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GEZI PARK AS SPONTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT: RE-IMAGINING THE TURKISH PUBLIC

Abstract: The subject of this paper is the Gezi Park movement that took place in the summer of 2013 in Turkey. Despite starting out as a peaceful protest to stop the demolition of Gezi Park for the purposes of the "Taksim Pedestrianization Project", the gatherings quickly became one of the biggest social movements to take place in Turkish history. People from all ages, classes and social groups came together in support, after government attempts to suppress the protest through brutal police actions garnered widespread criticism. Although the movement did not generate any immediate or drastic political change, it did leave a lasting effect on the Turkish public, especially because of the immense solidarity and social cohesion demonstrated by the participants. Hence, in this paper, I will argue that Gezi Park could be treated as an example of 'spontaneous development', an informal process through which the citizens of Turkey re-imagined the Turkish public and possibilities of modes of life within the state. Instrumental in this process was the long-lasting stratification of the Turkish public between the laicist, Kemalist 'modernists' and the Islamic, Erdoğan 'conservatives'. I argue that in the context of a historical and current repressive and silencing state, Turkish people constructed a Gezi community in direct opposition, in which social hierarchies were disbanded and freedom of speech was maintained as one of the highest values. By taking anthropological and developmental studies of the informal/formal sector dichotomy and their interrelation, I apply these understandings to the human development sector. Thus, I argue that informal modes of organization and maintenance of social cohesion can be treated as informal development, directly affecting people's imaginations and actions, as well as a potential source of knowledge and inspiration for formal-sector development. In this sense, I employ Amartya Sen's freedom-approach to development to demonstrate that freedom of expression played an instrumental role in the construction of this imagining. Further, I argue that despite theoretical limitations in social theory, ethnographic research and anthropological studies can be useful in the application of informal sector knowledge to formal development strategies.

Keywords: Gezi Park movement, Turkey, spontaneous development, public space.

In 2013, the world saw thousands of people mobilizing in one of the biggest social movements to take place in Turkey. On May 28th, in Istanbul's Gezi Park, a small number of environmental activists gathered to stop the demolition of the park for the purposes of the "Taksim Pedestrianization Project", an urban reconstruction project ordered by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party. Managing to temporally stop the workers, the activists decided to camp out in the park. Several days later, at the crack of dawn, riot police entered the park, burning the activists' tents and forcefully removing them using teargas. What followed was a public outrage against police brutality and the Prime Minister, Erdoğan, who was blamed for both the reconstruction project and his authoritarian stance towards the protesters.

Over the next several days, increasing numbers of people joined the protests. As the resistance unfolded, the Turkish public surprised itself as it came to grips with the large number of people willing to demand change. What was striking was the solidarity that grew out of groups of people that had no connection prior to the protest, and even more, the polyphonic character of the protests themselves. In a deeply polarized country, where most people find themselves put in some kind of category, most frequently along the lines of secularist or Islamist, modern or conservative/traditional, or immoral and moral, the Gezi resistance managed to resist falling under a single voice. Different demands, attitudes and reasons for mobilizing were continually voiced, allowing all of the different groups participating in the protest to engage in constant dialogue with each other. The resistance "brought environmentalists, LGBT groups, Kurdish people, feminists, anti-capitalist Muslims, students, lawyers, journalists and academics together. 'Tayyip – connecting people' was one of the prevalent jokes." (Erhart, 2014: 1724).

Turkey poetically reflects its geographic position between two continents in the divide between Ataturk's vision of a modern, secular republic and the conservative, Islamic side of Turkey. This conflict, to this day, generates controversy in the country, most recently visible in oppositional reactions to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Additionally, ethnic divisions and conflicts between Turks and Kurds, the infamously sensitive issue of the Armenian genocide, the reigning prejudice against minority groups such as the Alevis and Roma, and increasing economic divisions between different classes and economic ideologies, have also been set in Turkey (Baran, 2010: 10). Recent global human rights discourses also generate divisions, as groups such as LGBT and feminist activists, sex workers, and Çarşı[1] challenge normative conceptions of the Turkish public.

The Gezi resistance was not only evidence of social backlash against the AKP government, but also became a site for 'performing freedom', a space open and welcoming to the whole public for various activities (Öztürkmen, 2014: 51). Freedom of expression seemed to be a welcome change to participants, after long periods of censorship and restrictive regimes, both secularist and Islamist, that generated an atmosphere of silence in the country. Within Gezi, people formed a pastiche, constructing a community where one was able to contest one's own views of the world, the state and the surrounding public. The Gezi resistance was a process, rather than an event, in which 'meaning was

1 The largest fan group of the Istanbul football club Beşiktaş.

destabilized', allowing the Turkish public to change and transform (Öztürkmen, 2014: 40). Social hierarchies, which had generated antagonistic attitudes between various social groups, were broken down, as participating groups contested balanced positions of power and legitimacy in the making of the movement.

Using Amartya Sen's development as freedom approach and the human development paradigm, I will contend that the Gezi resistance was a process of 'informal' human development which generated by expanding the freedoms of individuals in terms of imagining the Turkish public as a place of cohesion and acting in line with that understanding. Freedom of expression was instrumental in shifting the imaginations of the public sphere as a site based on social equality, one that can be contested and shaped by all actors. By overviewing materials on the anthropology of the state, I will examine how such imaginations of the public influence society's relations to the state as well as contribute to maintaining social cohesion. Finally, after overviewing discussions of the construction of the informal/formal sector dichotomy, I will argue that this division could be applied to areas of human development and further argue that informal social development can be used as a useful policy-informing resource for the formal sector.

