

**Athens Institute for Education and Research
ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series
MED2014-1263**

**Gezi Park Protests in the Context of
Activism/Online Activism and
"Disproportionate*" use of Humor**

**Aybike Pelenk Özel
Assistant Proffesor
Kocaeli University
Turkey**

An Introduction to
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. The papers published in the series have not been refereed and are published as they were submitted by the author. The series serves two purposes. First, we want to disseminate the information as fast as possible. Second, by doing so, the authors can receive comments useful to revise their papers before they are considered for publication in one of ATINER's books, following our standard procedures of a blind review.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

Pelenk Özel, A., (2014) "Gezi Park Protests In The Context Of Activism/Online Activism And "Disproportionate*" Use Of Humor", Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: MED2014-1263.

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr
URL: www.atiner.gr

URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the source is fully acknowledged.

ISSN: **2241-2891**

11/09/2014

Gezi Park Protests In The Context Of Activism/Online Activism And "Disproportionate*" Use Of Humor

Aybike Pelenk Özel
Assistant Proffesor
Kocaeli University
Turkey

Abstract

Activism, as expressed by people who organize and use struggle methods in order to change or convert social conditions, has gained a considerable dimension with the emergence of the internet nowadays. Online activism as Joyce (2010) has emphasized, is the practice of using the Internet to increase the effectiveness of a social or political change campaign which spreads quickly in social life and which sometimes can be converted to “street activism” even though sometimes it is only limited to online platforms.

In this study, the process, that began with a sit-in by a group of activists on May 27, 2013 in Istanbul against the demolition of the Taksim Gezi Park’s wall and the uprooting of some trees, will be examined in terms of humor used by activists during the protests. Gezi Park is situated in Istanbul's main commercial district and is the last green space in the city center. So, it didn't go down well with many residents when authorities announced they wanted to raze the park and put in its place a replica of the 19th Century Ottoman barracks - containing a shopping mall. At first, the protests involved a handful of angry residents holding sit-ins. But the numbers quickly grew. Protests that began as a demonstration against the planned demolition of a park grew into general anti-government dissent across the nation. Riot police moved in, lobbing tear gas and pepper spray and protesters responded by hurling bottles, blocking bulldozers and setting up barricades. Then, outraged by the behavior of security forces, demonstrators began attacking police. There were protests in 67 of Turkey's 81 provinces, according to Anadolu News Agency. There have been reports of confrontations in the capital, Ankara, as well as the port cities of Izmir and Adana.

It was noted that humor was used extensively and effectively by protesters during the protests that started as street activism and shortly spread to online activism. The aim in this paper is to examine the effective and intensive use of humor over the slogans, graffiti and placards in the social networking sites during the Gezi Park protests.

Keywords: activism, online activism, activism and humor, Gezi Park

Introduction

The Gezi Park protests started with sit-ins in the form of environmental street activism in Taksim Gezi Park, İstanbul. Protests were continued with wide participation not only in İstanbul but also in 67 out of 81 provinces of the country. Street activism soon went online via social media by sharing the news, photographs and videos of the movement.

In the meantime, there were discussions on the intense and “disproportionate” use of force of the police forces, and the humorous attitude of the activists were dubbed as “disproportionate intelligence” in return. The slogans, placards, posters, bills and graffiti, that were used by the activists from street to online activism during the Gezi Park protests, was different from other social protests. Other social actions that took place in Turkey also used humor to a certain extent, but its visibility was fainter compared to other factors. The Gezi protests involved both the social and humor aspects.

However the degree of humor, its goals, under which conditions it was applied and its areas of use were important. According to Hart, all that matters is how and why certain social movements can deal with humor. This paper aims to bring together a varied collection of examples of humor in social protest and tries to determine: (1) under what conditions laughter can serve the cause of the protesters; (2) how humor has strengthened social protest; and (3) to what degree humor has been an effective tool for contentious social movements (Hart, 2007:2).

