

To Chapul or Not To Chapul

A Visual Frame Analysis on Collective Identity of the Gezi
Movement

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Abstract

This study works on collective identity formation in the Gezi movement by favoring of visual frame analysis, surveys and social media resources. Seeking to understand the linkage among collective identity and the reasons of participation in a demonstration and visual art, I designed a survey on 100 people who involved or supported the Gezi resistance. Then, a visual frame analysis was conducted in order to interpret the dominant frames to show how and why the audience, who involved or supported the movement, interpreted the images on certain variables, which construct the collective identity of the movement: *being chapuller*.

Key words: Gezi Movement, Collective Identity, Social Movement, Visual Frame Analysis, Visual Communication, Political Art, Chapulling
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This thesis is dedicated to the people who lost their lives in Gezi protests during 2013 summer, and the people who lost their lives in Soma Incident on May 13, 2014.

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1 Introduction

“Art is a lie that makes us realize truth.” Pablo Picasso

When I started on this research, my departure point of question I was asking to myself was why visual research is rare in social science. Art has its own influential power in the world, as well as in political culture and communication. In the discourse of social movement studies, it is argued that visual materials can be a valuable empirical data that their analysis can give an explanation to understand their role in constructing political images and identities.

Like in 2013 Turkish protests, art has emerged as a major vehicle for expressing the demonstrations in Turkey along with the Gezi Movement, the name given the protest movement which is shown as a milestone in both social and political realm in Turkey. It has also produced its own political culture through art as an alternative to traditional Turkish political culture by generating its own collective identity: being a *‘chapuller’*.

The catchphrase *‘chapuller’* was constructed as a collective identity through demonstrations, social and mainstream media, when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used the word *‘çapulcu’* referring to the protesters during the demonstrations¹. Although it means ‘bums, looters, marauders’, it has become a collective identity as “a description for anyone resisting state oppression and corruption while concurrently demanding the rule of law, freedom of speech, and a truly participatory democracy” (Gruber 2014, p.31).” Art was one of the agents constructing this image.

This research aims to answer the question *“How can being a ‘chapuller’ as a collective identity of the Gezi movement be constructed through the visual art content related the movement?”*. The other questions also play as a constitutive role while the research is being developed.

- Who is the *chapuller*?
- Is the visual art content consistent with the image of *being a chapuller* constructed as a collective identity by the protestors?

¹ “The root of the Turkish noun (çapul) was then converted into a verb by adding the English suffix “-ing,” creating a neologism (çapulling) that now means “standing up for your rights”, “resisting state oppression and corruption while concurrently demanding the rule of law, freedom of speech, and a truly participatory democracy” (Varol 2014, p.555, Gruber 2014, p.31). Its widespread English version is *chapuller*. This neologism constructed the collective identity of the movement along with a new wave of humor and creativity (Varol 2014, p.555, Gole 2013, p.11-12, Gruber 2014, p.31, see section 4.1.1).

The initial proposition is:

- The visual language of the Gezi movement, such as posters, can be used as an empirical data to construct its collective identity, which is *being a chapuller*.

In order to search of this, I have built a premise that I try to explain the link among the reasons or sub-narratives why people join the demonstrations, and collective identity and art. In terms of tools, I have favored of a reliable survey conducted during the demonstrations, resources from mainstream media in order to get information and background, then designed a survey on 100 people to understand this linkage. Then design a visual frame analysis on selective posters based on the surveys to come a decision on the proposition.

In section 2, starting from collective identity formation theory as a departure point, I tried to understand its linkage to visual expression, activism and media. In section 3, I developed methodological approaches to its process and operationalization to get variables in order to make an analysis to understand the linkage between collective identity and the reasons or sub-narratives why people joined the Gezi demonstrations. In section 4, a visual frame analysis was made on variables and art content to give an answer to the research question.

The purpose of this study is to understand how art posters can construct the collective identity of a movement based on the case study on The Gezi movement. Visual language of a social movement can shape, interpret or even lead the fate of the movement. Therefore, visual research and visual contents as an empirical data would be crucial in the sense of visual communication and politics.

2 Theory

2.1 Introduction to Social Movements

Historically, social movements have evolved through the late 18th century that world scene has been hosting a series of political movements, like those related with the French Revolution and Polish Constitution of May 1791 are among the first ones, which played as a major instrument for ordinary people's participation in public politics related to broad economic and political changes (Tilly 2004, p.3). Until 20th century, social movements are seen as labor movement, which are the prototypical ones, mainly playing an important role on the formation of Marxism and socialism, which saw that class was the core issue in politics, and a single political economic transformation can solve all social problems (Calhoun 1993, p.385).

Especially by the mid-1960s, with the rise of feminist, youth, environmental, peace, gay, the animal rights, prochoice and antiabortion movements, the term *new social movements* became widely preferred to be used by some scholars. The so-called new social movement theory has been rooted in European traditions of social theory and political philosophy (Calhoun 1993, p.385; Buechler 1995, p.441; see also Cohen 1985; Klandermans 1991; Klandermansa & Tarrow 1988; Larana, Johnston, & Gusfield 1994). This approach has emerged to bring new dimensions for analyzing collective action along with classical Marxism and socialism (Calhoun 1993, p.385; Buechler 1995). Rather than having economic goals, new social movement theory "worked outside formal institutional channels and emphasized lifestyle, or identity concern" (Calhoun 1993, p.385). By the 21st century, social movements were recognized as "a trumpet call, as counterweight to oppressive power, as a summons to popular action against a wide range of scourges" (Tilly 2004, p.3).

It is important to state why *new social movement* is distinct if compared to the old one in terms of studying social movements. First, new social movement theory mostly focuses on cultural sphere and symbolic action in a civil society as a major strand for collective action, that is also an instrumental in the political sphere (Buechler 1995, p.442). Second, new social movement theorists focus on the process that promotes "autonomy and self-determination" rather than the strategies that promote "influence and power" (Ibid). Third, new social movements work on the process of constructing collective identities (see section 2.2) to identify group's interests rather than believing that these interests are "structurally determined" (Ibid). Forth, new social movement theory accepts the "socially constructed" nature of concerns and ideologies (Ibid). Fifth, new social movement theory recognizes a variety of uncentralized bodies, organizations and institutions as a trigger for a successful mobilization, rather than central

organizational forms (Ibid). Finally, some theorists points out the linkage between post-materialist culture and new social movements (Ibid).

In the light of new social movements, when it comes to define what a social movement is, the term can be ambiguous. It is not a political party or an interest group, which are consistent political groups having a direct access to political power or political elites. Also, it is not an unorganized entity or a mass without goals (Christiansen 2009, p.2). Rather recognized with one, common definition, which is technically impossible, the term 'social movement' came by with a wide range of different definitions by scholars.

One of the earlier attempts was made by McAdam and Snow saying a social movement is "a collectivity acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional channels for the purpose of promoting or resisting change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part" (Doug McAdam & David Snow 1997, p.xviii). Social movements are a process, "consisting of mechanism through which actors engaged in collective action: (1) are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents, (2) are linked by dense informal networks and (3) share a distinct collective identity" (Diani & della Porta 2006, p.20). Social movements can be considered as organized and informal social entities engaged in "extra-institutional conflict", which has a goal aiming broadly at cultural change "along with their constant production of collective identity" (Christiansen 2009, p.2; Jordan et al. 2002, p.6).

It is a "movement of power and protest", which have become one of the key forces in twenty-first century societies that forms of collective action² or "people power" are the means of expressing political and cultural concerns shared by the groups of society (Jordan et al. 2002, p.5). The power of a movement is shaped by the collective identity, which is integral to any group of society in a globalizing world "as it is often only way in which communities or activist groups can express their choices and needs when power and decision making are increasingly gravitating to transnational markets and bodies" (Ibid).

Social movements are mobilized networks of groups which, based on a collective identity, participate in collective action to bring about social change mainly by means of protest (Rucht & Neidhardt 2002 p.9). They are as "networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity" (Diani & Bison 2004, p.282).

² Collective action is "a common or shared interest among a group of people" (Oliver 1993, p.272).

2.1.1 Major Theoretical Perspectives in Social Movements Study

Social movement studies employ different theoretical orientations, and cover different analytic dimensions of political protest and network formation. There are three major theoretical perspectives within the social movement literature: namely, *structuralism*, *voluntarism*, and *constructivism* (Suh [no date], p.63-70).

Structuralism is a theoretical perspective, saying structural relations and their changes—all aspects of social movements, such as its process, emergence, and consequences—are determined (Suh [no date], p.63). In other words, structural relations result in a “structural bias”, because structuralism regards “the formation of collective identities of potential adherents of social movements and the mobilization of their collective action as derivatives of –or subordinate to– the configuration of structural relations and their changes” (McAdam 1994, cited in Suh [no date], p.63). Like in Wendell Phillip’s words, ‘Revolutions are not made: they come’, movements are not the product of theorists or any actor, but “the outcomes of complex interactions between social and political structural conditions” (Skocpol 1979, cited in Rootes [no date], p.2).

Piven and Cloward’s work (1997) on the catastrophic depression in the 1930s’ United States represents a remarkable development within structural perspective. Focusing on massive unemployment and socioeconomic hardship as bases for the rise of the American industrial workers’ movement, according to their theory of *political disruption*, they argue that “the occasions, forms, strategic opportunities, and social impacts of political protest are all determined by insurgents’ locations in a class structure and their functional roles in institutional pattern” (Suh [no date], p.61).

Voluntarism is another theoretical perspective within the social movement literature developed in a response to the weakness of structural perspective. Voluntarist perspective stresses the active role of social movement organizations in mobilizing collective action. The key role of structural relations is rejected, because “they are ubiquitous and constant social phenomena” (Suh [no date], p.66).

Rational choice theory based *collective action theory* (see Olson 1965) and *resource mobilization theory* (see Olson 1965, Tilly 2004, McCarthy & Zald 1977) are born within the voluntarist approach, stressing there are other selective incentives leading the emergence of a social movement (Suh [no date], p.66). These theories share a common platform in assuming that movements and the participants are rational actors having a clear goal within a social movement. Collective behavior requires selective incentives, such as forming organizations and mobilizing resources based on common interest groups. These incentives are critical for the emergence of a social movement (Ibid, p.66-68).

Since the structuralist and rationalist biases of previous theories have been questioned and criticized for the issues, especially within the area of new social movement literature, such as “disregarding the independent role of interpretive framing for consensus formation and action mobilization”, constructivist perspective has made a significant contribution within the social movement literature (McAdam 1994, cited in Suh [no date], p.69).

Lastly, *constructivism* basically accepts the notion that social movements and collective actions are social constructions (Suh [no date]). This premise implies that collective agents are “active agents engaging in a signifying work to attribute definitions to external environments and to produce meanings of their collective action” (McAdam and Snow 1997, cited in Suh [no date], p.68).

The mobilization of collective action, according to *constructivist perspective*, is preceded by the formation of collective identities, which is also socially constructed (Suh [no date], p.69). Some social movement scholars conceptualize this *meaning construction* of collective action or so called “signifying work” by employing *framing aspect* (Benford & Snow 2000, p.614; see also Suh [no date]; McAdam and Snow 1997, Gamson et al 1982, Snow et al 1986, Snow & Benford 1988). Especially “collective identity formation” (Tarrow 1998, p.10-14), and Benford and Snow’s (2000) *theory of collective action frame* enables scholars to interpret products of social movements, such as ideas, values, attitudes, identities, etc. to produce meanings by “amplifying and extending extant meanings, transforming old meanings, and generating new meanings” (Snow et al 1986, p.464, Snow and Benford 1992, p.136).

2.2 Central Concepts on Collective Identity Formation in Social Movement

In the late 20th century, the social sciences underwent into a process of “cultural turn”, which has built on an earlier linguistic turn, but started to interpret social meanings in a variety of activities and artifacts as cultural (Jasper 2010, p.59). Beginning in the 1970s, an increasing amount of social scientists has begun trying to understand “how humans understand the world, and not simply their (supposedly) objective behaviors and outcomes within it” (Ibid).

The approach of social constructionism, which is a tradition showing “how aspects of the world that we take for granted as unchangeable or biological have instead been created by those in power as a means to retain their positions” has become the central banner of this new turn (Ibid). This approach has become effective when scholars use metaphors to understand the political, cultural and economic work that social actors are constantly constructing and maintaining “favored meanings” (Jasper 2010, p.59-60).

