

POLITICAL FOOTBALL:
MAKING FOOTBALL FANDOM A SYMBOL OF POLITICAL DISSENT

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Kamile Sena İncedere, certify that

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ABSTRACT

Political Football:

Making Football Fandom a Symbol of Political Dissent

This study aims to examine the role and effects of politicization of football fandom in the Gezi Movement, which was the biggest social upheaval of Turkish political history in the 2000s. This movement brought a lot of people from different backgrounds together, including dissident football fan groups of Turkey. These football fan groups united under the same political objectives and they attracted many unorganized people to join them in the Gezi Movement. This thesis scrutinizes how has it become possible for these unorganized individuals to unite under the same umbrella against a political power and how football fandom became a channel of politicization in the Gezi Movement. In a sense, football fandom was not the igniter of this movement, yet it channelled the political dissent of unorganized people who were already in the Gezi Movement. For this purpose, I mainly benefited from the literature approaching the sport from below, which takes sports or specifically football as the people's game and as a weapon of football fans in a political sense. Through giving a detailed historical background, through drawing examples from all over the world and through analyzing twelve semi-structured interviews, this study depicts a broad picture of common experiences and collective interpretations of unorganized people engaging with football fan groups in the Gezi Movement.

ÖZET

Politik Futbol:

Futbol Taraftarlığını Politik Bir Muhalefetin Sembolü Yapmak

Bu çalışma, Türk siyasi tarihinin 2000'lerde gördüğü en büyük toplumsal hareket olan Gezi Hareketi'nde futbol taraftarlığının siyasileşmesinin rol ve etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlıyor. Bu hareket, Türkiye'nin en büyük ve birbirine düşman taraftar gruplarının da dahil olduğu çok farklı sosyal çevrelerden gelen birçok insanı bir araya getirdi. Taraftar grupları Gezi Hareketi boyunca bu insanları aynı siyasi amaç altında topladı ve birçok örgütsüz insanın kendilerine katılmasını sağladı. Bu tez, Gezi Hareketi'nde örgütsüz insanların siyasi güce karşı aynı şemsiye altında birleşmelerinin nasıl mümkün olduğunu ve futbol taraftarlığının bir siyasileşme kanalına nasıl dönüştüğünü sorguluyor. Bu anlamda futbol taraftarlığı bu hareketin ateşleyicisi olmadı ama Gezi Hareketi'ne hali hazırda katılan örgütsüz insanların politik muhalefetini yönlendirdi. Bu amaçla, sporu ya da özellikle futbolu halkın bir oyunu olarak gören, futbol taraftarlarının siyasi anlamda bir silahı olarak gören ve spora aşağıdan bakış açısıyla yaklaşan literatürden faydalandım. Ayrıntılı tarihsel arkaplan ve tüm dünyadan örnekler veren ve on iki yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat analizi yapan bu çalışma, Gezi Hareketi'nde futbol taraftarlarıyla beraber yer almış örgütsüz insanların ortak deneyimleri ve kolektif yorumlarını içeren geniş bir resim sunuyor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Is it possible for the rival football fan groups whose matches are showed as some of the most antagonistic matches in the world unite against the government of their country? Turkey experienced this remarkable instance at the Gezi Movement in the summer of 2013, which was the biggest social upheaval that Turkey saw in 2000s. It was a multilayered movement that included many dimensions still waiting to be analyzed in further depth, such as environmental politics, urban politics, the politics of space, political culture, political economy, political humor, and football fan mobilization. Analyzing this latter dimension of the Gezi Movement is the main subject of this study. I examine the role and effects of political solidarity of football fan groups in the Gezi Movement.

The football fan groups of the three big football clubs of Turkey—Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş and Galatasaray—have a long history of antagonism towards each other. The Gezi Movement surprisingly broke down all the hostilities among these fan groups. There were so many violent clashes and even killings between the fans of these clubs in the past years. For instance, Burak Yıldırım, a Fenerbahçe fan, was killed by Galatasaray hooligans on 13 May 2013 just before the Gezi Movement and right after a derby between Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray.¹ However, the Gezi Movement united many people of different social, economic and political background against the government, including football fan groups who united despite their differences and encouraged people to stand together with them. During the

¹Blood Dripped to Football (Futbola kan damladı).
<http://www.fotomac.com.tr/fenerbahce/2013/05/13/futbola-kan-damladi> , Accessed on 01.09.2015

movement, for instance, many fans in Galatasaray uniforms held Fenerbahçe foulards and fans in Fenerbahçe uniforms waved Beşiktaş foulards.

This was a remarkable moment in Turkish football and political history that these fans of the antagonist three clubs united for something. However, this was not the first time football fans got politicized: There were political fan groups in Turkey with a history before the Gezi Movement such as *Çarşı*, *Sol Açık*, *Vamos Bien*, *Tek Yumruk*;² yet they mobilized as separate groups, not in solidarity with each other. While their uniting during the Gezi Movement was surprising enough in itself, their common objectives were also surprising. They united under the same political objectives; hence, they showed a political solidarity.

In scrutinizing football fandom mobilization, I need to make a distinction between the two dissident views on football and politics. The literature approaching from above to football is used to show the power of the governing elite while the literature approaching from below to football shows the power of people over governing groups through facilitating their political mobilization. In his book, Simon Kuper (1994) exemplifies a football fandom mobilization mentioning the independence of Baltic countries from the Soviet Union. According to this, Baltic countries wanted to be independent and to get rid of Soviet domination throughout the 1980s (Kuper, 1994, p. 26). For this purpose, they usually got politicized on days when they had football matches. These match days represented their nationalist protests against the Soviets. Their main purpose in these protests was to show their eagerness for political independence (Kuper, 1994, p. 27). The Turkish case of football fans coming together for a political objective resembles Kuper's case of the Baltic countries.

² *Çarşı* is the biggest dissident fan group of Beşiktaş; *Sol Açık* and *Vamos Bien* are the dissident fan groups of Fenerbahçe; *Tek Yumruk* is the dissident fan group of Galatasaray.

The Gezi Movement started as a display of anger towards the AKP government, which was seen as an authoritarian government by the people participating in this movement. There were many political groups, platforms or unorganized crowds who walked and chanted. The football fan groups were one of them in the Gezi Movement. Most of the unorganized crowd of this movement stood and walked with football fan groups. Hence, football fan groups actually pulled a lot of groups together. That was the reason why football fandom mobilization became a hot topic during the Gezi Movement. My research also concentrates on the unorganized people who attended the Gezi protests and walked with football fan groups. At that point, one should ask: Why did football become a channel of politicization in the Gezi Movement? This is the main question this thesis will answer. In other words, why did these people appropriate the colors of their football teams? Why did they not walk and chant with the organized political groups and instead prefer football fan groups? What made them politicize their football clubs' colors?