A history of secularism and Islamism

The first Republic

The secular Turkish Republic was established in the early 20th century under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who put an end to the long-lasting Ottoman Empire that had reigned for centuries (Walton, 2013: 185). A Turkish identity based on European, modern, secular values was institutionalized as the official constitution of the country; thus the history of Turkey has generally been conceived, in scholarship as well as in political discourse, as a history of "Westernization," whether it be in secularist praise or Islamicist criticism" (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 10). At the same time, however, the Turkish state was constructed on the basis of nationalism and authoritarianism (Walton, 2013: 185). Turkey's secularism is almost always understood as an Ataturkist, or laicist type of secularism (2014: 185). As Walton discusses, secularism takes different forms, most often divided as the liberalist, 'passive' model of secularism of British tradition and statist, 'assertive' type of secularism of the French-Jacobin tradition (ibid.). As such, the dichotomy of religious and secular governance does not necessarily equate to that of conservative and liberal politics, as may be assumed after the example of certain Western models. Turkey's authoritarian and assertive secularism left the space open for a liberal religious practice to "constitute a viable, vocal criticism of Turkish state secularism (ibid.).

In the decades following Ataturk's rule, the military periodically entered politics through government coups to preserve the country's secularism. It was in the 1990s when

Islamic governance finally re-entered Turkey. The Islamist Welfare Party had won 25% of the electoral votes for the greater municipality of Istanbul, securing an Islamic entrance back into Turkish politics (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 23). The 'second republic', characterized by its attack on secularism, came to Turkey after the more moderate Islamic party, AKP, came to power (Diken, 2014: 316-317). Turkey has seemingly been stuck in a give-and-take cycle of secularism and Islamism over the years. Following these developments, the meaning of Turkish culture has been constructed and reconstructed by the different groups living in Turkey according to their values. Navaro-Yashin, in her ethnography of public life in Turkey in 1990s, describes an encounter between a veiled woman and a short-haired woman in 'Western' style clothing and their questioning of whether the other one is a foreigner.

> *The veiled woman was surprised. "You speak Turkish?" she asked in amazement. "Yes, I am Turkish!" asserted the short-haired woman, put off by the question. "Oh! You don't look Turkish. You look like a Westerner," said the veiled woman. "You don't look Turkish either," said the other. "I thought you were an Arab". "Oh!" said the veiled woman, "thanks to God we are Turkish and Muslim." "Well, we are too," said the short haired woman.* (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 19)

The second republic

The Justice and Development Party first came to government power in 2002; winning four elections in a row since then, they gradually gained a significant amount of political and law-making power in Turkey (Varnali and Gorgulu, 2015: 1). Following a period of high economic growth and fast development, Turkey's growth began to stagnate by the end of the AKP's third term in government, almost simultaneously as the AKP began a widespread reconstruction and privatization project of urban areas under the pretence that older buildings were not adequately constructed to survive earthquakes (Germen, 2015: 13). AKP managed to bring on a GDP/capita growth of 5.5% between 2002 and 2008, expanding welfare policies such as universal healthcare and education, and decreasing poverty by employing pro-poor targeted growth policies (Aran, 2013: 1-2). By the time of AKP's term in government during the Gezi Park protests, the administration's policies shifted from poverty-alleviating targets to privatization-based growth (Aran, 2013: 3). Erdoğan has increasingly been credited for generating an extremely polarized political atmosphere in Turkey. Farro and Demirhisar point out that although most participants in the Gezi uprising were not politically active or acting on behalf of a political party, a general division between supporters of the AKP and Islamism and those of Ataturk's secularism was present (Farro and Demirhisar, 2014: 180).

Erdoğan's combination of democratic institutions, privatization, growth-based development and Islamic values and teachings have garnered widespread support throughout Turkey. At the same time however, Tayyip has been under fiery criticisms for his neoliberal agenda and his Islamic reforms, which many view as a path towards Islamist neo-Ottomanism (Örs, 2014: 6). The Gezi Park uprising generated spontaneously, however its endurance was a reflection of the growing antagonism towards the AKP and

Tayyip's authoritarian rule. As Judith Butler puts it in her introduction to a collection of essay on Gezi, Erdoğan demonstrates how "authoritarianism can co-exist with forms of liberal democracy that are increasingly governed by neoliberal logics" (Butler, 2014: x).

This was the immediate political situation at the time of the Gezi uprising. As such, many were quick to put Gezi into a certain category of protests, comparing it to the series of protests against authoritarianism collectively known as the Arab Spring, or adding it to the list of global Occupy movements that began at Wall Street and spread throughout the world (Yıldırım, 2013). Although grouping any two protests would be a dead end eventually, the case of Turkey particularly stands out from categorizations because of its specific political and historical context (Butler, 2014: vii).

Gezi Park

The "Taksim Pedestrianization Project" was a reconstruction project that would replace Gezi Park with an Ottoman-style barrack that would house a shopping mall (Varnali and Gorgulu, 2015: 1; Öztürkmen, 2014: 40). The AKP had been notorious for their reconstruction of urban Turkey, including the privatization and gentrification of neighbourhoods and parks in Istanbul for the construction of private residential properties, or as in the case of Gezi, a shopping centre (Aran, 2013: 3). These projects were often met with protest and opposition, yet were always miniscule in terms of awareness and support (Farro and Demirhisar, 2014: 177). The Gezi Park protest began in a similar, peaceful way, only to escalate on the fourth day of the sit-in, May 31st, when the camp was raided by police in a forceful method (Abbas and Yigit, 2015: 63).

Arguably, it was the excessive use of force employed by the police that generated the public outrage that led to the 'explosion' of the Gezi Park protest. Police brutality, condescending government attitudes, and the continuing repression and persecution of journalists, activists and other supporters of the protests generated increased discontent and criticism towards the state's handling of the movement (Abbas and Yigit, 2015: 63-64; Varnali and Gorgulu, 2015: 1).