Literature Review

Definition of Activism

Activism is the process by which groups of people exert pressure on organizations or other institutions to change policies, practices or conditions that the activist finds problematic. Activism generally arises when members of a public perceive some problematic situation. Sociological explanations of activism typically identify major social divisions, such as race, gender, or economic differences, as preconditions. This view also presupposes ideological motivations in that those who engage in activism are driven by political, religious, or economic ideology (Smith, 2005:5).

As activism is a struggle which tries to create change, individuals that struggle for this cause are dubbed activists. Environmentalists, workers’ rights activists, animal rights groups, human rights campaigners, protestors against genetically modified foods or nuclear power etc., in fact any group that pressures for change, can be given the title “activist group”(Deegan, 2007:1-5). Activists are engaged in struggles across a range of different areas, across different countries and against different target groups: governments, world organizations, individuals and on occasion, other activist groups (John&Thomson, 2003:5). A wide range of scholars have employed activism as a major construct in understanding connections between communication and

democratic practice (Ganesh&Zoller, 2012:67). Clark and Wilson (1961:134-136) assert that participation in political or other organizations results from three types of motives: material (involving tangible rewards that have a monetary value or which can easily be translated into rewards that have such a value); solidarity (involving rewards that derive from the act of participation itself, such as the opportunity to socialize, to gain social prestige, and to express a sense of organizational identification, e.g., party loyalty); and purposive (involving the stated ends and suprapersonal goals of the organization, such as the achievement of public policy objectives).

Activism is globalizing, says Raymond. It encompasses the whole world, and forms worldwide alliances with various tactics. Today, global media and internet provide an opportunity to expand the range and territory of activism (Raymond, 2003:211). Activism involves different instruments for different purposes ranging from guerilla actions, like street parties, street theatres, graffiti, performance actions, online activism. This paper will concentrate on online activism in detail.

Online Activism

Online activism is the practice of using the Internet to increase the effectiveness of a social or political change campaign (Joyce, 2010:220). This type of activism uses Internet communications technologies by citizen-led movements to enable rapid and widespread communications, disseminate information, raise funds, and/or mobilize and coordinate support for causes (Kvansny et al., 2009:17). According to Denning (2001), “activism refers to normal, non-disruptive use of the Internet in support of an agenda or cause.” And he asserts that, this normal, non-disruptive use includes, browsing the web for information, constructing web sites and posting materials on them, transmitting electronic publications and letters through email, and using the Net to discuss issues, form coalitions, and coordinate activities (Kvansny et al., 2009:4).

Internet provides four possibilities for activism: *information*, *organization*, *mobilization* and *transnationalization*. As for the first possibility, the internet increases accessibility to information. This improves knowledge of politics and encourages interest and participation (Micó& Casero-Ripollés, 2013:4). Secondly, organization is an important function in this process in that activists use their rhetorical skills via the web to establish legitimacy and to persuade others to accept their views. Also current information technology provides the crucial mechanism connecting collective identity to social movements by gathering individuals from disparate geographical areas in an Internet-based space ever faster and easier (Lomicky&Hogg, 2010:680-681). The third possibility, mobilization, is one of the most noteworthy, because its use reduces the costs of participation, making it faster and cheaper (Micó& Casero-Ripollés, 2013:4). According to Della Porta (2011), internet facilitates the transnationalism of political activism. Digital technologies enable an action to be spread globally, to be visible in the international arena, and link local demands to global protests. Della Porta emphasizes the importance of online

forums and mailing lists which hosted debates on various strategic choices in various campaigns and protest actions, and states that the success and failure of a demonstration can be attained through 'distant' activists (Della Porta, 2011:808-811). However online activism has provided a cheap and accessible platform from which to share information and experience, argue compelling but relatively unknown principles, and coordinate with like-minded people and groups (Thomas, 2003:118). Also an important function in this process is that activists use their rhetorical skills via the web to establish legitimacy and to persuade others to accept their views (Lomicky&Hogg, 2010:681).