For instance, one of my interviewees, Burçak, says: "The reason I like Çarşı is that they don't have a political background and I thought that anybody can be near them." These people could have protested the AKP government through different channels or under a political party or a civil society organization but they channelled their political dissent through their football fandom. It is the point where I am impressed with the connection: the political identity of fans is gained through the colors of a football club; moreover, political dissent is voiced as a march that praises a football club. It is a remarkable point on the politicization of the football fans who were otherwise seen as just fans. They immediately appropriated their identity from the football clubs they supported. Why did these antagonists of the stadiums unite for

a political objective and pursue the same goal without considering the violent past and the hostilities between them? How was it possible? Can Kozanoğlu argues that football promises an identity for the people (Kozanoğlu, 2002). Thus, the march and the club became the channel in which they reflect themselves and raise their voice in a given political situation.

However, it should be underlined that there is not an inherent relationship between football fandom and the Gezi Movement. This thesis is not about football fandom in essence, but there lies another process here. I see football fandom only a channel of politicization for football fans and the people supporting them. Besides, the fans were already in the streets, so the football clubs were not the igniters; the fan groups channelled the already-existing dissent according to their colors and over their football club. I think that the politically passive fans of the football clubs went into a political revival in parallel with developments in the Turkish political context.

Ünal Şentürk argues that fandom identity is such an entity that a fan can define himself/herself among millions of fans and thinks that s/he has the same values with them (Şentürk, 2007, p. 36). As I will explain in the upcoming chapters and my interview analysis chapter, I found out that fandom identity has the potential to pull together many people in times of crisis. It should be a point that is not missed when arguing about the intentions of football fans. Not only football fans but also people who have different social identities walked and chanted during this protest. Thus, my target does not encapsulate the dynamic of the mobilization of all the people who participated in the Gezi protests. My claim is about the unorganized football fans who had potential and who came with an igniter.

I think that under the conditions of a crisis such as the Gezi Movement, the politically unorganized state of the Turkish society pushed many people to find a

platform to channel their dissent towards the political situation, and the football clubs played a role of a civil society organization in the eyes of these people since the existing civil society organizations were unable to respond. A politically unorganized person, one of my interviewees, Güney, stated: “According to me, the fan groups are like civil society organizations. In fact, they were always like this because they can unite people under the same roof. They can be allocated and they can attract many people.” The twelve interviews I conducted for this thesis reveal that many unorganized people chose football fan groups in a time of resistance, walking or protesting. The experiences and thoughts of my interviewees reflect the roles and effects of football fandom mobilization in the Gezi Movement.

In order to examine role and effects of football fandom in the Gezi Movement, one must first explain the history of the Gezi Movement, specifically before June 2013. In order to map the context of the Gezi Movement throughout the Turkish political history, I separated it into two parts: The historical background of football and politics in Turkey before the Gezi Movement and after the Gezi Movement. Chapter 2 shows some historical examples of Turkish state policies that deal with football leagues and the intentions of politicians on football clubs for their promotion (Kılıç, 2006). I support this history with photographs and images from newspapers, archives, and internet sources so that readers can visualize the relevant descriptions. Then I give a short history of significant cases related to the interconnectivity of politics and sports before the Gezi Movement, such as opening ceremony of Galatasaray Stadium, the match-fixing case of Fenerbahçe, the WTA Championships5u Istanbul Tennis Tournament. Depicting these histories before the Gezi Movement, I give a detailed outline of the Gezi Movement with all its dimensions in order to contextualize football fandom mobilization in this movement.

Specifically, I used visualization such as wallpapers, photographs, and images used during the Gezi Movement. These will help readers understand the context and what's been written in the historical background.

Chapter 3 gives a theoretical comparative outlook on football fandom mobilization in the Gezi Movement. I separated the literature according to its approach to the relationship between football and politics: the literature approaching from above and the literature approaching from below. The literature approaching from above generally sees football as a form of state power that is used in the promotion of authoritarian figures and in the expansion of state power (Boniface 2007, Foer 2012, Sert 2000, Kuper 1994). On the other hand, the literature approaching from below takes football as a people's game. After giving a narrative about people's games, mentioning that football is simple, democratic, and peaceful (Boniface 2007, Sert 2000, Donuk and Şenduran 2006, Brown 1998, Kaplan 2004, Şentürk 2007, Fişek 2003, Talimciler 2005), I give a comparative outlook on the Gezi Movement through the examples of FC Barcelona and Catalan identity, ethnic struggles and football in the Balkans, the United Kingdom context, the colonial context, the Latin American context and the Egyptian context (Llopis-Goig 2015, Bora, Reiter & Horak 1993, Foer 2004 and 2012, Goig 2008, Zelyurt 2013, Alili 2010, Bradley 1998, Pilpil Yöney 2012, Galeano 2008, Barrett et al 2009, Bolivar 2012, Mason 1995, Özçetin and Turan 2015, Tuastad 2014).

After giving a historical and theoretical framework of this study through a comparative perspective, my interviews can offer a better understanding on how football fandom mobilization taking place at the Gezi Movement is positioned in this framework. Chapter 4 is composed of the themes on the analysis of my interviews and its linkage to the literature and history I mapped so far. I used the narrative

inquiry as my research methodology, backed up with several stories from my interviewees so that I can provide in-depth understanding of common experiences of the people involved in the Gezi Movement, together with football fan groups, and make collective interpretations based on my analysis. I analyzed my interviews by acquiring narrative knowledge created and constructed through stories of lived experiences and the meanings created while it helps to make sense of the ambiguity and complexity of human lives (Bruner, 1986). As Creswell (1997) states: "...it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals. Writers have provided ways for analyzing and understanding the stories lived and told." (p. 54).

In order to find out collective interpretations of my target audiences, I conducted twelve interviews with people who participated in the Gezi Movement with football fans. I did not aim for a certain number of interviews. I conducted interviews until I had an enough individual concrete experiences. Interviews create opportunities for participants to reflect on what they remember, value, like, dislike and to express certain feelings or opinions (Bell, 2003, p. 102). I conducted semi-structured interviews so that interviewees would feel free to use their own words and reveal the emotion-filled experiences. Since my interviews were semi-structured, I did not interrupt them when they wanted to talk more on my question or about something else. In order to reach to my initial interviewees, I mobilized my circle of connections and thanks to their acquaintances, I used the snowball sampling method to enlarge my participant pool. Snowball sampling, a chain referral sample, is formed through a series of referrals that are conveyed by a group of people who know one another (Berg, 2006, p. 1). It is developed from an initial sample, and elements of this sample give information for other future elements, which are all connected in a

system (Berg, 2006, p. 1). Hence, the sample develops from the initial sample to a larger set of sample connected through one or more relationships (Berg, 2006, p. 1).

