase and Barnes, 1979; Bang, 2005; Zukin, Keeter and Andolina, 2006; Dalton, 2008). In response to the earlier studies which focus on institutionalized forms of political participation, some scholars have called for a broader focus on activities ranging from petition signing to political consumerism and developed typologies such as 'conventional and unconventional political participation' (Kaase and Barnes, 1979), 'elite-directed action' (Inglehart and Catteborg, 2002), 'latent and manifest forms of political participation' (Ekman and Amnå, 2012), 'teleological and praxial political participation' (Lamprianou, 2012).

However, these typologies are subject to criticism as they overlook the multidimensionality of political participation. For instance, some unconventional acts such as demonstrating or petitioning have gained acceptance over time, thus the

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distinction between conventional and unconventional forms of political participation has become controversial (Dalton, 2008; Lamprianou, 2013). Furthermore, there may not be a sharp distinction between forms of political participation in some cases such as a blank vote that may be interpreted as a protest as well as signing a petition may become conventional as well (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004; Ekman and Amnå, 2012). Moreover although these typologies are advantageous because they bring new modes of political participation into the discussion, this rapid increase in the number of acts included in political participation has created a messy field in which every voluntary act of citizens may automatically be counted as political participation (van Deth, 2001; 2014). Therefore clarification in the field in terms of what counts as political participation and what does not is needed. By proposing a comprehensive conceptualization of political participation, Jan van Deth has responded to this need.

Jan van Deth (2014) systematically identifies and classifies different types of political participation and shows that strict differentiations between conventional and unconventional forms of participation are elusive. By reviewing the existing definitions and conceptualizations in the literature, as shown in Figure 1, van Deth (2001; 2014, p. 356) develops four criteria or decision rules that constitute the minimalist definition of political participation. In this minimalist sense, the term refers to "voluntary activities by citizens in the area of government, politics or state" (van Deth, 2014, p. 356). This kind of political participation includes activities such as voting and party support (van Deth, 2014) and therefore corresponds to 'conventional political participation' (see Kaase and Barnes, 1979) or 'elite-directed action' (see Inglehart and Catteborg, 2002).

Moreover, van Deth goes one step further by proposing targeted definition of political participation through a fifth criterion for the activities targeting at
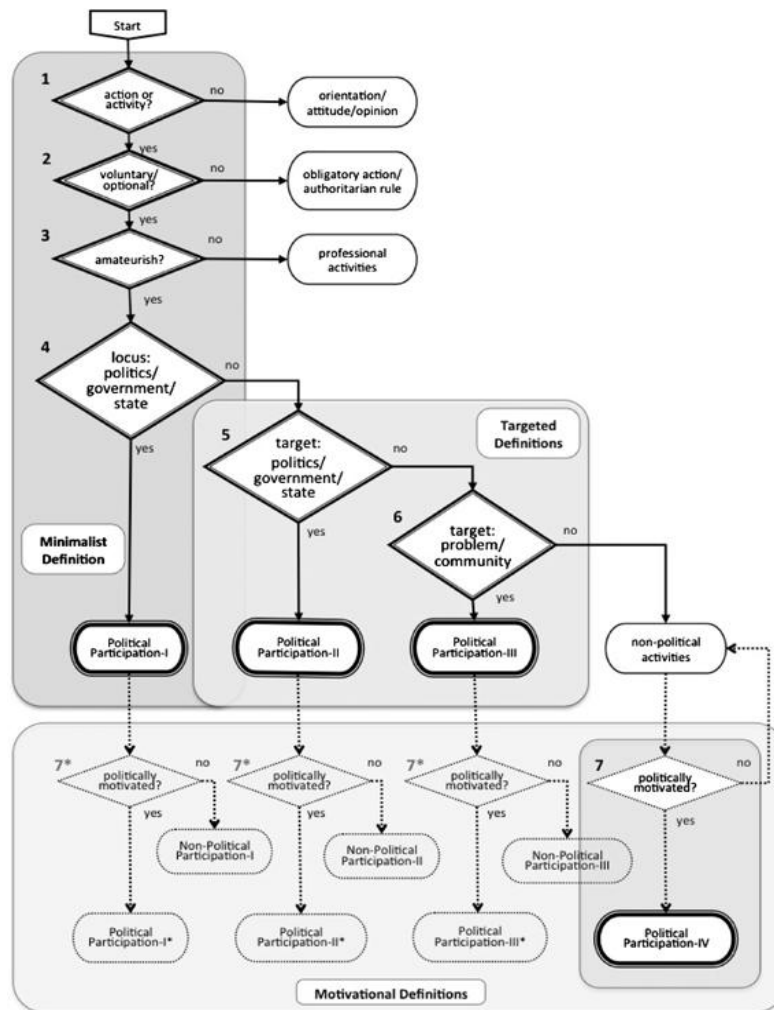
Figure 1.   A conceptual map to political participation.

Source: van Deth, 2014

government sphere but not located in that sphere. Targeted political participation
includes activities such as peaceful demonstrations, petition signing, street blocking,
and slogan painting which corresponding to unconventional political participation
(see Kaase and Barnes, 1979). Furthermore, targeted definition also recognizes
activities that are not located in or targeted at the governmental sphere but basically
aim to solve collective or community problems (van Deth, 2014). This kind of
participation includes activities such as citizen initiatives or neighborhood

committees and therefore corresponds to Ekman and Amnå's manifest forms of participation that refers to civic activities with potential to turn into political activities (2012). Finally, van Deth (2014) proposes motivational definition of political participation for voluntary citizen activities that are neither located in the political arena nor aimed at political actors or collective problems but have the potential of expressing political aims and intentions. Examples of this kind of political participation are political consumerism, conscious consumption and DIY politics (van Deth, 2014).

Although van Deth's model strongly claims to provide practical tools for operalization of the concept of political participation for various political activities, it has received criticisms in terms of its applicability (see Hosch-Dayican, 2014; Hooghe, 2014; De Moor, 2014). These criticisms are based on difficulties in applying a model to participation forms that include mixed activities located in both inside and outside of the governmental politics and targeting multiple actors such as lifestyle politics.[3]

By aiming to modify van Deth's model, De Moor (2014, p. 15) develops "mixed categories of political participation" by adding a fifth criterion for such political activities.

2.1.3 The Politics of everyday life

Despite the criticism it has received, van Deth's model (with De Moor's modification) provides tools to apply various non-institutional activities and analyze

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[3] I will use 'life-style politics', 'politics of everyday life' interchangeably.

them with the lenses of political participation. The politics of everyday life which is recognized by a considerable number of political scientists as a rising non-institutionalized form of political participation (e.g. Bennet, 1998; 2012; Bang, 2004; Li and Marsh, 2008; De Moor, 2014), refers to "the politicization of everyday life, including ethically, morally or politically inspired decisions about different dimensions of daily life such as consumption, transportation, or modes of living" (cf. De Moor, 2014, p. 4). Similar with non-institutional modes of political participation, in general, the rise of lifestyle politics is associated with the process of globalization and expansion of information technology. By challenging the states' monopoly on political power, these phenomena have multiplied targets of political participation (De Moor, 2014). Moreover in light of these changes, the politics has become personalized and occurred outside of the domain of institutionalized policy making (Hosch-Dayican, 2014; Bennet, 2012).

Although the politics of everyday life is primarily based on personal attempts to affect different dimensions of daily life, De Moor has argued that it may have an impact on both individual and collective levels (De Moor, 2014). On the one hand, lifestyle politics includes individual activities in the private sphere aiming to affect the politics such as political consumerism or vegetarianism; on the other hand, lifestyle politics also includes activities of collectives who aim at fostering social change through an alternative lifestyle such as alternative modes or production and food networks, communal livings, non-hierarchical decision-making systems (cf. De Moor, 2014). According to De Moor (2014, p. 5), there is no contradiction between these two aspects of lifestyle politics: "Lifestyle politics concerns both the politicization of individual life choices, and the mobilization of fellow citizens into

making politically or ethically motivated lifestyle choices." By adopting this approach one is able to stress the multidimensionality of everyday life.

2.2 Theories of political participation

Theories of institutionalized forms of political participation usually focus on why people vote and seek to analyze voter turnouts and voting patterns. For instance, Rational Choice Theory developed by Downs (1957) argues that citizens vote if the voting provides benefit for them. The Resource Theory Model developed by Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) suggests that resources available to individuals such as time, money, and civil skills have an impact on individuals' choices to participate. The Theory of Mobilization developed by Rosenstone and Hansen (1996) emphasizes the significance of social context, which includes a social network of families, friends, and neighbors etc., in shaping individuals' preferences about political participation. This resembles the Social Learning Theory that stresses the importance of cultural factors in shaping political opinions.

However, these theories do not provide satisfactory explanations for non-institutional political activities. Since these kinds of activities may sometimes be dangerous in terms of providing a direct confrontation with the state (as in the cases of protests, neighborhood activism or occupying public or private spaces), the literature on recruitment to activism may provide more satisfactory explanations to understand why individuals participate in such activities. Within the recruitment to activism literature, one of the topics is differential recruitment that aims to explain why some individuals engage in non-institutional activities while the others remain inactive (Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olson, 1980; McAdam, 1986; McAdam and

Paulsen, 1993). There are personalogical and micro-structural accounts of differential recruitment. According to the personalogical or individual motivational accounts, characteristics of individuals such as attitudes, ideological affiliations or psychological traits motivate them to participate in or render them to be skeptic about participation in non-traditional, often high-risk political activities (McAdam, 1986, McAdam and Paulsen, 1993; Martinez, 2005). According to McAdam (1986, p. 70) "biographical availability" that refers to the lack of individual constraints, such as employment, and adult responsibilities (parenting, marriage etc.), which may increase the cost and risk of participation, make individuals more likely to engage in non-institutional political activities.[4]

On the other hand, the micro structural accounts of differential recruitment have challenged individual motivational accounts by emphasizing the importance of contextual factors (Martinez, 2005). The primary assumption of these accounts is that structural availability is more significant than attitudinal availability. If individuals lack a structural contact pulling them to the political activity, ideology, attitudes or physiological characteristics have little impact on motivating participation (McAdam, 1986; McAdam and Paulsen, 1993). These studies focusing on micro-structural factors have emphasized impersonal or social ties as one of the factors fostering recruitment into non-institutional political activities (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993).

Impersonal ties or being familiar with somebody who is already engaged in the activity provides a strong motivation for participating in non-institutional

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[4] Cost and risk of participation represent McAdam's principal differentiation between different forms of activism. While cost refers to "expenditures of time, money, and energy that are required a person engaged in any particular form of activism", risk refers to "anticipated dangers- whether legal, social, physical, financial, and so forth- engaging in a particular type of activity". (McAdam, 1986, p. 70) Drawing on these two concepts McAdam identifies two types of activism: High- risk/cost and low-risk/cost activism both that have their own recruitment strategies. On the one hand, social ties motivate individuals to participate in low risk/cost political activism, on the other hand biographical availability plays a more significant role in motivating for high-risk/cost activism.

political activities, and also decreases the uncertainty of mobilization (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993). For instance, Oliver suggests that one of the strongest motivators of participation in neighborhood organizations is residence in the same area (cf. McAdam and Paulsen, 1993). Oliver has argued that "social ties may be thought of as indicators of subjective interest in the neighborhood, as factors influencing the availability of solidarity incentives for participation in collective action or as factors reducing the cost of action by making communication easier" (cf. McAdam and Paulsen, 1993, p. 644).

On the other hand, social ties may constrain recruitment as well as fostering it (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993; Martinez, 2005). McAdam and Paulsen (1993, p. 645) have emphasized the significance of "multiple embeddings" of life. According to them the tendencies of studying only activists and only a specific group of social ties (those link the individuals with others in the political activity) have created a failure by leaving (i) non-activists who have ties to the activity, (ii) the other social ties – family, friends, etc. – unexamined (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993, p. 646). However to take these phenomena into consideration, McAdam and Paulsen (1993) propose a conceptualization of social ties in the recruitment process, which draws on two concepts: multiple ties and identity salience. Multiple ties refer to the influence of interpersonal networks on an individual's decision about participation. However the relationship that we are embedded in and the people around us may not always provide consistent opinions. The concept of identity salience explains how an individual reaches a final decision by evaluating the opinions or pieces of advice that come from the people around her. McAdam and Paulsen (1993, p. 464) have conceptualized identities as "being organized into a hierarchy of salience defined by the probability of the various identities being invoked in a given situation or over

many situations." The decision to participate or not participate in a non-institutional political activity will be motivated by the salience of the identity invoked by the political activity and by the encouragement or discouragement an individual receives from persons who normally serve to sustain or reinforce the identity in question. Therefore the final decision to participate depends on the four restricting conditions: "(i) the occurrence of a specific recruiting attempts, (ii) the conceptualization of successful linkage between movement participation and identity, (iii) support for that linkages from persons who normally serve to sustain the identity in question, (iv) and the absence of strong opposition from others on whom other salient identities depend" (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993, p. 647). Therefore both the biographical availability approach and micro structural account of recruitment have contributed to political participation literature by proposing individual level characteristics and structural factors (Martinez, 2005).

In addition to these approaches, there are three other approaches specifically focused on the socio-economic status of neighborhoods in order to explain how context matters for neighborhood activism (Gilster, 2014). First of these approaches, the resources perspective suggests that neighborhood affluence motivates participation in neighborhood organizing (Gilster, 2014). Secondly, the neighborhood needs perspective suggests that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely to participate in non-institutional activities in the neighborhood (Gilster, 2014). Finally, according to the neighborhood inequality perspective, inequality in community level motivates participation because of the different standpoints of individuals from different socio-economic status (Gilster, 2014).

Thus far literature on political participation was reviewed by primarily focusing on the emerging non-institutional forms of political participation. The aim of this chapter was to operationalize the definition of political participation for the multi-dimensional (including both institutionalized and non-institutional activities for political engagement) and multi-targeted (aiming to affect the politics both in public and private spheres) modes of political participation. However the politics of everyday life which is the primary focus of this thesis requires clarification and elaboration in terms of the multiplicity it includes. Therefore, the next section presents the politics of everyday life in detail with activities that are used such as neighborhood organizing and occupation of public or private spaces.

2.3 Lifestyle politics in the context of neighborhood

The previous section has conceptualized lifestyle politics as a multi-dimensional and multi-targeted form of non- institutional political participation. This section of the chapter seeks to examine lifestyle politics in the context of the neighborhood. Therefore the purpose of this section is threefold: (a) to propose an elaborated model for lifestyle politics, (b) to discuss the significance of neighborhood context in order to understand its salience on the residents life and their actions, (c) to focus on neighborhood organizing and squatting as the two actions of lifestyle politics in the context of neighborhood.

2.3.1 Forms of lifestyle politics

De Moor (2014), as shown in Figure 2, has provided a classification of different forms of lifestyle politics according to their organization, targets and goals. First of

all, in terms of organization, lifestyle politics may take place both at the individual and collective levels. In the individual level, lifestyle politics refers to the politicization of individual lifestyle decisions and emphasizes the importance of individual action. In terms of their targets, individual level lifestyle politics includes two forms: individual lifestyle change (attempts to change one's own life such as decisions concerning what clothes to buy or what food to eat, e.g. political consumerism or vegetarianism) and individual lifestyle mobilization (individuals' efforts to foster change in lifestyle towards others, for instance informing family or friends about one's personal choices to mobilize them into making similar choices) (De Moor, 2014).

Furthermore, although forms of lifestyles politics at the individual level emphasize that lifestyle politics deals with individual choices made in the private sphere, lifestyle politics may also take place at the collective level. The idea of lifestyle politics at the collective level relies on the studies which argue that individuals have been organizing in collectives to advance social change through lifestyle politics (cf. De Moor, 2014). In terms of their goals, both direct and indirect strategies may be used to promote social change. Lifestyle politics as a direct strategy includes two forms: collective lifestyle change (members of a collective may support a lifestyle choice together such as food networks), and collective lifestyle mobilization (they may display activities to recruit new members) (De Moor, 2014). Moreover, lifestyle politics as an indirect strategy includes two forms: lifestyle as prefigurative politics and consensus mobilization. Lifestyle politics in the former sense refer to the use of lifestyle politics as a model for how society could be reorganized. Lifestyle actions as such include "communal living, the establishment

of alternative economic systems, alternative modes of production or experiments with non-hierarchical decision-making processes" (De Moor, 2014, p. 10).

Finally lifestyle politics as an indirect strategy may take the form of consensus mobilization that refers to "the process of replacing a dominant belief system with an alternative mobilizing belief system that supports collective action for change" (De Moor, 2014, p. 10). Lifestyle politics may have such mobilizing effect on public opinion, and under the pressure of public opinion as such, political elites are more easily persuaded to take bottom-up demands into consideration. Lifestyle politics may thus generate political momentum by affecting public opinion that can be used to affect political decisions.

Therefore "both types of lifestyle politics in collective level show how activities could target at private, public or institutional arenas at the same time, and how they could become enacted across different private and institutional political arenas" (De Moor, 2014, p. 11).