In the past twenty years, as Melucci noted that cultural turn “a renewed interest in cultural analysis which corresponds to a shift towards new questions about how people make sense of their world, how they relate to texts, practices, and artifacts rendering these cultural products meaningful to them” (Melucci 1996, p.68). Many scholars have begun to turn their focus much rather to cultural ground from the traditional field, such as class, race, and other political-based issues, because traditional issues-based movements have been declining and the emerging social conflicts in advanced societies, aforementionedly called as ‘new social movements’, have been raising “cultural challenges to the dominant language” which are “the codes” that “organize information and shape social

practices”, and therefore they could not be efficiently explained by the traditional issues-based analysis (Melucci 1995, p.41, Fominaya 2010, p.394). This was part of a paradigm shift in the developments of new social movement studies. New processes involving the construction of meaning have taken place of “the dominant theories of ideology, organization and rationality” (McCaughan 2007, p.220).

“The study of social movements has always been divided by the dualistic legacy of structural analysis as a precondition for collective action and the analysis of individual motivations” (Melucci 1995, p.42). This dualism has caused a gap between behavior and meaning –“between objective conditions and subjective motives and orientations” (Ibid). In this sense, the issue of *collective identity* has become as an alternative trend to the structural and rational perspective that given interests are structurally determined, (1) an alternative to “selective incentives” in understanding why actors involve, (2) an alternative to instrumental rationality which strategies actors do, (3) and an alternative way to deduct necessary reforms in the light of movements’ impact (Polletta & Jasper 2001, p.283).

Why has the issue of collective identity become a concern in the context of a study on social movements and culture? When it comes to cultural analysis, as Melucci indicates, social movements study has corresponded to a shift toward new concerns about “how people make sense of their world: How do people relate to texts, practices, and artifacts so that these cultural products are meaningful to them? And, ultimately, how do they produce meaning?” (Melucci 1995, p.42) since the traditional sociological and political theories has become weakened when confronted with the contemporary so-called ‘new social movements’.

Alberto Melucci’s works on collective identity construction is an influential theoretical contribution on social movement theory, linking to the interpretive role of the incentives of social movements to confront the gap between behavior and meaning (Melucci 1995, p.42).

Influenced by the work of Alain Touraine (1981, 1985) and Alessandro Pizzorno (1978), among others, Melucci (1980, 1988, 1989a, b, 1995, 1996) rose the concept of *collective identity* within the study of contemporary ‘new social movements’, developing a theoretical framework for collective identity in social movements (Fominaya 2010, p.394).

According to Melucci, collective identity presents a *constructivist* view of collective action that it has different epistemological consequences and research practices when corresponding to the relation between the observer and the observed in social research (Melucci 1995, p.43). The dictum of Melucci should be followed –“[t]he empirical unity of a social movement should be considered as a result rather than a starting point” (Ibid, p.43) which is “a fact to be explained rather than something already evident” (Melucci 1996, p.40, Turner 1981, p.4). Therefore, stating that collective identity is not given, Melucci rejects the notion that social movement is an already constituted collective actor, and he seeks to explain “how it becomes a movement in the first place” (Fominaya 2010, p.394).

Seeking to make a connection between meaning and structure –such as individual beliefs and meanings versus collective action– Melucci explores the process of movement through which actors construct their action through

collective identity, which is as a process involving also cognitive definitions about the process of action; this process is shaped by interaction enacted through a common language, set of rituals, practices and cultural artefacts. This cognitive framework produces different comprises, and even different definitions, therefore cannot be reduced to “unified or coherent” process (Fominaya 2010, p.395). I will come back to this issue again on the following sections.

Conversely, defining what collective identity, and understanding that how a collective actor forms and leads to a collective action are the key theoretical questions to explain the constructive process behind the meaning of collective action in a movement. Melucci has a broad set of definitions drawing a model for what collective identity is; “what type of construct we are faced with in the observed action”; and “how the actors themselves are constructed” (Melucci 1995, pg.44).

Definition

Melucci calls collective identity as a process of “constructing an action system” (Ibid). It is an “interactive and shared definition” produced by the whole of a society, or individuals or a specific group who “[construct] and [negotiate] through repeated activation of relationships that link [them]” (Ibid). He broadens the definition of collective identity as “interactive and communicative construction”, “which is both cognitively and emotionally framed through active relationships”, explaining in terms of three ways (Melucci 1995, pg.45).

First, collective identity is a *cognitive process* that collective action formulates cognitive definitions concerning “the ends, means, and field of action” as empirical indicators of a possible collective identity. Collective action is defined in a language constructed and shared by a group or the whole of society, who are incorporated in a given set of rituals, practices and cultural artifacts. Secondly, collective identity is an *interactive process* as a network of relationship, where actors communicate, influence each other, and make decisions. Finally, collective identity is an *emotional process* that an emotional investment is required for the groups and individuals, who need to feel like a certain belonging to a common unity (Melucci 1995, pg.44-45, 49-50).

The Cognitive Framework of Collective Identity Formation

“Shared meanings or consciousness”– Melucci (1989a, b, 1995) defines cognitive frameworks, which are directly linked with collective identity and action (Fominaya 2010, p.396). Melucci claims that “collective identity [is] as the ability of a collective actor to recognize the effects of its actions and to attribute these effects to itself” (Melucci 1995, pg.46).

In a social movement, first, collective identity presupposes social actors has a self-reflective ability enabling social actors to act as collective bodies –“unified and delimited subjects and to be in control of their own actions”– because they are in a constructive process of collective identity (Ibid). Melucci suggests that collective identity is “becoming ever more conspicuously the product of conscious action and the outcome of self-reflection...Collective identity tends to coincide with conscious process of ‘organization’ and it is experienced not so much as a situation as it is an action” (Melucci 1996, p.76-77) Collective action, which has

become increasingly “self-reflexive and constructed manner” –Melucci calls this as *identization*– as a response to the social and environmental constraints. It reduces symbolic orientations and meanings into what social actors are able to recognize. Second, collective identity entails a feeling of “causality and belonging”, which enables social actors to act, to recognize the outcomes of their actions, and to “attribute the effects of their actions to themselves” as a collective entity. With this recognition, they are able to exchange this outcome with others in terms of gathering and allocating. Third, collective identity enables social actors to make a linkage between their actions and their outcome, and to establish a relationship between past and future by giving an ability to perceive duration of a social movement (Melucci 1995, p.46-47, p.51).

The Relational Dimension of Collective Identity

The unity of collective identity is produced and maintained by “self-identification” (Melucci 1995, p.47). “Collective identity involves the ability to distinguish the (collective) self from the ‘other’ and to be recognized by those ‘others’” (Fominaya 2010, p.395). It is important to refer to its relational dimensions to understand collective identity better. Similar to the discussions on relational dimensions of collective identity under the neurosciences and cognitive sciences³, Melucci suggests:

Social movements develop collective identity in a circular relationship with a system of opportunities and constraints. Collective actors are able to identify themselves when they have learned to distinguish between themselves and the environment. Actor and system reciprocally constitute themselves, and a movement only becomes self-aware through a relation with its external environment, which offers to social action a field of opportunities and constraints that are in turn recognized and defined as such by the actor (Melucci 1995, p.47).

In other words, self-identification needs a social recognition to produce collective identity so that a collective actor cannot produce its identity without “at least a minimal reciprocity in social recognition” among the social and political actors (movement, authorities, other movements, third parties). This mutual recognition means “any collective actor makes the basic assumption that its distinction from other actors is constantly acknowledged by them” even if it is in a

³ “Recent advances in the neurosciences and cognitive sciences on what is innate to human behavior and what is acquired (Omstein and Sobel 1987; Gazzaniga 1987) provide a formal model for the present discussion of collective identity. Although some extreme positions have been taken up, contemporary brain research tends toward the intermediate view that the relational and social aspects of human behavior lie within its biological constitution. In the functioning of our brains, heredity lays down a neural program that governs the growth of an individual’s nervous system. As far as the constitution of individual identity is concerned, the program created conditions under which individual differentiation comes about as a result of interaction with the environment. Psychoanalysis, genetic psychology, and symbolic interactionism, investigating the early structuring of individual identity, had already demonstrated the crucial role of primary interactions—recognizing and being recognized—in the most deep-lying experiences of the life of an infant” (Melucci 1995, p.47).

form of negative recognition, such as opposition (Melucci 1995, p.48). This formation of “we” is the product of collective actor differentiating itself from others while pursuing to be itself –“the process of defining what ‘we are’ inevitably involves establishing what ‘we are not’”– in order to construct and recognize the collective identity. This means a collective actor both distinguishes itself from the rest of the society, and belongs to the shared culture of a society (Ibid, Fominaya 2010, p.395).

Therefore, collective identity is “a learning process that leads the formation and maintenance of a unified empirical actor”, which is called a social movement (Melucci 1995, p.49). During the stages of a movement, a collective actor can develop his/her own resolving ability against the constraints set by the environment while being increasingly autonomously and independently active. With the process of collective identity formation, actors produce new meanings by “integrating the past and the emerging elements of the present into the unity and continuity of a collective actor” (Ibid).

Triggers of Collective Identity Formation

Taylor and Whittier (1992), Futrell and Simi (2004), Hetherington (1998) highlight the importance of social movement’s oppositional nature to dominant cultural practices, and its need for an alternative cultural politics seeking to “resist or restructure existing systems of domination” in terms of collective identity formation (Taylor and Whittier 1992, p.111, cited in Fominaya 2010, p.396). Fominaya sums up by saying:

Movement practices and organizational forms, such as decision making based on consensus, communal living or ‘horizontal’ democratic organizational structures are conscious and explicit alternatives to dominant paradigms. Aesthetic and lifestyle requirements for acceptance into a movement subculture can act not only as means of establishing commonality between activists but can also act as barriers to potential activists. Because these requirements serve as a means of distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’, they are also linked to mechanisms of exclusion (Fominaya 2010, p.396).

Furthermore, the relational dimension between material culture, cultural artifacts, ritual practices and collective identity should be revisited (Fominaya 2010, p.396). In social movement, symbols are seen as signifiers of collective identities, which can be framed in different organizational or political structure (Jasper 1997, cited in Fominaya 2010, p.396).

Rather than shared interests, conflict is the main trigger for the consolidation of collective identity and for solidarity, which ties social actors to each other by regulating group belonging and defining the requisites to be recognized within the movement. The solidarity enables collective actors to recognize themselves and be recognized as subjects of their action induced by conflict (Melucci 1995, p.48-49, Fominaya 2010, p.395). Melucci describes the importance of conflict in collective identity formation in social movements by saying:

Conflict is the extreme example of this discrepancy and of the tension it provokes. In social conflicts reciprocity becomes impossible and competition for scarce resources begins. Both subjects involved deny each other’s identities and refuse to grant to their adversary what they demand for themselves. The conflict severs the reciprocity of the interaction; the adversaries clash over something that is common to both of them but that each refuses to grant to the other. Beyond

the concrete or symbolic objects at stake in a conflict, what people fight for is always the possibility of recognizing themselves and being recognized as subjects of their action. Social actors enter a conflict to affirm the identity that their opponent has denied them, to reappropriate something that belongs to them because they are able to recognize it as their own. (Melucci 1995, p.48)

2.3 Visual Language of Social Movements

Visuals offer valuable data to understand cultural, social and political characteristics of social movements. Modern society has increasingly been dependent on visual media, which “is a colloquial expression used to designate things such as television, film, photography and painting, etc.” (Mitchell 2005, p.257). Via visual media, people “communicate through a semiotic system of codes; iconic representing realistic impressions of subject, indexical referring to related cues, or symbolic based on conventional connotation” (Ibid).

Visual communication, which is a communication through visual language that transforms ideas, visions and perceptions into forms that can be read, watched, or looked upon (Sless 1981, p.187). The visual message is spread among the individuals, groups or whole of a society through the tools of visual communication, including signs, photography, graphic design, illustrations, animation, and etc. Dan Schill highlights the importance of how visual communication has a powerful influence on audience by saying:

...[E]mpirical studies have found: (1) that people believe what they see more than what they read or hear (Schweiger & Adami, 1999; Shea & Burton, 2001), (2) that when visual and verbal messages are in conflict, viewers have difficulty remembering the verbal information (Drew & Grimes, 1987; Grimes, 1991; Lang, 1995), and (3) that visual messages override other messages when processed simultaneously (Krauss, Apple, Morency, Wenzel, & Winton, 1981; Noller, 1985; Posner, Nissen, & Klein, 1976) (Schill 2012, p.122).

Especially new technologies, “favoring images over words”, have multiplied the chance of meaning production through the visual since discourses are harder to agree upon than visual symbols, which are easier to “synthesize diversity on a common vision” (Ibid, p.139, 142-143). It is argued that if the new technologies do support the spread of information transmitted via images more than words, then different styles of communication is expected among the social actors in the movements who use this technology more (Ibid, p.139), along with an increasing need of visual research in social movements, too.

2.3.1 Visual Expression in Social Movements

The visual expression in social movements through visual artifacts is one of the key research areas of visual analysis in social movement studies (Doerr et al. 2013, p.xii). Visual products, such as posters, photographs, or illustrations leave

impressions, sending non-verbal messages. With the use of visual language, social movements use “the shared visual knowledge of the society they are rooted in” as an advantage to voice critique and to form a collective actor by using and reinterpreting the exiting visual images or products, such as artworks, posters, photographs, and etc. (Ibid, p.xiii).