There were some special circumstances during the writing process of this thesis. I moved to another city during this process. When I tried to find interviewees, I came to recognize that my thesis study was actually an Istanbul phenomenon. The Gezi Movement was widespread all around Turkey, yet there was no big presence of football fan groups in other cities. Although local fan groups of teams such as Adanademirspor and Adanaspor from Adana; Karşıyaka, Göztepe and Altay from İzmir; or Gençlerbirliği from Ankara were in the streets of their cities during the Gezi Movement, their effects and presence were not as deep as in Istanbul, with the three biggest clubs of Turkey. Hence, I had to travel to Istanbul in order to conduct my interviews. In addition to travelling to Istanbul to conduct nine interviews, I also conducted three Skype interviews.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technologies such as Skype and FaceTime enable researchers to interview target audiences using voice and video across the internet via a synchronous connection (Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016). According to Iacono, Symonds and Brown, Skype can be an invaluable tool since it provides an opportunity to connect people all over the world, and it reduces the money and time resources needed (Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016). However, qualitative interviews via Skype have limitations with respect to establishing rapport and perceiving nonverbal cues. According to Cater (as cited in Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016), building a rapport over Skype is challenging. However, Deakin and Wakefield (as cited in Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016) argue that “Skype interviewees were more responsive and rapport was built quicker than in a number of face-to-face interviews. Online rapport is... only an issue when interviewing an

individual who is more reserved or less responsive.” On the nonverbal cues, Hesse-Biber and Griffin (as cited in Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016) argue that both tone of voice and gestures attribute richness to qualitative data. Novick (as cited in Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016) underlines: “Nonverbal data, which includes responses such as facial expressions and body language' can be lost in some forms of interview, such as when using telephone interviews.”

Taking these positive and negative sides of qualitative interviews via Skype into consideration, Iacono, Symonds and Brown conclude that VoIP technologies such as Skype should not completely replace in-person interviews, but they should be seen as complementary data collection for qualitative research, which encapsulates a broader research design and strategy (Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016). Moreover, Coomber (as cited in Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016) highlights that Skype interviews provide new horizons for the researcher. Hence, I would like to indicate that my three Skype interviews are only complementary to my research study.

Another limitation I came across is that it has been four years since the Gezi Movement. I conducted some of my interviews right after the Gezi Movement and some of them much later. In the interviews I made much more recently, I had to remember all the developments so that I could prompt my interviewees, as they also didn't remember all the things they experienced in the Gezi Movement. In all of my interviews, we sometimes work together to remember dates or incidents. This was sometimes a challenge during my interviews.

My general interview questions were as follows: “Why did you participate in the Gezi Movement? Why did you walk with football fans rather than with leftist organizations/platforms? Can you tell me your experiences walking with the football fans, if there were any specific ones? Do you remember/observe events that football

fans were part of? Did you follow the tweets/hash tags related to Çarşı and Sol Açık when you went to the protests? What do you think about Passoleague, which was implemented after the Gezi Movement? Did you follow the trials of Çarşı?”

My interviewees were between twenty and twenty-five years old at the time of the Gezi Movement. They were all university students. Most of them lived in Istanbul, yet some of them moved to other cities due to graduation and employment conditions. My intention was to make more interviews for my thesis in order to enlarge my sample, yet as I conducted my interviews, I came to see that I had obtained much more information and experiences than I expected. My interviewees were enthusiastic about talking about their experiences in the Gezi Movement and they still embrace this movement after four years.

As a conclusion, Chapter 5 gives an overall picture of my research, which I believe succeeds in establishing linkages between the historical background of the Gezi Movement and the relationship between football and politics in Turkey as well as establishing theoretical background of the football fandom mobilization in the world with a comparative outlook. The chapter also offers the experiences and stories of the people who joined football fan groups in their political mobilization during the Gezi Movement.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUALIZING FOOTBALL FANDOM IN THE GEZI MOVEMENT

In order to convey the significance of football fandom mobilization in Turkey, I would like to give the background of the political atmosphere in Turkey. The case of football fandom mobilization took place during the Gezi Movement, which was a remarkable social upheaval. Football and politics were related to each other in the past, but the Gezi Movement as a recent turning point constitutes the basis of the political revival in the stands or a political revival among the fans of the football clubs. Before delving into the Gezi Movement, I would like to give some historical background of football and politics before the Gezi Movement and contextualize football and politics in this movement accordingly.

2.1 Historical background of football and politics before the Gezi Movement

Football has always been intertwined with politics; however, it signifies an informal network due to its relationship with politicians, the mafia, gangs and businessmen in Turkey. There is not much academic literature on the informal relationships between these groups. For the sake of the historical background of this research, I will give some relevant information on Turkey that can be found in the existing literature.

Throughout the literature on football and politics in Turkey, I saw that football and politics are related to executives and state bureaucracy, not with football fans. For instance, in Anatolian football, the football club presidency of a specific city is seen as a springboard for the mayorship of this city since it provides political rent and a voter base (Kılıç, 2006, p. 8). For instance, the mayor of Gaziantep, Celal Doğan, was elected mayor in 1989. In the football season of 1993-1994, he was

elected president of Gaziantepspor and thanks to this development, he guaranteed his mayorship for the next elections due to his expanded voting base (Kılıç, 2006, p. 39).

Businessmen also use football clubs for their political aims. For instance, Cem Uzan bought Istanbulspor and Adanaspor, and he turned this buying into a voting tool since he made big transfers to the clubs and carried the clubs into the first league (Kılıç, 2006, p. 42). Furthermore, he played bigger in demanding the presidency of Galatasaray because he thought that around 20 million fans of Galatasaray would vote for him when he becomes a candidate for prime ministry (Kılıç, 2006, pp. 44-45).

At the level of state bureaucracy, football has also been used to deal with social policies. For instance, Kılıç states that the east of Turkey was waiting for the creation of education and employment opportunities offered by the state in order to eliminate the violent clashes which went on in this region throughout 1990s. However, Kılıç argues that the Turkish state has preferred to invest in the capacity of football clubs rather than in the development of democracy (Kılıç, 2006, p. 55). Through investing in football, the aim was that society would remain far away from political issues and participation in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Thus, football clubs such as Diyarbakırspor and Vanspor have elevated to the first league while Ağrıspor and Hakkarişpor missed this opportunity (Kılıç, 2006, p. 54).

In addition, there is also a common attitude among politicians in Turkey. Regardless of political party affiliation, all leaders wear foulards of the football clubs of the cities they visit and they hold public rallies. Even though they do not come from these cities originally, they try to make local people think that they are also sympathizers of these cities. In that way, leaders hope to get more votes from these local people/voters. There are plenty of examples and photographs showing this

situation. For instance, in Figure 1, Cem Uzan and his brother hold an Adanaspor flag in the last part of 1990s.