> *I saw the photo of the 'woman in red'[2] on Facebook. Police violence has both impressed and shocked me even more than the uprooting of trees planned by the government. I was also impressed by the growing participation in the demonstrations. The reason why they wanted to cut the trees was the expansion of the road. In my practice as a citizen, it was normal to see trees cut for stupid reasons and nobody resisted it.* (Ferda) (Farro and Demirhisar, 2014: 182)

2 The photograph of 'the woman in red' was a viral image connected to Gezi Park. The photograph, taken by Osman Orsal, features Ceyda Sungur, who is wearing a red dress, being sprayed in the face with tear gas by a policeman. The photograph and other artistic interpretations of the photograph can be accessed online: http://www.inenart.eu/?p=10157

Farro and Demirhisar, sociologists who conducted fieldwork in Istanbul during the summer following the Gezi uprising, give Ferda's account, who had lived in the Gezi area since he was a child. Ferda had "shown apathy" throughout all of the government changes and reconstructions, yet had joined the Gezi Protests. It was police violence towards protesters and a feeling "that finally the situation changed with the movement" that led him to join. Individuals who had initially not given interest in the project, or even supported such reconstruction, were motivated to join the resistance in response to the excessive use of force and the disallowance of peaceful protest (Abbas, 2013: 21). "As the revolt escalated to the urban scale of Istanbul, the primary political focus of the protests shifted from reclaiming the right to the city … to civil rights and individual and collective freedoms as they were severely hampered by the Prime Minister Erdoğan's growing authoritarian style of governance in shaping the public space as well as the city" (Varnali and Gorgulu, 2015: 1).

Gezi Park itself was transformed into a community that offered free provisions such as a kitchen, a medical and a veterinary clinic, a charging station for electronic devices, libraries, a vegetable garden, workshops and other educational and fun activities, including a 'revolution' museum (Erhart, 2014: 1728, Örs, 2014: 7). Hand-drawn maps that show where each station is, as well as pamphlets with legal and medical information surfaced on the internet (Historical Atlas of Gezi Park, 2013). In addition to services offered within Gezi Park itself, private hotels and cafes opened their doors to the protesters, lawyers and doctors offered professional services for free, while people of influence, such as celebrities, offered their support to the park in order to raise awareness. Creatives attracted media and online attention with attention-grabbing performances, posters, and songs, contributing to the collection of what Arzu Öztürkmen calls 'Gezi-lore' (Öztürkmen, 2014: 41). Notable performances included the Standing Man, a man who stood immobile on Taksim Square for hours (Diken, 2014: 319), a whirling Dervish who donned a gas mask, and people dressed as penguins as a critical response to CNN Turkey's airing of a penguin documentary instead of the ongoing protests (Diken, 2014: 316). Duman, a popular rock group dedicated a whole album to the resistance, including an anthem for the movement called "Eyvallah"[3] (Arda, 2015: 14). The Boğaziçi University Jazz Choir covered and wrote songs dedicated to the 'chappullers' (ibid.). In response to Prime Minister Erdoğan's criticism of the pots and pans resistance, a daily performance was conducted in which people banged pots and pans out the windows of their home in the evening, the band Kardeş Türküler wrote the song "Sound of Pots and Pans" and released a video of them playing the song using cutlery[4].

Arda notes that the display of art and creativity allowed protesters to counter Erdoğan's accusations that the protesters were looters (çapulcu), and "had nothing valuable to contribute to Turkey or the world" (Arda, 2015: 14). Whether artists had such motives and intentions in their creative production is uncertain, however art does have a function in society by providing a sceptical point of view of society (Germen, 2015: 17).

3 Eyvallah is a common way of saying thank you, also meaning 'so be it' or 'alright', in Turkish. (http://tureng.com/search/eyvallah)

4 The video begins with an excerpt of Erdoğan commenting on the 'pots and pans': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-kbuS-anD4 Last accessed on: August 22, 2015

“Scepticism is one of the components at the core of a progressive society and public artworks that present fictional constructions enable public engagement by encouraging people to solve puzzles collectively” (ibid.). The practice of art or sport as part of protest emphasized another way of life that allowed the public to rethink the concept of time not as an exploited resource to gain more capital but as a resource to enrich the soul (Arda, 2-15: 14). Artistic expression, previously heavily censored and repressed, was welcomed at Gezi, and contributed to the construction of certain ideas about the movement.

Gezi was a polyphonic site of resistance, of which the most striking aspect was not merely the varied background of each group, but the varied voices, which managed to be raised in unison, yet without melting into each other. The Atatürk Cultural Centre in Taksim Square and surrounding areas were covered with countless flags, posters and slogans that depicted the role of the myriad of groups participating[5]. Gezi was also made up of individuals who did not identify with any organized group taking part in the movement (Gambetti, 91). The unification of the vastly different participants generated solidarity, a recognition of the joint political power all of these groups held together, as well as a dialogue between them that brought them out of mutual isolation and ignorance (Butler, 2014: xii-xiii). Public forums were also established in various parks. The forums were each moderated by different groups, and became places where individuals had opportunities to voice opinions through speeches and political discourses, all while an audience listened (Öztürkmen, 2014: 59). Forums were also the sites of gift-giving, where local issues and needs were resolved (Turan 2013, as cited by Örs, 2014: 8). The imagination of Gezi as a place where one could participate directly in the consequences of the movement, reinforced actions of solidarity and values such as freedom.

Gezi imagined

Crucial to the understanding of the Gezi Park uprising, an aspect that most of the authors I encountered took care to mention was the fact that there was no ‘leader’ of the movement, such as a distinct political party or organization (Arda, 2015: 10). In fact, artist and political scientist, Balca Arda recounts her conversations with self-proclaimed ‘apolitical’ participants of the protests who explained that they did not consider the movement political “because they did not think that any party, association or alternative counter-organizations in public sphere could truly represent them” (Arda, 2015: 10). Although there are people, or groups, that usually play a larger role in the organization and push for protests, the general system that comes to form is characterized as direct democracy (Farro and Demirhisar, 2014: 184). This development of a seemingly just democratic model for protesters, where participants have access to knowledge on their rights and responsibilities, leads to a delegitimizing view of the state, seen as unable to represent its people (Butler, 2014: xii). “Further, the perception of being a member of a community can inspire a sense of commitment to a cause and foster a

5 Photographs of the Gezi protests in which the collection of banners and posters can be seen can be found on: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/12749/the-visual-emergence-of-the-occupy-gezi-movement-p

sense of empowerment, thus may increase political expressive participation" (Varnali and Gorgulu, 2015: 5).