As an instrument of networking, visual products can perform symbolic function by building identities and capturing the attention of the media and the public. Therefore, in social movements, visual symbols play the central role in terms of expression, because they are rich in knowledge and complex frames (Ibid): “social movements are formidable producers of visual symbols” that analyzing the content of visual production can give significant information about the process of social movements (Porta 2013, p.142). Symbols in visual products are as a *collective product* in social movements; therefore their combination can contribute to the meaning construction (Ibid, p.143, See also Doerr, 2010). For example, visual markers enable people to mark their affiliation to a movement, or identify and recognize the motives or orientation of groups in the movement – such as a red star on posters, which can give the frame of imperialism or class struggle to the audience without need of a text– (Doerr et al. 2013 p.xiii).

The visual expression of a movement enables a researcher to understand the “context of movement activity and the dynamic interaction with authorities, mass media and audience” (Doerr & Tuene [no date], p.159). Images can play as a triggering role for either mobilizing and motivating or demobilizing and demotivating social movements. Therefore, there should be a reference to the media and activism linkage which needs a visual language to legitimate their acts and orientations by visualizing their messages.

2.3.2 New Media and Activism

It is notoriously hard to define what *activism* means (Dobson & McGlynn 2013, p.8). It is the efforts to promote or make social, political, economic, or environmental change. It is making or changing history (Cammaerts & Carpentier 2007, p.217). Since the twentieth century, world has been exposed to many forms of activist protests, which “have arisen as a direct consequence of the economization of the body” (Dobson & McGlynn 2013, p.9). With the rise of counter-politics, reformulations has become more visible throughout what have been frequently called within new social movements phenomenon, such as anti-capitalization, counter-globalization, antiwar, occupy movement, etc. Variability in the forms of activism has characterized these movements as notable that they “took place beyond the explicit manifestations of political will” (Dobson & McGlynn 2013, p.9-10).

Regarding to the scope of my thesis’s literature, two different types of activism are required to be defined and then collided in here, which are *new media activism* and *design activism* (see section 2.3.3).

New media activism represents the usage of the term *activism* in new media, which is defined as “information and communication technologies” considering (1) the technological devices carrying and transmitting the information via digital

devices with an internet access such as laptops, smart phones, and tablet computers, (2) how people use these devices, (3) and how users and the system organize, interact and participate (Lievrouw 2011, p.7). Most technologies today are described as ‘new media’ which are digital, interactive networkable and constructive. Network platforms or digital hubs, such as Facebook, YouTube, Tweeter, social media blogs, and etc. are examples of social media which is part of new media. Media can be more responsive to the needs of people and supportive to their concern, if the production of media “involve[s] interactivity and collective production” (Enzensberger 1970: cited in Dawson 2012, p.327).

Connecting the internet as a technology for building network, communication and interaction in these multiple networks, activists begins constructing and sharing their own messages to an emerging audience. In the light of social movement studies, therefore, Downing suggests the term “social movement media” to make a better terminological linkage between social movements and the new media (Downing 2008, p.5: Dawson 2012, p.326-327). Socially active individuals have started using the new media to become informed, to be informed and to construct new social and political meanings, and identities while connecting to each other on a certain collective action. As Kahn and Kellner says:

These multiple networks of connected citizens and activists transform the so-called ‘dumb mobs’ of totalitarian and polyarchical states into ‘smart mobs’ of socially active personages who are linked by notebook computers, personal digital assistant (PDA) devices, internet cellphones, pagers, and global positioning systems (GPS). Thus, while emergent mobile technology provides yet another impetus towards experimental identity construction and politics, such networking also links diverse communities such as labor, feminist, ecological, peace, and various anti-capitalist groups, providing the basis for a new politics of alliance and solidarity to overcome the limitations of postmodern identity politics (Kahn and Kellner 2004, p.89).

Digital networks have fostered the process of new social movements by allowing people from different backgrounds, different locations to converge in cyberspace and cultivate a shared or collective goal (Ting 2011, p.40-41). New media plays an instrumental role in social movement networks by strengthening identities and solidarities among their members that it enables an identity to emerge through the products of this communicative technology (Diani 2000, p.395: Ting 2011, p.41).

2.3.3 Art and Activism in Social Movements

To define what is art is ambiguous. Rather than being interested in the question often posed for avant-garde or unusual art: “Yes, but is it art?” (Dobson & McGlynn 2013, p.11), I prefer to define as Marina Fokidis says art is “an unorthodox working procedure of narration usually occupies a space into reality where identity, society, memory, politics, history, language are all under close scrutiny” (Fokidis 2008, p.43).

Art has a political power that it can either support the status quo by benefiting to dominant institutions, or challenge them by serving as an emancipatory force. It can shape ideas and political behavior (Adams 2002, p.26).

The artist is not the central focus in artwork, but the audience, in terms of active participation. Artists have always had a strong interest in representing the situations and responding political and social issues in order to orient people to “[raise] pertinent social issues and to produce a resistant gesture that might change their historical direction” (Fokidis 2007, p.59-60).

Artists play a central role in reflecting or shaping public identity and political and social agendas of social movements through their artwork. They help attributing new meanings to the existing social phenomena such as class, race, gender, citizenship, sexuality, among others. Since artworks are seen as products of “self-consciously engaged in processes of representation and signification”, the role of art and artists have been getting influence within the theoretical and empirical developments of new social movements and cultural studies especially after the so-called “cultural turn” (McCaughan 2007, p.220).

In the sense of activism in social movements, *design activism*, firstly defined by Ann Thorpe, can be defined as representing the role of design art, which includes areas such as new media art, urban design, industrial design, architecture, fashion, interactive design, etc. that (1) promotes social and political change, (2) raises a common conscious about values and beliefs in relation to common concerns, such as climate change, sustainability, etc., (3) or criticizes and questions mass production and consumerism and their effects on everyday life of people (Markussen 2013, p.38). Markussen, in the light of Thorpe’s manifestation, categorizes six different forms of design activism:

(1) a *demonstration artifact* that reveals positive alternatives superior to the status quo; (2) an *act of communication*, in the sense of making information visual, devising rating systems, creating maps and symbols, and more; (3) *conventional actions*, such as proposing legislation, writing polemics, and testifying at political meetings; (4) a *service artifact*, intending to provide humanitarian aid or for a needy group or population; (5) *events* such as conferences, talks, installations, or exhibitions; and (6) a *protest artifact*, which deliberately confronts the reality of an unjust situation in order to raise critical reflection on the morality of the status quo (Markussen 2013, p.40).

In the context of studying social movements, first, art is a useful tool of visual expression for communicating both within the society, and with larger society in (Adams 2002, p.27). Second, art helps protest mobilization at both cognitive and emotional level (Adams 2002, p.27). It can mobilize protest by raising consciousness among demonstrators and the public (Adams 2002, p.27). In addition to this, any art forms can help to recruit individuals into a specific movement because they give emotional messages by playing as a connection between the potential movement and the activists; they can reinforce the value structure of activists; they can give authority to a movement; and they can give “a renewed feeling that social and political change is possible” (Ibid). Third, art helps and supports social actors in a movement to reach financial resources or outside support for the movement. Forth, it can play an influential role on popular culture by contributing or changing popular tastes (Ibid). Last, and most importantly, art enables individuals and groups being active and committed to a specific movement that they have already participated. It can develop bonds among individuals in a movement by providing *a feeling of unity and collective identity* (Adams 2002, p.28).

2.3.4 Collective Identity and the Role of Art in Social Movements

In both political and social context, it is argued that viewers produce an emotional response to visual artifacts and symbols, which is constructed by collective knowledge storing, activating and communicating through emotions, reflections and action (Schill 2012, p.126-127).

The analysis of visual products can be applied to the display of a collective identity and memory for a specific movement. Visual codes make a connection among activists and they express the feeling of attachment to a certain movement. Moreover, they can make a movement, including its supporters and participators, recognizable to outsiders. The role of colors and shape can construct an emerging collective identity with a collective action repertoire. (Doerr & Tuene 2007 p.159)

The role of art in identity formation (Melucci uses identity as a constitutive part of the concept of collective identity)⁴ has not been widely explored by scholars. And, a few of those has framed their work within new social movement perspective. Among the works, McCaughan's (2007) case study on art and identity in Mexican and Chicano social movements held between mid-1960s and mid-1980s has been one of the valuable resources highlighting my way at this manner. It has been basically influenced by Sanchez-Tranquillino's case study of a project in the 1970s which is about "the role of Mexican-American youth gang" graffiti art on Mexican and Chicano social movements (Sanchez-Tranquillino 1995, p.56, cited in McCaughan 2007, p.221) that both author attempt to reveal the role of art in shaping the collective identity of participators who recognized themselves as part of the movement. Sanchez-Tranquillino explains this by attempting to "shed light on one aspect of negotiating Chicano cultural survival, not only through the politics of what constitutes 'art' but also through an examination of how identity is constructed as part of the process of making artistic form and content 'readable' in a particular context". The author argues that "two signifying systems in which social value is produced in and through their constructed meanings as an integral part of the process of developing the painter's/viewer's subjectivity or identity" (Sanchez-Tranquillino 1995, p.65, cited in McCaughan 2007, p.221).

⁴"I am using the word identity, which is semantically inseparable from the idea of permanence and is perhaps, for this very reason, ill-suited to the processual analysis for which I am arguing. Nevertheless, I am still using the word identity as a constitutive part of the concept of "collective identity" because so far I have not found a better linguistic solution. Because, as I will argue, this collective identity is as much an analytical tool as a "thing" to be studied, it is by definition a temporary solution to a conceptual problem and can be changed, if other concepts prove to be more adequate. In the meantime, I work within the limits of the available language, confident that the shift toward new concepts is a matter not just of different words but of a new paradigm." (Melucci 1995, p.46).

2.3.5 Visual Expression, Collective Identity Formation and Framing Process in Social Movements

In order to concretize how the analysis of visual products can be used within the studies of collective action, Nicole Doerr and Simon Teune ([no date], p.160), and Jacqueline Adams (2002, p.45) suggest to study images as a tool of framing process, which can also be called as visual frame analysis if the empirical data is visual.

It has both theoretical and methodological framework. Its theoretical part is mainly introduced within Goffman and Snow & Benford's works on frame analysis (See Goffman 1974; Snow et al. 1986, Snow & Benford 1988, Benford & Snow 2000). According to them, frames can be defined as "schemata of interpretations" that "enable individuals [to] locate, perceive and identify occurrences within their life space and the world at large" that "introduces the analysis of cultural artifacts into the analysis of social movements" (Goffman 1974, p.21; Snow et al. 1986, p.464; cited in Doerr&Simon [no date], p.160).

Since the framing approach was received in a rationalist tradition, it mostly focuses on texts, documents and speeches rather than the visual language of a movement. The need for empirical case studies referring to the visual expression of social movement shows that there is a need of visual studies mirroring social and political change through frame analysis (Doerr&Simon [no date], p.160). The world view of a movement is not only embedded in speeches, texts or documents, but also in the form of visual language through codes, symbols, rituals or cultural artifacts.

2.3.6 Collective Action Frames as Tools for Collective Identity Formation

As aforementioned before, framing theory claims (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) frames as "interpretative schemas" are used by social actors, who are active participators in a movement to make a linkage between meaning and experiences in order to inspire and orient an emerging social movement (Adler 2012, p.295). Benford and Snow (2000) explain this through how actors produce and maintain collective action frames. In framing perspective, social actors are seen as "signifying agents" engaged in meaning construction and maintenance that they are deeply embedded in so-called "the politics of signification" along with media, local governments and the state (Benford&Snow 2000, p.611). Benford and Snow conceptualize this by saying:

This denotes an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction. It is active in the sense that something is being done, and processual in the sense of a dynamic, evolving process. It entails agency in the sense that what is evolving is the work of social movement organizations or movement activists. And it is contentious in the sense that it involves the generation of interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them. The resultant products of this framing activity are referred to as "collective action frames (Benford&Snow 2000, p.614).

Collective identity formation has become one of the core dynamics of social movements where “participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfillment and realization of the self” (Gamson 1992b, p. 56). When it comes to investigate the correspondence between collective identity and individual identity, Snow and McAdam suggests collective action framing can facilitate this linkage since identity construction is inherent to framing process (Benford & Snow 2000, p.631). Framing processes “link individuals and groups ideologically”, and also “proffer, buttress, and embellish identities that range from collaborative to conflictual” (Hunt et al. 1994, p.185). Framing can do this at general level by “situating or placing relevant sets of actors in time and space and by attributing characteristics to them that suggest specifiable relationships and lines of action” (ibid).