Fig. 1. Hakan Uzan holds an Adanaspor flag

Source: https://pbs.twimg.com/media/B9ZWC_PCEAAWdt-.jpg

As a more recent example, in Figure 2, we can see that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of Republican People’s Party (CHP), wore the foulard of Kocaelispor at his Kocaeli meeting and greeted the people.



Fig. 2. Kılıçdaroğlu in a Kocaelispor foulard

Source: <https://thisisfootballislife.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/23659742.jpg>

These examples show us the interconnectivity between football and politics in Turkey even before the Gezi Movement and also after the Gezi Movement.

However, the fans were behind the scenes and they remained inactive during these examples. While the general picture can be depicted as in the above examples, there are also events that resemble the Gezi Movement in character, with respect to the recent history of Turkish politics. I would like to mention the most prominent ones so as to show the way in which the relationship of football and politics in Turkey has gone with the Gezi Movement. There are some examples on how secularist people show their dissent through several sport events nationwide.

As the years passed during the AKP government since 2002, which is the year they came to power, the secularist opposition of Turkey started to raise its opposition towards the government. A big protest against the AKP government was seen at the opening ceremony of the new Türk Telekom Arena of the Galatasaray Sports Club on 15 January 2011.

An opening match with Ajax, a famous Dutch football team, was organized for this occasion. Before the match began, several sound and light shows were staged. According to newspaper Hürriyet, then-Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and other ministers came to the stadium after the show, and the president of Galatasaray Sports Club, Adnan Polat, welcomed them at the door.³ However, when the arrival of the ministers was announced in the stadium, a big part of Galatasaray fans started to protest by hissing and making other noises. Although Erdoğan was expected to make a speech at the ceremony, he cancelled it and left the stadium, angry with the

³ Painful Opening to Türk Telekom Arena (Türk Telekom Arena'ya Sancılı Açılış), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/turk-telekom-arenaya-sancili-acilis-16772738>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

protesters.⁴ Following Erdoğan's lead, Faruk Nafiz Özak, Minister of Youth and Sports, also cancelled his speech. Another minister of state, Egemen Bağış, said:

“This is ingratitude. Our prime minister has put his labor in the making process of this stadium. This building which comes to end for many times without completion is continued to build thanks to efforts of our prime minister. Such a beautiful facility is constructed as a result of these efforts.”⁵

Following the ministers, Adnan Polat also left the stadium and had a quick meeting, where he stated that fans of Galatasaray cannot be so ungrateful and that they would identify people who made this protest. The president of the Turkish Football Federation, Mahmut Özgener, also said, “These deeds toward the prime minister are unacceptable. Galatasaray society has also put labor in this stadium to be built, but the biggest labor came from Prime Minister Erdoğan.”⁶

This protest attracted lots of public attention since it was the first prominent protest through fandom politicization against the AKP government. This way was different than the other protests such as Republican Rallies in 2007 which are the prominent protest by the people against the AKP government.

The match fixing case of Fenerbahçe in 2011 offers an earlier example of the politicization of football fans in Turkey. Before the Gezi Movement, match fixing case was the biggest case that we see politicization when we scan the history of politics and football in Turkey. On the 3 July 2011 a police operation took place in fifteen cities, followed by top-level of football club executives being taken into custody including Aziz Yıldırım, the president of Fenerbahçe Sports Club.⁷ It was the biggest operation Turkish football has ever seen. They were accused of match

⁴ Painful Opening to Türk Telekom Arena (Türk Telekom Arena'ya Sancılı Açılış), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/turk-telekom-arenaya-sancili-acilis-16772738>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

⁵ Painful Opening to Türk Telekom Arena (Türk Telekom Arena'ya Sancılı Açılış), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/turk-telekom-arenaya-sancili-acilis-16772738>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

⁶ Painful Opening to Türk Telekom Arena (Türk Telekom Arena'ya Sancılı Açılış), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/turk-telekom-arenaya-sancili-acilis-16772738>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

⁷ Match Fixing Case since 3 July (3 Temmuz'dan Bugüne Şike Davası), <http://www.cnnturk.com/spor/futbol/38-maddede-3-temmuzdan-bugune-sike-davasi?page=38>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

fixing during the 2010-2011 football season by paying an incentive bonus to some players. On 7 July 2011, Şekip Mosturoğlu, the vice-president of Fenerbahçe, and 14 other people were arrested. On 10 July 2011, Aziz Yıldırım was arrested. Following these arrests, fans of Fenerbahçe came together at Topuk Yaylası, where the summer camp of Fenerbahçe is located. After this event, fans also marched from Bağdat Street to Kadıköy, where the Fenerbahçe stadium is located. On 24 August 2011, by the Turkish Football Federation barred Fenerbahçe from participating in the UEFA Champions League for the 2011-2012 football season. Approximately one year later, on 2 July 2012, the court decision was declared and Aziz Yıldırım was sentenced to six years and three months in prison. However, considering his one-year imprisonment, he was released. On 9 October 2015, Aziz Yıldırım, Şekip Mosturoğlu and all other executives of Fenerbahçe were finally acquitted.⁸

Since the champion of that season was Fenerbahçe, it was affected a lot by the court case. Because Fenerbahçe fans had been confronted with a “political” case, they were more likely to be in the protests. For instance, on the anniversary of the match fixing case, they staged a protest in front of the Şükrü Saracoğlu Stadium in 2012.⁹ They made a human chain and supported their president, Aziz Yıldırım. Moreover, because of the match fixing case, Fenerbahçe showed dissent towards the government. Aziz Yıldırım stated that Fenerbahçe has always supported democracy, the Republic and laicism and that the punishment given to him was about his political stance.¹⁰ He clearly said, “Our only guilt is being Atatürkist.”¹¹

⁸ Conspiracy is Collapsed, The Game is Over, Fenerbahçe was Acquitted (Kumpas Çöktü, Oyun Bitti, Fenerbahçe Beraat Etti), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=47051>, Accessed on 11.07.2017

⁹ 3 July Protest from Fenerbahçe Supporters (Fenerbahçelilerden 3 Temmuz Protestosu) <http://www.ntvspor.net/haber/gunun-haberleri/67664/fenerbahcelilerden-3-temmuz-protestosu>, Accessed on 23.11.2016

¹⁰ President Aziz Yıldırım: Our only crime is being Atatürkist (Başkanımız Aziz Yıldırım: “Tek suçumuz Atatürkçü olmak”), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38206>, Accessed on 11.07.2017

After the protest at the Türk Telekom Arena and protests against match fixing case of Fenerbahçe, people started to hear about sports involvement in politics, be it football or other sports. Following this visibility, another prominent protest took place at the WTA Championships Istanbul Tennis Tournament on 28 October 2012. In the award ceremony of this championship, which has famous participants from the international arena such as Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova, two ministers and a mayor were announced to present the awards to the tennis players. The ministers were the Minister of Family and Social Policies Fatma Şahin, Minister of Transport, Maritime and Communication Binali Yıldırım and the Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş. The common ground of these names is that they are all affiliated with the AKP government.