A similar classification is also introduced by Denning which includes five modes of online activism: collection, publication, dialogue, coordination of action, and lobbying decision makers (Kvansny et al., 2009:4-5). These five modes can be summarized as follows:

The collection mode, asserts that internet is a gigantic digital library that is full of factual information. It also helps activists in providing an effective communication environment for outreach, membership and fundraising, organizing, and advocacy. The publication mode offers the expansion of the authors' mission and policy objectives. For example, advocacy groups and individuals send information via email list services, post information to newsgroups or message boards, create posts on blogs or create entire websites, which can serve as a gathering place and source of information for supporters, potential supporters, and other audiences.

The dialogue mode reiterates the fact that the internet serves as a social and public space for *dialogue* on issues of concern. Discussion can be open to the public or can it be private, that is to say, limited to subscribers to an email list or weblog, or editors of a wiki. The dialogue process on interactive forums facilitates setting up of an agenda, the forming of policy decisions and the influencing of public opinion. Activists also use the internet for the *coordination of action*. It helps in the decision making process by encouraging individuals to post or distribute plans for mobilizing the actions of the group, coordinate schedules, and vote on alternative courses of action.

The last mode of online activism involves the *lobbying of decision makers* by encouraging and asking individuals to write, phone, email, or fax their concerns to influence change by institutions of authority. For actions on more powerful groups, online petitions are used, whereas online reporting of local events and stories strike the attention of mainstream media.

Activists use various strategies for different situations to advance their cause: They employ direct pressure in the form of sit-ins, mass demonstrations, and boycotts. They make frequent use of indirect pressure using communication tools such as traditional media, the internet, public seminars, publications such as leaflets, fact sheets, newsletters, etc. (Deegan, 2007:8-11). Electronic media and internet provide a new perspective and means for the spread and expansion of these tactics (Raymond, 2003: 211). They also use opinion leaders such as celebrities; employ scientific research to support their claims, use emotions such as language chosen carefully for optimum impact

(Deegan, 2007: 10-11). and also use humor to reduce the tension and to invite sympathy for their cause.

There are two striking examples, the Zapatista movement in 1994 and the battle in Seattle in 1999. The Zapatista movement started as a local rebellion, struggling for more rights and autonomy for the indigenous people of the Chiapas in the rainforest of southern Mexico. Their cause was supported rapidly due to the global network that links the Zapatista movement to other local and international struggles against neoliberal globalization politics. For Van Laer and Van Aelst, the internet was decisive in the global diffusion of protest and solidarity as in the case of the Battle in Seattle (Van Laer&Van Aelst, 2010: 1-2).

In 1999, the internet shaped the first social movement tactics and actions in the anti-WTO mobilizations in Seattle. The internet, as an open network, brought together a diverse range of activists, groups and social movement organizations both offline, in the streets, and online, in cyberspace (Van Laer&Van Aelst, 2010: 2).

Activism and Humor

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines humor as “The quality that makes something laughable or amusing; funniness, and the ability to perceive, enjoy, or express what is amusing, comical, incongruous, or absurd” (1992: 3555). From a psychological perspective, humor consists of four essential components; (1) a social context, (2) a cognitive-perceptual process, (3) an emotional response and (4) the vocal-behavioral expression of laughter (Martin, 2007: 5). Martin emphasizes that humor is fundamentally a social phenomenon; relatively people laugh when they are with other people, rather than being alone.

Humor can be a means of smoothing over conflicts and tensions between people and is also used to convey critical or disparaging messages that might not be well received if communicated in a more serious manner. (Martin, 2007: 17)

According to Hart, the work of social historians on the minds and feelings of the past has become fashionable during the 1980s. “Mentalities” and “emotions” have found a place in the new historiography on popular culture; there were no such topics before, and they were considered as marginal (Hart, 2007: 3).