It would be useful to remember again, Melucci says mass mobilization depends on collective identity construction, which is based on a shared knowledge of goals, means, values and opportunities including a common vision of the movement (Marina Adler 2012, p.295, see also section 2.2). Collective identity formation involves framing processes that (1) identify the themes requiring collective action –which is called as collective action frames– (2) link individual identities to collective identities –which is called as collective identity frames– (Benford & Snow 2000, p.631-632, Adler 2012, p.295).

2.3.7 A Visual Frame Analysis

Studying visual expression of social movements is based on its “simultaneously produced and productive nature” (Luhtakallio 2013, p.35). Visual products “both articulate social process and contribute to them: they produce meaning from within a world, objectifying something collectively observed or experienced, and produce, reproduce, and alter this world” (Ibid). Visual images of movements via illustrations, posters, photos or animations are simultaneous products of an intention articulating and producing certain meanings. When visual products are shared, they can enter in an endless process of interpretation, and they can produce a shared collective knowledge and identity among individuals, who participate in a movement, or support the movement (Ibid; Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161).

Images, shared among the public, produce a collective identity in order to influence different target groups and assert their presence. When studying these “established groups” response towards collective action, frame analysis can give an aspect about “similarities and differences in the interpretation of reality and the interactions between mainstream media and activists’ self-produced identifications” (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161).

Visual frames provide understanding what the image means and how it relates to the situation individuals have seen or experienced. In order to understand the meaning of an image, it is required to “come up with an answer to the question “what is going on here?” and to accompany it with additional interpretations and understandings that may either slightly alter or color the meaning, or redirect or

change it profoundly” (Goffman, 1974, pp. 8–11, 43–44, cited in Luhtakallio 2013, p.36).

Frames are considered as more effective when they can be linked to shared knowledge of the target group or the common sense interpretations of the movement (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161). Unlike textual frames, which are based on rational conceptualization (Benford & Snow 2000, p.619-622), visual frames are based on emotions, interpretations, and “recognition of a shared visual knowledge”, therefore images are called *cultural resonance* (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161).

Visual frame analysis should ask which frames get produced, how frames get integrated with the movement, and also how a movement is successful in rebuilding their frames in order to express its dominant frames in terms of commonly accepted or not to point out different groups and frames (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.162). Regarding to the scope of my study, I will take into consider the question ‘which frames get produced’ in framing perspective.

As aforementioned, to answer the primary question ‘What is going on here’ when looking to an image “at the first glance”, frames can be functioned into visual analysis by finding and defining *dominant frames* technique (Luhtakallio 2013, p.36). The process of dominant framing enables the researcher, at the first glance, to identify the general meanings and characteristics of a visual theme producing a collective meaning (Ibid, p.35, 37). Luhtakallio sums up this procedure by saying:

This procedure can be described as imitating a random viewer of the images trying to make sense of them, with the difference that I had a larger number of pictures before me than an average web surfer might care to go through at one sitting. Defining the dominant frames means observing the mental categories one builds when trying to understand what happens in an image: what is present that is similar to something I have seen before, how does it differ from something I have seen before, and how is it similar to or different from the other representations that surround it (Luhtakallio 2013, p.37).

How the movement environments react is an important dimension taken into consider by visual frame analysis. People mostly perceive social movements first via images or visual products transported by mass media. Not only images, but also visual frames articulated by movement activists become subject to a process of reinterpretation for building a shared knowledge that plays crucial role in collective identity formation. This process can be out of control, which is mainly based on emotions via symbolic interaction (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161-162). People can react to activists’ frames in different ways, as Doer and Teune categorize:

1. Rejection – frames are conceived as illegitimate and incompatible with the hegemonic value system (e.g.: prohibition of symbols used by terrorist or totalitarian groups: swastika, symbol of the RAF (i.e. Red Army Fraction))
2. Containment/Distance - frames are accredited at least some legitimacy but rejected based on more important validity claims (e.g. Symbols of the peace movement: Picasso’s dove, turn swords into plowshares)
3. Appropriation: frames are re-integrated at the surface while being (partly) emptied of their subversive core. This form of frame procession is often accompanied by commodification (e.g. picture of Che Guevara taken by Alberto Korda).

4. Integration: visual frames are adapted not only superficially but integrated at a more substantial level (albeit possibly de-politicized). They are considered as representing the hegemonic value system (e.g. the color green as a symbol of the environmental movement) (Doerr & Teune [no date], p.161-162).

3 Methodology

3.1 The Design and Tools

This research considers the Visual Frame Analysis as its base to the analysis of the visual content of Gezi posters in terms of reading the sub-narratives, situations and reasons which construct the collective identity of the Occupy Gezi movement. The overplan in this case study is to:

- 1- Analyze the Gezi movement
- 2- Analyze the part of “the most important reasons why people joined the Gezi demonstrations” provided by the *MetroPOLL*'s (a Turkey-based strategic and social research center) survey on “Gezi Park Demonstrations”⁵.
- 3- Analyze the results of the survey “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective identity”⁶ that I conducted for this research by using the variables given by the *MetroPOLL*'s survey.
- 4- Make a visual analysis of the results of the survey on “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective identity”.

The main goal of this study is to read a social movement's collective identity through visual art content. “How this can be done?” and “What are the most used rhymes as collective identity?” are the first questions come to mind that needs to be answered. In order to answer these questions, the *Gezi movement* as one of the new social movements has been chosen for the case study.

Same as other case studies, this research focuses on and try to collect in depth information about a specific event and community. Although conclusions found cannot be applied to the general population, case studies can provide detailed information about a particular subject. While conducting this research some suggestions for organization were considered from other well-known case study researchers such as Robert E. Stake, Helen Simons, and Robert K. Yin.

⁵ *MetroPOLL*'s (2013) survey on “Gezi Park Demonstrations” (Gezi Parkı Protestoları) is available online here: <http://www.metropoll.com.tr/report/turkiyenin-nabzi-temmuz-2013>

⁶ Savaci, S 2014, *Gezi, Illustasyon ve Kollektif Kimlik*. Availabe at [Closed Link]: <https://tr.surveymonkey.com/s/B7C55K8>, accessed 25 Aug. 2014.

Determining and defining the research questions, determining data gathering and analysis techniques, preparing to collect the data, evaluating and analyzing the data are such examples.

According to Schell, “case studies are only one of many ways of doing social science research, with experimentation, observation, surveys and archival information each suited to a certain type of research problem, degree of experimenter control over events and historical/contemporary perspective and focus.” (Schell 1992, p.3).

3.2 Operationalization

At the present benefits of social media, activist artworks can catch more attention than the words can. Visual art directly correlates with movements even by advocating for the right of people who shared a common sense of attachment to a group. In some cases, local movements are in the limelight, like the Gezi movement. Understanding the importance of visual art and its contribution to today’s evolved social movements is getting crucial. With the study, this hidden footprints and their direction to read collective identity revealed by addressing the following questions:

1. How can we read the Gezi movement’s collective identity through visual art?
2. What are the most used rhymes as collective identity?
3. Is this art content’s message consistent with the Gezi movement collective identity?

In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted to answer this research questions. Today social movements are nested or used by one another. Borders become more intangible and latent. Field of social study carries some unique challenges, such as working with non-standard materials and invisible processes. Therefore using qualitative and quantitative methods together can make these challenges more visible.

3.2.1 Data Collection

The study addresses visual art contents and surveys generated during the Gezi movement. The target population is the people who related or contributed to this movement. This type of population is used to create a new survey in order to answer the research question(s). In this study, 30 visual art contents are randomly selected among the most distributed ones identified from mainstream new media (Facebook, Twitter, social media blogs and community networks). Google search engine is helpful to reach major survey results related to the Gezi movement. As

an empirical study, survey results are used for conducting this research with necessary theorems gained from literature in the background.

In the sense of social movement studies, Melucci's collective identity formation theory and visual frame theory is used to analyze each variable taken from the *MetroPOLL*'s survey with the help of the literature on visual expression of social movements, media and activism.

A new survey on "Gezi, Illustrations and Collective identity" is conducted for the collection of the data, which is used for consistency check with the existing survey results. Three major surveys examined, but one of them is chosen for this comparison because of place, time and contribution number:

1- From the survey on "Profile of Gezi Park" by *Genar*⁷:

This survey conducts on 498 people but only %77.9 from Gezi Park region. %22.1 selected from another crowded region during the movement time. Also it includes indirect parts such as "Turkey's most important problem" (Genar 2013, [no page]).

2- From the survey on "Gezi Report" by *Konda*⁸:

This survey conducts on 400 people at the first period of the Gezi movement. It would be useful to use this resource if there is a research on social media and Gezi movement; because according to this survey %69.0 stated that they got the news from social media first (Konda 2013, [no page]).

3- From the survey on "Gezi Park Demonstrations" by *MetroPOLL*⁹:

Regarding my research, "Most important reasons for protest" part was chosen from here and used together with the visual art contents to conduct a new survey because this one reflects more accurate data when considering timeline of the survey (during when demonstration are at high level), face to face interview technique and the place it held. This survey conducted on 500 protesters between June 11 and 13, 2013 (*MetroPOLL* 2013, [no page]).

The survey on "Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity", which is designed for this research, focuses on the people who directly involved in the Gezi movement. Therefore the analytical procedure behind choosing a current survey and conducting a new one based on this group is to express collective identity clearly. The *MetroPOLL* survey gives the required statistical data under the section of "Most important reasons of protests". While conducting a new survey, six of high ratio reasons are selected from the survey by *MetroPOLL*, and associated with 30 visual art contents (posters), which are randomly selected

⁷The *Genar*'s (2013) survey on "Profile of Gezi Park" (Gezi Parkı Profili).

⁸ The *Konda*'s (2013) survey on "Gezi Report" (Gezi Raporu).

⁹ The *MetroPOLL*'s (2013) survey on "Gezi Park Demonstrations" (Gezi Parkı Protestoları),

among the most distributed ones provided from mainstream new media (Facebook, Twitter, social media blogs and community networks). The six high ratio reasons are¹⁰:

- Freedom and democracy demands
- Response against the Government
- Disproportionate use of violence by police
- The Government's authoritarian / repressive attitude
- Environmental concerns
- Prime Minister's attitude against demonstrators

In the inquiry, these six reasons are used as variables, and all of them are associated with each poster. After that the participant is asked to choose *Agree*, *Disagree*, or *Uncertain* for each of the six variables. This procedure repeats for all 30 Gezi posters. This new survey on “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity” carries out upon 100 people who supported or involved in the Gezi movement, and the results are used in analysis as a part of this study. *Survey Monkey*¹¹ and social media are used to gather this 100 people online¹². This study tries to show the bound degree between the collective identity and visual art by analyzing and comparing these survey results. Frame theory is used in the representation of the new survey's results for stating how people understand situations via visual art content.

3.2.2 Sample

Out of 100 people, only 66 completed the inquiry hundred percent. 100 attendee filled between questions 1 and 5, 82 attendee filled questions between 6 and 10, 73 attendee filled questions between 11 and 15, and 69 attendee filled questions between 16 and 25. Question types based on many responses and ratio are one of four scales of measurements commonly used in statistical analysis. Therefore, the ratio data among the participants is used for each question to calculate high level statistics, and then average percentage is calculated for each one of three options (*Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Uncertain*) cumulatively in relation with the variables.

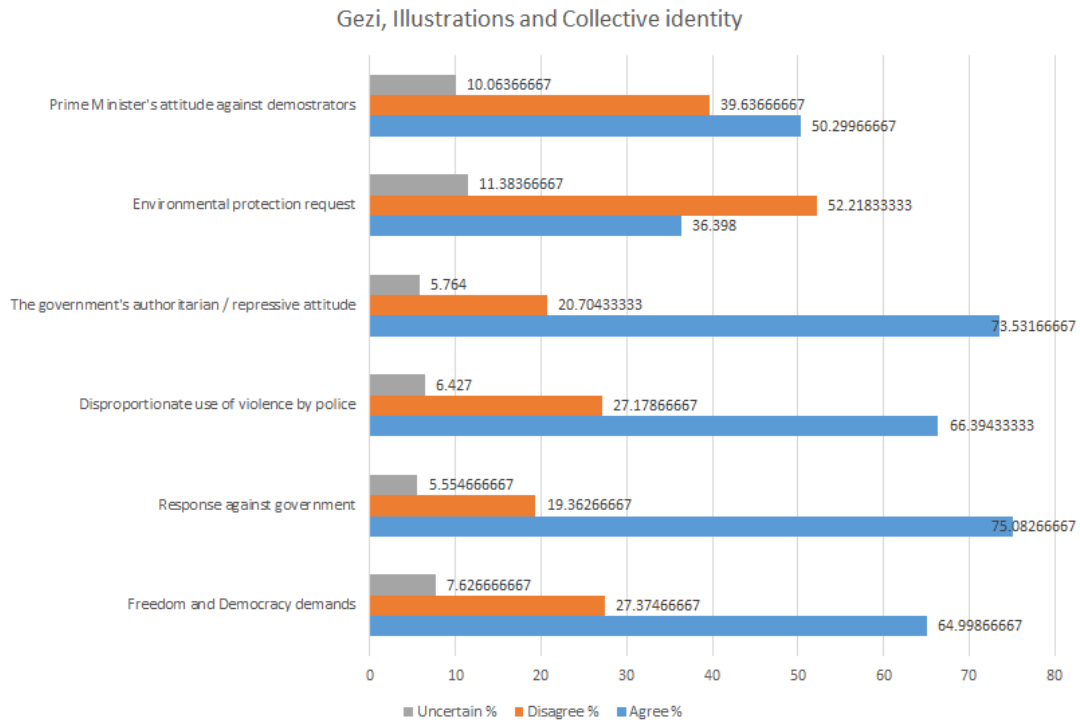
¹⁰ “Demokrasi ve Özgürlük talepleri” ,” Hükümete karşı biriken tepkilerin açığa çıkması”, “Polisin orantısız şiddet kullanması”, “Hükümetin otoriter / baskıcı tavrı”, “Gezi Parkı'nı / çevreyi koruma isteği”, “Başbakanın göstericilere karşı üslubu” (*MetroPOLL* 2013, [no page]).