When their names were announced in the awards ceremony, the audiences started to whistle and jeer. Following the announcement, Fatma Şahin delivered a speech. Her speech was interrupted by the protests and Binali Yıldırım left the stage in protest.¹²

These events showed that football fans were becoming more active agents, coming together by their free will, raising their voice specifically for political aims and against the government. All these events gave voice to fan activism in Turkey before the Gezi Movement.

¹¹ President Aziz Yıldırım: Our only crime is being Atatürkist (Başkanımız Aziz Yıldırım: “Tek suçumuz Atatürkçü olmak”), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38206>, Accessed on 11.07.2017

¹² Two Ministries and Kadir Topbaş were Protested through Whistles in the Tennis Tournament Final (Tenis Turnuvası Finalinde İki Bakan ve Kadir Topbaş İslıkla Protesto Edildi), <http://t24.com.tr/haber/tenis-turnuvasi-finalinde-iki-bakan-ve-kadir-topbas-islıkla-protesto-edildi,216198>, Accessed on 25.11.2016

2.2 Historical background of football and politics in the Gezi Movement

The Gezi Movement did not break out without prior social and political developments in Turkey. It was the result of dissent that had accumulated throughout the years by the people in opposition. Therefore, I would like to give a short summary of the background to the Gezi Movement to provide a better understanding of how and under which circumstances the Gezi Movement materialized.

There were some big protests during April and May, right before the Gezi Movement erupted on 31 May 2013. The most notable event which took place close to the Gezi Movement with respect to its identity and targeted group was Emek Movie Theater protests, which continued until the theater was finally demolished on 22 May 2013, approximately a week before the Gezi Movement started.¹³ A big protest took place on 8 April 2013 to show objections to the demolition of Emek Movie Theater. After a while, police announced that they would not let protesters enter the street and that they would intervene if they did not disperse. Then the police used water cannons and tear gas against the protesters. This intervention was regarded as a disproportionate use of force against a peaceful protest according to many people who have a right to claim on urban transformation processes.¹⁴

The famous director Costa-Gavras came to Istanbul within the context of 32nd Istanbul Film Festival to receive the Lifelong Success Award at this festival. He also participated in this protest and gave a speech, saying, “The violent events coming after a peaceful meeting and whose causes are unknown shouldn’t make us forget the real reason of this meeting. An important movie and cultural center shouldn’t be destroyed. It’s like erasing a part of our memories and destroying a

¹³ Historical Emek Movie Theater Completely Demolished (Tarihi Emek Sineması Tamamen Yıkıldı), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/tarihi-emek-sineması-tamamen-yıkıldı-23340276>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

¹⁴ What Happened to Emek Movie Theater on 7 April 2013? (7 Nisan 2013’te Emek Sineması’na Ne Oldu?), <http://www.alternatif-istanbul.net/2013/04/7-nisan-2013te-emek-sinemasında-ne-oldu.html>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

place which is important for the future. Thus, it's a political, social and artistic mistake. With all respect, I am calling to the prime minister, who is the guarantor of cultural integrity of Istanbul. I kindly ask him to save this hall and take action to make culture more important than trade.”¹⁵ The participation of an international figure such as Costa-Gavras to this protest made a big impact, and the young people who attended the Gezi Movement were mobilized or at least heard of this protest since it was about art and culture, both of which are relatively non-political and universal areas.

Following this protest, the globally celebrated 1 May Workers' Day took place in all over Turkey, including Istanbul. The syndicates stated that they would celebrate the 1 May at Taksim Square, where many leftists had been massacred on 1 May 1977. Thus, Taksim Square has political significance in Turkish history, so the unions did not want to abandon this square. However, the governor of Istanbul, Hüseyin Mutlu, stated that they would not allow the celebration of 1 May in Taksim Square due to the pedestrianisation project going on at Taksim at that time.¹⁶

As a result, three thousand policemen were brought to Istanbul from other cities by plane. The metrobus, metro, the Istanbul seabus, city lines ferry ports were all shut down and the bridges were closed in Istanbul.¹⁷ Police forces intervened against protesters, using water cannons and tear gas in places near Taksim Square. At the end of the day, Governor Hüseyin Mutlu said, “We intervened in an extraordinarily proportionate way.”¹⁸ This police intervention got reactions from

¹⁵ “Emek” Request to Prime Minister from Master Director (Usta Yönetmenden Başbakan’a “Emek” Ricası), <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/usta-yonetmenden-basbakana-emek-ricasi,KpGXLt-ZFEielhzjjiRaw>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

¹⁶ 1 May 2013: Tag and Loss (1 Mayıs 2013: Künye ve Bilanço), <http://m.bianet.org/bianet/yasam/146326-1-mayis-2013-kunye-ve-bilanco>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

¹⁷ 1 May 2013: Tag and Loss (1 Mayıs 2013: Künye ve Bilanço), <http://m.bianet.org/bianet/yasam/146326-1-mayis-2013-kunye-ve-bilanco>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

¹⁸ 1 May 2013: Tag and Loss (1 Mayıs 2013: Künye ve Bilanço), <http://m.bianet.org/bianet/yasam/146326-1-mayis-2013-kunye-ve-bilanco>, Accessed on 13.07.2017

many people and this was one of the developments that contributed to the political accumulation on the road to the Gezi Movement.

On 11 May 2013, Turkey was shocked with two explosions in Reyhanlı. Two bomb-laden vehicles were exploded in succession in the afternoon. One of them exploded near the Reyhanlı mayorship building and one exploded near the post office building. According to official statements, 49 people died in the two explosions.¹⁹ Yet the local people and some part of Turkish society think that the real number is higher than the official number.²⁰ After the explosions, the prosecution office imposed a broadcast ban on this event, using these words: “The detailed depiction of scenes, the depiction of dead or injured people and information about them are under investigation, and publishing these on visual and written media violates the confidentiality of the investigation and puts the investigation at risk.”²¹ CHP parliamentarian İlhan Cihaner objected to this ban of the court and shared his petition of objection on social media. In his petition, he stated that the decision is at odds with European Convention on Human Rights, the Constitution, and the Law of Criminal Procedure.²²

The deputy chair of the CHP, Gürsel Tekin, stated that these explosions were the result of the foreign policy of the AKP government and that it was not an unexpected event: “There is a saying that coming events cast their shadows beforehand. The government has ignored the problem in this region; it is actually

¹⁹ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_ordu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

²⁰ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_ordu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

²¹ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_ordu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

²² What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_ordu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

blasting the problem.”²³ The chairman of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Selahattin Demirtaş, underlined that they criticized the government policies on Syria, but it was time to unite. The chairman of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Devlet Bahçeli, said that “bloody-minded PKK militants fool around our borders on one side, Syrian origin provocation and attacks are increasing on the otherside.”²⁴ Considering these statements of the opposition parties, the people of Reyhanlı reacted to the press even before the broadcast ban. The anger was so big against the broadcasting of ground on the evening of the Reyhanlı explosions, which killed dozens of people.²⁵ Considering these examples, one can say that political dissent had accumulated in the months before the Gezi Movement started. There was a show of opposition, comparing the older times in the social media and among the people. The Gezi Movement exploded in this political atmosphere.