Humor has long been used to confront privilege, to weaken the power of oppressors and to empower resistance (Branagan, 2007: 470). Although humor and laughter are universal in humans and are likely a product of natural selection, the way people use and express them in a given time and place is strongly influenced by cultural norms, beliefs, attitudes, and value (Martin, 2007:26) The humor in the Gezi Protests consisted of universal themes to a certain extent, and reflected an extensive use of national or local elements.

Hart notes that humor and laughter can serve as a powerful tool in social protest (Hart, 2007:1). When intellectual and moral arguments fail to open the door to dialogue, the activist can be quite creative in finding other ways to get

their concerns across, asserts Raymond (Raymond, 2003:211). During the Vietnam War protests, the Yippies ran a pig for the US president and threw money into a Stock Exchange to disrupt it in pranks that echoed Dadaism (Branagan, 2007: 470).

Another example of how humor is used effectively in activism is the case of The Raging Grannies. The Raging Grannies are one of North America's most innovative and colorful social movements. Composed primarily of older women in their 60s, 70s, and beyond, the Grannies mobilize on a variety of peace, environmental, feminist, and region-specific social justice issues (Sawchuk, 2009:171). Grannies dress like caricatures of cartoon grannies, they wear disarming smiles, outrageous hats, pink running shoes and colorful vintage clothing. They carry umbrellas, kazoos, plastic missiles, knitting needles, turkey basters, and a variety of kayaks and canoes (Roy, 2000:17). Through humor, they resist war and environmental degradation, question assumptions and challenge stereotypes about older women. They grab media headlines, stir up public debate, express collective power, and educate: 'their unexpected avenues of expression disturb complacency' (Branagan, 2007:471).

Considering the relationship between activism and humor, the Zapatista movement, a local movement in Mexico, succeeded to convey its aims and goals to a global audience through humor of its leader. Commandante Marcos' humorous anecdotes helped people to join in the movement and attracted the attention of the distant communities simultaneously. Marcos was successful, because his style served as a catalyst for the activists to be seen as humans and they received global sympathy. Olesen argues that the humor of the Zapatistas outreached various national and cultural barriers, because the global language of humor penetrates, influences and enchants the educated middle class in the "Westernized" world. "Having a sense of humor" is an advantage that can be exploited by protesters to attract attention and the participation of others (Olesen, 2007: 26-33).

As an example, during the "alter-globalist" protests in Seattle, for example, when the World Trade Organization met in November 1999, media coverage of the absurd "turtle brigade" (protesters in turtle costumes, positioning themselves as ancient repositories of wisdom) was much larger than that of the more "serious" protests. Because of its surprising character, humor is always different, and enjoyable news is always to be preferred to predictable news (Bruner, 2005:136-155). As a communication strategy, humor belongs to the rich treasury of the instruments of politics and can be used in political protest (Hart, 2007:8).

Branagan addresses many important points regarding the use of humor in activism. He enlisted them as follows (Branagan, 2007: 473-477):

- Humor can balance highly critical, disturbing messages with elements of light-heartedness, perspective and hope,
- Many activists have used humor to educate audiences, including police, security guards, loggers and miners; to disseminate

information (for example, about nuclear waste) and to try to convert them to eco-pax or social justice viewpoints,

- Humorous activism can break down resistance to behavior change and educate people in a variety of holistic ways – emotional and physical as well as on several intellectual levels,
- Humorous activism brings a carnival, yet simultaneously sharp, atmosphere to rallies, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to conversion and deep learning,
- Humor provides a wide variety of avenues of self-expression and possibilities for inclusion in activism, other than the more traditional lecturing, lobbying, marching or blockading,
- Humorous activism has the capacity to reach large audiences, either directly or indirectly.