¹¹ *Survey Monkey* is an online survey software, which is available online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

¹² Savaci, S 2014, Gezi, Illustrasyon ve Kollektif Kimlik. Availabe at [Closed Link]: <https://tr.surveymonkey.com/s/B7C55K8>, accessed 25 Aug. 2014.

3.2.3 Measurement

Each of six variable's *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Uncertain* percentages calculated in terms of how many people were chosen those options. These ratios are associated with each question from 1 to 30. After that, the highest *agree* percentage selection



Graph 1: Results based on the survey on “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity”

is done for each question to use in detail analysis with supporting theories. Also the highest agree values are determined in each column belong to variables for the data table (See Appendix 1,2,3). To present a cumulative percentage ratio for each variable and option, average percentage is calculated (See Graph 1).

3.3 Limitations

This research has a limited theory and methodology. The thesis is based on a social movement study by using visual data as an empirical data, which is theoretically and methodologically limited. Since the scarcity of the existing research on social movements and their visual content, theoretical and methodological developments are still under development. Theoretically, collective identity formation is still one of the most preferred theoretical fields when the research data is visual. Semiotics and iconography would be another theoretical field but do not directly address to analyze collective identity of a social movement, but would give a deeper analysis on images. Methodologically, this study does not make a visual frame analysis to make a frame alignment, which is a process to explain the process of a social movement. Indeed, in this

study, I make a visual frame analysis to conduct and interpret the dominant frames of the images that constructs the collective identity of the Gezi movement.

4 Case Study

2013 Demonstrations in Turkey, which is called as the Gezi Movement or the Occupy Gezi, has been a milestone and showed the importance of politics of everyday life. As a movement, hold in a famous public park named 'Gezi' in Taksim Square, it opened up a growing arena for micro creative practices, experiences and democratic opportunities with a need for "a new public culture based on recognition and acceptance" (Gole 2013, p.7).

The Occupation of Gezi Park along with the Gezi movement started on May 28, 2013 when a group of activists and a group called "Taksim Solidarity" initiated protests in Gezi Park to save trees against the implementation of an urban management project of Istanbul Municipality to build the historic Ottoman barracks with a shopping mall on the area of Gezi Park. The group, supported mainly by university students, has started to confront the police arms.

As Charles Tilly says a social movement needs a repertoire that it means a social movement needs "creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering" (Tilly 2004, p.53). Regarding the Gezi movement, while the tension between the students and police arms was rising, it continued to draw enormous support from mostly young people –supported by the middle class, and featuring a strong female presence– and prominent figures such as journalists, professors, politicians, authors, actors and singers, and also formal bodies such as political parties, confederations, associations and unions who joined the movement and started to support activists (Akgun 2014, [no page], Gole 2013, p.8). Gezi Park was home for a variety of groups coming from different ideologies with a shared collective action embodied in a feeling of belonging to certain collective values. These groups, including Left parties, liberals, Kemalists, LGBT activists, feminists, Kurdish nationalists, anti-capitalist Muslims, and others who had been feeling that their voices has been underestimated for a long time, and had been recognized as mostly opponent to the conservative-rooted Justice and Development Party's (known as AKP or AK Party) regulations and policies which were set, they were thinking, by a single-handed influence over the country (Eskinat 2013, p.45).

Tarrow claims that "contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own" (Tarrow 1998 p.2). Regarding to the Gezi movement, the first major change in political opportunities was the intervention to disrupt the green areas in the Gezi Park under the name of "urban transformation and the establishment of hyper-development projects that are run by pro-government businessmen" (Akgun 2014, [no page]). The second change in political opportunities was the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's religiously conservative rhetoric and speeches which made a group of society feel that there might be an interruption to their

private life (Ibid). Also for some aspects, there was a fear that conservative rooted AK Party Government and the prime minister was constructing a process of Islamization of the state, because of Islamophobia inside Turkey and in the EU (Abbas 2013, p.22).

The huge support legitimized a “continuous organized public struggle making collective demands” from the authorities. (Akgun 2014, [no page]) Rooted in a criticism of neo-conservative and neo-liberalism, the collective concerns were targeting the AK Party Government that it was demanded from AK Party to abandon its capitalist policies, implemented under the name of urban transformation, and their conservative rhetoric. After a short time, on May 30, the police brutally intervened and used excessive use of force through water cannons and tear gas bombs against the peaceful protestors. This disproportioned use of violence, and the failure of the mainstream Turkish media to report the events led to a social outbreak. From that time, the Gezi movement gained a new milestone from even greater support of the middle class and other urban cities across Turkey. Because of the failure of the mainstream Turkish media to report the events, especially the first cycle of the events, the use of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and other social media networks had increased among the people in order to spread information and gain support. Gole describes the spread of the public attention across the country as a virus:

“The public has not hesitated to take to the streets and block avenues, neighborhoods, and their city’s central spaces. Others participate from their balconies, with whole families chiming in to the protestors’ chorus, banging on pots and pans. They have found pacifistic means of protest that require no arms or political slogans to express their discontent and frustrations with the AK Party government...Clouds of gas filled the sky in city centers, making breathing difficult; but these clouds, symbols of pollution and the abuse of power, have only bolstered the anger of ordinary citizens” (Gule 2013, p.7-8).

Conversely, along with the excessive use of police force, protesters, who are dominantly students and young adults, criticized restrictive rhetoric and regulations being imposed on their lives and their freedom, and the disruption of green fields for consumerist, money-making projects. The protestors was neither belonging to a political affiliation nor a civil society organization to demonstrate their interests, so they had a lack of regular access into a political process. However, all they sought for respect from the government and the prime minister for democracy and their freedom (Akgun 2014, [no page]).

4.1.1 Collective Identity of Gezi Spirit: “*Everyday I’m Chapulling*”

The Gezi movement has constructed “its own language and repertoire of action” (Gole 2013, p.8). When prime minister denounced the protestors as “*Çapulcu*”, which can be translated as “marauder, low-life, riffraff, or bum” (Gruber 2014, p.31), protestors took it as a label and embraced it with pride and humoristic assertion instead of taking it as an insult (Varol 2014, p.555, Gole 2013). In a short time, the word became a compliment and a collective identity of the movement (Varol 2014, p.555, Gole 2013, p.11-12). “The root of the Turkish noun (*çapul*) was then converted into a verb by adding the English suffix “-ing,”

creating a neologism (*çapulling*) that it now means “standing up for your rights”, “resisting state oppression and corruption while concurrently demanding the rule of law, freedom of speech, and a truly participatory democracy” (Varol 2014, p.555, Gruber 2014, p.31). Its widespread English version is *chapuller*. This neologism constructed the collective identity of the movement along with a new wave of humor and creativity (Gole 2013, p.12, Gruber 2014, p.31, see also Varol 2014).

Using the word *chapuller* as a label for movement identity became popularized via international and national media. For example, thousands of Turkish Facebook users changed their first or last names, or put before their actual name as a title with the word *chapuller*. Some national and international prominent figures, including Noam Chomsky, labeled themselves as a *chapuller* via social media to demonstrate their support for the Gezi movement (Varol 2014, p.555, Gruber 2014, p.32). Another humorous example was the music video title “Everyday I’m Çapulling”¹³, and as a reference to this, “a widely circulated photo of Yoda in a robe titled “Occupy Gezi” was captioned: “Chapulling¹⁴ everyday too, I am. May the resistance be with you”” became among the most memorial collective humor among the protestors (Varol 2014, p.556). These examples, like many others, illustrated how the protestors unleashed a wave of humor and creativity to symbolize their criticism of government, resistance and demands for a better democratic and free system.

Being a *Chapuller* as a Form of Collective Identity

The term so-called *chapulling* as a humorous rhetoric is another dimension of the Gezi movement (see Varol 2014); however, being a *chapuller* as a collective identity of Gezi spirit is the central point I would like to analyze (Varol 2014, Gole 2013, Gruber 2014, Akgun 2014).

It would be useful to revisit that social movements are composed of an informal set of individuals or/and groups of a society who are involved in a clash against certain opponents. These movements, linked by a variety of informal networks, share a distinct collective identity, which is an “interactive and shared definition” produced by the whole of a society, or individuals or a specific group who “[construct] and [negotiate] through repeated activation of relationships that link [them]” (Akgun 2014, [no page], Melucci 1995, p.44). I wrote in the section 2.2:

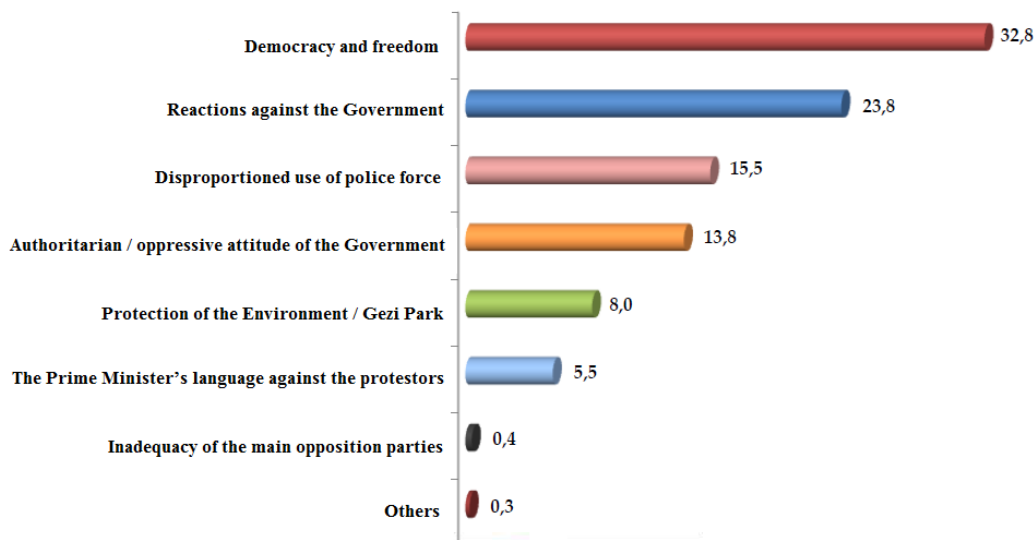
Collective action, which has become increasingly “self-reflexive and constructed manner” as a respond to the social and environmental constraints, reduces symbolic orientations and meanings

¹³“The music video title “Everyday I’m Çapulling” was created o the tune of the popular “Everyday I’m Shuffling” chorus from LMFAO’s “Party Rock Anthem”” (Varol 2014, p.555).

into what social actors are able to recognize. Second, collective identity entails a feeling of “causality and belonging”, which enables social actors to act, to recognize the outcomes of their actions, and to “attribute the effects of their actions to themselves” as a collective entity. With this recognition, they are able to exchange this outcome with others in terms of gathering and allocating. Third, collective identity enables social actors to make a tie between their actions and their outcome, and to establish a relationship between past and future by giving an ability to perceive duration of a social movement (See section 2.2, Melucci 1995, p.46-47, p.51).

Regarding the Gezi Park protestors, called as ‘*the chapullers*’ from now on, were composed of individuals and groups of a society, who were coming from a different background and ideologies, and were supported by a variety of informal networks, such as neighborhood platforms, cultural centers and support groups, “established a collective identity from a shared reactions” against the environmental constraints and limits (Akgun 2014, [no page]). According to Atak, reading sub-narratives of the uprisings may play role in the formation of collective identities (Atak 2013, [no page]). For example, the disproportioned use of state power and violence could be a sub-narrative of a movement (Ibid) which may form a collective causality, belonging and recognition in terms of collective action among protestors. Therefore, analyzing the most critical sub-narratives or themes of the Gezi movement would give an explanation to understand collective identity of being a ‘*chapuller*’ that protestors had constructed during the demonstrations.