The Gezi Movement, a big social upheaval of Turkey, began on 27 May 2013 as a small protest against the urban development plan of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, which required the demolition of Gezi Park and the construction of artillery barracks in the center of the city as a part of a pedestrianisation project of the Taksim area, but without proper legal permission. In the beginning, a small group of environmentalists protested this plan in Gezi Park. These people set up tents in Gezi Park in order to keep watch over the park between 27 and 31 May 2013. Some of CHP and BDP members of parliament came to Gezi Park and supported the protesters. On 31 May 2013, BDP parliamentarian Sırrı Süreyya Önder was injured by a tear gas cannister and CHP parliamentarian Gürsel Tekin fell ill from the tear

²³ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_oldu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

²⁴ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_oldu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

²⁵ What Happened in Reyhanlı? (Reyhanlı’da Ne Oldu?), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_oldu, Accessed on 13.07.2017

gas. The police intervened using tear gas. However, upon the disproportionate use of force by police towards these peaceful protests that lasted until the 31 May 2013, many people heard about this police violence very quickly through social media channels. On the 31 May 2013, a lot of young people in Istanbul started to come together near Taksim square and protested the disproportionate police violence all day and all night long in neighborhoods surrounding Taksim. In the early morning on 1 June 2013, a lot of people came together in Kadıköy in the night and crossed the Boğaziçi Bridge on foot to protest police violence and to reach Taksim Square. Figure 3 shows this crowd.



Fig. 3. The crowd crossing the Boğaziçi Bridge

Source: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-nfwwFcFHHiQ/UalpRA_UiRI/AAAAAAAAA8Zc/jFakDgt_GNs/s1600/KADIK%C3%96Y.jpg

Police intervened using tear gas and water cannons on the protesters upon their arrival in Beşiktaş. In the morning of 1 June 2013, this protest suddenly spread all around Turkey, thanks to the power of social media. Starting from the afternoon times on the 1 June, thousands of people flowed into Taksim area, where Gezi Park is located. By coincidence, CHP had a rally on this day in Kadıköy. With the news

spreading about the Gezi protests, CHP cancelled its rally and directed its supporters to Taksim square instead. Upon this, huge numbers of people moved into Taksim Square, the police stepped back from Gezi Park, and these thousands of people filled Taksim Square in the afternoon of 1 June. At the same time, the other big cities of Turkey such as Ankara, İzmir, Adana also started to have protests for Gezi Park. In Ankara, the protesters came together at the Kızılay Güven Park and police intervened using tear gas and water cannons. There were also protests in İzmir, Eskişehir, Muğla, Antalya, Konya, Trabzon, Ordu, Marmaris, Mersin, Tunceli, Adana, Zonguldak, Kayseri, Kahramanmaraş, Isparta, Erzurum, and so on. According to a report by the Turkish Medical Association on 2 June 2013, there were more than 1,000 injured people in Istanbul and Ankara. Moreover, most of the injured people, some of whom lost their eyes, were exposed to tear gas, plastic bullets and water cannons.

On 5 June 2013, the syndicates and trade associations such as Confederation of Public Laborer's Union (KESK), Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK), Turkish Medical Association (TTB), Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) went on a strike and came together at Kızılay Square of Ankara, Gündoğdu Square of İzmir, Taksim Square of Istanbul as well as the main squares of other cities. In the meantime, the young people occupied Gezi Park and set up a camp-like environment in Gezi Park. The protesters established a communal life there, bringing food and drinks from their homes and sharing them with each other. People set up tents and lived there until Gezi Park was evacuated by the police. Every wall around Taksim region was painted and full of graffiti, including caricatures and political humor about the government. On 14 June 2013, then-Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan met with the representatives of protesters,

including Taksim Solidarity. The members of Taksim Solidarity organized forums in order to force a permanent decision on the Gezi Movement. On 15 June 2013 at a “Respect for the National Will” meeting in Sincan by the AKP government, the prime minister said: “You need to evacuate Taksim Square; otherwise our security forces know how to evacuate.”²⁶ From this point, the police announced that people should evacuate Gezi Park. On 16 June, Gezi Park was evacuated by the police.²⁷

In the Gezi Movement, which was part of a larger context of national and urban unrest for Turkey, football fans certainly played one of the most important roles, and it was the first time that the big three clubs of Turkey united around a single political aim. In a documentary on Gezi, one of the participants says that when the football fans came to Gezi Park, people trusted them and they were getting motivated.²⁸ A photograph showing the solidarity between rival football fan groups (shown in Figure 4) was very popular those days.

²⁶ Gezi Park is Evacuated or Else (Gezi Parkı Boşaldı; Boşaldı Yoksa), http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/427958/_Gezi_Parki_bosaldi_bosaldi_yoksa..._.html, Accessed on 18.07.2017

²⁷ Gezi Park is Evacuated through Police Intervention (Gezi Parkı Polis Müdahalesiyle Boşaltıldı), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/06/130615_gezi_parkina_mudahale2, Accessed on 17.07.2017

²⁸ Here is Istanbul United Documentary (İşte İstanbul United Belgeseli), <http://webtv.hurriyet.com.tr/4/61652/0/1/iste-istanbul-united-belgeseli>, Accessed on 17.07.2017



Fig. 4. Istanbul United

Source: <http://www.soccerissue.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/040613united.jpg>

On this photograph, it was written “Istanbul United since 31 May 2013”. The fans of the biggest football clubs of Turkey came together and walked shoulder to shoulder for the first time in Turkish history. It was as if the biggest clubs constituted a single football club now: “Istanbul United”. There are some prominent examples on the role of football fan groups during the Gezi Movement.

For instance, on 31 May 2013, Çarşı addressed the deputy chairman of CHP, Gürsel Tekin, who had spent the night at Gezi Park: “Give us 1,000 tear gas masks; we will take over the park.”²⁹ This call by Çarşı attracted an enormous amount of sympathy among people and especially among other football fans. On 3 June 2013, protesters, most of whom were fans of Çarşı, captured a bulldozer and used it to resist the police and TOMAs.³⁰ They named this bulldozer “POMA”,³¹ a name which

²⁹ The Request of Çarşı from Gürsel Tekin (Çarşı'nın Gürsel Tekin'den İsteği), <http://sozcu.com.tr/2013/gunun-icinden/carsinin-gursel-tekinden-istegi-304264/>, Accessed on 17.07.2017

³⁰ TOMA is an official vehicle of the police and is the abbreviation for “Riot Control Vehicle (Toplumsal Olaylara Müdahale Aracı)”.