Research

The Purpose of the Study

During the Gezi Park Protests, the protesters used humor intensively and effectively and it is noted that there were references to the political, economical and social agenda of the country in the elements of humor. The slogans, placards, posters, and graffiti; creative performance actions like the Standing Man; public actions like casserole; songs composed for the Gezi Park actions; cartoons, animations and videos, showed how humor can be used efficiently and creatively. The aim of this work is to examine humor through the slogans, graffiti and placards used in the Gezi Park actions. Proceeding from this point, this study tries to deal with the following topic from a historical perspective and through the analysis of Gezi Park activism. The use of humor in activism, and t examples of the use of humor in slogans, graffiti and placards.

Methodology

In this study, the most widely used social networking, i.e. Facebook and Twitter, was researched to establish how humor was used in slogans, placards and graffiti relating to the Gezi Park Actions. This study is based upon the slogans shared from Twitter accounts and the slogans, graffiti and placards were gathered from the Facebook pages dedicated to the Gezi Protests which have more than ten thousand followers, among them, Resist Gezi Park, Taksim Solidarity, Spirit of Gezi Park, Taksim Platform,. The style of use of humor was examined, especially in slogans, graffities and placards, and a situational analysis was conducted on the selected examples.

Findings

During the Gezi Park actions, hundreds of slogans, placards and graffiti were used. Most of these slogans, placards and graffiti contained humorous metaphors, ironies and references. Political, social and economical criticism, especially the intensive use of pepper gas, harsh interventions, the insufficient flow of news in traditional mass communication media and in news media, the regulations on the consumption of alcohol, “ayran is our national beverage” declaration of the Prime Minister and his identification of the protesters as “looters” were echoed in the slogans, placards and graffiti of the protests. There were also references to the elements of popular culture (i.e., computer games, TV series, movies, famous characters, celebrities).

Slogans

The protesters, mostly preferred a humorous tone in their slogans. During their actions, they used numerous slogans, which reflected humorous metaphors and ironies, against the police forces and their intensive use of tear gas. The most remarkable slogans can be listed as follows: “Yeter artık ya polis çağırıcım” (Enough already, I’ll call the police), “Dün çok çeviktin polis” (Policemen, you were quite agile yesterday, referring to the name of the riot police: “agile police”), “Polis naber cnm?” (Hey Policeman, what’s up dear?) “Polis kardeş gerçekten gözlerimizi yaşartıyorsunuz” (Hey Brother Policeman! You’re really making us burst into tears), “Gazın bitecek memur abel!” (Your gas will finish bro!), “Bu gaz bi harika dostum!” (This gas is wonderful my friend!), “Gaz bağımlılık yaptı” (This gas is addictive), “Çilekli yok mu?” (Isn’t there any strawberry gas?), “Biber gazı cildi güzelleştirir” (Pepper gas embellishes your skin), “Gaza geldik” (We’re fired up, referring to a Turkish idiom meaning uplifting, promotion), “Gazım geldi gazım nerde?” (I’m thirsty for gas, where’s my gas?), “Geleneksel gaz festivaline hoş geldiniz” (Welcome to the Traditional Gas Festival), “Lé Gas”, “Sizin biberiniz varsa bizim de UEFA kupamız var” (You’ve got pepper, we’ve got the UEFA Cup), “Gazlı ve öfkeli” (Gassed and Furious), “Kavun gazı sıkın da rakıyla gelek” (Spray us melon gas and we’ll fetch our rakı), “Bazı gazlar çok güzel” (Some gasses are very good!), “Gazlar Meksika’dan mı hacı?” (Are these gasses from Mexico, hadji?), “Gas me baby one more time”, “Gaza gel!” , “Gazılay” (A blend word referring to the actions with tear gas in Kızılay Square, Ankara), “Dövenpark” (A blend word referring to the actions with regard to with the bullying of the police forces in Güvenpark, Ankara), “3 gündür yıkanmıyoruz TOMA gönderin!” (We haven’t been taking a shower for 3 days, send us a TOMA [Anti-riot water cannon vehicle]!)