Communities are constructed as distinct wholes through imagination. That is, although the members of a certain community do not all know each other, they all share an "image of their communion" (Andersen, 1983: 6). Individuals always occupy several different social positions, thus have the possibility of identifying with different communities, which certainly differ from each other by modes of imagination (ibid.). The Turkish public has frequently been subjected to strict categorizations on the lines of secularism and Islamism, liberalism and authoritarianism, as well as modern-ness and backwardness. As the opposing groups' political power gained and waned throughout decades, a perception of the state as being above society was consistently present. In the Western conception, the state has long been imagined as the regulative and rational force that maintains order and peace in the otherwise dangerously (to use Hobbes' natural state) irregular society (Ferguson and Gupta, 2005: 107).

Theories of anthropology of the state bring into light an understanding of the state that in turn allows for different conceptions of development. In this sense, Foucault's work on power in maintaining conceptions of reality has been the starting point for understanding constructions of the social order (Escobar, 1995: 5). That is, by viewing the state and its authority as culturally constructed, one can begin to understand how people react to the state, rather than assuming the state to be an entity sui generis. Sharma and Gupta, in the introduction to the volume The *Anthropology of the State* (2006), outline how the state and conceptions of its authority are imagined and reproduced in people's lives through 'proceduralism', the repetitiveness of bureaucratic practices and representational practices (Sharma and Gupta, 2006, 12-18). The State is imagined as both separate and above society, as well as constructive and containing of society, what Ferguson and Gupta refer to as 'vertical encompassment', a conception that legitimizes all-encompassing authority and leads the way to a constructed opposition of state and society (Ferguson and Gupta, 2005: 106). Thus, conceptions of the structure and power relations within a social order maintain the same formation.

Gezi, in contrast to the Turkish state, was imagined very differently. The movement did not develop an official leadership, and even the organization of the camp and the provision of services were not maintained by official administrators (Gambetti, 2014: 93). Instead, spontaneous volunteering and agreements allowed for some organization of routines (ibid.). However, certain groups of participants did attract attention for their roles in the movement, notably Çarşı, the anarchist fan group of one of Turkey's biggest football clubs, Beşiktaş. Beşiktaş is part of the 'big three' Istanbul football clubs, alongside Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe (Erhart, 2014: 1725). Football fans in Turkey are notorious for their violent encounters and deadly rivalry, yet during the Gezi resistance, Çarşı and left-winged fan groups of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe joined ranks under Istanbul United, a team they founded to display their solidarity (Erhart, 2014: 1730).

Football fans, having encountered police brutality frequently in the past, proved invaluable to the organization and leadership of the Gezi protests, using their tactical experience in building barricades and shielding themselves from tear gas, pepper spray

and water cannons to help less-experienced participants. Çarşı took a central role in football fans' involvement, gaining support from rival fans, a development which would have been inconceivable prior to Gezi. As Erhart notes, as a football fan "you were expected to live and die in the colours of the team you were supporting" (Erhart, 2014: 1725). Yet, numerous rival football fans, and even people not affiliated with such clubs, began sharing messages in support of Çarşı on social media, chanting Çarşı slogans on the streets, such as "Çarşı herşeye karşı"[6] or "We are all Çarşı" (ibid.). As a result, Çarşı gained significant popularity and authority in the movement, although their leadership was not seen as a hierarchically higher than the rest of Gezi, something that can perhaps be attributed to the group's anarchist stance and 'human-ness'.

Elif Batuman, a writer and New York Time journalist, provides an account of striking ethnographic detail and insight on the politics and lived reality of Çarşı fans, noting Beşiktaş's surreal essence, its irrationality and human-ness (Batuman, 2013: 687-688). Beşiktaş is often referred to as 'the people's team, as its supporters traditionally came from left-winged working classes (Erhart, 2014: 1727). The name of the largest fan group is derived from this background, 'çarşı' meaning bazaar, or merchant-place, where most of the supporters used to work as shopkeepers (ibid.). Çarşı's virtue as leaders came from their continuous fight against social injustice, their group solidarity, and practical experience. As an anarchist group, Çarşı does not employ a distinct vision or ideological stance, the group itself is not formally established as an organization (Batuman, 2013: 693). The group is well known for their support of human rights, and their attack on fascism, racism, war, and human rights abuses (Erhart, 2014: 1727), however it is also fluid and malleable. Batuman describes an encounter with several unofficial leaders of the group, where they were discussing how the group is becoming 'mainstream', a radical group that everyone looks up to for any type of social movement. Alaattin Çam, the administrator of the Çarşı website, explains to Batuman why this is problematic, and why "Çarşı is against itself", as one slogan says:

> *You'll understand when you're older," Alaattin Çam had told me, when I asked about its meaning. "As you live longer, you have to turn your back on things you used to believe in. You change your identity. Çarşi isn't fascist, so it doesn't resist those changes* (Batuman, 2013: 699).