³¹ It's name is POMA anymore: Protesters Got the Construction Equipment (Onun Adı Artık POMA: Beşiktaş'ta Eylemciler İş Makinesini Ele Geçirdi), <http://haber.sol.org.tr/kent-gundemleri/onun-adi-artik-poma-besiktasta-eylemciler-is-makinasini-ele-gecirdi-haberi-73996>, Accessed on, 17.07.2017

ridicules TOMA by changing the first letter of it. Figure 5 shows a picture of POMA which is commonly used in the news about the Gezi Movement.



Fig. 5. POMA

Source: <http://cdn-tv.sozcu.com.tr/video-resimler/2015/05/taksim.jpg>

At the moment Çarşı got the POMA, Davulcu Vedat (Drummer Vedat), who is one of the front men of Çarşı, had a dialogue with the police during the clashes between police and protesters:

Chief of police: Open the barricade; don't go to the inside of barricade! (Barikatı aç, çok içeriye girme). TOMA 7: It's understood (Anlaşıldı). Chief of police: Come through using water cannon! (Gel şimdi içeriye, su sıkarak!). TOMA 7: It's understood (Anlaşıldı). Chief of police: TOMA 9, you also use your water cannon at the same time! (TOMA 9 sen de aynı anda su sık!). TOMA 9: Zzzzz. Chief of police: TOMA 9! TOMA 9: I am Vedat, listening to you! (Ben Vedat, dinliyorum!) Chief of police: Who is Vedat? (Vedat kim ya?). TOMA 9: Drummer from the open stand! (Açık tribünden ya, davulcu!). Chief of police: TOMA 7 step back! (TOMA 7 geri çekil!). TOMA 7: Black! (Siyah).³²

Here, black represents the Beşiktaş football team, whose colors are black and white.

Drummer Vedat says “Black!” with the anticipation of hearing back “White!” from the police officer. When this dialogue spread in the social media, it suddenly became

³² Çarşı The Drummer Vedat Toma Wireless (Çarşı Davulcu Vedat Toma Telsiz), <http://listelist.com/gezi-parki-icin-basbakan-ile-aslinda-kimler-gorusemeli/carsi-davulcu-vedat-toma-telsiz/>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

very famous among Gezi protesters. Most of the people who participated in the Gezi Movement started to admire Çarşı and sympathized with them. In addition to these instances, the slogans cheered at the Gezi protests were mostly made from football slogans. Çarşı had a big role in transforming football-related slogans into political slogans. Some of them are: “Shoot it, shoot it, fire the tear gas, take off your helmet, leave your baton, and then see who’s the tough guy. (Sık bakalım sık bakalım biber gazı sık bakalım, kaskımı çıkar jopunu bırak, delikanlı kim bakalım)” “Aaaa, tear gas hurray! (Aaaa, biber gazı oley!).” This slogan was originally as follows: “Aaaa, my dear Beşiktaş hurray! (Aaaa, Beşiktaş’ım oley!)”.

Football was also used in the graffitis in the Gezi Movement. The football fans used them in a funny and also in a smart way, which sent subliminal political messages to the government such as the one shown in Figure 6: “Alex left, won’t you leave? (Alex gitti sen mi gitmiyecen?),” which means that even the legendary player of Fenerbahçe, namely Alex de Souza, left the team, so why not the prime minister:



Fig. 6. Alex left, won't you leave?

Source: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CFT4I9WWIAAo0ik.jpg>

Besides, the football fans reflected their feelings through the slogan, “We truly miss Alex (Vallahi Alex’i özledik)” in order to show that they would like to have a good government (see Figure 7).



Fig. 7. We truly miss Alex

Source:

http://68.media.tumblr.com/2b660d24e889553eb6a068b3360a59f3/tumblr_mta8pwxTeF1sco84bo1_1280.jpg

Another prominent example is “The solution is Drogba (Çare Drogba),” which implies that the government doesn’t govern well, so the solution is Drogba, who is a famous scorer for the Galatasaray team. See Figure 8.



Fig. 8. The solution is Drogba

Source: <http://www.gazete5.com/upload/2014/06/295033.jpg>

Fenerbahçe fans also memorialized another legendary player of Fenerbahçe, a left-wing political supporter named Lefter Küçükandonyadis, stating that the “Future is the runway of Lefter (İstiklal Lefter’in koşuyoludur)”. See Figure 9. It implies that İstiklal Street is full of police, yet Lefter can run through it.



Fig. 9. The future is Lefter’s running path

Source:

http://68.media.tumblr.com/cbaa05c4ddd265d92da7cb0693e47468/tumblr_mobph7OwEP1qzsdf9o1_1280.jpg

Beşiktaş fans also reflected their political stance through another legendary player of Beşiktaş. They stated, “We give you Holosko and a sum of money, you give us the government (Holosko ve bir miktar para verelim, hükümeti verin)” which means that they can even exchange their most valuable player for the sake of a good government (see Figure 10).

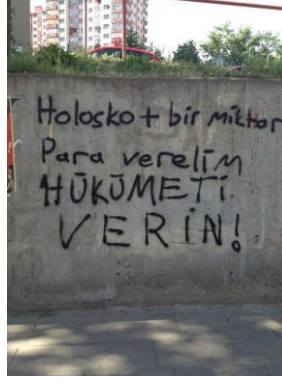


Fig. 10. We'll give you Holosko and some money, you give us the government

Source: <https://instela-static.info/m/holosko-arti-bir-miktar-para--i507315.jpg>

During the days of the protests, Gezi Park, a special event was organized by the football fans at Taksim on 8 June 2013, when Taksim Square saw one of the historical and most crowded days in history. Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş fan groups called for a big protest with the participation of all their fans. 12 Numara, a Fenerbahçe fan platform, released a call as follows: “Fenerbahçe fans who support the rightful and honorable contention which includes other fan groups as well from the first day of the Gezi Movement, will walk to revive its support to the Gezi Park protest. Fenerbahçe fans will meet at the Kadıköy Pier on 8 June 2013 Saturday at 17:00 and will cross the Bosphorus on the Kadıköy-Kabataş ferry and will then walk to Taksim Square from Kabataş with other fan groups joining them. Fenerbahçe fans will come together with other fan groups in front of Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and will support the Gezi protests all together. The groups who will join this march are 1907 Ünifeb, Grup CK, Kill For You, Vamos Bien, Sol Açık, FEDER, and Cadde.”³³