Based on the recent academic articles, surveys and mainstream media resources regarding Gezi movement, there are major sub-narratives of the Gezi movement playing the prominent role in forming collective identity of being a *chapuller* among individuals and groups who participated or supported the demonstrations. According to *MetroPOLL*’s –Strategical and Social Research Center– survey (MetroPOLL 2013), which is the last academic survey based on an interview with five hundred protestors during the demonstrations in the Gezi Park. According to the *MetroPOLL*, there are six common sub-narratives which protestors and other supporters constructed an image of *chapuller* as a collective identity by creating its own language, and shared among each other through social media.



Graph 2: “Most important reasons of the protests” by the *MetroPOLL*’s survey

1- Freedom and Democracy: “*We Are All Pokémons*”¹⁵

A *chapuller* is a person who struggles for his/her democratic rights and freedom. Like in many recent grass-root movements, such as Occupy-like movements and Arab-springs around the world in a globalization era, one of the common perspectives of protestors concern was the focus on the democratization demands and their linkage with individual freedom. The Gezi movement and the resistance indicated that “Turkish movements become close to the new kind of social struggles that occur in the different places of the world” (Yildirim 2014, p.178).

Ordinary people, who claim their own lives, have started to need a new framework of politics to access better democratic opportunities. Therefore, new politics of social movements focus on the demands of ordinary people who claim their own lives. These movements have a kind of anarchical values that the existing authorities, hierarchical organizations and institutions are put into question. In Gezi movement, the resistance’s departure point was the specific demands on their life regarding democracy and freedom. Neither did individuals and groups request dissolution or removal of the exiting Government, nor did they aim for actions rooted in class-based consciousness, or in relation with a specific organization or institution (Ibid).

In terms of democratic demands, the Gezi movement created different ways of opposition. It mobilized protestors in public spaces, created different networks that people connected to each other to share and exchange information to reach other people for finding support, and made protestors construct their own language, in an ironic manner, to express their reactions. The new democracy built on direct speech by actions and public spaces. Yildirim sums up this process:

[T]hey do not use specific vocabulary of an organization and rank-file membership system to mobilize together. The given options to take political positions were rejected and they have tried to create a new one. Their plural and multi-cultural manner has a potential to create a newness to change the established system. This was an attempt to constitute a new common. This connection figure out a new political aspect that [dealt] with daily life and direct action and it has [begun] to change the democracy concept (Yildirim 2014, p.178).

There were series of particular incidents that shaped the collective concerns and demands of the Gezi protestors and supporters criticizing the quality of Turkish democracy and political process (Yildirim 2014, p.177, see also Gole 2013). One of them was “the restrictions on the freedom of expression and the crackdown on the opposition” (Gole 2013, p.10). Judicial institutions lost their independence and became under pressure of the Government’s critics. Many high-

¹⁵ A famous phrase among the Gezi protestors, ““Hepimiz Pokemonuz” [We Are All Pokémons] (a slogan referring to the original slogan “Hepimiz Hrant’ız, Hepimiz Ermeni’yiz” [We’re all Hrant, We’re all Armenians] upon murder of Hrant Dink)” (Emre et al. 2014, p.441). *Pokémon* is a famous Japanese cartoon series that its Wikipedia information is available online here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_\(anime\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_(anime))

ranking military officers and journalist were put in jail because of their ideas and political departures, in most cases without a fair trial (Acemoglu 2013, [no page]). The mainstream Turkish media had been criticized for becoming submissive to the Government that transformed media into self-censorship (Acemoglu 2013, [no page], Gruder 2014 p.29). For example, in the first cycles of the demonstrations, the mainstream Turkish media did not or became late to cover the first cycle of the continuing protests in Gezi Park, police violence and how the protests turned out to a mass movement (Acemoglu 2013, [no page], Gole 2013, p.10).

2- Authoritarian attitude of the Government: “We tell you, we are the people!”¹⁶

A *chapuller* is anti-authoritarian and criticizes the authoritarian attitude of the Government. Another common sub-narrative of *chapulling* as a collective identity of the protestors had been the AK Party Government’s authoritarian attitude and unwanted intervention to people’s everyday life for a while, especially under the name of conservative and moralist rhetoric (Yilmaz 2013, [no page]). AK Party had made a series of significant process through the promotion of liberal democracy; however, for the past few years, the mode of governance had become a personalization of power. Although the AK Party was elected under a pluralist democracy, government had been criticized for monopolizing the power around itself, enjoying the majority rule without a real political opposition. Even Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan “has not hesitated to make major decisions himself, without deigning to consult those primarily concerned – the citizens – nor his own political entourage” (Gole 2013, p.11).

One of the respected observers on Turkish politics, Mustafa Akyol, wrote that the Government had changed and become even more “overweening” than their Kemalist predecessors, whom the AK Party had been criticizing for having an overweening attitude that they knew best for the society, and had been approaching all political opposition “as the manifestations of an organized plot against their brilliant rule” (Abbas 2013, p.20, Akyol 2013, [no page]). Akyol adds:

This rhetoric is indeed quite different from the early years of the AKP, when the party often referred to Western (EU) standards to argue against “the unbendable wrist of the state,” which was then represented by the Kemalist military and judiciary. But the AKP today is simply on the other side of the fence, and sees the might of the state not as a threat but an asset” (Akyol, 2013, [no page]).

¹⁶ “We tell you, we are the people!” [“Halkız biz, halk!”] was a famous phrase among the Gezi protestors (Emre et al. 2014, p.436).

Growing moralist and conservative rhetoric of the Government had been at the center of concerns and suspicion among the protestors, opposition platforms and opposition media. The AK Party had been criticized for “intending to intervene in secular ways of life” with a religious and conservative approach (Gule 2013, p.10). Gule highlights this argument with a series of examples:

A warning issued to a young couple kissing on a subway in Ankara has triggered anger and criticism. A decree limiting the sale of alcohol has ignited a huge negative reaction, particularly due to the moralist rhetoric surrounding it. The latest regulations aim to restrict sales of alcohol and ban all images, advertisements, and movie scenes involving alcohol consumption; this brought together students, merchants, actors, singers, and directors in fear of restrictions on their individual and artistic freedoms (Gule 2013, p.10).

3- Reaction against the Government’s regulations and policies: “Viva la fully independent Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi”¹⁷

A *chapuller* criticizes the Government’s regulations and policies. The AK Party Government’s authoritarian attitude had not been the only reason for their being criticized, but also their existing and regulations had prepared a negative ground that had played a major role on shaping the collective identity of protestors as *chapullers*.

The Government’s spatial politics circling around neoliberalism, privatization and aggressive urbanization had been opposed by a broad spectrum of political actors for a while (Abbas 2013, p.24). Kose highlights the ongoing legal and institutional transformation in Turkey that some institutions such as Mass Housing Administration (MHA) and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism (MEU) were given excessive power “in the use, planning, and governing of urban spaces and resources of all sorts” (Kose 2014, [no page]). AK Party was approached suspiciously by the critics for their policies in the construction sector “on attracting capital flows within the highly volatile atmosphere of global financial markets”, which had been causing the urban space to turn into “the means of capital accumulation” (Kose 2014, [no page]). Kose exemplifies by arguing:

For instance, the recently legislated “Urban Transformation Act” was surely aimed at overturning all the previous legal barriers to neoliberal urban transformation projects, paving the way for all sorts of informal practices and arbitrary decisions. When things did not go well, the AKP cadres did not refrain from running over legal processes and decisions or creating *de facto* situations in which development projects were completed despite ongoing lawsuits or even verdicts. An example is the Sulukule neighborhood of Istanbul where an urban transformation project was already completed before the lawsuit against it was handled and finalized (Kose 2014, [no page]).

¹⁷ *Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi* is a famous Turkish coffee brand and shop. The phrase among the Gezi protestors, “Viva la fully independent Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi” [Yaşasın tam bağımsız Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi] is a critic referring to *Starbucks* brand (Emre et al. 2014, p.444).

Regarding the Gezi demonstrations, the protestors' concern in saving the trees against the implementation of an urban management project of Istanbul Municipality could be also seen as a "criticism of capitalism" rather than "environmental sensitivity" as Gole observes (Gole 2013, p.9). Among critics, protestors had been opposing hyper-development projects by expressing new urban awareness and spatial politics against consumer culture (Ibid). In Turkish discourse, the two ideologies had been somewhat intertwined. Gole describes this by stating:

In Turkey, capitalism has taken a material form, incarnated in the shopping mall, a new and concrete symbol of global financial capitalism. It makes tangible commercial capitalism, a consumerist society, and the global exploitation of labor. The initial enthusiasm for malls as both shopping centers and places to socialize has faded away. Malls have started to ruin the urban fabric in the same way as commercial greed and consumerism. For Istanbul citizens, the project of constructing a shopping mall in the middle of Gezi Park is nothing more than the confiscation of a public space by private capital (Gole 2013, p.9).

4- Disproportioned use of force: "*This gas is awesome, dude!*"¹⁸

A *chapuller* prefers a non-violent resistance with a humorous and sarcastic response against the use of violence. The Gezi demonstrations spread beyond when the police intervened in the ongoing peaceful environmental sit-in in the Gezi Park, and violently tried to evict them out by burning the tents and using tear gas against the protestors. During the violent confrontation between the demonstrators and police force, many photographs and videos were shared throughout social media. One of them was the image of "a woman wearing a red dress, tear gassed by a police officer" which then had become one of the symbols of the Occupy Gezi movement and resistance among the protestors and supporters (Gruber 2014, p.29).

The Government's strong attitude on using force against the protestors encouraged other ordinary people across Turkey to become involved in resistance against police officers (Abbas 2013, p.21). For two weeks, the streets of major Turkish cities, including Istanbul and Ankara, were exposed to the police intervention using mass-intervention vehicles, tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets, and sound bombs. It was estimated that at least 150,000 tear gas bombs were used during the interventions (Grumber 2014, p.29).

The Government and the Prime Minister claimed that demonstrations were not peaceful that there were groups of provocateurs, who responded brutally against the police officers and attempted to damage public property (Abbas 2013, p.23).

¹⁸ A phrase among the Gezi protestors, "*dude* this gas is awesome!" ["bu gaz bir harika dostum"] "make[s] the practices visible which are to neutralise the opponent's power by using an ironic language and make it powerless by turning the whole process to a game" (Emre et al. 2014, p.436).

However, it was widely known that majority of the demonstrators were peaceful, with an exception of some anonymous groups, who were not protestors. This case was clearly indicated in a 60-page report of Amnesty International on Gezi demonstrations and use of force:

While the overwhelming majority of the protests were peaceful, a small minority of persons, be they participants, non-participants or *agents provocateurs* did engage in acts of violence including throwing stones, bottles and other objects at police and damaging property. These acts are not protected by the right to freedom of assembly and police have a duty to intervene to protect the safety of the public and prevent damage to property. However, they must do so without denying the right of the peaceful majority to continue their protest. Throughout the course of the Gezi Park protests, however, the authorities have used isolated acts of violence to justify the dispersal (with force) of entire assemblies (Amnesty International 2013, p.12).

In contrast to what the peaceful protestors being accused for, they answered the police brutality with humor, sarcasm, and satire by using street talk, graffiti, graphics and social media (Grumber 2014, p.29). For example, a famous banner issuing a smiley-faced “*Welcome to the First Traditional Gaz Festival*” playing on the phonetic similarity between terms ‘gaz’ (gas) and ‘caz’ (jazz) (Grumber 2014, p.29) and “standing man protest” who stood in Taksim for eight hours as a peaceful resistance (Arat 2013, p.809) along with other protestors who later joined are among the examples of resistance culture of Gezi against use of violence as a collective identity.

5- The Prime Minister’s invasive rhetoric and speeches: “No Recep No Cry”¹⁹

A *chappuller* prefers a humorous and sarcastic response against the Prime Minister’s evasive tone of speech and rhetoric. Beside AK Party Government’s authoritarian and moralizing drift, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s own conservative and invasive tone of address often played the profound role on increasing the tensions and offending his opponents. Referring to his opponents in pejorative way as “marginal”, “scum” (Çapulcu), and “drunkards” (Gole 2103, p.11), he was criticized for widening the gap between him and his opponents in terms of respect and democracy. His conservative style of moralizing speeches, which had addressed the private life of his opponents and protestors, such as consumption of alcohol were criticized due to the increasing frustration (Atay 2013, p.40-41).