In the case of Çarşı, their role as leaders was a result of "being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name" rather than a forceful domination of the movement (Arendt, 2004: 239). Power relations are particularly important in understanding the making of Gezi Park. The community of Gezi Park was established in direct opposition to AKP's ideology and actions. Where the AKP restricted speech, Gezi Park called for freedom of expression, accepting constructive criticism and welcoming creative satire. Neoliberal capitalist economics was opposed with a gift-giving economy based on sharing, communism and altruism. In contrast to Erdoğan's position in Turkey, the Gezi commune had no autocratic leader. In Gezi, everyone had as much of a right to participate and define their protest. Weber defines power as the chance to fulfil one's own will despite resistance of others (Weber, 1991: 180). In Gezi, however, power

6 One of the most famous slogans used by Çarşı, meaning "Çarşı, in opposition to everything"

represented the chance to fulfil one's own will alongside the will of others. A notable experience during the movement was the interaction between soccer fans and LGBT and feminist activists. Some slogans and chants used by the protesters included sexist and homophobic statements, to which activists and sex workers responded with criticism, asking their fellow protesters to refrain from the use of such language or by employing humorous slogans in return (Erhart, 2013: 302). One such example is the reaction to the use of the slogan "Erdoğan, Son of a Whore", where sex workers responded by saying "We, the prostitutes, are a hundred percent certain these politicians are not our children" (ibid.). These groups also held gatherings, such as the "Swearword Workshop" where they discussed issues of offensive language with protesters (Zengin, 2013). Ultimately, the presence of such groups led to the reduction of such language in the protests (Erhart, 2013: 302). Soccer fans very frequently used offensive language in their protest, and as Çarşı had taken the first ranks in the protest, their actions had a great impact on other participants (Zengin, 2013; Öztürkmen, 2014: 47). However, following encounters with feminist and LGBT activist groups, especially after open criticisms of these groups, soccer fans apologized to the groups and reduced the use of such language (Zengin, 2013). Members of Çarşı paid a visit to the LGBTI solidarity group Lambdaistanbul's tent, bringing in flowers to apologise for their use of offensive language (Erhart, 2014: 1729).

Gezi Park and the surrounding area became "a venue for displaying an alternative democracy", where the heterogeneity of the community was displayed and celebrated (Örs, 2014: 7). The resistance quickly became the longest-enduring and most impactful social movement in Turkish history (Arda, 2015: 9). This is also demonstrated by the large number of academics who took interest in the movement, especially anthropologists and sociologists, who wrote ethnographies, conducted interviews and published analyses of the movement. Their short, yet varied accounts provide a collage of different voices, points of view, and understandings of the protest. Although the movement was severely suppressed and eventually ran out of steam, the effects it had on artistic, academic and even individual levels make it a site of opportunity for garnering knowledge for social development.

Development

Development as a practice has transformed the world many times over since its official inauguration as a global responsibility and mode of reaction to prevailing poverty. The Truman doctrine which envisioned an international global order in which underdeveloped countries would be 'saved' by developing them - at the time meaning transplanting features of rich countries into the Third World - spurred the drive for development in the 1940s (Escobar, 1995: 3-4). For decades that followed, up until today's practice of development, the task has proved itself to be more complex than anticipated, as a universally acceptable definition and practice of development is still far from reality. The only two constants, arguably, have been the establishment of development as a certainty to be done, despite debates on what that development would mean (1995: 5), and the view that states are the main facilitators and implementers of development (Sharma and Gupta, 2006: 20-21; Hart, 2008: 6).

Weber claimed that what is characteristic of the modern, developed state is the establishment and dominance of bureaucracy (Weber, 2006: 49). Defining it as "an instrument of rationally organizing authority relations", Weber sees bureaucracy as a dominating institution, deriving its legitimacy from its "'technical' superiority" in maintaining order (2006, 62). Bureaucracy reproduces the state through its repetitive and banal actions, normalizing the idea in society to the extent that it becomes imagined as a given (Sharma and Gupta, 2006: 11-12). Constructions of the superiority of the Western, modern state in the early years of development, contributed to equating development practice to the process of bureaucratization, rationalization, and the establishment of the state as the apex of society (Marglin, 1990: 2). This process is visible especially in current debates on state-craft and state fragility, as in the case of Somalia, a state governed by an interim government continuously being treated as a failed and fragile state by development agencies, despite prevailing peace and social cohesion in the country (Menkhaus, 2007).

The formal and informal

Understanding the State as culturally constructed includes understanding the concept of formality, as opposed to informality, as equally constructed. The informal sector has understandably been the subject of much debate in economics and development. The concept of informality itself is not clear cut from that of formality, as both sectors exist in a continuum, rather than in opposition to each other (Guha-Kashnobis et al., 2006: 3). Additionally, the informal sector is quite abstract; being unregulated bureaucratically, it is difficult to pin it down to a certain place, practice and time-scale, thus difficult to define (ibid.). Two characterizations that Guha-Kashnobis et al. single out in their introduction to *Linking the Formal and Informal Economy* is that of the informal (1) being distant from governance in contrast to the formal, and (2) as being unstructured and unorganized (2006: 4). According to Keith Hart, the formal, or form, is what is understood to be constant, which for the past century has been bureaucracy (Hart, 2008: 11-12). In line with the normalization of bureaucracy as emblematic of the modern, the formal sector pertains to bureaucracy, rational ordering and structuring in development practices.

The formality of development consists of rationalizing the process of progress. The idea that problems of the underdeveloped world have identifiable causes, thus a practical solution that could be inferred logically (Hayek, 1949: 519), has shaped the discipline of development into a technocratic institution that contributes to a hierarchical placement of the formal above the informal (Easterly, 2013: 6). Calling on Hayek's paper *The Uses of Knowledge*, Easterly posits that experts, the policy-makers and implementers of economic development, do not have the whole of knowledge needed to 'solve' problems, as knowledge in itself is never centralized, but dispersed among different individuals, in different situations and different power relations (Hayek, 1945: 519). Roger Keesing spoke of a similar issue in his criticism of Clifford Geertz's interpretive approach to anthropology (Keesing, 1987). Geertzian symbolic anthropology was based on the Weberian idea that meaning is public and shared, thus culture can

be interpreted from the symbolic interactions of people (Geertz, 1973: 12). Keesing, however, points out that meaning is never universally given to all members of society (Keesing, 1987: 163). Some members of society will have more access to knowledge, either because of privilege, personal interest, age, or other social position (Keesing, 1987: 163). To tie the understanding of the way in which knowledge is spread through society with that of practical development approaches, Easterly proposes a bottom-up type of 'free development', in which problems could be solved spontaneously in what is generally referred to as the informal sector (Easterly, 2014: 7).