A growing number of individuals have been organizing in lifestyle organizations in order to foster social change through the politics of everyday life (De Moor, 2014). As the sites of daily life, neighborhoods, which are "urban residential district" (Martin, 2003), provide appropriate spaces for such organizations and lifestyle-focused activism.
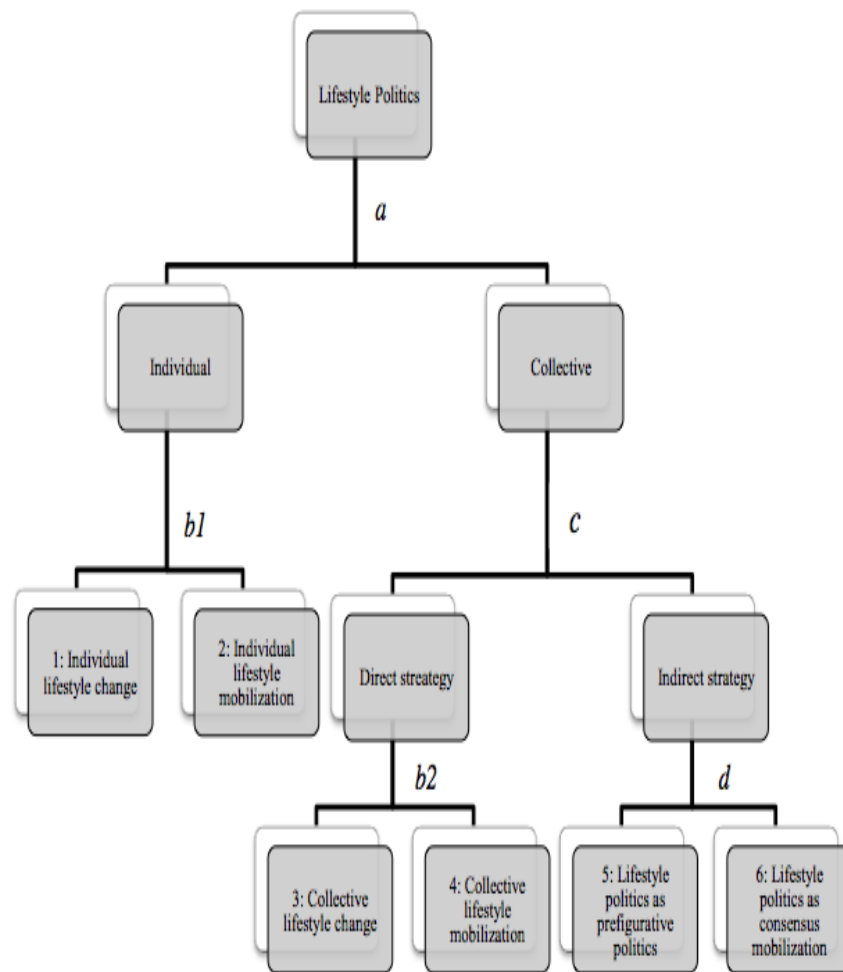
Figure 2.   Forms of lifestyle politics.

Source: De Moor, 2014, p. 6

2.3.2 Neighborhood as a site for collective lifestyle politics

The scholarship on political geography, primarily focuses on the interaction between space and politics, and indicates that the neighborhood is a more sophisticated phenomenon than being only a given geographical territory (Castells, 1977; Hunter, 1979; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Martin, 2003; 2013; Gilster, 2013; Kearns and Parkinson, 2001). Rather scholars consider neighborhood as a

multiscalar, multifunctional and dynamic concept that affects and is affected by the community as well as the political, social and economic context (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001; Martin, 2013). This broader understanding draws attention to the interactions among the place, actors and the context and thus conceives the neighborhood as a socially constructed place.

Agnew's definition of place provides a better understanding for this multilayered nature of neighborhood as a specific type of place. According to Agnew, place includes three different dimensions: place as location, place as a series of locales and place as a sense of place (Agnew, 2011, p. 326- 327). Place as location refers to a site in which various activities and actors are located as well as interactions with other sites at various ranges to a broader social, economic and political context (Agnew, 2011; Martin, 2003). In addition, place as a series of locale refers to a site in which lifestyle activities take place. Finally, place as a sense of place refers to our tendency to identify ourselves with the place such as the sense of belonging to a particular place.

Agnew's definition of place resembles Escobar's emphasis on political economy and humanistic sense of place, as the two processes that have significant roles in the construction of place (cf. Martin, 2003). While political economy frames the place through both the local and global capital investment, sense of place refers to individuals' beliefs and attitudes toward a place that is based on their own personal experiences and interactions (cf. Martin, 2003). These two explanations highlight that place functions for economic, social and political processes, but it also provides a ground for situating everyday life.

In line with these characterizations of place, neighborhoods as the settings of daily life and socially constructed places include three different scales: home area,

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locality and urban district (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001, p. 2103) and in each of these scales neighborhood has different functions. First of all, as home area, neighborhoods provides psycho-social benefits such as relaxation, belonging and reflecting individual values; secondly as locality neighborhood serves for residential activities such as planning, service provision and housing market; and finally, the neighborhood functions as an urban district and therefore includes interactions with others through employment connections, leisure activities and social networks (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001).

Finally, neighborhood is not a fixed entity; rather it is a dynamic and ever-changing concept. On the one hand neighborhood affects the residents as well as the social, political and economical context (Martin, 2003; Jonas, 1998). For instance, Martin (2003) has shown how neighborhood activism has challenged land use policies in Athens, Georgia. In addition, Jonas (1998) has pointed out how local unions and the residents have fought against global capitalism through lifestyle politics in Chicago. This dynamism of neighborhood resonates the neighborhood effects literature that explores the effects of neighborhood on behavior and life-chances of the individuals (Martin, 2003).

2.3.3 Neighborhood organizing

Neighborhood as a multiscalar, multifunctional and dynamic concept has been highly recognized by the recent scholarship "as a place in which daily life experiences of residents may constitute neighborhood level activism" (Martin, 2003; Heathcott, 2005; McAdam, Sampson, Weffer and McIndoe, 2005). Additionally neighborhood level activism is identified as an important form of activism. For instance, McAdam,

Sampson, Weffer and McIndoe (2005) and Heathcott (2005) have pointed out that civic actions have become more visible while protest activities have been declining since the 1960s (McAdam, Sampson, Weffer and McIndoe, 2005; Heathcott, 2005).[5] McAdam, Sampson, Weffer and McIndoe (2005) have emphasized that by focusing exclusively on protest activities, social movements scholarship has been missing activities of everyday life that are more peaceful, routine and local in nature.

On the emergence of neighborhood organizing or activism, the relationship between "place, identity and political opposition" have been attributed a significant role (Martin, 2003; Robinson, 2001). Residents of a neighborhood identify themselves with the place to constitute an "oppositional consciousness" (Robinson, 2001) that mobilize residents into collective action. Interactions in daily life among the residents advance a sense of place with shared values and concerns and therefore contribute to the constitution of this oppositional consciousness (Martin, 2003).

Individuals gather in neighborhood organizations in order to foster social change through lifestyle politics. In essence neighborhood organizations refer to "groups of residents and organizers dedicated to addressing one or a range of issues, including social, political and economic, and quality of life concerns at the neighborhood level" (Martin, 2013, p. 732). Moreover, neighborhood organizations do not have to organized in a formal structure:

> Although they often work within an existing political structure, neighborhood organizations are not formally part of an appointed or elected body, and at times they explicitly challenge governance structures. Neighborhood organizations interact with and demand services from existing political institutions while they strive to define collective polities at a scale different from that of local government. (Martin, 2003, p. 732).

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[5] They use the term, civic actions, in order to refer to a combination of civic and protest activities.

One of the most prominent studies on organizing in a specific community is that of David Saul Alinsky's working class based community-organizing model in Chicago. Alinsky aimed at adapting labor organizing strategies to urban communities to build consensus among local institutions such as churches, labor unions and civic groups in order to challenge local authorities and political bodies (Heathcott, 2005). Although Alinsky did not consider neighborhood as a site of activism for itself, he primarily focused on establishing coalitions based on common work experience, ethnicity, and political marginalization. Alinsky recognized the significance of place in separating communities and providing boundaries between political districts (Martin, 2013).

However, Alinsky's model primarily relied on the coalitions among established institutions (Heathcott, 2005). What has changed since Alinsky's application of this model to Chicago in the 1940s is the industrial organization of the city. When institutional order of industrialism has changed, namely when major shifts have occurred in technology, capital mobility and industrial organization since World War II, civic, religious and labor organizations have started to decline (Heathcott, 2005). As a result, citizens have established different networks, coalitions and found different strategies to have an impact on decision-making.

2.3.4 Squatting as an indirect strategy for social change

Squatting refers to occupying empty or abandoned properties illegally to provide housing or organize public activities. In its latter form, squatting may be considered as a collective form of lifestyle politics, which is used as an indirect strategy

(prefigurative politics) to advance social change through performing a collective, alternative lifestyle.

Squatting as a long-lasting phenomenon in Europe and North America since the 1960s took many forms. By squatting the activists could aim at providing housing, protecting a specific building or the whole neighborhood from urban transformation or gentrification, organizing public activities or protesting against urban speculation (Prujit, 2013; Martínez, 2011; Mudu, 2004, 2012; Cattaneo and Martínez, 2015; Aguilera, 2013). However challenging housing shortage, private property, urban speculation and capitalist reproduction of space represents one of the common aspects of all forms of squatting (Cattaneo and Martínez, 2015). Another common aspect of the forms of squatting is the combination of various political activities and collective self-management of different dimensions of daily life (Martínez, 2011). One specific form of squatting that is undertaken for organizing public activities is self-managed social centers. With the emergence of social centers, squatting has become "a relatively wide autonomous and mainly non-institutional mode of citizen participation, protest and self-management" (Martínez, 2011, p. 2). A self-managed social center is defined as:

> [A] Space, usually but not necessarily urban, conquered by a group (mostly heterogeneous) of people who use it directly to meet their own needs and to give space to any creative form that is totally outside any kind of commercial and speculative business and acting independently of any external political supervision. (Mudu, 2012, p. 419)

Self-management refers to both the way of managing the activities in the squat and the principal characterization for social relations (Mudu, 2004, 2012). Therefore, it has three different aspects: (i) the establishment of an alternative public sphere with direct and autonomous participation of individuals and collectives, where decision-making is channeled into an assembly and not delegated (Mudu, 2004); (ii) a wide

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area related to social relations, art, health, education, solidarity, knowledge, emotions, birth and death, communication and the promotion of similar experiences elsewhere (Martinez, 2007), (iii) a reproductive and economic component, which allows the social centers to survive, conflicting with the hierarchies organized by the market and industrial and financial structures (cf. Mudu, 2004). All these three aspects together combine the meaning of self-management.

According to Martinez (2011) social centers have two functions. First of all, they represent a "public resource" in which people meet, share information and socialize. Secondly, social centers constitute the most visible form of squatting and therefore can attract a variety of individuals ranging from activists to visitors, and therefore more people connect with social centers. However, these are different. For instance, whereas some social centers are open to various political discourses and activities, others focus less on political issues and organize concerts, workshops, art exhibitions as well as serve cheap food and beverage (Martinez, 2011; Bart Van der Steen at al., 2014).

Moreover self-managed social centers also aim to achieve multiple goals of social change in both local and global levels (Martinez, 2011). In the local level, on the one hand, social centers display a variety of non-institutional political activities for local activism; on the other hand, they propose self-management as the general organization of everyday life (Martinez, 2011; Mudu, 2004; 2012; Cattaneo and Martinez, 2015). Therefore in the context of the neighborhood, social centers may function as indirect strategies for advancing social change. First of all, by attempting to manage everyday life through self-management they emerge as spaces for prefigurative politics, which provide a prototype for a wider experience. Moreover,

by fostering local activism, social centers also function to promote mobilization in the neighborhood.

2.3.5 Neighborhood organizing and squatting in Turkey

Studies on political participation in Turkey mostly focus on institutionalized practices associated with parliamentary democracy such as voter turnout, political party membership, participating in election campaign (e.g. see Özbudun, 1976; Kalaycıoğlu, 1994; Esmer, 2002; Basvelent, Kirmanoğlu and Senatalar, 2005). Senatalar, 2005).[6] Exceptions may be the recent studies on online political participation that focus on the role of Internet regarding political participation of young people (Karabağ and Çoşkun, 2013; Varnalı and Görgülü, 2014). However, there are few studies which focus on bottom-up practices to reveal citizens' choices and opinions regarding politics and ways of being political. For instance Çiğdem Kentmen-Çin (2015) has focused on non-institutionalized political activities in Turkey and has shown that factors such as education, institutional trust, democratic satisfaction and religious benefits are decisive on shaping unorthodox political participation in Turkey (2015).

Squatting is not a new phenomenon for Turkish political life. University and workplace occupations that took place during the 1968 Movement in Turkey, resulted in important political outcomes. The year of 1968 in which intense student movements took place in Europe affected the political environment in Turkey. Between 1968 and 1971 university students in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Eskişehir

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[6] For instance, Ergun Özbudun defines political participation as "voting behaviour" in his work, *Social Change and Political Participation,* (1976).

occupied faculties and boycotted university administrations with the demands for a democratic university.

These occupations aimed at institutionalizing participation channels in the decision-making process at universities (Aydemir, 2014; Vural, 2012; Yalçın, 2014). In addition, workplace occupations did not have a significance impact on Turkish political life until 1968 (Koç, 2003). However as a result of the influence of student movements on the working class, the first factory occupation took place in Istanbul (Koç, 2003). The employees of the Derby Auto Tire Factory occupied the factory with the demand of making their own decision about the union which they apply for membership without the pressure of the employer (Koç, 2003).

Moreover *Gecekondu* phenomenon, as one of the problematic urban issues in Turkey since 1940, has represented the experiences of squatting for housing in Turkey. According to *Gecekondu* Act no. 775, *gecekondu* is defined as "[the] buildings constructed independent of building and urban codes and on someone else's land without prior consent of its proprietor and public authorities". Massive rural to urban migration that began in the late 1940s resulted in the over accumulation of the populations in the cities. However the inability of the government officials in policy making regarding the emerging housing shortage, led to the emergence of the phenomenon as an urban issue. In the 1970s, the *gecekondu* movement coincided with the political context of the time and therefore *gecekondu* movement had a critical political character. Until the 1970s, the *gecekondu* movement emerged as various isolated, uncoordinated and disorganized experiences and ignored by the local governments (Aslan, 2004). Left wing groups associated the problem of housing shortage with capitalism as well as other issues such as poverty and unemployment. Those groups led to the construction of neighborhoods for the

homeless. Nurtepe, Gülsuyu and 1 Mayıs in Istanbul are the examples of such neighborhoods (Aslan, 2004).

Occupying public or private properties with the aim of creating a public space open to everyone and organizing a daily life based on self-management, voluntarism and horizontal decision-making has emerged after the Gezi Resistance. Therefore the next chapter will examine the Gezi Resistance in a broader context of occupy movements and reveal its characteristics in order to understand the political context in which neighborhood solidarities and squatting could emerge.

CHAPTER 3

THE GEZI RESISTANCE AND THE POLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

In the summer of 2013, Turkey witnessed a nationwide protest that began against the cutting down of trees at Gezi Park with the aim of the implementation of an urban development project launched as 'Project for the Pedestrianization of Taksim'. The uprising spread to the whole country and turned into a nationwide protest that questioned the accountability of the government and the quality of the democracy in Turkey. According to the report by the Ministry of Interior, the resistance took place in the all (81) cities of Turkey with the only exception of Bayburt, 3,545,000 people participated in a variety of demonstrations and protests in which 7 people died; 4,329 people got injured; 5,513 people were detained by the police and 189 people were arrested (TIHK Report, 2014). Since such a massive uprising had not been observed for a long time in Turkey's political life, many people are still discussing effects of the Gezi Resistance on the economic, social and political life of Turkish citizens. One of the characteristics of the Gezi Resistance was its ability to mobilize ordinary people around issues regarding their lifestyle that had been often intervened by the government, specifically by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan throughout his statements about alcohol consumption, number of babies a family should have, abortion, student houses etc.

This thesis focuses on a case of a neighborhood organizing attempt that appeared right after the Gezi Resistance. To examine this experience and understand its particularity, one should take into consideration the opportunity structure that was provided by the Gezi Resistance. Therefore the aim of this chapter is threefold: (i) to

examine the recent wave of protests after 2010s in terms of common aspects, transnational bonds and differences, (ii) to explore the Gezi Resistance in this global context, (ii) to specify its characteristics and uniqueness in response to the other uprising in this period, (iii) finally to clarify its potentiality in terms of its effects on the politics of everyday life in the aftermath of the resistance.

3.1 Cycles of protests in the twenty-first century: The movements of crisis and of public space

Social movements have been transforming globally and as a result of this transformation we have been witnessing a new type of protest cycle (Della Porta, 2012; Göle, 2013; Yıldırım, 2014; Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). The reason for this transformation has been the demand of ordinary citizens for more autonomy and democratization (Yıldırım, 2014). Recently, the protests of ordinary citizens have taken place in different countries against, for instance, growing economic difficulties and austerity policies in Iceland in 2008, in Portugal and Spain in 2011, in Greece in 2011; authoritarian regimes in the Middle East in 2011, and the privatization of public spaces in the US in 2011 and in Turkey, Bulgaria, Brazil in 2013 and Bosnia in 2014 (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Yıldırım, 2014). Despite the differences in their contexts, expressing a social discontent with the established political system, a discrepancy between the demands of the people and the agenda of the political elites and a quest for more direct and participatory alternatives for democracy represent the common aspects of these movements (Göle, 2013). Therefore establishing a "grassroots democracy" and influencing the decision-making processes have been the primary focus of all these movements that are oriented more towards daily life

and attempt to voice plural demands of the citizens (Yıldırım, 2014, p.178).

Transnational bonds among these movements in terms of "agendas, tactics, contentious performances and activists themselves" have been identified by a number of scholars (Castañeda, 2012; p. 316; Gledhill, 2012; Kerton, 2012; Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Göle, 2014). For instance by considering these protests as linked to each other or as being parts of an "international cycle of contention", Della Porta and Mattoni (2014) have labeled them as "movements of crisis". By the term crisis, they do not refer exclusively to the economic crisis but also to political crisis associated with the problems of democracy and political participation.

These recent movements have both continuities and discontinuities with the movements in the past. Focusing on national politics, participation of ordinary citizens without political affiliations and use of occupation as a protest tactic have represented the distinctive features of these movements (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Göle, 2013). For instance, these movements of crisis differ from the Global Justice Movement that arose with the aim of protesting World Trade Organization Summit in 1999 in Seattle just a decade before the recent waves of protests. Della Porta and Mattoni (2014) have identified a link between the Global Justice Movement and the recent movements of crisis; while the former represented a warning about the possible damages of the upcoming financial crisis; the latter represented an outrage of the citizens who were hit by the financial crisis of 2008.

However these two waves of movements differ from each other in terms of the governmental levels they targeted at; on the one hand the Global Justice Movement moved from national politics to global politics, on the other hand, the movements of crisis targeted primarily national politics and "while the global justice movement often engaged in cross-border mobilizations that moved from one country

to another, the current waves of protest chose relatively stable camps, deeply inserted in the urban settings of hundreds of cities across the world, as the main venue of activists". (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014, p. 11)

Moreover the recent movements have been (not exclusively) composed of individuals rather than the members of social movement organizations, political parties, civil society organizations and identity movements (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Yıldırım, 2014, Göle, 2013). These movements have relied more on mobilization via "social networking sites, participatory web platforms and to some extent micro-blogging spheres (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014).