Moreover, there were humorous slogans which had of economical, social and political undertones. Some of them are: “Kafamız ayık ayranımız yayık” (We’re sober, our ayran is from butter!), “Bu ayran bi harika adamım” (This ayran is wonderful my man!), “Revolution party. Tüm halkımız davetlidir

(pilavlı)” (Revolution Party. All people are invited (rice is served), “Çare Drogba” (Drogba is the remedy!), “What can I do sometimes?”, “7. gün oldu hala yoksun Gandalf!” (It’s been 7 days and you’re still absent Gandalf!), “Neredesin Spartacus” (Where are you Spartacus?), “Çapulcu was here”, “Revolution will not be televised it will be tweeted”, “İsYanbul” (A blend word with riot and İstanbul), “Alkolü yasakladın millet ayıldı!” (You banned alcohol, you made people sober!), “Kahrolsun bazı şeyler” (Damn with some things!),

Graffiti

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



The themes of the graffiti of the protesters mostly referred to the excessive use of pepper gas, pressurized water fired by TOMA¹ (Anti-riot water cannon vehicle), restrictions on alcohol, declarations of the Prime Minister on the national beverage of Turkey, the attitude of traditional media towards the actions, etc.

Figure 1 was the reaction to the excessive use of tear gas “Welcome to the 1st Traditional Gas Festival”. The graffiti in Figure 2, “Too Many Cops Too Little Justice” expressed the severity of interventions in a humorous manner. After Turkish Prime Minister described protesters as “looters” (çapulcu)², the

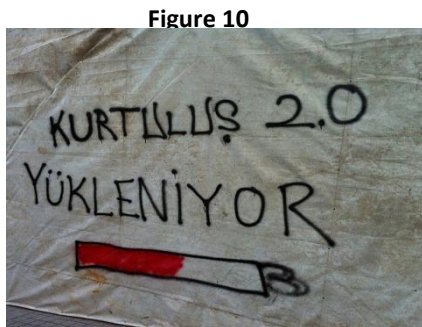
¹TOMA: Anti-riot Water Cannon Vehicle. It suppresses social actions by firing water, colored liquid, liquid gas and foam.

²Prime Minister Erdoğan, criticized the Gezi Park resisters and said “We don’t do what a handful of looters do. They burn and they demolish. That is the definition of a looter”.

protesters derived and translated the word “çapulcu” into “çapuling”, “chapuling” and used them humorously as “Everyday I’m Chapuling” as seen in Figure 3. The expression of “Ayran head” in Figure 4 refers to the Prime Minister’s highly disputed speech¹ in which he identifies ayran as the national beverage of Turkey. In Figure 5, the intensive use of tear gas was reflected in an ironic way: “Hey Brother Policeman! You’re really making us burst into tears”. In Turkish, the expression “burst into tears” is used when people are sensitive and fragile towards a certain issue, situation or event. The expression “You banned alcohol, you made people sober!” in Figure 6 refers to the government regulations that restrict the consumption of alcohol.



However, the activists used graffiti in an ironic manner mostly as an oxymoron on the shutters and walls of well-known brand shops. For example, in Figure 7, the graffiti “Cheers Tayyip” on the shutter of the Wine Boutique By Mimolett created a humorous contrast with the restrictions of alcohol. In a similar fashion, “Pepper gas embellishes the skin” on the shutter of M.A.C. Cosmetics in Figure 8; and in Figure 9 on the shutter of the Swatch Store it is written “Your time is up Tayyip”.



Another noteworthy element is that the young generation of protesters widely reflect their daily habits in the field of popular culture in a humorous style.

http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan_erdogan_biz_birkac_capulcunun_yaptiklarini_ya_pmayiz-1136875, Date of access: March 12, 2014.

¹Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the Global Alcohol Politics Symposium held by the Turkish Green Crescent Society in Haliç Congress Center, and said “Beer was introduced as a national beverage. However our national beverage is ayran”, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23142075.asp>, Date of access: March 12, 2014.