The idea of informality is welcomed as an area that covers social activity that cannot be measured and analysed with a 'formal' set of units (Hart, 2008: 21). At times it was viewed as a positive force that can 'fill in the gaps' of the formal economy, especially by the 1973 ILO Kenya report, while for a period it held the status of a threat to private entrepreneurship (2008: 17-18). In theory, the formal and informal are opposite sides of the same coin. Where the formal can be regulated, measured and known, the informal is invisible. To know it would necessitate a "skeletonization of fact", that is, reducing the complexities of the informal to black and white bureaucracy (Geertz, 1983: 170). Nevertheless, the role of the informal economic sector for the discipline of development has been quite significant, albeit for either positive or negative reasons in different contexts. The dualism has been defined within various spectrums, such as " state-non-stage, public-private, large-small firms, rigid-flexible norms, market-non-market institutions, Western origin-'traditional', written-unwritten rules, impersonal-personal and efficient-inefficient enforcement" (Sindzingre, 2006: 60). For the purposes of this essay, I define informal activity as that which is not regulated by any state institution, as well as any other institution that presupposes a standard organizational principle. In that sense, I understand informal to be spontaneous activity, not subjected to any kind of regulation, be that private or public.

Human development

As mentioned previously, although the idea that development should be done has been taken as given for a long time, the way development is understood and has been implemented has varied throughout the past century. Despite being previously inconceivable, the importance of human capital in influencing development paths is increasingly becoming the norm as growth-based strategies have led to varied results throughout the world (ul Haq, 1995: 3). The human development paradigm puts people in the centre of importance, and involves the development of human capabilities and the use of these capabilities (1995: 16). Human development is not opposed to economic growth, as both aspects of development are correlated and tied to each other. In fact, from the human development perspective, "economic growth ... becomes only a subset of the human development paradigm" (1995: 20). Stemming from academic debates on what constitutes development and what its ends are, Amartya Sen approached economic development in a remarkably human-oriented light, defining it primarily as the "process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen, 1999: 3). Sen acknowledged the important role of economic growth in development, however expanded the theoretical

understanding of the practice as more broadly constituting the improvement of human welfare. For Sen, the traditional welfare measures of utility and income were inadequate for understanding well-being, instead he focused on human functionings and capabilities (Gough, 2004: 17). A freedom-oriented approach to understanding the means and ends of development brings to light the lack of correlation between income and wealth and quality of life. That is not to say, however, that this entails a conception of development in which economic growth is subordinated as an aspect. Developmental welfare theory maintains that social and economic processes are both important aspects of development (Midgley and Tang, 2001: 246). Thus, economic growth can be sustainable only if human capabilities and freedoms, such as education, healthcare, freedom of expression, social stability, and other 'non-economic' factors are expanded.

Thinking of development as the expansion of freedoms, hence the improvement of human welfare, implicitly includes thinking of development as a process, rather than a certain stage to be reached. That is, development is continuous and present in every society, including those high-income countries which are often assumed to be developed. This perspective allows for thinking about development in Turkey, a middle-income state with the 18th largest economy in the world (World Bank, Overview). The AKP government has moved towards projects of gentrification to improve run-down urban areas, expanding social policies, and attempting to resolve long-standing ethnic minority issues. However, the AKP, in line with both its Islamic and secularist predecessors in Turkey, has maintained a very restrictive policy on freedom of speech, an issue which has generated both local and international criticism in terms of human rights (Human Rights Watch: 2015).

Events at Gezi Park could be understood as spontaneous development. The resistance saw the coming together of vastly different groups of people, all of who united and displayed solidarity despite differences in ways of life. What was essential to this solidarity was the freedom of expression. Outside Gezi, the protesters were portrayed as a homogenous group with a singular aim. Party-controlled media and Erdoğan himself accused the protesters of being terrorists acting on behalf of foreign services with the intent of staging a government coup (Abbas, 2013: 19). Media depictions of the protests were nonexistent, except for several independent news channels which gained prominence during that period precisely for their coverage of the events. The aspects of the protests which were publicized, on the other hand, were aimed to show the destructive nature and immorality of the protesters, through claims that the protesters were drinking alcohol in mosques or engaging in violent behaviour towards heads carved women (Bakıner, 2014: 70).

The Turkish public has been subject to varying degrees of restriction and censorship for decades. Thus, much of the backlash towards Erdoğan during the Gezi Park protests was aimed against his censorship policies. National news channels, CNN Turkey, and other pro-AKP media companies largely ignored the protests or deliberately censored them (Öztürkmen, 2014: 48). The government took legal action against some Twitter users, and even attempted to reach an agreement with the social media company to stop its functioning, as it was a "'headache' and a 'menace to society'" according to Erdoğan (Öztürkmen, 2014: 57). Erdoğan's tough stance on censorship was well-known

before the start of the protests. He would frequently take legal action against people who criticized or mocked him in the public, slowly shutting down satirical commentary shows that would involve him and party politics (Öztürkmen, 2014: 44). However, it would be wrong to say that Erdoğan was the first such politician to enter the public sphere in Turkey. In fact, the Turkish public has dealt with censorship issues since the formation of the Republic. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, for example, in his vision of a modern, Western Turkey had imposed dressing codes, banning the fez and other 'Oriental' attire with the famous 1925 'Hat Law' (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 19).