Finally, physical encampments or occupation of public spaces represent other characteristics of these recent protests waves. Unlike the Global Justice Movement that engaged in "cross-border mobilizations" from country to country, the recent waves often preferred to settle in stable camps (della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). In the recent movements occupation has represented a protest tactic and took place in public squares and parks, for instance, in Tahrir Square in Egypt, in Puerta del Sol in Madrid, in Zuccotti Park in New York and in Gezi Park in Istanbul. Göle (2013) has stated that originality of these movements relies on their emphasis on space:

> These movements are grounded in material places. They are named according to the places occupied, –Tahrir Square, Gezi Park, Wall Street where protesters make their presence felt, oppose decisions imposed from above and stage their protests. These places –public squares, parks, streets provide a stage on which different actors display their ideals and perform and rehearse collectively. (p. 2)

Therefore Göle (2013, p. 2) has called these movements "public space movements" and stated, "It is the public space that enables the gathering of people with different social origins and divergent cultural orientations. The public space movements

connect the personal and the public and differ from organized civil society movements or identity movements". As a result of this emphasis on public space, these movements are called "Occupy Movements".

3.2 Occupy movements

Although physical encampment has not been new as a protest tactic, this action has attracted a broad attention with the rise of occupy movements worldwide which refers to the idea of taking space for an undecided period since 'the Arab Spring' uprisings, the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo in particular, the Indignados movement in Spain and Occupy Wall Street in 2011 (Lubin, 2012; Halvorsen, 2014, Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014).

These movements' special emphasis on space include claims regarding urban public spaces such as the right to the city, facilitating participatory democracy and transforming these spaces into political spaces for claiming the power of the people (Lubin, 2012). Cities, where a great proportion of the global wealth is concentrated and the economic inequalities become more visible because the neoliberal policies (Lubin, 2012), have represented the spaces these movements have aimed to transform in which "the social reproduction of everyday life" takes place. (Halvorsen, 2014, p. 5; Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012) In order to accomplish this social reproduction of everyday life in their own favor, these movements have established their own social structure and generated what Göle (2013) called "democratic imaginaries". According to Göle (2013, p. 2-3) the occupy movements "open up a new space, a public space for democratic imaginaries, bringing the micro-politics of everyday life into the realm of democracy". Occupied spaces became

"vibrant sites of human interaction that modeled alternative communities and generated intense feelings of solidarity". (Juris, Ronayne, Shokooh-Valle and Wengronowitz, 2012, p. 268) Therefore occupied public space has turned into space for prefigurative politics (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Schein, 2012). The protesters have prefigured "different conceptions of democracy, based on participation and deliberative values, following a vision of democracy profoundly different from that which legitimates representative democracy based on the principle of majority decisions" (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014, p. 18) as well as communal distribution of goods and services within the occupied public space (Schein, 2012). The quality of the democracy in this sense is "measured by the possibility to elaborate ideas within discursive, open, and public arenas, where citizens play an active role in identifying problems, but also in elaborating possible solutions" (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014, 18).

However, this prefiguration has seemed to be a difficult task to accomplish. Some of the case studies on occupy movements in different cities have shown examples of exclusion, emergence of hierarchy and problems in the decision-making process. First of all, the protesters in occupy movements avoided the formation of organizational structures in order to establish an open process that is more responsive to the demands of the individuals (Smith and Glidden, 2012). Rather than a formal organizational structure based on hierarchy, the protesters chose to establish horizontal structures without leaders and employed consensus techniques for decision-making (Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012; Lubin, 2012; Smith and Glidden, 2012; Lubin, 2012; Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). However, a number of the case studies on occupy movements have shown that the lack of a formal structure and leaderlessness resulted in the emergence of hierarchy and exclusion. For instance, by

examining occupy Pittsburg, Smith and Glidden (2012) have mentioned the "tyranny of structurelessness" and found that in the absence of formal structures for accountability relational structures in which particular groups claimed a higher status in decision-making emerged eventually. Moreover Smith and Glidden (2012) also emphasized that in the absence of formal structures, "friendship ties" played an important role. Communities emerged around those ties and made it difficult to new comers to join the movement.

Moreover, the effectiveness of general assemblies or public forums has been controversial in some cases. Consensus techniques and democratic practices may be exclusionary, for instance, for homeless people (Smith, Castañeda and Heyman, 2012; Schein, 2012), for the people with adult responsibilities (Smith and Glideen, 2012), and for the minority voices in the assemblies (Kerton, 2012). First of all, Smith, Castañeda and Heyman (2012) provide an example to these two characteristics of occupy movement by analyzing tension between occupiers and homeless people who were located in that space before the occupation in Texas. The protesters excluded those homeless people at first as a result of an internal controversy about the rules of encampment and homeless people's reluctance to follow the rules such as not drinking in the occupied place and necessity of doing collective work yet expecting to access limited food and water collected through donations. Another reason was homeless people's cooperation with the police against the danger to be dismissed by the protesters. However a number of protesters criticized exclusion of homeless people by emphasizing that those people occupied the place first and they are also part of the 99%, therefore homeless people were permitted to participate in daily life of occupation as equals to protesters. By doing collective work and helping protesters in security issues, homeless people

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transformed into political beings who helped the maintenance of the occupation as well as providing solidarity for homeless people (Smith et al., 2012)

Furthermore, according to the observation of Smith and Glidden (2012) based on the movement in Pittsburg, while these techniques were effective in building solidarity among small and homogeneous groups, they did not work for bigger and more heterogeneous groups without the help of a facilitator. Moreover these assemblies were held in daily basis and therefore required a lot of time; as a result, the protesters who had adult responsibilities (work, family, children etc.) were excluded from most part of the decision-making processes (Smith and Glidden, 2012). Another challenge of consensus techniques was slowing-down decision-making process that proved to be ineffective in responding spontaneously (Smith and Glidden, 2012). The decisions were made in order to provide consensus rather than accept the decision of the majority and this was very difficult in a group composed of activists with various political orientations (Smith and Glidden, 2012).

Finally, another distinctive feature of occupy movements was the strong slogan of "the one thing we all have in common is that we are the 99 percent that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1 percent" that stresses the power of majority against few corrupted elites (Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012; Lubin, 2012). Despite the sense of inclusion and majority that the slogan creates (Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012), it attracts criticism as resulting in a "homogenizing discourse" that make it difficult to recognize the racial and class differences among the protesters. (Juris et al., 2012, p. 436) Additionally by examining the occupation of Tahrir Square, Kerton (2012) has pointed out this homogenizing discourse excluded some voices who did not agree with it such as women, LGBT individuals and minority

groups from the decision making processes in the assemblies by making difficult for them to sustain their critical perspective regarding the rest of the protesters.

Along with the challenge created by the consensus techniques in terms of movement expansion through new protesters and new networks, the movement's link with the local networks played an important role in terms of expansion of the movement. For instance Uitermak and Nichols (2012) have compared the occupy movements in Los Angeles and Amsterdam and found that while occupy movement in LA mobilized successfully through local activists networks composed of union leaders, seasoned activists and immigrants, the movement in Amsterdam disappeared because of a lack of such network.

3.3 The Gezi Resistance

Scholars studying occupy movements have often highlighted the transnational bonds in terms of "agendas, tactics, contentious performances and activists themselves" among the movements in different countries (Gledhill, 2012; Kerton, 2012; Castañeda, 2012; Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). In the summer of 2013 Turkey witnessed an uprising with these characteristics. However, the national context was quite different from the previously mentioned movements. For instance, the Arab Spring and the occupation of Tahrir Square represented people's anger and targeted an authoritarian regimes as well as aiming at dissolution of this regimes and establishing democratic elections (Göle, 2012). On the other hand, since Turkey has a parliamentary system with elections since 1946, the uprising was about "defending minority voices that have been disregarded in the context of a majoritarian concept of electoral democracy". (Göle, 2012)

Moreover while the protesters in Europe were against austerity policies, the protesters in Turkey were not victims of financial crisis but they were against "urban development projects undertaken by the AKP government". (Göle, 2012; Farro and Demirhisar, 2014 "The plan to construct a shopping mall on this public park was a tipping point and has led to the manifestation of a new critical consciousness. The Gezi Park movement expresses the objections to the kind of urban development and real estate speculation that characterized the Turkish economy during the past decade". (Göle, 2012, p. 4)

With this political background, Turkey witnessed an unforeseeable uprising in the summer of 2013. The uprising was triggered by the attempt of implementation of an urban development project regarding the Gezi Park that is one of the few public spaces in Istanbul. Specifically, the aim of the project was rebuilding Ottoman Barracks to serve as a commercial center and a mosque at Gezi Park in order to implement a phase of the Project for the Pedestrianization of Taksim (Demirhisar and Farro, 2012). On 28 May 2013, a few environmentalists came to the park and settled down with their tents to stand against the implementation of the project. However, they met with brutal treatment by the police. The disproportionate force used by the police against the peaceful environmentalists and the support of the officials for this treatment triggered mass support by the middle classes. The uprising spilled over to other cities in Turkey in a very short span of time and turned into a nationwide protest with broader political claims. While protesters occupied the Gezi Park in Istanbul, people in the other cities took the public spaces, squares, and streets as well. The protest continued throughout the summer and in some neighborhood levels it continued for a longer time.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE: SOLIDARITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

AND SQUATTING IN AN ISTANBUL NEIGHBORHOOD

The first public forum held in the Gezi Park in order to make a decision on the future
of the Gezi Resistance decided to move the resistance to the parks located in
different neighborhoods around Istanbul. Right after the eviction of the protesters
from the Gezi Park and from Taksim Square on June 15, 2013, thousands of people
began to convene in park forums to discuss local and national issues affecting their
lives. This decision on gathering together in local parks contributed the resistance to
localize and to develop more intense interactions with the rest of the city and the
citizens.

By creating local dynamics, the park forums attracted many people and
sympathizers of the resistance who could not remain unresponsive to the local
mobilization. Within a relatively short time, solidarity-based neighborhood
organizations emerged from the park forums. These neighborhood solidarities began
to convene forums in their neighborhoods. In some places, the resistance intertwined
with the daily life in the neighborhood and led to the emergence of experiences
worth studying in terms of their impacts on the social and political life of the
residents. For instance, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, one of the solidarity based
neighborhood organizations in Kadıköy, occupied a private property in the
neighborhood which was abandoned for twenty years as a result of a legal dispute
between the owners. The occupation took place on 29 August 2013. After that the
activists began to rebuild the property that was abandoned without completing the

construction process. For the first five months after breaking into the building, the activists worked voluntarily in order to put the building in service. They opened up it for public use in October 2013. The activists of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity attempted to improve the building in order to establish a social center for organizing public activities that are open to everybody. The Solidarity called the building 'Don Kişot Social Center' in response to the word 'Yeldeğirmeni' that means 'windmill' in English. The Solidarity put local and national issues in its political agenda and attempted to mobilize the residents in the neighborhood around those issues. They adopted an alternative perspective for politics and political participation which was based on a horizontal organizational structure with consensus techniques for decision-making, voluntarism and self-management. By the time, Don Kişot Social Center recruited individuals who were interested in squatting movements instead of mobilizing neighborhood. Therefore, different tendencies emerged within the activists that resulted in internal tensions and dwindling of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity.

Therefore this chapter will present the findings of the case study on the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists and their actions under four titles: (i) methods, (ii) The Gezi Resistance and politics, (iii) Political preferences of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists, (iv) The politics of everyday life in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, and (v) internal tensions.

4.1 Methods

This thesis examines Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity that is a solidarity-based neighborhood organization that was established in the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance. Therefore, it provides a single-case study. I used qualitative methods for data collecting.

Specifically, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews and also employed participant observation. I also participated in a numbers of forums and a variety of activities organized by the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity between April 2013 and January 2015. Finally, I followed the Solidarity and Don Kişot squat via their social media accounts that represent the channels for communication and announcements. Therefore, some of their sharing via social media constitutes data for this thesis.

As shown in the Appendix A, Interview I conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with seven female and eight male activists of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity and Don Kişot Social Center between 9th and 28th January 2015. I also conducted two pilot interviews in 21st and 23rd April 2015. The interviewees included seven females and eight males whose ages ranged from twenty-four to fifty-four. Each interview lasted at least one hour.

I reached the interviewees by participating in neighborhood forum. I introduced myself, explained what I aimed to do and asked them for cooperation. After I learned that some activists decided not to participate in the activities of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity anymore, I decided to reach some of them since their experiences were crucial for this thesis. Therefore through some activists of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, I met and interviewed with some residents of the neighborhood who used to be members of the Solidarity.

The interviewees had a high profile in terms of education level. All the activists whom I interviewed were university graduates. Additionally while one of the interviewees had an MA, two other interviewees were Ph.D. candidates. Moreover, the interviewees were composed of middle-income and lower-middle income individuals. Along with the students, the rest of the activists' occupations varied. Among the activists I interviewed there were two teachers, a nurse, two

lawyers, a psychologist, a librarian, a tax specialist, two engineers, an interior designer, a dancer and an advertiser. Along with having a job, they seemed to be free of other adult responsibilities such as taking care of somebody except two interviewees who had children.

All of the interviewees were residing in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood for four years on average except five. One of these five activists stated that he needed to move from the neighborhood because of the internal tensions in Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity and Don Kişot Social Center that was prevailed the last one and a half year. Moreover amongst the activists living in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, all of them were living in rented houses but two who had their own properties.

Furthermore, all interviewees participated in the Gezi Resistance from the 31 May to the end except two activists. One of these activists was in jail during Gezi Park period of the Resistance while the other supported in a more passive manner but began to participate when the local park forums arose. Most of them did not know each other until the Gezi Resistance.

As Appendix B has shown, I asked interviewees about their personal histories in order to figure out the formation of their political preferences; their opinions regarding institutionalized sphere of politics and political participation as well as their choices regarding institutionalized forms of political participation; their reasons to participate in non-institutionalized forms of political participation; their observations of local issues; their understanding of the concept of 'neighborhood' and 'solidarity in the neighborhood'; their experiences as a member of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity (or Don Kişot Social Center); their thoughts on the application of horizontal organizing, direct democracy, consensus techniques and leaderlessness; the issues, debates, tensions they witnessed.

In order to clarify why I chose to employ a case study rather than any other methods, I claim that the occupation of the Gezi Park for fifteen days or the Gezi Commune as some people called functioned for a prefiguration of the politics of everyday life that the protesters stand for with their various claims. The experiences of neighborhood solidarities that were established in the aftermath of the eviction of the protesters from the Gezi Park have provided cases for the implementation or putting into the action of this prefiguration into the real life contexts. By the real life contexts I mean those neighborhoods that were neither close to the park nor functioned for mobilization of the crowds like Taksim square. When the protesters went back to their neighborhoods the usual daily life was not affected by the Resistance as much as they were. They attempted to transform the everyday life in their neighborhoods by adopting a new approach to the politics with mechanisms they employed in the Gezi Park. Therefore, these experiences were more challenging when they were combined with the neighborhoods' own dynamics. I believe that these cases provide the opportunity to test this new approach to politics, namely the the politics of everyday life, in order to see how they work, what kind of problems emerge, how the activists deal with them.

4.2 The Gezi Resistance and politics

The whole story was started with the Gezi Resistance. The protesters occupied the Gezi Park and established an alternative daily life which was politicized with the attempts of challenging the dominant belief system and practices in the society through the establishment of communal living, alternative economic systems, alternative modes of production and non-hierarchical decision-making processes and

social interactions among individuals. This politicized daily life represented a prefiguration regarding how the society could be reorganized through previously mentioned political values or principals. Therefore, an assessment of the politics of everyday life in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood requires exploring activists' experiences regarding the communal life and ways of political engagement during the Gezi Park occupation. Hence, this first subsection will present the findings regarding activists' experiences of the Gezi Resistance.

4.2.1 On the goals and political gains of the Gezi Resistance

All the interviewees who participated in the Gezi Resistance pointed out that they decided to join the resistance on 31 May 2013 when the brutal treatment of the police against the protesters intensified. Although they were aware of what was happening in the Park, none of the interviewees participated in the protest before 31 May. The reasons of the activists for not to join the protest before 31 May have varied. On the one hand, one interviewee pointed out that he saw the first call for support by the environmentalists via social media but he did not go to the Park because he believed they could not stop them to intervene the park or from cutting down the trees. On the other hand, another interviewee noted that until 31 May the resistance in the Park did not attract her attention. However with the 31 May, extreme police brutality and political authorities recklessness in response to the treatment of the police, they decided to join the protest.

According to interviewees, instead of having a clear and common political goal or targeting at a specific actor(s), the Gezi Resistance represented a "blow up" against the oppressive practices of the government and claimed for expansion of democracy, freedom and individual autonomy:

I think Gezi did not have a purpose. I believe the incident of tree was a blow-up. If it was not, not so much people would show up there; so, it was a blow-up rather than a purpose. There was an accumulated anger. The government looked down on people, despised them and did not treat them as citizens. It was something suppressed. When you suppress something too much, you blow at some point. Everyone in this country knows police violence. Anger of the police always tended towards the public with a loose break. The public, having been exposed to any kind of violence by the state, could not stay indifferent; even those with no political view. This was a blowing point. It was the Gezi. (Appendix A, Interview 11)

The interviewees also pointed out the Gezi Resistance had the capacity of comprising various individual claims dependent on different political positions:

Everyone had many reasons to be there; some shouted "government, resign" while some shouted "cheers, Tayyip". While some came for environmental reasons, some had the concern to be an independent state. Everyone had his or her rightful reasons. (Appendix A, Interview Interview 12)

It was like the topic of each incident. It is strange that this idea included all of them. It included our rebellion, met our lack of completing, our lack of tolerance and our manner to say stop to the power. It responded to many things we needed. Actually, it even responded to our need to apologize when we bump to someone on the street. It was a process when we were tired of apologizing but we needed it a lot in a humanistic manner. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

Besides the oppressive practices of the government and extreme police brutality, two other factors have seemed to be significant in terms recruiting the activists into the resistance. First of all, all the interviewees emphasized the crowd of protesters, including hundreds of people that began to gather in Taksim Square in order to protest the hostility against the protesters, as providing motivation for them to participate in the movement. One interviewee elaborated his thoughts regarding the effect of the crowd in terms of recruiting people:

> I believe it was the crowd that appealed people to go there. A social hysteria was created at that period and it was people, just like you and me, who created this hysteria. Everyone had the impression "we are going" and this impression comforted people a little. They felt this responsibility that "I should also go". I believe the crowd was the reason why people insisted on going there in challenging conditions. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

Moreover, the interviewees also pointed out their political background which made it impossible for them to remain unresponsive to such a mass mobilization.