These feelings had constructed perception and emotion that government, particularly Prime Minister Erdogan, did not consider a group of society, which

¹⁹ A phrase among the Gezi protestors, “No Recep No Cry” makes affiliation to the famous singer Bob Marley’s ‘No Woman No Cry’ (Emre et al. 2014, p.439).

was labeled as “secular”, as not “faithful” component of the Turkish society compared to the religious and/or conservative part –whom he frequently recognized them as his decent supporters and referred them as “the 50 percent” (Atay 2013, p.42) to imply the AK Party Government’s ruling majority. In addition to this, the Prime Minister’s polarization rhetoric became doubled with his frequent comparison since 1998 regarding different segments of the society as ‘White Turks versus Black Turks’²⁰ and ‘We versus Others’ (Yilmaz 2014, [no page], Acemoglu 2013, [no page]).

In this polarize atmosphere, “respect” had become one of the slogans among protestors, tagged on walls of streets, with a call for “a return to civility in Turkish public life” (Gule 2013, p.11). The Prime Minister’s offensive and patronizing tone and style of address was mostly responded humorously and sarcastically by the protestors and other supporters who had already an “incited collective indignation” (Ibid) via social media, graffiti and graphics. This humorous and sarcastic reaction against the Prime Minister had contributed to the construction of the collective identity of being a *chapuller* spread fast among the people through social media.

6- Environmental Concerns: “To live! Like a tree, alone and free/ To live! Like a forest in unity”²¹

A *chapuller* feels responsibility for the nature. Besides confronting the Government’s neoliberal urban transformation projects, the protestors’ effort to protect the Gezi Park had revealed the existing environmental debates and put ecologic awareness at a new level in Turkish politics. Environmental concerns regarding the Government’s so-called urban development projects previously mentioned in social media were revisited again. For example, one of the recent projects about the construction of a new airport and the third Bosphorus Bridge on the massive forest areas of Northern Istanbul drew many reactions (Gruder 2014, p.34).

²⁰ [T]here is a real chance that these protests, and the political movements that they might spawn, will transcend the deep-rooted but stale political divisions of the last two decades, divisions captured pithily by Recep Tayyip Erdogan when he said in 1998: “In this country there is a segregation of Black Turks and White Turks. Your brother Tayyip belongs to the Black Turks....In Turkey, these terms have nothing to do with skin color. “White Turks” are the well-educated, wealthy secular elites who see themselves as the defenders of Ataturk’s legacy. They are often associated with government bureaucracy, the military and big businesses in major Turkish cities. “Black Turks” are those that the White Turks look down upon as poorly educated, lower class and trapped by their piety. Elites tend to view them as peasants or being unable to shake off their peasant heritage. (Acemoglu 2013)

²¹ Finkel [no date].

The environmental awareness against the state-sponsored violence against the nature merged with a social awareness that favors eco-friendly, responsible, collective, democratic, social culture over consumer culture (Mouradian 2013, [no page], Gole 2013, p.9). The early twentieth century Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet's line from his one of the famous poems, *Plea*, became an iconic slogan through streets to social media: "To live! Like a tree, alone and free/ To live! Like a forest in unity" (Finkel [no date]).

In addition to the examples, the artistic installation of Yoko Ono inspired Wish Tree²² in Gezi Park (Evren 2013, p.8) had become a symbol of the democracy and solidarity, which then was burned during the police intervention, but continued to remain as one of the symbols of the movement. Also, transformation of empty gas canisters filled with green branches was one of the symbols of the movement's collective notion on nature and life as a response to violence (Gruber 2014, p.32).

²² Information on *Yoko Ono's Wish Trees*, which is available online here: <http://imaginepeacetower.com/yoko-onos-wish-trees>

5 Visual Frame Analysis

In this section, a visual frame analysis is made on selective Gezi posters based on the results of the survey “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective identity”²³ I designed and conducted on 100 people, who involved and supported the Gezi demonstrations. Basically what I did is to link ‘the reasons why protestors joined the Gezi demonstrations’ conducted by *MetroPOLL*’s survey on “Gezi Park Demonstrations” as selective choice under each 30 Gezi posters (MetroPOLL 2013, [no page]). I expected them to interpret the symbols and meanings in accordance with the 6 reasons/sub-narratives in terms of they agree, disagree, or not certain. In fact, I expected from them to select the most reasonable dominant frame or frames when they look at the image at the first glance. Based on the results, I determined the major posters which the majority interprets for each dominant frame. In this analysis, by framing each dominant frame in an image, I try to explain why the audience interprets these variables which construct the collective identity of Gezi resistance: *being a chapuller*.

Frame of Freedom and Democracy

In Okan Bulbul’s artwork (see figure 1), it is seen that (1) a woman holds a red flag with and wearing goggles paired with a bandanna, (2) a man wears a *Guy Fawkes mask*²⁴ as an allusion to the movie *V for Vendetta*²⁵ and holds a slingshot, (3) a man with a hat having a star on as a reference to socialism and symbol of victory on hand, wears a gas mask (4) a woman crouching wears a gas mask, (5) and a dead body lies on the ground.

Based on the popular culture, it is obviously a re-adaption of Eugene Delacroix’s painting named *Liberty Leading the People*²⁶ –where a woman as the

²³ Savaci, S 2014, Gezi, Illustrasyon ve Kollektif Kimlik. Availabe at [Closed Link]: <<https://tr.surveymonkey.com/s/B7C55K8>>, accessed 25 Aug. 2014.

²⁴ Wikipedia information on *Guy Fawkes Mask*, which is available online here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Fawkes_mask

²⁵Wikipedia information on *V For Vendetta*, which is available online here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V_for_Vendetta

²⁶ Wikipedia information on *Liberty Leading the People*, which is available online here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People

symbol of liberty, freedom and rights holds the flag of France (allusion to the French Revolution) and leads other people around her over the dead bodies. In



Figure 1: Artwork by Okan Bulbul

Similarly in Bulbul's work, the symbol of gas mask, bandannas, the postmodern anarchism symbol of *the Guy Fawkes Mask* (see Call 2008) and street clothes is an allusion to the image of a *chapluller* as a collective identity of the Gezi movement.

Regarding the resistance, the *chapluller* identity served as "a description for anyone resisting state oppression and corruption while concurrently demanding the rule of law, freedom of speech, and a truly participatory democracy" (Gruber 2014, p.31).

The 87.88 percentage of the survey audience appropriates the figure 1 as a frame of demanding freedom and democracy. It would be assumed that the artist enables the audience to "[integrating] the past and the emerging elements of the present into the unity and continuity of a collective actor" which plays a crucial role in the formation and maintaining of the collective identity of protestors while articulating a shared consciousness and emotions through symbols (Melucci 1995, pg.44-45, 49-50)

Through the symbols, it would be assumed that the audience, as a body of collective actors, recognize the main struggle of the Gezi movement as a struggle for democratic rights and individual freedom by integrating elements of the historical and popular cultural meaning of the woman statue as *liberty* and the existing democratic demands and struggle of the protestors into a collective identity while recognizing the effects of actions framed in the image and attributing them to themselves as a collective identity of Gezi resistance: *being a chapuller*. (Melucci 1995, pg.46)

Frame of reaction against the Government and its regulations and policies²⁷

In Enzocavalli's artwork (see figure 2), it is seen that (1) a group of protestors during a demonstration wear street clothes, gas masks, goggles and bandannas, (2) a man wearing the *Guy Flaw Mask* plays an accordion, (3) a man reads a book, (4) and there is a banner in the center of the image saying: '*Everywhere Taksim, Everywhere Resistance*'.

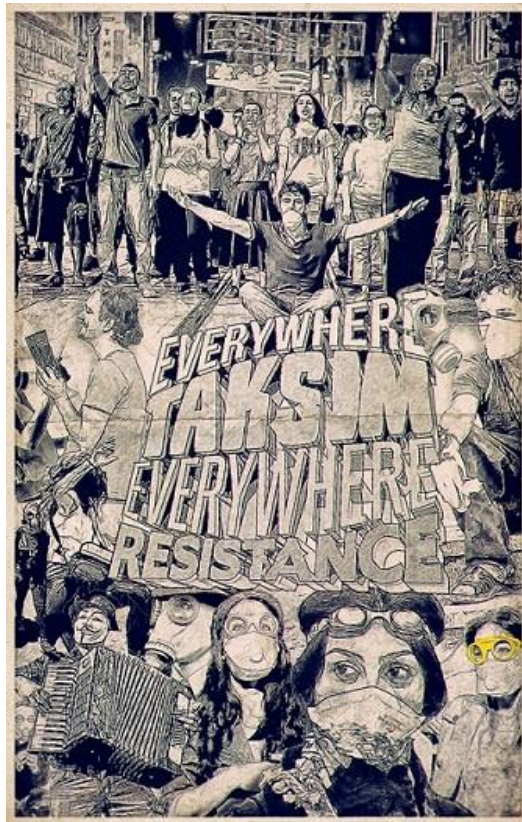


Figure 2: Artwork by Enzocavalli

These images are the adaptations from the collection of the iconic photographs documented the Gezi movement that each figure has own symbolic meaning, which played a role of constructing the collective identity of Gezi movement. The photographs can be found around social media and community networks

²⁷ It was observed that the results on the variables "Against the Government" and "Against the Government's regulations and policies" were close to each other in terms of the audience's interpretation. Therefore, I merged them into one category here.

The dominant symbol is the use of gas masks, goggles and bandannas as a symbol of protestor identity which “[shatters], at least during the course of the movement, extant class distinctions and hierarchies, establishing a relatively egalitarian collective group identity” (Varol 2014, p.570). During the Gezi demonstrations, socio-economic distinctions were disregarded by the collective group identity as being a *chapuller* (Ibid). Varol says:

For example, although the protestors in Turkey cut across socioeconomic lines, their dress code was the same: street clothes, goggles, and a gas mask. Once they donned their protest outfits, they abandoned their identities—whether it be a student, a teacher, a blue-collar worker, or a celebrity—and assumed the alter ego of a “çapulcu” [or chapuller]” (Ibid).

It can be assumed that protestors share a collective emotion of reaction against the Government’s regulations and policies by participating collectively without individual identities, but with a collective identity in a response to the environmental constraints and limitations, such as police’s use of tear gas against demonstrations. The icons of the man playing accordion and reading book can be seen as an anarchist or non-conformist identity against the Government’s rules. Symbols of music and knowledge would remind the audience of the peaceful, collective and non-conformist nature of the Gezi demonstrations, and response to the use of violence.

This non-conformism versus conformism resembles what Melucci calls the formation of “we” versus “them” in the sense of collective identity:

This formation of “we” is the product of collective actor differentiating itself from others while pursuing to be itself –“the process of defining what ‘we are’ inevitably involves establishing what ‘we are not’”— in order to construct and recognize the collective identity (See section 2.2, Melucci 1995, p.48, Fominaya 2010, p.395).

The 80 percentage of the survey audience appropriates the figure 2 as a frame of reaction against the Government’s regulations and policies. It would be assumed that the audience defines what the *chapuller* identity is in accordance with what it is not. While framing the visual message of the figure 2, I come to a conclusion that the audience recognizes the non-conformist identity of being a *chapuller* which is a collective identity of Gezi resistance.

Frame of The Prime Minister’s invasive rhetoric and speeches

In Gorkem Demir’s artwork (see figure 3), it is seen that (1) a red pepper caricaturized with an angry face of the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, (2) and a banner “*Red Hot Chili Tayyip*” written under the pepper.

The artist uses the popular rock band’s name “*Red Hot Chili Peppers*”²⁸ as a reference by changing the word *pepper* with the Prime Minister’s name *Tayyip* to critic the Prime Minister’s role and rhetoric during the demonstrations, as well as

²⁸ Wikipedia information on *Red Hot Chili Peppers*, which is available online here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Hot_Chili_Peppers

his support of use of force. His rhetoric and tone of address played an offensive role, which also constructed and shaped the collective identity of the resistance.

The sarcastic and humorous tone of the protestors and other supporters who already had an “incited collective indignation” throughout the social media (see section Gule 2013, p.11) constructed a new dimension to being a *chapuller* as collective identity of Gezi resistance.

The 92.75 percentage of the survey audience appropriates the figure 3 as a frame of reaction to The Prime Minister’s invasive rhetoric and speeches. Remembering the relation between self-identification and social recognition in the sense of a requirement of constructing collective identity, I would assume that the conflict between the sarcastic and humorous nature of the protestors and the patronizing nature of the Prime Minister constructs a mutual recognition “any



Figure 3: Artwork by Gorkem Demir

collective actor makes the basic assumption that its distinction from other actors is constantly acknowledged by them”. This conflict articulates the consolidation of collective identity of being *chapuller* which is both recognized by the opposers and supporters (audience) who interpret it as a shared value.