In contrast, within Gezi Park, information and knowledge circulated constantly, and participants deliberately constructed a community that did not fall under a single voice. The Turkish public's history of censorship and the repression of speech during Gezi were crucial in driving the movement (Bakıner, 2014: 71). Participants of the resistance had the opportunity to attend public forums, lectures and debates, where issues on the larger level of the movement were discussed and settled (Gambetti, 2014: 93). Gezi became a space where "people creatively engaged in the very definition of democracy" (Örs, 2014: 7-8). Essentially, the two polarized categories of secular and Islamist were broken down. The stereotype of elite, nationalist secularist was put aside as secularists engaged in a joint movement with groups such as Kurds (Bakıner, 2014: 70). In essence, solidarity and collaboration within Gezi contributed to the increase of social capital, a term Fukuyama, in the absence of a universal definition, understands as mutual 'values that promote social cooperation' among individuals (Fukuyama, 2002: 27). Social capital is often understood to be a given, existing in societies as a result of shared religious and cultures values or historical events (2002: 32). Fukuyama notes that one of the gaps in understandings of social capital is the relationship this concept has to the reality of cultural change, in other words, how social capital can be built through development (2002: 36).

Culture in development contexts

Freedom of expression was dismissed by Erdoğan and supporters of the AKP as a legitimate right. The restriction of freedom based on the lines of cultural tradition is a common argument used to delegitimize human rights discourse as a product of imperialist Western influence. However, this line of argument falls under a certain understanding of culture, itself a result of Western influence. The concept of an unbounded, fluid culture is not new in anthropology. Following early anthropologists and social theorists who assumed a holistic and essentialist character to cultures, the issue has been largely problematized and developed by more recent authors. However, views on the anthropological discipline, and 'culture' in general, have stayed the same for the outside world (Engle Merry, 2003: 55). In effect, the concept is one that holds potential for bringing on positive developments in society, yet also brings the danger of extreme relativism and a leeway for human rights abuses. To call on James Clifford: "culture is a deeply compromised idea that I cannot yet do without" (Clifford, 1988: 10).

Talk of culture in the case of Turkey has frequently been tied to a debate on whether an oriental Ottoman tradition or a nationalist, 'Western' Kemalism represents the true 'culture' of the people. In fact, it can be argued that for much of Turkey's history, and especially with the entrance of Islamist politics back into the government in the last two decades, the main clash of subjectivities was between those two. However, the Turkish public certainly is more complex, involving a myriad of ethnic groups, religions, economic classes, and divisions on the basis of sexuality, gender, or sports. In the case of Gezi Park, participants in the protests were often grouped under one tag, that of the opposition, the de facto secularist, immoral and problematic citizens.

Gezi demonstrated that polarizations are not a given. In fact, just prior to the movement, for Kemalists and members of the Republican People's Party, both Islamism and progressive movements, like LGBTQ activism, were dangerous forces (Bakıner, 2014: 70). However, these and similar traditionally antagonistic relations were addressed for the purposes of maintaining solidarity during the movement (ibid.; Abbas, 2013: 24). Gezi was a plural community, where all participants had the freedom to express themselves, yet it was stable.

Stability does not mean a static state or one that does not change, whatever that may mean for a certain community. The discipline of development incorporates a presupposition of change in a positive transformation type, yet is also very inflexible to societies' actual fluxes. As Leach wrote in the introduction to Political Systems of Highland Burma, "real societies exist in time and space" (Leach, 2006: 129). Leach had voiced his criticisms of the equilibrium approach in the 1950s, particularly that of Gluckman, who he assumed to be speaking of a stable system, which could only exist in as an ideal type (2006). However, as Kuper has pointed out in his account of the exchange, Gluckman was in fact saying that societies exist in perpetual conflict, and it is the "balancing of oppositions in a dialectical process" that maintains equilibrium (Kuper, 1973: 139). In a sense, both Leach and Gluckman are arguing for ideas that are along similar lines: cultures are in constant flux, neither stable (static) nor bounded wholes. Although an idealized culture is useful for analytic purposes in anthropology, ideal types can be mistakenly taken to represent reality. Change is constant in society, and stability involves the ability of these changes to be undertaken in peaceful ways.

For a society to maintain stability as it undergoes development, globalization and change, there must be a correspondence between formal and informal institutions. Both types of institutions are subject to change and continuity, however in different forms. The formal order is in fact under constant continuity, as various roles are shifted and replaced, for example, as an Islamist party is elected and replaces a secularist party in power (Leach, 2006: 129). In this case, the formal structure does not actually change - the structure itself is physically, legally or administratively static and difficult to transform (ibid.). If informal institutions were to represent values, moral codes, and belief systems, they would by default; by not being subject to formal regulation, they would be more flexible and dynamic. To achieve a correlation between formal and informal institutions, a system's formal institutions would need to be adaptable to change, in other words, to self-correction.

Although historical development and political atmospheres can tell a lot about the structure of society, the lack of a deeper insight of the everyday lives and relations between social groups can lead to a surface-level understanding of social development. In Gezi, arguably, what was happening was a process of transformation of post-secular and post-Islamist subjectivities (Abbas, 2013: 23), rather than a specific targeting of neoliberal and Islamic policies. Thus, although some participants directed their frustration at the AKP's increasing institutional Islamization, it would be wrong to assume that the whole of Gezi resistance was directed towards the party specifically. Erdoğan had indeed generated controversy through policies that increasingly affect people's everyday lives, such as restricting alcohol consumptions, advocating for a certain number of children families should have, and condemning abortions and Caesarean section birth (Abbas, 2013: 24). However, this conservative attitude was not tied to religion per se, as the AKP was seen to be acting similarly to previous restrictive secularist governments, in the sense that both sides took it upon themselves to determine 'the right way of life for Turkish society' (Abbas, 2013: 20). In that sense, through controlling and restrictive policies, as well as a strict separation that throws the individual into either one political party or the other, the state came to be seen as an association that maintains systems of hierarchy, in which the people fall under the state and become 'the Other' (Arda, 2015: 10).