Therefore the crowd and interviewees' political background represent personalogical or individual motivational accounts of differential recruitment which focus on individual characteristics such as attitudes, ideological affiliations or psychological traits in terms of motivating the individuals to participate in or not to participate in non-traditional, often high-risk political activities could explain the interviewees' participation in the resistance in a specific day, 31 May 2013.

Although the Gezi Resistance did not have a common or clear political goal at first, the interviewees pointed out that the resistance achieved some political gains to some extent. According to the interviewees, one of the first political gains of the resistance was creating self-confidence. By coming together, occupying Gezi Park for fifteen days and establishing an alternative daily life in there, the protesters restored their self-confidence regarding acting collectively against the undesired policies or regulations of the political authorities.

This self-confidence has seemed to be the primary motivation of the activists for taking further steps such as adopting an alternative approach to politics, gathering forums and establishing neighborhood solidarities.

4.2.2 A new approach to politics

The interviewees pointed out that the Gezi Resistance opened up space for a new

approach to politics which differs from the conventional politics. One of the

interviewees noted what she meant by conventional politics:

> I think after Gezi, style of doing politics changed. That is to say, we used to
> see politics in traditional style. There were certain stereotypes and there was a
> dominant idea that you should act according to these stereotypes if you want
> to do politics. ... Prejudices were plenty. There was no such a thought that
> people from different sections can be at the same place. ... There was a big
> gap between organized and unorganized sections. A common belief was that
> they [the unorganized] could not do politics or they were apolitical. The
> assumption based on the idea that politics should be done by people involved
> in politics; they would be the best to do it, fight if necessary and produce
> ideas, it was like they were monopolizing the politics. (Appendix A,
> Interview 13)

When I asked what made such a transformation possible, interviewees emphasized

the fifteen days period in the occupied park area which required more intense

interactions among individuals. As a result of this intensified interactions, an

alternative daily life was organized by the protesters. One of the interviewees

described the daily life in Park:

> In Gezi Park, we, for the first time, taken out an area from its exchange value
> and for fifteen days, we have created a life some people called commune. We
> turned it into an area where the distribution is equal; there are kitchens and
> vegetable gardens; nobody was deprived of any right and where there was
> equal distribution. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

Organizing from below, direct democracy and horizontal organizing structure and

consensus techniques for decision making represent the principal characteristics of

this new approach to politics. One of the interviewees described this approach in terms of organizing from below and direct democracy:

> This new political approach does not have any tolerance for central and bureaucratic organizations. So to say, it does not want alienation between those forming the political center and base. It wants to participate directly in the decisions. When it cannot participate, it either resigns or resists. Quest for direct democracy is a crucial part of this. It is more involved, more based on direct action, creative and more open to individual initiative. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

As a result of this approach to politics that prioritize organizing from below, park forums were organized to make a decision about further steps of the resistance. The first park forums were gathered at Gezi Park as a result of the necessity to decide about the future of the resistance. Political plurality, enthusiasm for participation, direct democracy, dissatisfaction with the parliamentary democracy and finally internalization and implementation of horizontal decision-making mechanisms have represented characteristics of the park forums.

First of all, political plurality that was one of the characteristics of the Gezi Resistance influenced park forums in organizing an egalitarian environment in which political and social differences were welcomed. Two protesters described the political atmosphere of the park forums at the Gezi Park by emphasizing political plurality in terms of consisting political party members as well as non-members:

> Forums were very colorful formations. They were like micro-scales of Gezi. They were reflecting the colors of all participations in Gezi. There were political organizations and *ulusalcı*s.[7] Socialists, those who are member of various organizations, were mostly living an unorganized life, never struggled in an organization and maybe they vote but do not have any sympathy for these parties. Without a doubt, it was not homogeneous. It was colorful and

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[7] Özkırımlı and Uyan-Semerci (2006, p. 62) define the term *ulusalcı* as "a composit term of recent vintage used by anti-imperialist, EU-sceptical, staunchaly secularist, Kemalist". This definition resembles the group of people who the interviewee described.

different; as I said, there were both Kurdish people and nationalists. Or Muslims... It also included Muslims who stood at more anti-capitalist and more critical level. Groups, which have not been experienced to stay together, could unite here. In this sense, it is an important democracy experience. (Appendix A, Interview 13)

It was a very cosmopolitan thing. There were many people such as those who have been tortured during 68 movement, those who threw the American soldiers at Dolmabahçe with Deniz and others, those who clearly have never been involved in politics and sounded like they borrowed the words and those who studied politics in their academic life. We could understand who came from where based on their speech. We used to say; "this woman is *ulusalcı*, this man supports Kurdish movement, this man must have been in socialist struggle". It was a wide range. There were people whom we would not like; however, we were there with them. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

Moreover, the park forums created spaces for direct democracy. Anyone could join the forums and express his/her thoughts upon any subject he/she thought relevant. This opportunity seemed to create an enthusiasm for participation. Although the forums did not have common political goals at first, they reflected people's need and desire to speak for themselves in public. One of the protesters who participated in the first forum at the Gezi Park emphasized the enthusiasm that the forum witnessed:

That first forum in Gezi Park was really strange. Moreover, when we look at the time; it was a weekday and work time. Many people could not participate for that reason. However, there was serious interest. For example; I remember the first meeting. Everybody from different ages was striving to have a say. When each of them began speaking and stated their own independent, different views, everyone, surprisingly, applauded. A friend was talking about Kurdish matter and an *ulusalcı* was applauding. It was as if none of the words mattered and the existence of forum had created strange enthusiasm. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

According to one of the interviewees this enthusiasm for participation was associated with the mass dissatisfaction with the parliamentary democracy:

> When we look back, we can see that it was not a clear project designed in somebody's mind. There was no specific political purpose like "the purpose of the forums should be this and this".
> Thereby, views could be different in here. However; one thing was clear: there was a sound, which could not be heard, against the political power or existent parliamentary democracy; a sound that could not express itself within four years of elections. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

According to one of the members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, despite the various individual political agendas, political positions or opinions, consensus was not unlikely:

> Everybody brought his or her own agenda; it could be a woman's agenda or what she perceived from it. A member of political party carried that thought; sometimes really opposite ideas were heatedly discussed. The place was getting tense. Actually, an area was beginning to form, where people, indeed, expressed their ideas without fear. People with very opposite ideas were vehemently debating but at the same time, they were uniting under some common points. They were able to leave extreme points aside and build consensus. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

Finally, despite the lack of common political goal at first, the horizontal structure and consensus techniques internalized and implemented very quickly. Forums were organized in a short time with no superior authority. Rather moderation was chosen to facilitate the forum process. Therefore, methods for enabling communication among crowds such as special hand gestures were adopted by the protesters and run without major difficulties.

However beside its positive aspects in terms of facilitating communication and interaction among the protesters, the forums at the Gezi Park could sometimes turn into exclusionary practices as some of the interviewees asserted. First of all, since the forums were held within the working hours the protesters who were

working were excluded from decision-making process regarding the future of the

Gezi Resistance. One of the interviewees pointed out that she was uncomfortable

with the decision of put an end the resistance at Gezi Park without opinions of

protesters like her:

> I could not make it to the forum where the decision to leave the park was debated but I went there and interrogated. In the end, we were working and I felt the necessity to question whether the forum would be repeated for us in order to take our opinions into consideration. It was said that the park was going to be left and that the decision was taken at the forum. I was disturbed. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

Moreover another interviewee stated that despite the egalitarian and horizontal

structure of the forums at the Gezi Park, because of some people's attempts to dictate

their perspectives, she felt there were no room to express herself and kept silent for a

while:

> Everything could be spoken. That was good. However there was something I mostly encountered during the forums. What we always object is dictating; trying to convince someone that the other's idea is true is one of the things we oppose, however, in time, I realized that people had such tendency. Then, I personally decided not to participate so much in the forums or remain silent. Because many reactions could cause you to become distant in the forums and break away from the process. (Appendix A, Interview 8)

Furthermore, one of the protesters asserted political parties' attempt to manipulate

the public by hiding their political identities regarding political party membership

during the forums at the Gezi Park:

We began having forums at tents for the first time, invited others to the tent,
mentioned what to do, daily problems such as prohibiting the alcohol. Then I
attended a forum; there I saw that everyone wanted to have a say.

People from the same organization wanted to speak as individuals, yet talked about the same things. The moderator needs a good skill to manage such a group; I had such feelings. (Appendix A, Interview 9)

Nevertheless, the interviewees also stated that these problems regarding the park forums did not result in serious problems or disagreements among the protesters. The political atmosphere helped them to resolve such conflicts. The fifteen days of occupation in Gezi Park, with experiences of communal living, horizontal decision-making processes, the establishment of alternative economic systems and the establishment of alternative social relations, generated a politicized prefiguration of everyday life which attempted to provide a model for how society could be reorganized through the social and political values adopted by the protesters.

4.2.3 Public forums at Yoğurtçu Park

After the eviction of Gezi Park and forums' decision to move the resistance to more local levels, the park forums began to convene at parks around different places in Istanbul. One of the members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity explained the reasons for this decision:

> After such a major event as Gezi, people began to feel uneasy. This feeling actually began during Gezi. Well yes, hundreds of people met here and there was a good festival. Many people found a way to get out of their daily concerns and found an atmosphere where they can respect nature and animals besides human beings. This atmosphere could not be tolerated by the dominant power and it was besmeared. Then people were forced to leave with physical violence. Now, how will the story continue? Should it continue or not? How will the united people reconnect? It was a concern to continue this via park forums and we did not believe such a thing could be formed. Yet, people found a way to unite in forums. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

At that time, there were about fourty park forums that were carried out in different locations in Istanbul. Yoğurtçu Park was one of these parks located in Kadıköy in which protesters gathered together. The forums took place around 8 pm on a daily basis.

As a further step of the Gezi Resistance, the Yoğurtçu Park Forum did not only conduct public forums. On the first days of the forum at Yoğurçu Parkı, the protesters discussed more of the Gezi Resistance and national politics. However on the following day, the protesters decided to take concrete steps and a number of workshops and commissions were established. There were about thirty workshops including a wide range of subjects from philosophy to drama for children.

Moreover eight commissions were established including commissions of "health (responsible for intervening in case of emergency), environment and security (responsible for security and cleaning of the park area), neighborhoods representatives (responsible for transmitting the demands of the residents, for spreading Taksim Solidarity's demands to the neighborhood and for announcing the Yoğurtçu Park forum to the neighborhood), activity-organization (responsible for the forum process and for organizing demonstrations), foreign affairs (responsible for communicating other park forums and Taksim Solidarity), and workshops (responsible for coordinating, running and production of the workshops)."[8]

In addition to the forums at Gezi Park, the forums at Yoğurtçu Park represented political plurality and an egalitarian environment that is open to various political attitudes. However in the long run this political plurality was not sustained. The conflicts among political groups, which did not prevent them from acting together during the Gezi Resistance, reemerged. For instance one of the members of the

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[8] Gezi Dayanışması Yoğurtçu Parkı'nda, Halkevleri.org, 28 June, 2013

Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity stressed the conflict between Kurdish people and the

Turkish nationalists by drawing the attention to the failure of the Gezi Resistance in

'communizing the struggle':

> There was an exciting atmosphere. People still had the desire to struggle.
> However, there was not a serious leadership regarding what to do. Everyone
> was trying to pull people aside. The struggle, itself, could not have a common
> purpose. It could not be united with Kurdish problem, for example. Although
> during Gezi, *ulusalcı*s and Kurdish people could stay under the same roof;
> after Gezi, there had been serious debated at Yoğurtçu Park, I was not there.
> After that, there had been separations. Certain groups left the place while
> certain groups tried to claim it. When Medeni Yıldırım was killed, there had
> been a serious union and I was really hopeful. However, it began to disperse
> after one or two forums. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

On the one hand, as in the forums at the Gezi Park, the forum at Yoğurtçu Park was

lacked a political goal upon which the protesters reached consensus. As a result of

this when the intensity of the struggle began to lessen, the participation rates in the

park forum decreased. On the other hand, to some extent, Yoğurtçu Park forum

provided a sense of proximity and attracted the attention of people who were residing

in the neighborhoods close to the Park.

4.2.4 Establishment of neighborhood solidarities

In a short span of time neighborhood forums and neighborhood solidarities were

established from Yoğurtçu Park forum. One of the members of the Yeldeğirmeni

Solidarity summarizes the decision of Yoğurtçu Park forum regarding the

establishment of neighborhood solidarities:

At Yoğurtçu, the decision was made that there should be neighborhood solidarity and a neighborhood forum. And first meeting was held at Yoğurtçu Park. People living in Yeldeğirmeni met each other there and held the first meeting there. Then in the second week, people met at the parking lot next to which is now called Ali İsmail Korkmaz Park. (Appendix A, Interview 3)

As a result of the decision made at the Yoğurtçu Park, the protesters established the neighborhood solidarities. One of the interviewees explains their reasons for building up Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity:

If this movement is going to continue, it should be able to continue with locals and from neighborhood; for that reason we have built a neighborhood solidarity with the concern whether people can find each other in neighborhoods, at their work places and whether people can carry on the concern of building our future together, which was formed in solidarity and collective spirit of Gezi, at the neighborhood; and it was the reason why I participated in this neighborhood solidarity. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

The Gezi Resistance raised awareness about the importance of public spaces. Through the fifteen days of the communal life at Gezi Park, the protesters drew attention to alternative use of these public spaces which prefigure a daily life in which all kind of relationships in the society ranging from consumption to production, from power relations to relations between individuals could be reorganized. Through the park forums, the protesters transformed these public spaces into democratic platforms which are open to anyone who would like to speak for himself/herself.

4.3 Political preferences of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists

Although this case study focuses on an attempt of neighborhood organizing, it is not dealing with one, united, homogeneous political actor. Rather, this organizing

attempt is composed of various political actors with conflicting interests. I will be discussing about the conflicts, issues and debates among the activists under the title of 'internal tension' at the end of this chapter, but in order to understand the process of organizing, the protest tactics and the organizational structure employed by the activists, I should review their political background at first in terms of their relationship with institutionalized forms of political participation, namely political party membership, voting, running election campaign, support for a candidate and contacting officials as well as their adoption of non-institutionalized forms of political participation. Therefore here I will present the prominent aspects regarding political backgrounds, behaviors and habits of the activists in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood.

4.3.1 On political parties and membership

One of the common characteristics of most of the activists was their interest in politics that they developed at early ages. All the informants pointed out they have been interested in politics since they were at high school except two interviewees who asserted that they were politically apathetic until the Gezi Resistance. In addition to this, most of the activists had a period in which they were members of political parties. Eleven interviewees pointed out they used to be members of political parties, but they resigned from the membership after long years in the organization.

None of the interviewees currently, with one exception who became a member of HDP recently, had political party affiliation as of my research period. Amongst their reasons to resign, political organizations' inability in keeping with the

changing conditions of twenty-first century, hierarchy, the lack of in-party

democracy, interpersonal problems and marginalization of some political subjects

were the most cited themes by the interviewees. For instance, one of the activists

elaborated what he meant by the inability of leftist political parties in keeping up

with the twenty-first century:

> I believe that the current organization form does not appeal to the new period. What is the new period? These organizations are the formations of twentieth century and they act with the movements of twentieth century; it is not only about writing slogans on walls by heart and courses of action. It is also not only about similar dressing, perspective on women, sexuality, women-men relationships, manners and limitations. These organizations have more universal problems: For example, they carry the diseases of class societies as they are born within them. So to say, there is a civil society circle drawn by capitalism and they prefer to act within this circle. A fight with the state is not preferred. They are called revolutionists, communist or Marxist; whatever their name is, when we look at their programs as of their essence, we see that their long-term perspectives or codes are mostly copy/paste and they act as a reserve of the system within the class societies as of their essence. Meaning that they act like the left face of the system. For that reason, I'd rather not participate. (Appendix A, Interview 5)

Another interviewee, who agrees on the inability in keeping up with the twenty-first

century, associates this inability with political parties' misinterpretation of Marxism:

> Unchanging [things] brought by classical left culture... I believe Marxism is not an absoluteness; on the contrary, it is something that should be exceeded, changed and transformed. So, it is about keeping up. Organizations acting with old reflexes cannot succeed in this. (Appendix A, Interview 3)

In addition an interviewee accuses political parties of creating 'vicious cycles':

> The fact that the organizations go round in circles makes it obvious that they have many old-fashioned ways although they look like they represent progressivism, and organizations first sanctify their organizations, then the parties and later their leaders and they begin to look at incidents from their point of view. They are the one who are always right, best and know it all.

This situation applies to everyone; I do not say it for a specific organization. This is the general organization formations in Turkey. There is such a tendency and I believe in otherwise. (Appendix A, Interview 1)

When I asked about the effects of this 'tendency', he answered by pointing out the inability to unite, while the numbers of political organizations are increasing, the number of the members are decreasing.

Additionally, one of the interviewees asserted that political parties' failure in local politics was her primary reason to avoid becoming a political party member:

To be honest, I have a very critical look. Although I am a supporter of many things, I am an investigator on the streets. I feel close to some place and support it but I look into what they have done in the past. I investigate their local governance, what policies they have carried and I especially see many problems in local authorities regarding the matter of urban transformation. For that reason, I keep my distance against all political parties. Actually, we can add the fact that I do not favor hierarchy. Still, if I should somehow be a part of it, I investigate what they have done in local administrational level. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

Lack of internal democracy is another problem of political parties according to the interviewees. One of them pointed out the long-termed leadership mechanisms as an obstacle for younger people:

Organizing is a must in the society; there should be organizing in everywhere. Local organizations, neighborhood organizations, unit organizations, occupational organizations; all these should be organized. However, the main problem is that they cannot build democracy within their own organization. Whether it is local organizations or labor unions, somebody takes charge of the union and nobody gets to be the administrator besides this person in fifteen, twenty or thirty years. You see that there is no democracy in there. New people cannot overcome this obstacle. The way is not paved for the young ones; this applies to both left unions and local unions. It keeps going on the same people. However, it must be in turns. While people get older, they should leave their place to younger ones which are more dynamic; they cannot do this; I believe this is one of the biggest handicaps. (Appendix A, Interview 1)

Moreover five interviewees note they were members of unions and NGO's. However marginalization of some particular political subjects by the political organizations represent another aspect for the discontent with the formal political organizations. One of the interviewees who has identified herself as a radical feminist asserts the difficulties she has in the ÇHD (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği) that she is a member:

> Masculine politics methods, the fact that the masculine politics is dominant in political analyses. For example, femicides are now the most active topic in feminist agenda. Yet, although there is a commission system for prisons in ÇHD (Progressive Lawyers Association), and although it is a commission system dealing with occupational murders and social rights, a study area was not favored to be created for femicides. Because such a selection was made: We have a specific labor power and we give priority to these areas; to labor movement. However, for me, working on femicides was as important as that. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

As the interviews have shown, most of the interviewees are or were used to be members of political parties, NGO's or unions. Their political background in terms of their membership to formal organizations as such led them to both observe and experience the organizational structures of these formal organizations. They were familiar with the organizational aspect of these organizations such as hierarchy, vertical decision-making processes, bureaucracy etc. Therefore, their experiences in these organizations regarding these aspects have seemed to be the main reason for their discontent with membership to formal organizations and their quest for alternative forms of organizing. Therefore, it has seemed that the activists' previous engagements in institutional forms of political participation, particularly their membership to the formal organizations, contributed to their participation in non-institutional forms of political participation.