Figure 10, “Kurtuluş 2.0 Yükleniyor” (Salvation 2.0 Loading...) graffiti refers to the excessive use of computer technology in a humorous way. Figure 11 displays a warning referring to the computer game Grand Theft Auto “GTA’da polis döven nesile sataştın!” (You annoyed a generation that beats cops in GTA!”. In Figure 12, the famous quote from the TV Series “Game of Thrones” is used to warn the Prime Minister, “Tayyip Winter is Coming”.

Placards

Figure 13



Figure 14



During the actions, humor was intensively used by individuals, groups, NGO's and political institutions in various placards. Indifference was displayed for the intensive use of tear gas on the placard “Pepper Gas Won’t Work on People that Control Camp Cylinder with a Lighter” in Figure 13. “Do You Want 3 Children like us?” placard (Figure 14) refers to Prime Minister’s statements that point out the importance of having 3 children.

Figure 15



The placards in Figure 15 reflect the discourse of the LGBT group, “The Funkiness of Resistance”, “Hey! We’re resisting.”

Conclusion

Humor is frequently used in social events due to its rich treasure. The balancing and peaceful side of humor is important because of its penetration into the society and its reception by the society. As Hart (2007:2) pointed out, some social events are more gloomy and stable and some of them speak of humor. Until now, humor has been used in social events in Turkey to a certain extent, but not as excessively and visibly as in the Gezi Park Protests. The discussions relating to the effective and intensive use of humor in Gezi actions, mainly reflected the fact that Gezi Park Protests turned into a youth-led movement and these young people's (dubbed as Generation Y) life styles, consumption habits, the way that they interpreted facts and events, were very influential. The visibility of these actions which started as street activism gains importance with the great concern and the intensive circulation of these actions in social networks.

Humor, constitutes a different and influential mode of protest in actions,. At the onset, conventional media and news media did not cover the protests and they became a major issue of dispute, and the humor aspect became influential and made the uncovering of what was happening, as newsworthy. Humor became an important language of protest in the Gezi Park protests.

The events that started as a form of street activism, gained different dimensions involving *information, organization, mobilization* and *transnationalization* with the internet, especially through social networks and sms "information". The individual Facebook and twitter accounts in social networks, the solidarity groups in Facebook, video sharing websites like Youtube, provided the "transnationalization" of protests both countrywide and worldwide. Then also gathered the support of the people, institutions and international activist groups and kept them updated with news about the events, and brought their attention to the protests.

Many different people, groups, NGO's and institutions participated in the Gezi Park actions. The actions brought together many different activist people and groups, like the supporter groups of three major sports clubs of Turkey, namely Beşiktaş/Çarşı, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe, university students, NGO's, and representatives of various political parties. Social networks also played an important role in the "mobilization" and "organization" of these above mentioned groups.

However, as emphasized by Branagan, humorous activism created a carnival atmosphere. This carnival atmosphere has played an important role of the Gezi Park protests. Bookmobiles, dance performances, music concerts, talks involving poets, writers and artists, workshops, exhibitions attracted the masses who wanted to be part of the ongoing atmosphere. There is one thing that must be mentioned here: the real architects of this carnivalist environment were the representatives of the young generation who constantly communicated through social networks. The Gezi Park protest humor was the basic language of protest action that spread from squares to social networks,

and back from social networks to squares. This generation dubbed Generation Y, reflected thoughts, values and life styles with striking humor.

Besides the humor, which was used as a protest tactic and strategy, in graffiti, slogans and placards there were also animations that were shared through video-sharing websites and which reached the vast masses. Civil actions like *Pots and Pans*, performance actions like the *Standing Man* for resistance, echoed globally via the social media.

Activism movements that were fed with humor, succeeded to transform the language of the political actions,. In Turkey, humor has never been used as widespread and as effectively as in the Gezi Park protests, including the actions of 1968.