Frame of disproportioned use of force

In Kaan Demircelik’s artwork (see figure 4), it is seen that (1) a group of protestors stand behind a barricade with a man wearing a plastic bottle reminiscent of a gas mask, (2) a group of police force beats a person, (3) a police force uses tear-gas against a person, who is covering her/his face to protect, (4) a man wearing the *Guy Flaw Mask* plays accordion, (5) an ordinary individual draws on the wall, (6) there are water cannons at the end of the image, (7) and there is a banner in the center of the image saying: ‘*Grand Theft Auto*’.

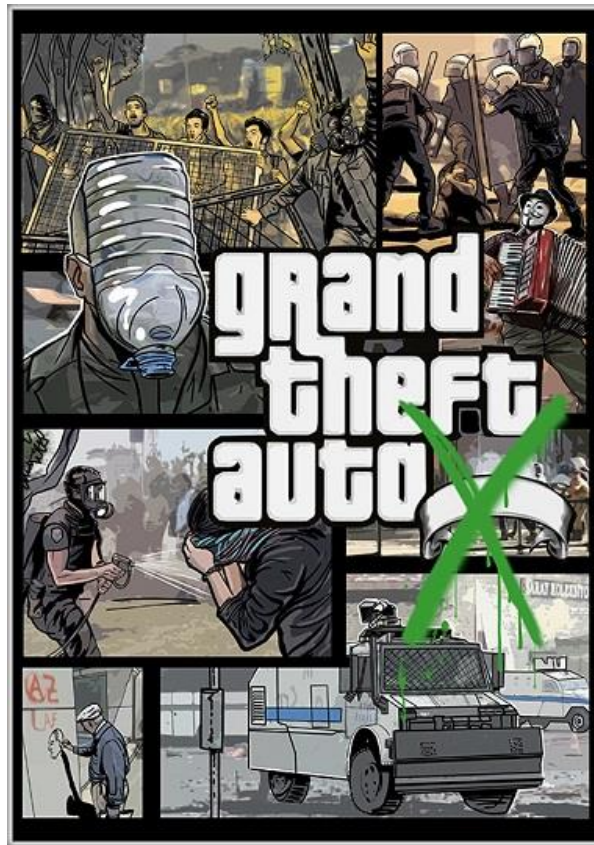


Figure 4: Artwork by Kaan Demircelik

Giving a reference to the poster of a popular computer game *Grand Theft Auto IV*²⁹, the artist readapts the visual content based on the iconic photographs of the Gezi demonstrations, which are shared through the social media and community networks. Each figure has own symbolic meaning, which played the role of constructing the collective identity of Gezi movement. As reference to the violence and chaotic nature of the game content, the artist enables the audience to remember the overuse of police force and violence by the state against the protestors during the Gezi demonstrations. Conflict is the main trigger for the consolidation of collective identity and for solidarity, which connects actor to each other by enabling them to be mutually recognized in a single, collective identity as a *chappuller*.

It would be important to note here, based on the survey results, 85.51 percentage of the audience frames the figure 4 as reaction against Government's policies, whereas 94.2 percentage of the audience also interprets the image as a frame of disproportioned use of force. It would be assumed that the two frames can be intertwined, when it comes to interpretation. This could be revisited within a new research. However, regarding the scope of my thesis, I am considering the

²⁹ Wikipedia information on *Grand Theft Auto IV*, which is available online here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_IV

dominant frames, which are the general themes interpreted at a first glance by the majority.

Frame of Environmental Concerns

In the following artwork by Anonymous (figure 5) which belongs to the design group *dortistanbul*, it is seen that (1) an image of a woman opening up her arms covered by a green background, (2) and a phrase with hashtags “#DirenGeziParki”³⁰, “#GeziPark”, “#OccupyGezi” written under the image.

The artist uses an iconic symbol of Gezi movement, adapted from a photograph where a woman, during the Gezi demonstrations, stands in front of a water cannon opening her arms, exposing her torso while being exposed to the water on her torso. Then image of her becomes a symbol of the non-violent resistance (Kayabali 2013).

The 92.75 percentage of the survey audience appropriates the figure 5 as a



Figure 5: Artwork by Anonymous

³⁰ “#DirenGeziParki” can be translate in English as “#ResistGeziPark”

frame of environmental concerns of the protestors. It would be assumed that the symbol of the woman as a non-violent resistance and the green background as a reminiscent of tree can directly be referred to the ecological awareness and the peaceful nature of the protestors or the *chapullers* as a collective identity, which the audience recognizes and shares.

To sum up, based on the analysis and with help of surveys, theoretical framework and media resources, art has a power shaping and constructing the image of collective identities. After seeing the consistency between the survey conducted by *MetroPOLL* and the survey I conducted, I was able to interpret the dominant frames to show how and why the audience, who involved or supported, interpreted the images on certain variables, which constructed the collective identity of the movement.

6 Conclusion

In this study, the theoretical and empirical data on how collective identity can be constructed within a visual art content by making a case study on Gezi movement and the collective identity of Gezi Resistance, *being a chapuller*, which is discussed in order to find the linkage between the reasons of the participation during the demonstrations and the collective identity of Gezi resistance. The theoretical part proposed a linkage among Melucci's collective identity formation and Benford, Snow's visual frame analysis, art, activism and media. In terms of using visual art content as an empirical data, it is argued that posters as a visual language of Gezi movement can construct the image of collective identity of the Gezi movement, which is *being a chapuller*, by raising emotion and consciousness, playing as a connection between the movement and the activists by bonding individuals with a feeling of unity.

The empirical data, survey and posters, were combined with theoretical framework to make a proposition that posters can be an empirical data while analyzing collective identity of a movement. In the case of Gezi movement, it generated valuable visual sources by many artists, who documented and reflected the collective values of demonstrations on their artwork. The survey 'Gezi Illustrations and Collective Identity' gives an explanation that there is a direct linkage between the reasons of participation and collective identity of Gezi resistance, and this linkage can be interpreted with a frame analysis. In the last part, the visual frame analysis on the dominant themes of posters –which are the reasons or sub-narratives of participation, and those sub-narratives construct a shared identity of Gezi spirit, which is being a *chapuller*– was conducted to show how to frame collective identity through posters.

I believe being a *chapuller* as a collective identity has already been transforming the Turkish civil society and politics, or at least becoming an alternative to them, and art was the constitutive part of its construction during the demonstrations.

Appendix 1

	Freedom and Democracy demands			Response against government		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %
Q1	71.72	17.17	11.11	88	8	4
Q2	48	40	12	73	21	6
Q3	71	22	7	71	25	4
Q4	65	27	8	69	19	12
Q5	74	21	5	86	12	2
Q6	45.12	45.12	9.76	89.02	9.76	1.22
Q7	54.88	31.71	13.41	80.49	14.63	4.88
Q8	36.59	52.44	10.97	64.63	26.83	8.54
Q9	79.27	13.41	7.32	90.24	6.1	3.66
Q10	67.07	26.83	6.1	65.85	24.39	9.76
Q11	83.56	10.96	5.48	95.89	4.11	0
Q12	82.19	16.44	1.37	63.01	26.03	10.96
Q13	75.34	20.55	4.11	72.6	20.55	6.85
Q14	50.68	39.73	9.59	41.1	49.32	9.58
Q15	52.05	35.62	12.33	50.68	41.1	8.22
Q16	68.12	26.09	5.79	85.51	10.14	4.35
Q17	72.46	17.39	10.15	65.22	23.19	11.59
Q18	30.43	62.32	7.25	73.91	23.19	2.9
Q19	49.28	39.13	11.59	84.06	13.04	2.9
Q20	55.07	31.88	13.05	75.36	17.39	7.25
Q21	57.97	28.99	13.04	53.62	33.33	13.05
Q22	49.28	40.58	10.14	66.67	26.09	7.24
Q23	79.71	20.29	0	97.1	2.9	0
Q24	69.57	24.64	5.79	82.61	17.39	0
Q25	78.26	14.49	7.25	72.46	26.09	1.45
Q26	86.36	9.09	4.55	80.3	10.61	9.09
Q27	87.88	9.09	3.03	77.27	16.67	6.06
Q28	75.76	19.7	4.54	81.82	15.15	3.03
Q29	66.67	28.79	4.54	74.24	21.21	4.55
Q30	66.67	28.79	4.54	81.82	16.67	1.51
Avg	64.99866667	27.37466667	7.62666667	75.08266667	19.36266667	5.55466667

Highest Agree value for each question
Bold Highest Agree value for each variable

Appendix 1: Data 1 on the survey “Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity”

Appendix 2

	Disproportionate use of violence by police			The government's authoritarian / repressive attitude		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %
Q1	56	34	10	63	26	11
Q2	96	2	2	90	7	3
Q3	20	67	13	82	13	5
Q4	56	35	9	60	27	13
Q5	56	28	16	67	23	10
Q6	53.66	39.02	7.32	69.51	25.61	4.88
Q7	98.78	1.22	0	89.02	8.54	2.44
Q8	92.68	6.1	1.22	71.95	20.73	7.32
Q9	87.8	7.32	4.88	90.24	8.54	1.22
Q10	21.95	64.63	13.42	78.05	18.29	3.66
Q11	94.52	4.11	1.37	91.78	6.85	1.37
Q12	83.56	15.07	1.37	65.75	23.29	10.96
Q13	97.26	1.37	1.37	84.93	13.7	1.37
Q14	35.62	52.05	12.33	82.19	13.7	4.11
Q15	89.04	9.59	1.37	73.97	21.92	4.11
Q16	94.2	4.35	1.45	79.71	14.49	5.8
Q17	81.16	13.04	5.8	72.46	17.39	10.15
Q18	46.38	50.72	2.9	79.71	15.94	4.35
Q19	65.22	24.64	10.14	59.42	30.43	10.15
Q20	75.36	15.94	8.7	71.01	23.19	5.8
Q21	68.12	21.74	10.14	55.07	33.33	11.6
Q22	23.19	65.22	11.59	66.67	26.09	7.24
Q23	33.33	56.52	10.15	72.46	26.09	1.45
Q24	75.36	18.84	5.8	68.12	26.09	5.79
Q25	39.13	53.62	7.25	50.72	46.38	2.9
Q26	31.82	57.58	10.6	60.61	33.33	6.06
Q27	83.33	13.64	3.03	71.21	21.21	7.58
Q28	77.27	18.18	4.55	77.27	21.21	1.52
Q29	77.27	19.7	3.03	92.42	6.06	1.52
Q30	81.82	15.15	3.03	69.7	22.73	7.57
Avg	66.39433333	27.17866667	6.427	73.53166667	20.70433333	5.764

Highest Agree value for each question
Bold Highest Agree value for each variable

Appendix 2: Data 2 on the survey "Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity"

Appendix 3

	Environmental protection request			Prime Minister's attitude against demonstrators		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %	Agree %	Disagree %	Uncertain %
Q1	35	51	14	30	55	15
Q2	22	67	11	47	33	20
Q3	24	63	13	78	16	6
Q4	30	58	12	35	51	14
Q5	26	61	13	32	48	20
Q6	35.37	53.66	10.97	64.63	29.27	6.1
Q7	25.61	64.63	9.76	56.1	35.37	8.53
Q8	24.39	64.63	10.98	47.56	42.68	9.76
Q9	32.93	48.78	18.29	80.49	12.2	7.31
Q10	17.07	70.73	12.2	47.56	45.12	7.32
Q11	65.75	26.03	8.22	86.3	10.96	2.74
Q12	27.4	57.53	15.07	32.88	47.95	19.17
Q13	16.44	69.86	13.7	47.95	41.1	10.95
Q14	12.33	72.6	15.07	35.62	47.95	16.43
Q15	84.93	10.96	4.11	36.99	54.79	8.22
Q16	31.88	53.62	14.5	52.17	39.13	8.7
Q17	23.19	57.97	18.84	43.48	42.03	14.49
Q18	14.49	75.36	10.15	92.75	5.8	1.45
Q19	57.97	37.68	4.35	31.88	55.07	13.05
Q20	42.03	44.93	13.04	42.03	49.28	8.69
Q21	43.48	46.38	10.14	33.33	52.17	14.5
Q22	28.99	53.62	17.39	72.46	20.29	7.25
Q23	24.64	62.32	13.04	47.83	42.03	10.14
Q24	27.54	65.22	7.24	37.68	52.17	10.15
Q25	92.75	5.8	1.45	26.09	63.77	10.14
Q26	27.27	60.61	12.12	31.82	59.09	9.09
Q27	25.76	62.12	12.12	34.85	57.58	7.57
Q28	37.88	48.48	13.64	42.42	48.48	9.1
Q29	83.33	15.15	1.52	95.45	4.55	0
Q30	51.52	37.88	10.6	66.67	27.27	6.06
Avg	36.398	52.21833333	11.38366667	50.29966667	39.63666667	10.06366667

Highest Agree value for each question
Bold Highest Agree value for each variable

Appendix 3: Data 3 on the survey "Gezi, Illustrations and Collective Identity"

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