4.3.2 On voting

In addition to the choices of the activists regarding membership to political parties or other types of formal organizations, perspectives of interviewees regarding voting have also varied. Ten interviewees have pointed out they vote regularly as they could. While all those ten interviewees have asserted that voting on its own does not respond their political goals and desires, their discontent seemed to be associated both with the election system in Turkey as well as the representative democracy. Amongst this ten activists while some of them have conceived voting as an important ground of struggle, another group has identified voting as a tool of official ideology or used by political elites to distract the people. For instance, two interviewees state their partially positive thoughts regarding voting:

> As we are in a powerless state now, an area where we can express ourselves within parliamentary democracy is good. Because what we fight for is there. It is important to fight there. We definitely fight in streets but I vote in elections in order to not be distant to fights in that area. (Appendix A, Interview 3)

> I generally vote. Although I do not have high expectations, I vote. The reason I vote is because I believe that election or other activities are related with the struggle of oppressed groups. Without any high parliamentary expectations, it would be meaningful to form a base where oppressed groups can express themselves; this is the reason why I vote. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

On the other hand, another interviewee asserted that she does not vote because she sees the parliamentary system and the political parties as the representatives of official ideology:

> [The reason why I do not vote] is ideological. I actually did not accept parliament. It does not matter whether the party is Akp, Chp or Mhp.

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The names are different but for me, they are the representatives of official ideologies. I do not like and deny this official ideology. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

Critiques regarding the quality of the representative democracy represent another aspect of the interviewees' attitudes towards elections. One interviewee accuses representative democracy of serving political elites rather than disadvantageous groups:

Representation system is not something I believe in so much. Because it is a system serving to political elites. I do not think that it is a system which is aware of disadvantaged groups. And now the representation works with alliances founded with funds. (Appendix A, Interview 4)

Moreover, another informant pointed out that representative democracy is nothing but 'distraction':

It is distraction. That is all. As Murathan Mungan said in the latest Hrant Dink speech, I consider it as a democracy cartoon. (Appendix A, Interview 9)

Additionally, one interviewee has pointed out she used blank votes in the elections because she does not believe in representation principle of the democracy.

Furthermore, one activist identifies voting as a 'passive action' that has no influence in terms of accountability of the representatives:

Voting is a very passive action. You vote and disappear and then look at the person you vote from a distance, without affecting. Actually, they do not feel responsible, too. (Appendix A, Interview 11)

Another interviewee stresses the deficiencies of current implementation of parliamentary democracy through his prefiguration of parliamentary democracy with necessary mechanisms:

Yet, this thing called parliamentary system should be fed otherwise. If you are going to vote and determine a parliament, this parliament should be conducted with a mechanism including neighborhood organizations, district organizations, where couple of neighborhoods are united, and unions where couple of districts are united and even an organization where people could reach more evenly, produce policy and take their own local decisions; this is how the parliament could work in healthy standards. There should be a system allowing to decide individually, to conduct investigation any time and it should allow withdrawing a candidate when there is corruption in the country. Now, whatever I do, I cannot withdraw my prime minister. If you give the authority of decision, legislation and execution to the same person, you cannot take this person off the Constitutional Court or from his position in Supreme Court. He cannot be relieved of his duty anyway. The best method I know and think of could be parliamentary system but it should be horizontal, not as vertical as I can see today. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

Moreover most of the interviewees even the ones who pointed out their discontent with the parliamentary democracy noted that they would vote for HDP in the June 7 elections. One of the members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity explains his reason:

Not because I'm on a close line politically with HDP, but as I believe it is important that the rate should be stronger, I will vote them with a cyclical decision. (Appendix A, Interview 5)

This common tendency in the Solidarity has a significant importance since it denotes a change in the attitudes of the Solidarity toward voting and parliamentary democracy. The time period of this research that (more or less) included two elections –local elections of March 30, 2014, and the national elections of June 7, 2015– has provided noteworthy insights about how the political preferences of the activists of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood may have evolved over time. I began to explore the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity and the Don Kişot Social Center one and a half years ago. I went to the forums and activities organized by the Solidarity and followed them via the social media. At that time the neighborhood forums were gathered with more than fifty individuals, the participants of the activities seemed to

circulate; I saw different faces from one activity to another. The solidarity seemed to

be supported by the residents of the neighborhood. I met some of the members of the

solidarity and conducted two pilot interviews at the end of April 2014. It was right

after the March 30 local elections. I read on the news that in Ankara, three

neighborhood assemblies in Batıkent run election campaigns in order to support

'muhtarlık' candidates for local elections, while one of these candidates was a

member of neighborhood assembly.[9] [10] In the end, those candidates won the

'muhtarlık' in three neighborhoods.[11] However, the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity did not

run a campaign regarding local elections. When I asked about their thoughts on

Batıkent cases and local elections, one of the interviewees emphasized the difference

between the representation principle and the rationale of the Gezi Resistance:

> Until now, this movement was not carried based on the representation relation. Thereby, we did not have a discussion regarding a candidate or a name to represent this movement. I do not know; I cannot deny the representation relation as a whole; however, it is a relation that should be questioned sooner or later. The fact that a person can assign his rights for four years is a serious and problematical thing. Another type of representation relation can be described. There should be a right to recall. There should be a regular responsibility for those who voted for him. There was not a common history to form this matter of representation until the elections after Gezi; we could not discuss that much at representation level. Yet, we tried to discuss this: What kind of Yeldeğirmeni do we desire? We tried the discussion of what kind of city we desire; however, it failed. I think we could not do it properly. If we could do it, we would have collected the ideas in Gezi and have various requests such as "we desire such a city" or "we want a city, a local administration, in which we have the right of supervision for the decisions taken at the municipal council". But we did not do it. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

When I asked why they could not discuss the topics he stated the return of atomized

political environment:

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[9] Batıkent Mahalle meclisleri muhtar adaylarını tanıttı, Halkevleri.org, 9 February 2014
[10] Members in Batıkent neighborhood preffered to be named as 'neighborhood assembly' rather than 'neighborhood solidarity'.
[11] Batıkent'te seçimlerin kazananı halk meclisleri, Sendika.org, 1 April 2014

I think the existent polarization re-gained dominance after Gezi. Gezi dispersed this at some level and it imposed itself as an ideology independent of parties and all political movements paved the way for this. After that, they rapidly bounced back and that old polarization was rapidly re-gained. Topbaş against Sarıgül, whether it is AKP or... We could not mention this with a policy based on fears: What kind of city do we want, what kind of local administration do we want; we could not properly conduct a discussion on these matters. Because even in here, camping has a major effect on people. I believe this has a share in our failure in discussing at that period. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

Another member of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has emphasized that their perspective of everyday life politics and democracy do not coincide with the elections:

We did not carry such an operation during elections. Actually, we kind of preferred not to conduct such a discussion, thinking that what we call daily politics and democracy should not be restricted in one day... Maybe we should have determined more general policies but we stayed out of this. Forum made us adopt such a tendency. For that reason, we did not get involved. (Appendix A, Interview 13)

In sum, in the context of March 30, 2014 elections, The Neighborhood forum seemed to avoid adopting institutionalized forms of political participation such as voting, supporting a candidate and running campaigns. Rather they were working on employing what they called 'a new approach to politics'.

On the contrary, for the national elections of June 7, 2015 the Solidarity took a completely different position. I finished my data collecting at the end of January but kept following the Yeldeğirmeni activists through social media. During the interviews, most of the interviewees asserted that they would vote for HDP along with their criticisms on its organizational structure based on hierarchy. After a short span of time, '10'dan Sonra Initiative' was established in order to support HDP to go beyond the 10% election threshold. The Solidarity was the main representative of the

initiative in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood and ran an election campaign for this

political party. I also observed that some of the old members who left the solidarity

because of the internal tensions even came back and joined the initiative. Although

my research did not comprise the election campaign in the Yeldeğirmeni

neighborhood for the June 7 elections, I believe these observations have contributed

to this study in terms of revealing the effects of internal tensions that resulted in a

weaker Solidarity that abandoned the Don Kişot Social Center, a squat with problems

that has not been welcomed or supported by the residents as much as at the

beginning.

4.3.3 On contacting officials

Contacting officials, especially local authorities, is another form of institutional

modes of political participation that was chosen by the activists to force local

government to work for the community. For instance, one interviewee pointed out

she sent e-mails to Kadıköy Municipality about her complaints regarding

unfavorable physical conditions of the neighborhood:

> I sent an mail to Municipality during previous elections. They cried for
> victory in here. That year, my husband was serving in the army and I was
> living here alone. When I entered the street, sewer rats were running on the
> street. Water was collected in pits next to the pavements. While cars were
> passing by, I was getting soaked as I left work late at night. I sent a mail to
> the Municipality, saying that they were constantly renewing the streets of
> Moda but the streets of Yeldeğirmeni was really in a poor shape. Another
> thing was that cars used to park on both sides of the road at that time and
> garbage trucks could not pass through the street. Then they began to fix these
> streets. After a couple of months they really took action and I was very
> happy. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

Moreover, the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has cooperated with the Kadıköy Municipality in a number of activities ranging from improving physical conditions of the neighborhood to charity campaigns and asked for some services for the squat such as water and electricity and pest control. However, the members' perspectives on cooperating with the municipality have varied. On the one hand, some members act with suspicion towards any action of the Municipality and do not hesitate to argue against working with the municipality, on the other hand some other members believe they should force the Municipality to work for the favor of the residents. One of the members of the Solidarity summarizes his thoughts and the dispute among the Solidarity regarding cooperating with the Municipality:

> Let's say we are to do something with the municipality; that does not mean cooperating with this municipality. It is my municipality, it has to do it. If I want that park, the municipality has to do it. ... I told these; told them that there are such requests from the neighborhood. Mayor responded and asked for a one on one interview. I said I would not come alone and found a committee from Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity and come with them. I told these in the forum. They reacted for having a relation with CHP... I asked them whether they had self-confidence. I told them that this was our model to tell local administration what we need. There is no nursing home or women's shelter. (Appendix A, Interview 5)

Although there has not been a consensus about the potentiality of institutional forms of political participation in terms of influencing politics, activists of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood have not completely avoided engaging in the institutionalized form of political participation. By acknowledging that institutional activities have limited sphere of influence, the activists have identified institutional forms of political participation as the tools for influencing the state authorities. As the interviews have suggested there has been also an interaction between non-institutional activities and institutional activities. One the one hand, activists'

previous experiences regarding engagements in institutional activities (membership to formal political organizations) have an impact upon their engagement in non-institutional forms of political participation as in the case of political party membership, on the other hand, the activists have participated in some institutional forms of political participation after joining the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity as in the case of contacting officials. Therefore for them some forms of institutional forms of political participation have become valid options in order to have an impact on politics after they began to engage in non-institutional forms of political participation.

4.4 The politics of everyday life in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood

After the establishment of the neighborhood solidarities, the activists who were living in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood began to gather forums in the neighborhood. Their primary goal was to spread the resistance into local level. In line with the new approach to politics, they attempted to adopt the mechanisms into the local level which they used during the previous phases of the resistance. They combined their political agendas with the local problems in the neighborhood, they aimed to mobilize the residents around those local issues as well as to establish an alternative daily life in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. In terms of their organization, their, goal and their targets, activists of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood have adapted the politics of everyday life as one of the multi-dimensional and multi-targeted forms of political engagement in order to both promote social change in the neighborhood as well as have an impact on national politics.

4.4.1 Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood as a site for collective lifestyle politics

Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is located in Kadıköy and "begins with Haydarpaşa Çayırı on the North, ends with Mısırlıoğlu district on the Sought; there is railway on the left and Haydarpaşa Rıhtımı on the right". (Giz, 1994, p. 100) As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Istanbul, its history as a residential area has been traced back to the 15th century (Atılgan, 2007). The neighborhood was a colorful space in terms of the ethnic and religious plurality of the population (Atılgan, 2007). Since the first buildings in the form of apartments (rather than wooden houses as usual) of Istanbul were built in this area, the neighborhood is full of old and historical buildings including a church, a synagogue and a school (Atılgan, 2007) and some of them are still used by the residents for housing.

Since 2010, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood has been the subject of an urban transformation project that was launched as "Yeldeğirmeni Rehabilitation Project" by the Kadıköy Municipality and ÇEKUL Foundation. According to the web page that was designed by the Kadıköy Municipality to announce and provide further information about the project, the aim was "to protect and sustain the historical fabric –that has survived until today– of Yeldeğirmeni and distinctive neighborhood identity". The project was also identified as a participatory process that has aimed at opening up public spaces for participation and interaction of the residents along with the physical renovations:

Besides renewal of Yeldeğirmeni substructure, protection and refunctioning of historical artifacts, creating public areas, and physical projects such as regulation of fronts; social projects will be put into practice such as founding a neighborhood

union where neighborhood residents will take responsibility for the neighborhood, forming craftsmen union and conducting activity and workshops.

Since the beginning of the project, the physical conditions of the neighborhood seemed to be improved. When compared to the older photos of the neighborhood taken a couple years ago, there have been visible improvements on roads, sideways and outlook of the historical buildings. One of the interviewees summarized the changes in the neighborhood:

> There are many changes indeed. Many cafes are opened, number of markets increased; as for the class, it looks like the neighborhood moved up the social ladder. There are many historical buildings in here; they used to be very uncared, now they are well-cared and utilizable. Moreover; there used to be thinner addicts in here; this was a place where families did not want to live. Now, there are not many of these groups. There had been such changes. It looks like it is turning into Cihangir – I hope not. It is in better condition compared to past, unless it stays that way. (Appendix A, Interview 11)

However along with appreciating the improvements in the physical conditions in the neighborhood, most of the interviewees have expressed their discontent regarding the project by pointing out the demographical changes that have become visible with the transformation of the neighborhood. One of the interviewees who were also residing in the neighborhood noted that she was satisfied to some extent:

> I am happy about these of course: Art centers, galleries etc. are opening. We made more organic relations with them [compared to the traditional craftsmen in the neighborhood residing since early times]. Of course I do not want it to be mentioned a lot but improving the relations with craftsmen and enriching the look of the neighborhood is good but it is still problematic for us. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

When I asked what was problematic for them she stated that the transformation may result in a change in the profile of the residents:

> For one thing, rent prices will increase. People's profile will chance. So to say, we are expecting a change. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

On the one hand, according to some of the residents the profile has already been changing since the neighborhood has become more charming for upper- middle classes. The demand for housing has increased improbable and therefore the rents and prices of houses have increased disproportionately. On the other hand, one can easily notice various cafes and art galleries in almost every street in the neighborhood which used to be run by local shop owners. As a result of these recent developments, most of the residents have accused the transformation project of aiming at gentrifying the neighborhood which will make it difficult for residents to sustain their life in the neighborhood in response to both the physical and cultural changes that have made them feel like strangers. One of the interviewees labeled the project as 'transforming for unearned income' in terms of its effects on the city and the residents:

> Yeldeğirmeni is in Kadıköy, near city center. However, it has interesting problems. One of them is the urban transformation process. It is not really possible for an area near city center not to be ennobled and economically transformed while the city expands to Tuzla, Beylikdüzü and Şile with urban transformation. What is called alternative life is tried to be applied there; there are cultural centers and art studios. These are a part of the transformation. With Haydarpaşa Port project, there is a serious urban transformation there with the places getting more expensive. It can also be called as income transformation rather than urban transformation. All in all, people who have resided there for years and whose economical status is not really good cannot afford to live there anymore. One example is Tarlabaşı; I'm not talking about that much sub-culture though. As in Tarlabaşı and similar places, people who live there move to other parts of the city and a group over middle class begins to settle in Yeldeğirmeni.