To demonstrate that the protesters were a heterogeneous group that could not be defined through the narrow category of seculars, several performances as 'displays of respect' were staged where Muslim practices, such as collectively breaking of the Ramadan fast in the evenings, were shared by various different groups that included people of different faiths (Öztürkmen, 2014: 51). The dinner was named "earth's table" and was set up on İstiklal Avenue, gathering several hundred people and highly impacting the representation of the protest as a site of solidarity (2014: 62). Similarly, groups of people circled and protected praying Muslims during Friday prayers from potential police attacks (ibid.). One of the more prominent groups in these developments were the Anti-Capitalist Muslims, who were able to get recognition as part of the protest despite their smaller numbers. Their members, which included heads carved women and women in black hijabs, joined other groups in their mutual resistance, forming bonds and alliances despite different values, demands and discourses (ibid.).

Although the AKP has managed to bring rapid growth to Turkey and improve social securities, education and healthcare, Turkey still remains a place of deep polarization. The Gezi resistance was a clear demonstration of reconciliation of this polarization. However, the application of direct democratic practices, such as those that took place in Gezi, would be virtually impossible to establish on a state-level basis. Although there exists a certain divide between the state and the people, these two parts of society need not be in a hierarchical relation to each other. Influence of state policies and government politics is still a hard task to achieve for an individual. However, social movements, like that of Gezi, provide a bridge towards people's politics and the state. In this sense, Gezi can be thought of as a process of altering the Turkish public's view and reactions to the state. In this development, freedom of expression plays a crucial role in establishing trust, understanding and constructive dialogue. Rather than repressing different voices

of society, freedom of expression allowed different actors to alter discourse and the course of the protests.

INFORMAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS KNOWLEDGE

Gezi did not generate any direct political change in Turkey, however it did alter imaginations of the state and the Turkish public. The spread of information, both academic and practical, opportunities of questioning and rethinking democracy and society, as well as a collective conscience of belonging to the same community, influenced individuals and groups' relations to Others and the state. Imagining Gezi as a place of understanding, freedom of expression and equal belonging of all participants allowed for the structure of Gezi to reproduce itself.

To go back to the problem of knowledge discussed by Hayek, social movements not only alter individual's subjectivities and imagining of the state, they can also provide information to policy-makers on institution-building and modes of governance. Besides the social transformation within Gezi, the movement also provides a useful case study for formal development policy. In other words, informal institutions of self-governance often form during times of conflict, and although temporary and unregulated, those institutions could be employed to 'buttress formal institutions' (Sawyer, 2006: 231). Studying informal institutions can provide understandings for groups' values and 'possibilities of self-governance' as argued by Elinor Ostrom (2006: 232).

Dani Rodrik largely focuses on the importance of quality institutions, defining them as institutions that "induce socially desirable behaviour on the part of economic agents" (Rodrik, 2007: 51). As for my perspective in this paper, I am in agreement with him, with the need to elaborate on two aspects of this idea. First, Rodrik includes informal as well as formal institutions in his definition, a potential source of development that is often overlooked (Rodrik, 2007: 51). Values, morals, and attitudes towards the State and other citizens are a crucial determinant of human action, thus showing the importance of incorporating informal institutions more deeply in development strategies. Second, the discipline of economic development has for decades employed essentialized conceptions of culture, tradition and modernity. A simple definition of what a good or valuable institution would be is highly contestable across cultures and periods, so terms such as 'efficiency, transparency and professionalism' would take on different meanings in different places (Fukuyama, 2002: 25). People continuously redefine their values, and thus would redefine what a good institution means. Although the formal system is rigid and cannot be continuously changed to suit everyone's wills in society, institutions can be built to be adaptable to change. As such, the expansion of freedom, especially that of expression, can be critical in expressing changing societal values and stable transformation. Bringing these two spheres of society, the informal and formal, together by applying understandings of societal values, social realities and ways in which societies express cohesion into formal policy and institution building holds immense potential for future work in human and social capacity improvement.

Gezi Park was a historic event for Turkey. The resistance, starting out as one of a number of protests against the AKP's urban reconstruction projects throughout Turkey, transformed into one of the biggest social movements to take place in Turkey. The movement generated support from all kinds of different social groups in Turkey, including both secularists and Islamists, lower and higher economic classes, activists and citizens who did not identify with any group. As the resistance unfolded, Gezi Park was structured to represent a community wherein one could find free legal help, health services, information and recreation. Gezi was a polyphonic movement, generally oriented against the Justice and Development Party's controlling stance of the Turkish public. The AKP had been implementing Islamist reforms that touched on dressing styles, birthing patterns and alcohol consumption since establishing government, stances that a lot of the Turkish public found to be problematic and destructive to the country. At the same time, however, the AKP had been increasing neoliberal reforms: undertaking massive privatization and gentrification projects throughout Turkey.

In this paper, I have argued that Gezi was an event that could be understood as spontaneous human development. After early decades of growth-oriented economic development, human capacities and welfare have come to the centre of understandings of development ends. Amartya Sen, one of the most influential theorists of the human development approach, claimed that freedom is the primary end and means to development. Utilizing the freedom approach, I have sought to show how freedom of expression in Gezi Park, a right that was raised to the fore of values in the movement in opposition to the Turkish public's silencing, generated a situation of solidarity, democratic problem-solving and constructive dialogue. Power relations were re-structured within the community, as previously marginalized groups altered protest discourse by voicing criticisms and values. The overall situation was a place of re-imagining the Turkish public, state and individual sense of belonging.

Finally, I maintained that analyses of events such as Gezi, which could be said to represent the informal human sector of development, would be a useful contribution to formal development strategies. In relation to the informal/formal sector debates and understandings of economic development, the informal/formal correlation could also be applied to human capacity improvement policies. In this sense, understanding how and why the Gezi community, which was made up of the wider Turkish public, maintained solidarity and stability even as its discourse was continuously changed and altered by participating groups, can provide knowledge for implementing such strategies in formal policies.

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