References

- Branagan, M. 2007. The Last Laugh: Humour in Community Activism. *Community Development Journal*, (pp.470-481).Vol 42, No.4. DOI:10.1093/cdj/bsm037.
- Bruner, M. L. 2005. Carnavalesque Protest and the Humorless State. *Text and Performance Quarterly* (pp. 136–155). Vol. 25, No: 2. DOI: 10.1080/10462930500122773.
- Clark P. B., & Wilson, J. Q. 1961. Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* (pp.129-166). Vol. 6, No. 2.
- Deegan, D. 2007. *Managing Activism: A Guide to Dealing with Activists and Pressure Groups*. London: Kogan Page.
- Della Porta, D. 2011. Communication in Movement: Social Movements as Agents of Participatory Democracy. *Information Communication & Society* (pp.800-819). Vol.14(6). DOI:10.1080/1369118X.2011.560954.
- Ganesh, S., & Zoller, H.M. 2012. Dialogue, Activism, and Democratic Social Change. *Communication Theory* (pp.66-91). Vol. 22. DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01396.x
- Hart, M. 2007. Humour and Social Protest: An Introduction. *International Review of Social History* (pp.1-20). Vol.52. DOI: 10.1017/S0020859007003094.
- John, S., Thomson S. 2003. Activism is Dead: Long Live Activism. In S. John & S. Thomson (Eds), *New Activism and the Corporate Response* (pp.1-13). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Joyce, M. 2010. Preface:The Problem with Digital Activism. In M. Joyce (Ed.), *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change* (pp.vii-1). New York: International Debate Education Association.
- Kvansny, L., Payton, F., & Hales, K. 2009. Social Activism in the ‘Blackosphere’: The Jena 6 Case. In J. Park & E. Abels (Eds.), *Interpersonal Relations and Social Patterns in Communication Technologies: Discourse Norms, Language Structures and Cultural Variables* (pp.17-32). USA: Idea Group Inc., DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61520-827-2.ch002.
- Lomicky, C. S., & Hogg, N. M., 2010. Computer-Mediated Communication and Protest: An Examination of Social Movement Activities at Gallaudet, A University For The Deaf. *Information Communication & Society* (pp.674-695). Vol.13(5). DOI: 10.1080/13691180903214515.
- Martin, R.A. 2007. *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*. Boston; Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press.

- Micó, J.L., & Ripollés, A.C. 2013. Political Activism Online: Organization and Media Relations in The Case of 15M in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society* (pp.1-13). DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2013.830634.
- Olesen, T. 2007. The Funny Side of Globalization: Humour and Humanity in Zapatista Framing. In M. Hart, & D. Bos (Eds.), *Humour and Social Protest* (pp. 21-36). Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Raymond, D. 2003. Activism: Behind the Banners. In S. John & S. Thomson (Eds.), *New Activism and the Corporate Response* (pp.207-225). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Roy, C. 2000. Raging Grannies and Environmental Issues: Humour and Creativity in Educative Protests. *Convergence*. Vol. 23, issue 4.
- Sawchuk, D. 2009. The Raging Grannies: Defying Stereotypes and Embracing Aging Through Activism. *Journal of Women & Aging*. (pp. 171-185). Vol. 21., DOI: 10.1080/08952840903054898.
- Smith, Michael F. 2005. "Activism", *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*, Ed. by Robert Lawrence Heath, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, (pp.6-9). Volume I: A-L.
- Thomas C. 2003. Cyberactivism and Corporations New Strategies for New Media. In S. John & S. Thomson (Eds), *New Activism and the Corporate Response* (pp.115-135). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Van Laer, J., & Van Aelst, P. 2010. Internet and Social Movement Action Repertoires: Opportunities and Limitations. *Information Communication & Society* (pp.1-26). Vol.13.
- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 1992, 3rd Edition.