There are art studios, squat, vegetable garden, cultural centers, immigrant tables, an alternative life center and they are taking rapid steps in the way of turning into Cevahir. I am a computer engineer and I'm working at İş Bank; I cannot afford to pay rent in Yeldeğirmeni. If I cannot, I wonder who can. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

In a similar manner, another interviewee conveyed his observations regarding families who had to leave the neighborhood as a result of the increase in rent rates:

In general, there is such a condition: Four years ago, there used to be families with three children; the man was working at the bakery, they were living in ground floors. Now all of the people are gone. They went to Fındıklı. They went to Ümraniye. They went to places where rents are more affordable. This is the case in general sense; now a process continues in areas where the neighborhood culture maintains and other elements are included for the poor ones to be exiled. Thereby, this place will soon turn into a place where a person cannot easily work and afford to take care of the family. People living in here will leave and therefore people dealing with capital will come here. The neighborhood faces such a threat. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

In contrast to the Kadıköy Municipality's statment of the project which claimed to open up a participatory process for the residents, one of the interviewee accused Kadıköy Municipality of ignoring the demands of the residents about the undesired results of the project:

... but unfortunately, there is the case of gentrification, which we all complain, I am really disturbed by this. If you are asking from the point of local administration, there may not be an abandoned and pushed view in the neighborhood; however, when I look at Yeldeğirmeni from outside, I do not feel that way. Because I look at the other neighborhoods of Kadıköy; I mostly compare it with Caferağa. To expand this criticism; when you look at Baghdad Street and its alleys or when you look at Sahrayı Cedid or its alleys, you can see that the Municipality has provided the service for these place which it has not for Yeldeğirmeni, which is very close to it. In this sense, Yeldeğirmeni is left aside; many dreams have been built on it by local administration. I consider it as a neighborhood where the dreams are expressed. And it is unfair. I do not approve of the municipality's approach. I think Municipality should know its place when it comes to turning a neighborhood into an art center. It should ask for public view. They increase the prices [rents] and old buildings collapse on us... I know that old buildings

can be restored in consistency with its original form by receiving resources from World Bank. I think these things should maybe be brought into action. I also think that right steps have not been taken and that it is an uncared neighborhood. I believe the local administration has poor relations with the residents. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

Since Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Kadıköy, the community is composed of residents who have intense interactions based on being neighbors. One of the interviewees pointed out this 'neighborhood culture' that has been diminishing as a result of the urban transformation project:

> When we first moved here, we used to hear such things about the neighborhood: it is not safe; you can encounter anything and there are many fights. I felt uneasy back then. However, when we moved, it made me happy that it could remind me of the things I lived in my childhood that these relations could still be preserved although it is very central. This is a neighborhood where everyone greets each other. In a short time, everyone is informed about you. Even if you do not talk to them, they learn about you and they make you feel that they know about you. They also want you to know them and provide that possibility. However, as in many places, there is also urban transformation in here. There is the example of Fikirtepe, which is very close to us. Now they are trying to handle this place, too. There is Haydarpaşa project. It makes me sad to know that this neighborhood culture is going to disappear. I do not want this to take place. I think the place is good already as it is. (Appendix A, Interview 8)

However according to some of the interviewees these changes were associated with the location of the neighborhood and easily accessible public transformation. One interviewee noted he did not agree with the gentrification thesis:

> I do not see gentrification in Yeldeğirmeni. I think who says there is, exaggerates. Because the people in here, especially the painters with studio debate on this over artists. All of them are newly-graduates; they have their breakfast with tea and bagel and pay their rent with their father's money; I do not call this gentrification. This is not an accurate point of view. Well yes, there is a serious price increase in rents due to the location. Price of houses is also increasing; but the reason of this is not artists or others. Or it is not that the rich people came here and ennobled the place. With marmaray, metro, boats and metrobus on the back, this place has become easy to reach. It has become a center of attraction for young ones and price of houses and rents

also increased. But it is not because the artists came, ennobled the place, made it bourgeoisie and aristocratic. Many people think that but I do not agree with this idea. (Appendix A, Interview 1)

Whether the transformation project has aimed at gentrification of the neighborhood or not, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood has been having a serious social and economic transformation for the last five years that has had material impacts on the life of the residents such as increases in the rent, changes in the physical outlook, changes in the economic structure and changes in the profile of the residents. As the interviewees who were the residents of the neighborhood pointed out, on the one hand, some residents welcomed these changes, especially private property owners who have been able to make extra profit through renting their properties with higher prices. On the other hand, some other residents, especially ones who have to pay more for rent, unhappy with these transformations because it has been becoming difficult for them to sustain their life in the neighborhood.

The Gezi Resistance, park forums and the establishment of the neighborhood solidarities emerged at the same time as the urban transformation project in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. Therefore struggling against the project and mobilizing the residents around the local issues associated with the project have been goals of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists who were aiming at spread the Gezi Resistance into local level, organizing from below and establishing an alternative type of social relations. Therefore Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood as the site of daily life has represented a site for collective lifestyle politics in which the activists targeted at both public and private spheres as well as employed both institutional and non-institutional modes of political participation.

4.4.2 Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity as an example to solidarity-based neighborhood organizing

Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity is a neighborhood committee that has been composed of the residents in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. It has differed from the conventional neighborhood committees as the Solidarity has adopted a horizontal organizational structure with no leader or executive body. The Solidarity has employed consensus mechanisms for decision-making. The neighborhood forums have been claimed to be the one and only mechanism for decision-making.

4.4.2.1 On the meaning of neighborhood solidarity

The concept of solidarity has represented one of the principal political values of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists. The term solidarity has constituted the basis for any kind of relationship among the activists. Because of the importance of the neighborhood for the activists, the neighbor has represented the principal aspect and the rationale of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity. The members of the Solidarity reinterpreted neighbor as a political identity around which to organize and mobilize the neighborhood for the issues associated with the politics of everyday life.

The members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity have different perspectives on the concept of 'neighborhood solidarity' as a neighborhood organization based on solidarity principle. One the one hand, some of the interviewees emphasized the role of the Solidarity in facilitating neighbor relations in order to strengthen the social interactions amongst the residents; on the other hand, some other interviewees

identify neighborhood solidarity as a the smallest organizing body for the grassroots politics.

One of the interviewees emphasized 'neighbor relations' when I asked what neighborhood solidarity meant to her:

> The things in our heads are the thoughts discussed in the forums I could participate or the thoughts shared in mail group. It is about the fact that people look at the closest place when they need something... They certainly have friends and relatives but that was the culture I was raised in. When we were in trouble, we did not call our relatives first, we went to the neighbor next door. This is what I understand from neighborhood solidarity. It is about asking help from a friend, when something is broken in my home, for example. Or helping the other person if there is anything I can help with. There should be a group where you can do these; a group that unites everyone, knows them and makes them known, aware of the incidents in the neighborhood and studying on these subjects. Because all of us are mostly aware of the incidents in our own street but do not know much about what is going on in the street below. For example, there was a man whose house was in a really poor condition. We fixed his house with solidarity. I think this is how the solidarity [as organization] should be. (Appendix A, Interview 8)

According to some of the members of the Solidarity, the need for neighborhood solidarity in terms of promoting social interactions among the residents is associated with the downsizing of the welfare state and diffusion of capitalism into everyday life. For instance, one member pointed out the role of local networks in terms of constituting an alternative to corrosion of social interactions:

> Capitalist relations and relations in production area cause a transformation also in social life. People are atomized and cities have changed. This situation brings along alienation, not trusting each other and becoming introverted. Or people live in small communes and do not build relation much. So to say, we have seen what a neighborhood is but this is, without a doubt, not a neighborhood life... Although it is kind of nostalgic; we think that it would be meaningful if these humanly relations are revived on local scale and if it is turned into a place where people can touch each other, not feel uneasy when they are locked out or something bad happen to them and if there were places where people could feel safe when they are sick. (Interview 13)

Additionally, another interviewee emphasized the sense of security that

neighborhood solidarity may provide against the precarious work conditions:

> Lack of social state causes a major gap. Both capitalist business and state are lack of the sense of security. So, they cannot predict the future of people. This is a serious trauma, indeed. They are soul-crushing things when we do not know if we can keep working when we get up and the fact that we cannot know all about it. Direct relation between work and survival can be seen in people in many ways. We see it as insanity or in other ways. Thereby, it is really important to build local solidarity networks. (Appendix A, Interview 15)

In addition, another interviewee defined neighborhood solidarity in a similar manner:

> What I understand from neighborhood solidarity is that people unite without having political concerns, talk about daily matters and share things together. It is something that can practice these functions at basic level. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

When I asked whether it should become political, he pointed out his notion of the

political:

> In a place like Turkey, it is inevitably politicized. But, how will it be politicized? I think a structure, where people can talk to each other and nobody imposes their own agenda, is also political. In fact, creating a nursing home (I do not know if this is an accurate description) for elder people, where they can easily socialize, or a place where the students in the neighborhood can do their laundries, a laundry provided in cooperation of state or another institution, can be utilized. Because we have done such things in the past. Helping a man or woman living alone, carrying woods for them is a part of solidarity. I think these actions are very political. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

Another interviewee explains what makes neighborhood solidarity political:

> [Neighborhood solidarity] sounds like cooperating in weddings and funerals. To say: Places where people know about each other and wish for the wellness of others without hurting each other. I think this is a policy. When we say macro policy, we think of some things; such as Haydarpaşa etc.; but no,

because having a solidarity, being able to sustain love, interest or anything human; these are a part of the politics. Because even building a friendship is political in this capitalist organizing model, where people are forced to compete, hostility, alienation and where people are tried to give in to each other. Thereby, neighborhood solidarity is also political. Knowing about someone's problems, knowing who is sick or happy... (Appendix A, Interview 7)

On the other hand, one of the interviewees, who defined neighborhood solidarity as the smallest organizing unit, identified the solidarity with a broader organizing network:

Neighborhood solidarity is the smallest organizing unit of locals. Locals and people should be able to cooperate for their own problems. It shouldn't be like solving a single problem regarding the neighborhood; doing something for the people in the group is also a part of the solidarity. We can call it an organizing network which collectively expands from individuals to society. (Appendix A, Interview 1)

Another interviewee elaborated on the neighborhood solidarity as the main political unit in the neighborhood:

A capacity and openness dealing with all the problems of that neighborhood; openness of horizon, away from sectarianism. For example, this person from AKP is away from the sectarianism of CHP. What we had in mind was not only organizing with a revolutionist manner but cooperating with activities; sometimes cultural, sometimes social aid, which are always straight and uncompromisable. We were close to it. The solidarity should reach such a level that local administration should not even drive a nail without asking the permission of this solidarity. For example, if a park is going to be built, it should ask for your opinion; they should know that if you oppose, there will be uneasiness at the neighborhood. If the neighborhood headman has an idea, he should act in solidarity with you. This is how the solidarity should be like. (Appendix A, Interview 5)

In a similar manner, another interviewee who identifies neighborhood solidarity as something established "in order to organize for the primary policy of the solidarity in

cooperation with the residents" emphasizes multidimensionality of the neighborhood

as a site in which private life takes place:

> However, there is a process waving between localness or too much centralism, distant from localness. Because neighborhoods and locals are a bit interesting. For example, you have a class identity and you exist in your work place with this class identity. You have relation that you have built with your boss other superiors; it is your class manner. Yet, when you go back to the neighborhood, you wrap yourself in a completely different identity. It is the place where you rest and find peace. It is the place where you seek certain conforms. Thereby, I think the concept of neighborhood solidarity can sometimes be problematic. Because you may want to start an event within the solidarity and open a music piece. Someone may say: I will go to work tomorrow, tell her to turn it down. But the same activity would not be reacted as it is an event arranged for people's own rights. Other workers go there, dance or shout slogans. But when it is in the neighborhood, they can wrap themselves in a completely different identity. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

The interviewee gave an example about the conflicts that emerge between the

residents and neighborhood solidarities:

> For example, we experienced such an incident in Kuzguncuk and if I tell about it, maybe the term of neighborhood solidarity can be understood better. There is a vegetable garden in Kuzguncuk. It is there for seven hundred years. It has an association and the association has serious relations with the Kuzguncuk residents. They have meetings at the cafe, know about the housewives, know about the woman from Black Sea and together, they made a park project in Kuzguncuk vegetable garden. It is a usual park project; with roads, sports equipment, hobby garden and amphitheater on grass. Residents requested it. They do it in cooperation with AKP Municipality. However, there is a natural site there and they will ruin it; they will conduct several works which are non-ecological and inconsistent with perma-culture. Yet, the residents ask for it, what are you going to do? Are you going to say yes to every request of the residents or are you going to say something despite the residents? I think a fight without the support of locals would fail but I cannot always say yes to the requests of the locals. I cannot let trees to be cut just because craftsmen think that there will be a park, it will be better and noble and they will make more money. It is a low possibility for my fight to succeed; however, it is not possible for me to always accept the suggestions of the residents and neighborhood local study is a challenging title. You can easily perform a central work; your enemies would be clearer. Yet, in neighborhoods, traces are mixed into one another; thereby I always had difficulty in neighborhood studies. (Appendix A, Interview 14)

As the interviews have shown that the variation of the perspectives on the meaning of neighborhood solidarity depend on the activists previous experiences and political background. One the one hand, the activists who were used to be a member to formal organizations, tended to identify neighborhood solidarity as an organizing unit that has wider political aims, on the other hand, according to other activists who have not been experienced in terms of membership to formal organizations, neighborhood solidarity does not have political mission, rather it has represented a committee that aims at improving social interactions and social networks among the residents in the neighborhood.

4.4.2.2 On the achievements of the neighborhood solidarity

In a similar manner, the activists' perspectives on the achievements of the Solidarity have varied. One of the interviewees' statements has shown that the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has been successful in terms of promoting social interactions and local networks which help individuals feel safe and secure:

> [Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity] gained me a lot. Although I had many people around me, I was living my life alone; in this sense, I began to have more people in my life and got used to crowd. I learned to form some things together and improved myself in terms of listening to different ideas. While I was a part of it, I realized that I had strict thoughts that need to be smoothened. It improved me a lot in this sense. I saw that even though I do not like somebody or even hate, that person may have valuable ideas and can take a step to make it happen. For that, the solidarity was a good experience for me. (Appendix A, Interview 4)

However in terms of the political purposes attributed to the Solidarity, some other interviewee thinks the Solidarity has failed:

> [Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity] meant the continuation of Gezi, but it was not.
> There were even informers among us. It meant collecting souls in order to
> form a real opposition movement and to spread the energy to locals; but we
> could not do it. (Appendix A, Interview 9)

Moreover, another interviewee asserted that the Solidarity needed to do something

similar to what has been done in the neighborhoods such as 1 Mayıs and Gülsuyu:

> We should be in closer relation with all residents in the neighborhood. I'm
> saying this for the whole Kadıköy; it cannot be compared with May 1st or
> Gülsuyu. We at least need some things that can encourage the determination
> of close relations of these revolutionist neighborhoods. The solidarity is
> getting weaker and less people are coming. A new mechanism or relation
> should be built in order to revive it. If you unite, we can express our desires
> more easily, see our problems and share them better and then become a good
> neighborhood. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

As the interviews have shown that Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has been successful in

promoting social networks, social interactions and solidarity in the neighborhood.

However, it has not been successful in terms of putting into the practice of its

political agenda and of mobilizing the neighbors around the issues in that political

agenda.

4.4.2.3 Strategies for advancing social change through the politics of everyday life

By targeting at having an impact on both local and national politics, the Solidarity

has employed both institutional and non-institutional forms of political participation.

The Solidarity has been focusing on both local and national issues and has targeted at

aiming politics in both public and private spheres. On the one hand, in terms of local

politics, the Solidarity has focused in the neighborhood context and has been

working through the forms of improving the neighborhood, promote a positive

community by establishing solidarity amongst the residents, broaden local solidarity

networks and expand awareness towards the use of both public and private spaces.

One of the interviewees describes the goals of the Solidarity:

> As I said, purpose of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity is to keep the neighborhood as
> it is, fight with urban transformation, preserve the neighborhood atmosphere,
> help residents keep living in the neighborhood and touch each other.
> (Appendix A, Interview 8)

First of all, the efforts for improving the neighborhood has included the Solidarity's

efforts to mold public opinion and draw attention regarding physical conditions of

the neighborhood and forcing the local government to serve the community. For

instance, Ali İsmail Korkmaz Parkı which was used to be a parking area, turned into

a playground by the Kadıköy Municipality with the efforts of the Solidarity. All the

interviewees emphasized the playground as the only green area in the neighborhood.

Another activity of the Solidarity was organizing a campaign to prevent the

Government to close Osman Gazi İlköğretim Okulu as one of the schools in the

neighborhood that is a hundred-years old building. The members of the Solidarity

cooperated with the graduates and teachers of the school. They organized a reunion

activity in order to mobilize people against closing of the school. They also prepared

petitions against closing of the school. As a result of this activity, the campaign was

successful and the school was not closed. These two activities that were organized

for Ali İsmail Korkmaz Park and Osman Gazi İlköğretim Okulu are the examples of

institutional (contacting officials) and non-institutional/ targeted (petition signing)

activities of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity that targeted at state authorities and took

place in public sphere in the local context.

Moreover, the Solidarity has also aimed to promote a positive community of neighbors whose relations, interactions and networks are based on solidarity. In order to achieve this objective, the Solidarity has been organizing various activities ranging from charity events for old and needy neighbors to free film screenings. Moreover, the Solidarity also organized activities such as Yeryüzü Sofrası, Ashura day and a wedding ceremony. These activities may seem to contradict with the philosophy of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity since they are based on predominant cultural norms in the society. However the way that the Solidarity displays these activities has two distinctive features which attempted to transform the conventional meaning of these activities by prioritizing some values over the others. First of all, all these activities took place at public spaces. For instance, Yeryüzü Sofrası was set in the streets of the neighborhood during the month of Ramadan, while Ashure activity took place in one of the empty gardens and the wedding took place in Don Kişot Social Center. Therefore, they were open to anyone who would like to join. Secondly, these activities were organized collectively. The Solidarity made a requirement list, shared it via its social media accounts and invited people. The residents have come with their supplies and shared the work. Through these two aspects, the way of organizing these sorts of events have also contributed to transforming the traditional and sometimes symbolic events into a coming together in a public space in which an alternative kind of relationship among the individuals which has aimed to establish solidarity and social interaction took place. For instance The Solidarity prepared a flyer in order to invite people to Aşure activity and distributed it to the residents in the neighborhood. The flyer shows how the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity attempted to transform the meaning of Aşure activity by emphasizing the importance of political plurality or living with differences in the society:

Let's taste Ashura,
Ashura is one of the most special tastes in Anatolia.
It is a special delight symbolizing that the "life would restart" since Noah's Flood.
It is known and made in many beliefs. It is essential to distribute and share it.
Ashura brings along many different tastes.
Beans, chick-pea, wheat and dry fruits are cooked in a boiler.
None of them lose their own taste, smell or color. They create a brand new taste when united.
This taste is the name of being reborn. Name of opposites and union...
In some way, Ashura is the proof that different ideas, views and beliefs can create a brand new soul.
Let's cook our Ashura together this year.
Yeldeğirmeni Residents
Let's eat and speak sweet.
Let's unite around an Ashura boiler where we will be together with our differences.
Let's taste the Ashura.

In a similar manner, a wedding ceremony was organized collectively in the Don Kişot Squat under the name of 'Another wedding ceremony is possible'. The Ceremony that was open to all the neighbors in the neighborhood started in the squat and then continued in the street. One of the interviewee convened her thoughts regarding the ceremony:

> For example, there was a wedding at the squat. We are against the weddings, aren't we? As a feminist, of course I am against a signature forced by the state, but this was a different feeling. You are united and sharing happiness. This actually means we can transform traditionalism for the sake of uniting. I am not saying we should organize weddings. We can have other unions. For example, earth table is also traditional, even an Islamic motive, just like Ashura day... But this is different; this is where you meet, encounter and can keep all differences together. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

These activities targeted at private sphere in local context and aimed at promoting a social change by transforming the relationship between the residents by drawing attention to some values such as solidarity, political plurality and the importance of public spaces for coming together and social interaction. These activities have also

contributed to the neighborhood in terms of developing positive relationships with the rest of the neighborhood.

Besides the activities in the local context, the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has also had a political agenda that aims to influence national politics. For instance, the Solidarity has organized local protests and marches in order to protest undesired policies of the political authorities, or to draw attention to a specific issue which the members of the Solidarity agreed on the importance of that issue. They attempted to organize from below during the protests. They have made an announcement to the neighborhood and called for support through the Solidarity's social media accounts or through hanging banners or posters. Moreover, the Solidarity has also organized charity events (Şengal, Kobane, Soma). Finally, the Solidarity has organized visits to workers who were in the strike, such as the resistance of Greif workers and Kazova workers, in order to strengthen solidarity.

These activities are the direct strategies of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity for advancing social change. As direct strategies, the politics of everyday life can be used to support a particular daily life and to promote change toward the general public. Among these activities, the residents of the neighborhood have tended more in engaging in activities that have aimed at having an impact on local context rather than activities that are aimed to influence national politics.

4.4.3 Don Kişot Social Center: Squatting as an indirect strategy for social change

In addition to collective lifestyle action that uses direct strategies, the politics of everyday life is also used to advance social change in a rather indirect fashion. In this sense, lifestyle politics may perform the role of prefiguration that provides a model

for how society as a whole could be reorganized. Squatting is one of these indirect activities of the Solidarity that has performed the role of prefiguration by providing a model for how the society by starting with the neighborhood could be reorganized.

After a series of discussions in the neighborhood forum, the members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity decided to occupy a private property that was abandoned for about twenty years as a result of a legal dispute between the owners. As the interviewees pointed out the idea of occupation emerged as a result of practical needs such as the necessity to find a place to conduct forums under unpleasant weather conditions, instead of a result of long-term theoretical or political discussions. According to the interviewees the reasons for the emergence of the occupations right after the Gezi Resistance has been associated with the political plurality, creation of awareness toward the city, anarchist ideology and the new approach to politics.

First of all, according to the protesters the Gezi Resistance showed that the individuals with conflicting political attitudes could unite around common political goals and therefore has encouraged the protesters for further political actions. One of the interviewees emphasized the courage that the Gezi Resistance created:

> I think Gezi might have totally enhanced this perception. Everything could be done. Sometimes you try and cannot organize an activity for a month; but during that period, thousands of people could protest upon tweets couple of people sent. So naturally, everything could be done at that period and we could have. If there weren't Gezi and someone told me to occupy this place, I would describe a series of problems such as police, how to resist, construction works, how to carry the debris etc. and it would be really hard to solve even single one of it. During Gezi, we announced on the internet what we needed and trucks were arriving filled with what we needed. It was the liberty taken from Gezi and that social union. (Appendix A, Interview 13)

Interviewees indicated that alternative approaches to Orthodox Marxism such as ecologists, anarchists and feminists contribute to the decision of occupation with their notion of changing the world without seizing the political power:

> In Turkish political example, Leninist and Marxist politics were dominant while anarchists were a team waiting aside. But as they gained self-confidence during Gezi, I believe channels have been opened for their political perspective and it was convincing. Changing the world without power was something contemplated by alternative left rather than Orthodox left. However, as socialists play by the book to the power, they do not have a problem with the nature of power. Anarchists and feminists mostly do. Maybe ecologists, too. So, thanks to Gezi, the way was cleared for ecologists, anarchists and feminists. It was also about Orthodox left's facing itself and an occupation experience at the park, on the other hand. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

4.4.3.1 On the meaning of the squatting

On the meaning of the squat, perspectives of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood activists have varied. The building was occupied by the members of the Solidarity. The occupation took action on August 29, 2013. Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity posted a declaration on their Facebook page in the format of a letter that was written to the residents of the neighborhood. In addition, the protesters printed out the declaration as flyers and handed out to the residents. According to the declaration, by occupying the building the Solidarity aimed at:

> Providing a living place, a social center in which neighborhood residents and everyone who has dreams for a better world can "use collectively". An assembly in which we can discuss common problems freely and look for solutions as well. A place for solidarity that provides assistance for needy."

As a result of this emphasis on the neighborhood and the collective use of the building, the Solidarity decided to name and to organize the squat as a social center.

One of the interviewees differentiated the Don Kişot experience from other types of squatting by elaborating their thoughts on social centers:

> We know that our shanty houses are also occupation experience. It is among the occupation experiences we can give as an example. Along with migration to cities from rural, it was an occupation process tolerated by state that the need of accommodation arose, in order to decrease capital, labor force and costs. When we look at it, most of the city is consisted of shanty houses. We call it our first occupation experience but it is not the first occupation experience on individual level. There are many occupation experiences on individual level. Along with this, what we did was an occupation at collective level, different than the shanty houses and different from European squat experiences, these houses have a history. Our actions came after a major social movement. There, it is used with public purposes and it is something developed since 1970s and mostly used for housing. Here, it is not mostly used for housing. We considered them as places where we could unite and produce something together. There is such a difference. Another thing is that we have a more collective and non-homogenous formation. This [occupation] was performed with forums of course, with non-homogenous structures. As far as I know, there are occupations performed over more political groups and there are those performed on individual level. Our actions are the products of Gezi. Gezi reminded us of that awareness. Because Gezi is really a movement where people expressed their opinions on the city. You say what you need to say and give practical attention. The awareness there was also reflected on the locals. You need a practical attention against the order. You do not want to just touch an empty place. You were passing by hundreds of times and now you are touching it. Such a thing developed, indeed. (Appendix A, Interview 13)

Therefore occupation created a moment of rupture by attempting to transform a private property into a public space. The members of the solidarity got into a very hard period that included renovation of the building. Moreover, the occupation provided an important shift in the movement by confronting protesters with new challenges such as organization and management of a huge building as well as their goals about the neighborhood. Additionally, the Solidarity has begun to organize activities in the squat; therefore the numbers of the activities have multiplied. This process resulted in attracting a wider audience both from the local and global level. First of all, the residents of the neighborhood began to support the activists as one of the interviewees pointed out:

Their reactions were always positive but of course, they wanted to see a result, too. Day by day, they were seeing this result. Because there were constant excavations. Women were saying things like; "thank you, this place became a shelter for thinner addicts, we were afraid when we were passing by this street. Now you cleaned up this place and turning this building of horror into something nice". Reactions were good. Even people who didn't know us learned about solidarity with that house. Thanks to the house, number of people, who treated us positively, increased. Many people began coming with the occupation. (Appendix A, Interview 3)

Furthermore, most of the interviewees indicate that with the occupation of the building The Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity and the squat became very popular as the first social center type squatting in Turkey. As a result of this popularity, a number of people came and joined the solidarity. Some of these newcomers were composed of people who were only interested in the squat. Therefore throughout the discourses of the interviewees, one would probably identify two principally different tendencies among the activists regarding their motives of activism in the neighborhood. These tendencies can be distinguished as 'neighborhood-centered' and 'squatting-centered'.

According to the first group of people who have tended to focus more on the neighborhood, developing local networks based on solidarity has represented the primary motivation for their activism. As a result of this motivation this group have underlined problems of the neighborhood and claimed their will to improve the condition of the neighborhood in terms of social, political and economic dimensions. Therefore squatting has not been attributed too much meaning rather than being a means to accomplish broader goals aiming establishment an alternative or different daily life in the neighborhood. This group has mostly been composed of the members of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity.

On the contrary, according to the individuals who have been closer to the latter tendency, the neighborhood has not occupied an important place. Rather the

neighborhood has been even seen responsible for the problems that the squat has. This group has not been interested in developing positive relationships with the residents of the neighborhood or mobilizing them around particular issues. Rather they have thought that the squat should be free of the boundaries that the neighborhood has created. As a result of that unlike the former group, for the activists with this tendency the squatting has represented an end itself rather than constituting a mediator or just a public space to develop a positive community.

One of the activists of the Don Kişot Social Center pointed out he did not join the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity because he did not want to attend the activities aiming at influencing the neighborhood. As a result of these two different and sometimes conflicting tendencies regarding the use of the building and the activities of the Solidarity have emerged. One of the members of the Don Kişot Social Center summarized his interpretation of the neighborhood:

> 99% of the problems of this place (squat), are based on the case that this place is perceived as a local dynamic and the solution to these problems lays in moving away from these local dynamics. o to say; our thief lives there, thinner addict is two streets away, our bi-polar and schizophrenic friends are here. They may visit us soon, as the forum is open to everyone. It is like a sledgehammer tied on our feet while we can spend our energy more effectively; this is how I describe local dynamic. We are trying to crawl with it and we cannot turn it into a format which may people can say "okay, that could be a mode" as a form of resistance. However, as we cannot get over the neighborhood dynamics, we cannot present this house as a model and cannot tell about the difference of this place. So to say in brief, I consider the neighborhood dynamics as shackles. (Appendix A, Interview 10)

When I ask about his thoughts of getting rid of 'the bond' as he mentions, he points out that the squat should not open to any one as the Solidarity decided on:

> For one thing, squat should be well-understood. This place should not be considered as the topic of each incident and it should be described what it is, what kind of people come to such a house, what is the purpose of this place etc. ... Secondly, after the description, nonlocal dynamic should be told that this is different than a community center, organization or party branch. (Appendix A, Interview 10)

Therefore on the one hand, the squat has represented a means to strengthen the solidarity in the neighborhood through creating and transforming public spaces, on the other hand for the activists who joined the Solidarity after the occupation has represented an end itself. These different views on the Don Kişot Social Center were one of the reasons for the emergence of internal tensions within the Solidarity. In addition to this, the need for sustaining the squat combined with the activities of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, therefore there was a dramatic increase in the amount of subjects discussed and of time spent talking. Therefore, the problems of communication and coordination emerged.

4.4.4 Internal tensions

Despite the strong networks based on the solidarity, after one and a half year of the establishment of the neighborhood solidarity, some internal tensions among the activists of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood have become visible. It is important to note the changes in the political context in order to assess the tensions better. One of the members of the Solidarity summarizes the political context:

> Both domestic affairs related to the squat and country agenda began to change near the time of [Local] elections. By that period, important incident took place; such as things happened in Soma. In one and one-and-a-half years, it is not possible to maintain Gezi protests with the same enthusiasm. Thereby, people began to withdraw. Another thing is that people could not see the results they were hoping for during local elections. That caused

disappointment; thus, the disappointment affected people. While they were more defiant in participating in the protests before the elections, the case caused them to be discreet. Of course when these minds withdraw, forums also get weaker. Domestic problems begin to arise. Actually, these domestic problems existed before, they were there when we were protesting at Gezi; it is only the enthusiasm we felt for the big scene uniting people that is decreased and thereby, such problems occur. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

Moreover, Don Kişot Social Center as the first squat that was occupied with collective purposes has provided an incentive for spreading of a wave of squatting; four other properties were occupied in different locations by the protesters. Unfortunately, these places could not survive in the long run as a result of internal tensions among the protesters or of eviction by the police. One of the protesters calls these changes in the context "pullback of the movement" and addresses them in creating a sense of disappointment among the protesters of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity in terms of providing pessimistic atmosphere about the future of the neighborhood solidarity and the squat.

This political context that I briefly mentioned above, namely "the pullback of the movement" has seemed to constitute the main reason for the emergence of the internal tensions according to most of the interviewees. One of them summarizes her observations:

Of course it is not as same as the first times. Forums are conducted with very few people. I still believe in neighborhood relations and solidarity. In this sense, people who showed up on the streets returned their homes; so as many people who participated in the forums. People from a political organization or party returned. Because forum has never been a place for political organizations to find a place to settle. Forum has never allowed this. For that reason, only the people like me remained, who did not feel close to any group or party. (Appendix A, Interview 6)

The internal tensions include the difficulties in maintaining political plurality, emergence of hierarchy, inability to sustain the public space. First of all, maintaining

political plurality as a strong challenge to deal with is one of the controversies among the activists of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The Solidarity used to be composed of individuals with various political attitudes. After a while, the disagreements on issues ranging from activities to forum decisions resulted in serious disputes within the members of the Solidarity.

As a result of that some of the members have quit the Solidarity and therefore the Solidarity has become smaller in number. One of the interviewees who has not been a member of the Solidarity anymore summarized the process of bleeding out:

> It caused separation to think you are not appreciated and approved while you have made a great effort and surprisingly, disagreements also caused emotional separation. All in all, you begin to build an emotional connection with the solidarity; I remember some friends began to resent when their ideas were not approved. This case happened in anarchists, too. ... Anarchists were the first ones to become distant; because they could not be politically compromised. Then there was a critical May 1 and May 31 debate. Because besides the daily works, there was also a macro political aspect. Some people resented thinking that we are not thinking the same thing and when we do not think the same, what we say is not accepted and everything we say is opposed. We could not always keep our differences together; it began to obstruct at some point. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

Additionally, as a result of the debates and conflicts between the activists the Solidarity has decided not to convene neighborhood forums in the squat. Therefore the Solidarity and the Squat have begun to conduct two different forums. However, it was not a strict separation between the activists into two group; rather some activists have participated in both forums while the others have participated in one of them. One of the members of the Solidarity associates this separation with different perspectives on the squat:

> I mostly tried to participate in solidarity's forums. Because earlier, there was a forum; it was the forum of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity that we first founded and the decision of occupation was made there. Then, when the house became

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popular, there had been cracking among people in the solidarity. Because everyone had different idea on the occupied house. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

When I asked what are the different perspectives, he states:

There is a thought of doing politics at this house. For once; you are the continuation of Gezi ... Gezi, itself, was a very political thing. People who continue after a political thing would do something political when they occupy the house. But I think sexist and racist people should not have a say in property defense. I am not saying that we should dismiss them but we should have a counter manner; those who have occupied should have a counter manner. This manner does not mean dismissing people; discussion should be able to continue as an open discussion, in dialogues. There, the thought began to arise that the politics should never be mentioned, there should be art studios and the house should only be related with art studios. Another thought also arose: When the house we entered with solidarity became popular, solidarity would be separated and borders would be drawn in the house. Then, different views continued. But this case also took place in Gezi. The problem is not the differences. I think the handicap was not being able to discuss freely within the forum. (Appendix A, Interview 2)

On the other hand, a couple of months ago, all the members of the Solidarity have declared they had no ties with the Don Kişot Social Center anymore. When I asked one of the interviewees via a message on Facebook, she points out that the activists of the squat made a decision through "overall tendency" by violating the rules of the forum that makes decision through consensus rather than by majority of the votes. The Solidarity decided not to use the squat for housing. However, a few members of the Solidarity who were disagree with this decision entered the building by force and begun to stay there at night. Therefore serious problems associated with security emerged. These problems among the members of the Solidarity have also resulted in a decrease of the support of the residents for the Don Kişot Social Center. One of the interviewees indicated that the residents have questioned the decision of the Solidarity:

We had such days. When the door was broken, residents asked for us. They said they were following us and good things were happening and that they felt safe. But after the door was broken, they said they got worried. One of them said that what we were doing was not clear and questioned what kind of a place it was. One time, waterman sent us water for 2 times. They were supporting in a way. Sometimes they were sending free food. They might have been disappointed, I feel that way. There are also people whom we had conversation and did not greet on the street anymore. (Appendix A, Interview 7)

Moreover emerging relational hierarchies have been another reason for the conflicts amongst the activists. In the absence of a clear leadership, 'particular groups' and 'friendship ties' have begun to function for a superior authority according to the interviewees. Interviews points out that these groups has created a sense of exclusion for the others:

In one word, I can say that groupist manners weakened the solidarity. When we say groupist, we think of organizations. There is an organization there and acts groupist. But it does not have to be an organization. Friend circles can also act this way. Let's say there are two people who are very close; they may act groupist and try to exclude others. Such behaviors damaged the solidarity a lot. (Appendix A, Interview 1)

When I asked why did not the Solidarity or the forum intervene in the situation, another interviewee asserts these groups' engaging in politics via nonpolitical ways:

Because I think they do politics with non-political methods and this does not seem right to me. ... It is different to express something in the forum, present a criticism and organizing a thought. It is also different to produce a thought after forum in house meetings and bring it to the forum as if it is everyone's individual thought. This is canniness and it is not nice. While you are trying to build individuals in equal distance to the center, there arises another focus. (Appendix A, Interview Interview 7)

Another interviewee conveyed his experiences on the emergence of relational

hierarchies regarding communication mechanisms that the Solidarity has used:

> When I arrived, both the suggestion agenda and result agenda of the house meetings in the second period were shared on the Internet. They were sent from a closed mail group. Thereby, people who arrived there did not have a leg to stand on. There was a long distance between arriving and mail group. When this is the case, someone suggests something in the meeting and the next day one block says no while only that person says yes. How these people said the same thing in one day while their views were different? In direct democracy there are negotiation techniques. You say something, another person says something else and you reach somewhere. But when you see that the arguments are all the same, you think that it is discussed before; then the mail group shows up. (Appendix A, Interview Interview 10)

Furthermore the Solidarity and the activists of Don Kişot Social Center has been

successful in transforming a private property into a public space by occupying an

abandoned building and renovating it in order to create a social center. On the other

hand, it has not been successful in terms of sustaining the public space. In the period

of the conflicts between the Solidarity and the activists of the Don Kişot Social

Center was used by the some people who were not respectful for the rationale behind

the social center. As a result of that undesirable circumstances emerged and resulted

in sexual harassment and physical injury as one of the interviewees indicates.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis examined emerging political action repertoires that interact in both public and private arenas, through multiple forms of both institutionalized, state-oriented forms of political participation and more recently emerging the politics of everyday life. To this end, through a single case study, this thesis examined Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity which is one of the neighborhood organizations in Istanbul established in the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance in 2013.

This concluding section aims to provide an overview of the findings of this thesis with reference to the existing literature. It will first highlight the significance of the findings as they relate to the general discussion of changing forms of political participation in the contemporary era. It will then overview the findings and their significance in relation to political participation in Turkey in the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance. Finally, it will evaluate the impact of such solidarity on participation at the level of the neighborhood.

In contrast to the studies arguing that institutionalized forms of political participation such as voting, political party membership, contacting officials has been declining (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2003 and Dalton, 2008), findings of this thesis have not confirmed a decline in the rates of citizen engagement in institutionalized forms of political participation. Rather, in line with other scholars who have rather claimed a shift in the character of political participation towards forms of political participation that fall outside of the state (Bennet, 1998; 2012; Stolle and Hooghe, 2011; Ekman and Amnå, 2012), this thesis has found political action repertoires have

been broadening. Finally, in contrast to the political scientists who have provided typologies of political participation (Kaase and Barnes, 1979; Inglehart and Catteborg, 2002; Ekman and Amnå, 2012; Lamprianou, 2012), this thesis argues that institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of political participation are complementary rather than substituting each other. Therefore this thesis argues that there is an interaction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of political participation.

On the one hand, this thesis has suggested that citizens' discontent with institutionalized political participation forms has motivated them to engage in non-institutional activities. This discontent, in a similar vein with the Western democracies (Wattenberg and Dalton, 2002; Inglehart and Catteberg, 2002; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Habermas, 1989), includes public cynicism regarding the capacities of elections and representative democracy as the primary means of citizen engagement in state decision-making, dissatisfaction with the government, inability of political parties in keeping up with contemporary developments, internal hierarchy, lack of in-party democracy and political plurality and finally inability of civil society organizations in maintaining political plurality and in getting into the act by following politically plural claims of their members. On the other hand, this thesis also found that citizens' engagement in the non-institutionalized forms of political participation contributes to their participation in institutionalized political action. Specifically, individuals who engage in collective lifestyle politics as a non-institutional political action are likely to engage in institutionalized forms of political participation such as voting, contacting officials, supporting a candidate as well.

In terms of institutionalized forms of political participation, to some extent, Turkey has had a different trend than Western democracies. First of all, in contrast to

the declining rates of voter turnout rates in Western democracies, Turkey has historically had high electoral turnout rates. For instance, in 2015 the electoral turnout rate in Turkey for parliamentary elections was 86.64%, while in the US, the turnout rate in 2014 was 42.50% (IDEA, 2015). In a similar manner, the voter turnout rate in Turkey for presidential elections, which is 74.13%, was even higher than the turnout rate in the US, which is 42.50% (IDEA). Secondly, in contrast to citizens' diminishing interest in political parties, studies have suggested an increase in political party identification in Turkey. For instance, by examining the voting patterns of 2009 and 2014 local elections in Turkey, Kalaycıoğlu (2014) has found that voters, identifying themselves with political parties have increased to 68% in 2014 when compared with nearly 40% in 2009.

However, these higher participation rates in elections in Turkey do not indicate a politically active society in which political plurality, and high rates of interest in politics take place. Rather, as the studies have suggested, the citizens of Turkey are highly polarized (Kalaycıoğlu, 2007).

Moreover, mechanisms for engagement in politics in-between elections are very limited in Turkey. For instance, civil society organizations have not constituted effective alternatives for citizen engagements since they have been coopted by the state (Paker, 2003). In addition, participating in non-institutionalized forms of political participation has attracted few, because engaging in such activities cost countless lives in the past as in the case of 1 May 1977, the international Labor Day on Taksim Square in Istanbul.

Therefore, because of the limited effectiveness of institutionalized political participation forms in terms of affecting the state decision-making process and the lack of effective mechanisms for affecting state decision making in-between

elections, one can claim that Turkish state has a monopoly on political power. This thesis found that citizens of Turkey challenged the state's monopoly on political power by engaging in a nationwide political protest. During the Gezi Resistance, the protesters established new channels for political participation and employed alternative mechanisms of decision-making in a less polarized political environment. As this study revealed, political plurality and respect for differences represented the main political values during the Gezi Resistance. Therefore religiosity, age and gender as the factors affecting non-institutionalized political participation of 1980s (Kalaycıoğlu, 2007), have not represented characteristics of the Gezi Resistance. First of all, although the data revealing the effects of Gezi Resistance on the existing religious associations is not available yet, a particular religious group, Anti-capitalist Muslims, succeeded in communizing their interpretation of the religion with the claims of the Gezi Resistance. Secondly, as the findings of this thesis have confirmed, neither the Gezi Resistance itself nor the process in the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance were exclusively composed of young individuals. In fact, as the average age of the interviewees of this thesis has suggested, the participants of the post-Gezi period were primarily composed of individuals who were in their mid-30s and 40s. Moreover, Gezi Resistance has also differed from previous non-institutional actions in terms of gender aspect. Instead of principally lead by men, besides their broad participation in number, both women and LGBT individuals were visible and effective during the Resistance as much as men were. In the aftermath of the resistance, this gender-friendly attitude has been internalized and became one of the political values of the neighborhood solidarities and park forums.

In the aftermath of the Gezi Resistance, a new approach to politics has represented the primary aspect of political participation. First of all, this thesis found

that politics is organized in a horizontal manner. Individuals are organized from below without a leader or executive body. Secondly, this thesis revealed that the new approach to politics employs consensus techniques for decision-making and direct democracy. Individuals convene in forums and participate directly in the decision-making process by speaking on the behalf of themselves. The decisions are made through consensus instead of being decided by a large majority. Finally, self-management represents the final aspect of this new approach. Since there is no hierarchy, individuals take initiatives voluntarily and work is undertaken through solidarity among the individuals. It would not be right to suggest that the majority of Turkey's population have internalized this approach. However in the aftermath of the resistance in Gezi Park, a considerable amount of protesters attempted to employ this approach through park forums and neighborhood solidarities.

As the findings of this thesis have confirmed that, in the local context, this new approach to politics has attracted many people, even those who did not actively participate in the Gezi Resistance as well as those who did not have an interest in politics. The broad participation in park forums has revealed the desire of citizens of Turkey in term of engaging in politics through different channels from those of institutionalized forms and has showed their need for speak for the behalf of themselves.

This thesis examined the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity in Kadıköy and evaluated the structure of the organization, the goals and the targets of Yeldeğirmeni activists and the activities they engage in. In line with Oliver (1993), this thesis has found that residing in the same area and social ties among the residents are motivators for participation in neighborhood organizations. Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has engaged in multi-dimensional and multi-targeted forms of political participation. Since

neighborhood is a multi-scalar and multifunctional and socially constructed type of place, in which both national and local as well as public and private intertwine, participation in politics in neighborhood context has required that the activists take the issues of daily life in the neighborhood into consideration. At the beginning, this was not challenging for the activists for two reasons. First of all, since they had fifteen days of experience of communal life in the Gezi Park, they were aware of the possible issues and problems regarding daily life. Moreover, in line with Göle (2013), the findings of this thesis have confirmed the special emphasis of the movements of 2010s on public space. However this thesis has also found that, to some extent, Gezi Resistance, by creating an awareness toward the city and the fifteen days experience of activists on communizing a public space through occupation, motivated and encouraged them to take further steps. As a result of their experiences regarding holding a public space and transforming it in an alternative manner, the activists claimed for transforming unused or abandoned private spaces into public spaces as well.

Furthermore, the new approach to politics based on organizing from below and direct participation of citizens, the neighborhood has become and appropriate place for adopting the politics of everyday life. Therefore the activists attempted to communize their political claims with the residents' in the neighborhood by seeking, one the one hand, having and impact on the state decision-making, and one the other hand, influencing the everyday life in the neighborhood that includes private life of the residents. By engaging in multi-targeted (aiming to affect politics both in public and private spheres) and multi-dimensional (including both institutionalized and non-institutional activities for political engagement) type of activities, the activists of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood have provided an example for mixed forms of political

actions. In line with De Moor's (2014) model of lifestyle politics, this thesis has found that activists of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has engaged in various actions that seek to influence the daily life in the neighborhood.

However, as this thesis has shown, after one and a half year of the establishment of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, internal tensions have emerged and obstructed maintaining the new approach to politics. Internal tensions among the activists included the difficulties in maintaining political plurality, the emergence of hierarchy, inability to sustain the public space and show similarities with those in Occupy Movements. In line with Smith and Glidden (2012) who had found that the lack of formal structures for accountability in Occupy Pittsburg resulted in the emergence of friendship ties as relational hierarchies, the lack of a clear leadership or an executive body in Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity resulted in the emergence of friendship ties as well. As a result of these internal tensions, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity has dwindled in number while the support of the neighborhood for the activities of the Solidarity has decreased. Therefore, this thesis has found that the effectiveness of the politics of everyday life in promoting social change has been questionable.

However promoting social change through the politics of everyday life is not a fixed phenomenon. Rather it is much more dynamic and dependent on both the national political context and multiple embeddings of daily life. At the beginning of the establishment of neighborhood solidarities, the politics of everyday life in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood had mobilizing potential to the extent that national political context was still favorable to the Gezi Resistance in terms of the diffusion of the resistance to local level. At that time, neighborhood solidarities and park forums attracted considerable numbers of people. 'Multiple embeddings of daily life' (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993) that refers to various social ties that may both foster

and constrain recruitment process, has become more significant over other from one period to another. Over time, the political atmosphere has begun to change with the pullback of the Gezi Resistance. The politically polarized environment has reemerged with the local, national and presidential elections that took place in 2014 and 2015. The new approach to politics has required too much effort by the activists since it requires spending too much time since it is primarily based on volunteer activity and individual initiatives. However over time, the politics of everyday life has become difficult to maintain for the activists who had adult responsibilities such as work, parenting etc. Therefore this thesis has found that social change is not a concept that is fixed with a specific time and place. Rather, as the findings of this thesis have confirmed that the activists who used to participated in institutionalized forms of political participation through membership to formal organization tend to participate more actively in non-institutionalized forms of political participation. Thus in spite of the dwindling of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity, the activists of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood have already achieved to gather in another organization, 10'dan Sonra Initiative, in order to run a campaign for supporting a candidate in 7 June elections. Although the initiative targeted at influencing the state-decision making through an institutionalized form of political engagement, the activists organized in a horizontal manner and employed consensus techniques. Therefore it is likely for the Yeldeğirmeni activists to engage in different local organizing activities in different time and places in order to promote social change through the politics of everyday life.

To sum up, Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity represents an interesting case of emerging political action repertoires that typically interact in both public and private arenas, through multiple forms of both institutionalized, state-oriented forms of

political participation and more recently emerging the politics of everyday life. Through examining Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity through the lenses of political participation, this thesis argues that there is an interaction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of political participation. Instead of substituting one another, these two forms of political participation are complementing each other, depending on the political context and desires of the individuals engaging in these activities. Moreover this thesis also argues that effectiveness of the politics of everyday life in promoting social change should not be conceived as fixed with a specific time and place. Rather it would be effective in different contexts through the different activities in which the activists engage.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Interview 1: 54, male, interior designer, 09.01.2015

Interview 2: 40, male, librarian, 09.01.2015

Interview 3: 24, male, student, 12.01.2015

Interview 4: 39, female, nurse, 14.01.2015

Interview 5: 35 male, lawyer, 28.01.2015

Interview 6: 38, female, advertiser, 20.01.2015

Interview 7: 30 female, lawyer, 23.01.2015

Interview 8: 33 female, teacher, 22.01.2015

Interview 9: 52 female, psychologist, 23.01.2015

Interview 10: 50, male, engineer, 19.01.2015

Interview 11: 45 male, tax specialist, 27.01.2015

Interview 12: 27 female, dancer, 28.01.2015

Interview 13: 34, female, teacher, 23.04.2014

Interview 14: 30, male, engineer, 21.01.2015

Interview 15: 36 male, teacher (unemployed), 24.04.2014

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1- Kısa bir şekilde kendinizden bahseder misiniz? Yaşınız, eğitim düzeyiniz ve mesleğiniz...

2- Siyasetle ilgi duyuyor musunuz?

3- Siyasete neden ilgi duyuyorsunuz?

4- Siyasete ne zamandan beri ilgi duyuyorsunuz?

5- Siyasete ilgilenmeye başlamanızda neler etkili oldu?

6- Kendinizi siyaseten aktif biri olarak tanımlıyor musunuz?

7- (Ne kadar süredir siyaseten aktifsiniz?)

8- Herhangi bir siyasi partiye, bir derneğe ya da bir sivil toplum kuruluşuna üye misiniz? Neden?

9- Bu kuruluşların düzenlediği siyasal aktivitelere düzenli olarak katılıyor musunuz? Neden?

10- Bu kuruluşlara üyeliğiniz ve sunulan siyasal ajanda sizin politik ihtiyaçlarınıza yanıt veriyor mu? Neden?

11- Seçimlerde oy kullanıyor musunuz?

12- Seçimlerde oy kullanmak sizin politik ihtiyaçlarınıza yanıt veriyor mu?

13- Politika yapmak ve siyasete katılmak sizce ne anlama geliyor?

14- Yeldeğirmeni Mahallesi'nde mi oturuyorsunuz?

15- Ne kadar zamandır Yeldeğirmeni Mahallesi'nde oturuyorsunuz?

16- Bu mahalleye taşınmaya nasıl karar verdiniz?

17- Sizce mahallenin karşı karşıya bulunduğu yerel sorunlar nelerdir?

18- Bu sorunların çözümü için bir şeyler yapmayı önemli buluyor musunuz?

19- Dayanışmanın kurulmasından önce mahalleye ilişkin sorunların çözümü için herhangi bir girişimde bulundunuz mu?

20- Dayanışmanın kurulmasından önce mahalleye ilişkin sorunların çözümüyle ilgilenen herhangi bir kurum ya da kuruluş var mıydı?

21- Bu kurum ya da kuruluşlardan çalışmalarına katıldığınız oldu mu?

22- Sizce Belediye bu sorunların çözümünde nasıl bir rol oynuyor?

23- Size göre bu sorunların çözümü için neler yapmak gerekiyor?

24- Gezi Direnişi'ne katıldınız mı?

25- Gezi Direnişi'ne neden katıldınız?

26- Gezi Direnişi'ne ne zaman katıldınız?

27- Gezi Direnişi'ne örgütlü olarak mı bireysel olarak mı katıldınız?

28- Gezi Direnişi sırasında herhangi bir örgüt/meslek kuruluşu/platform/inisiyatifle birlikte hareket ettiniz mi?

29- Gezi Direnişi sırasında parkta herhangi bir aktivitede ya da oluşumda görev aldınız mı?

30- Gezi'deki forumlara katıldınız mı?

31- Gezi'deki forumlara ilişkin izlenimleriniz nelerdi?

32- Sizce Gezi Direnişi'nin amacı neydi?

33- Sizce Gezi Direnişi'nin kazanımları oldu mu, varsa nelerdi?

34- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'yla temasınız oldu mu?

35- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'ndan nasıl haberdar oldunuz?

36- İşgal evinden nasıl haberdar oldunuz?

37- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın düzenlediği forumlara katılıyor musunuz?

38- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın düzenlediği forumlara ne zaman katılmaya başladınız?

39- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın düzenlediği forumlara neden katılıyorsunuz?

40- Mahalle dayanışması sizce ne anlama geliyor?

41- Sizce Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın amacı nedir?

42- Avrupa'da 60'lı yıllardan beri var olan işgal evlerinin Türkiye'de Gezi'den sonra ortaya çıkmasıyla ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz? Gezi sürecinin böyle alternatifleri düşünülür hale getirmesi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

43- Yeldeğirmeni dayanışmasında işgal fikri ortaya çıktığı?

44- (İşgal kararının çıktığı forumda bulundunuz mu?)

45- İşgal kararının verildiği forumun politik atmosferi hakkındaki izlenimleriniz nelerdir?

46- Sizin işgal fikrine yaklaşımınız nasıldı?

47- İşgal sizce ne anlama geliyor?

48- Binanın işgal edilmesinin ardından yeniden inşa edilmesi sürecinde aktif olarak bulundunuz mu?

49- Mahallelinin işgale karşı tepkisi hakkındaki izlenimleriniz nelerdi?

50- Binanın yeniden inşa edilmesi sürecinde evin içinde görev aldınız mı? Ne tür görevler aldınız?

51- Binanın işgal edilmesinden sonra evin içindeki aktivitelerin, mahalle çalışmalarının ve dayanışma eylemlerinin örgütlenmesinde görev aldınız mı? Ne tür görevler aldınız?

52- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın işgalden önceki politik atmosferi hakkındaki izlenimleriniz nelerdi?

53- Dayanışmanın işgalden önceki politik atmosferiyle işgalden sonraki politik atmosferi arasında bir farklılık gözlemlediniz mi?

54- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışma Forumu kararları nasıl alıyor?

55- Bu karar mekanizması hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

56- Dayanışma forumunda siyasal bir farklılaşma gözlemlediniz mi?

57- Bu farklılaşmanın olumlu tarafları var mıydı/ varsa nelerdi?

58- Bu farklılaşmanın olumsuz tarafları var mıydı/ varsa nelerdi?

59- İşgal evinde kararlar nasıl alınıyor?

60- Bu karar alma mekanizması hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

61- İşgal evinde ve forumlarda siyasal farklılaşma gözlemlediniz mi?

62- Bu farklılaşmaların olumlu tarafları var mıydı/ varsa nelerdi?

63- Bu farklılaşmanın olumsuz tarafları var mıydı/ varsa nelerdi?

64- Geçtiğimiz süreçte işgal evinde gerçekleşen forumlara mahalleden katılım oldu mu?

65- İşgal eviyle mahalleli arasında bağ kuracak çalışmalarla ilgili deneyimleriniz nelerdir?

66- Aradan geçen 1,5 yılda forumlara düzenli olarak katıldınız mı?

67- (Katılmadıysanız neden?)

68- Aradan geçen 1,5 yılda forumun politik atmosferinde değişen bir şey oldu mu?

69- Aradan geçen 1,5 yılda dayanışmaya ve işgal evine ilişkin düşüncelerinizde değişen bir şey oldu mu?

70- Aradan geçen 1,5 yılda mahallelinin eve yaklaşımında bir değişiklik oldu mu?

71- Bu 1,5 yıllık süreçte Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması'nın ve işgal evinin karşı karşıya kaldığı sorunlar nelerdi?

72- Bu 1,5 yıllık süreç size neler kattı?

73- Sizce Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması ve Don Kişot Sosyal Merkezi mahalleyle nasıl bağlar oluşturdu?

74- Yeldeğirmeni Dayanışması mahallenin sorunlarına ilişkin nasıl çalışmalar yürüttü?

75- Dayanışmanın ve Don Kişot'un diğer işgal evleriyle ya da diğer yerel aktörlerle ilişkileri hakkında neler söyleyebilirsiniz?

76- Sizce dayanışmanın mahallenin sorunları konusunda yapması gerekenler nelerdir?

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