³³ Fan groups of Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş Walked to Taksim (Fenerbahçe ve Beşiktaş Taraftar grupları Taksim'e Yürüdü), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/fenerbahce-ve-besiktas-taraftar-gruplari-taksime-yurudu-23462125>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

With the same purpose, Çarşı announced the invitation to walk to Taksim Square through the hashtag “#1903tesemttengeziye (At1903FromneighborhoodtoGezi)”. The year 1903 signifies the foundation year of Beşiktaş, and Beşiktaş fans met at 19:03 in Beşiktaş Square based on this fact. This meeting was characterized as the biggest march of Çarşı. Beşiktaş fans started to walk from Köyiçi Square (near the center of Beşiktaş), passed through Akaretler neighborhood and reached Taksim Square with thousands of fans. Thousands of Fenerbahçe fans also arrived at Kabataş Square with banners and shouting slogans. The banners read, “Fans of Fenerbahçe do not forget the 3rd of July match fixing case”. It was also a protest against the match fixing case of Fenerbahçe. Fenerbahçe fans expected to start to walk at 19:07 which represents the foundation year of the Fenerbahçe club (1907), but the crowd did not fit into Kabataş Square, so they started to walk to Taksim Square. Not only Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş fans, but a lot of fans who support other teams also walked side by side during these marches of Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş fans.

Fenerbahçe fans were the first to reach Taksim Square. They were applauded by the crowd in Taksim Square. Then, Beşiktaş fans reached the square with a long cortege and Taksim Square was animated with the huge crowd. Some fans went up to the roof of the AKM. Beşiktaş fans hung a poster of Mehmet Işıklar, whose nickname is Optik Başkan (see Figure 11) and who died in 2007. He was one of the founders of the Çarşı fan group.



Fig. 11. Optik Başkan

Source:

https://encrypted.google.com/search?q=optik+ba%C5%9Fkan+posteri+akm&safe=active&tbn=isch&imgil=RWXrbIeeayxDuM%253A%253B-dC0syioevoeMM%253Bhttps%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.eyem.com%25252Fp%25252F46380211&source=iu&pf=m&fir=RWXrbIeeayxDuM%253A%252C-dC0syioevoeMM%252C_&usg=__yHZhF-yGamJ-GWO4y-MEbP_w1pM%3D&biw=1152&bih=773&ved=0ahUKEwjvceZyJfVAhXhAcAKHWCzC60QyjcILA&ei=G3pwWaPEDeGDgAbg5q7oCg#imgrc=RWXrbIeeayxDuM:

After hanging this poster to commemorate Optik Başkan, the fans lit torches and set off fireworks, as shown in Figure 12.



Fig. 12. Fireworks

Source: <http://fotogaleri.hurriyet.com.tr/galeridetay/69889/155/1/tarafarlar-taksim-gezi-parkina-yurudu>

There was a real solidarity among the rival fans who supported different teams. Normally, groups who normally do not even come close to each other were side by side in Taksim Square, and there was no rivalry between these fan groups. For instance, Beşiktaş fans were wearing Fenerbahçe foulards, and vice versa. This was the time that rival football fans came together and chanted together with such a crowd.

On 16 June 2013, there was a basketball championship match between the Galatasaray Medicalpark and the Banvit teams. Cenk Akyol, a Galatasaray basketball player, picked up an NTV microphone and threw it away as a show of support for the Gezi Movement.³⁴ Then, he proceeded to give a speech using other microphones and talked about the championship of Turkey. NTV is seen as a pro-government media channel and the Gezi protestors labeled it as partisan media (yandaş medya) since NTV did not put much news about the Gezi protests in its broadcast streaming. As an effect of this event, Cenk Akyol was not selected as a candidate for the National Basketball Team to attend the 2013 FIBA European Championship in Slovenia between 4 and 22 September 2013.³⁵ This decision caused some disturbances, since Cenk Akyol had had a fruitful season and had played a big role in Galatasaray's winning the championship.³⁶ The assumption was that it was because Cenk Akyol threw the NTV microphone away that he was not selected for the national team.³⁷ However, there is no an explanation on the side of any part.

During the Gezi Movement, between 20 and 30 June 2013, the Mediterranean Olympics were held in Mersin. This international sport event was open to the public

³⁴ Cenk Akyol Threw NTV Microphone Away (Cenk Akyol NTV Mikrofonunu Yere Attı), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku26an4_JEA , Accessed on 20.11.2016

³⁵ Flash claim regarding Cenk Akyol Case (Cenk Akyol Olayı İle İlgili Flaş İddia), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cenk-akyol-olayi-ile-ilgili-flas-iddia-23728860>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

³⁶ Flash claim regarding Cenk Akyol Case (Cenk Akyol Olayı İle İlgili Flaş İddia), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cenk-akyol-olayi-ile-ilgili-flas-iddia-23728860>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

³⁷ Flash claim regarding Cenk Akyol Case (Cenk Akyol Olayı İle İlgili Flaş İddia), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cenk-akyol-olayi-ile-ilgili-flas-iddia-23728860>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

and its tickets could be bought through a ticket sale company. All the tickets for this event were sold out within 15 minutes following the opening of ticket sales.³⁸ It was assumed that the government wanted to prevent any possible public demonstration during this event with the effect of the Gezi Movement, so all tickets were bought by government with this aim.³⁹ Many government executives of several towns of Mersin such as Erdemli, Silifke, Anamur and Bozyazı stated that they received tickets from the AKP Mersin provincial organization for this event.⁴⁰ However, General Coordinator of Mediterranean Olympics said:

“The capacity of stadium is 25,000, so 25,000 tickets were put on sale. Of those, 11,200 tickets were reserved for foreign guests and sport players, and 2,000 were reserved for VIP guests. Around 11,000 tickets were put on sale and these tickets were soled in a short time through Biletix. Since the ticket was 10 TL, it was like a symbolic price, so there was a boom in demand. But we don’t expect that there will be such a problem in the closure of the Olympics.”⁴¹

Hence, purchase of tickets by the government was not approved. Rather, it was just an assumption due to the high volume of protests during the Gezi Movements through sport events since these events bring lots of people together in the stadiums. All these examples show that not only football but any type of sports event was seen as a way of giving voice against the government and making political statements in alternative ways rather than conventional ways.

In 10 July 2013 during the Gezi Movement, 19-year-old Ali İsmail Korkmaz died in Eskişehir. He was a student at the department of English teaching at Anadolu University. He participated the protest on 2 June 2013 in Eskişehir to support the Gezi Movement in Istanbul. He then ran away when the police intervened, and it was

³⁸ Ticket Crisis in Mediterranean Olympics (Akdeniz Oyunları’nda Bilet Krizi), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akdeniz-oyunlarinda-bilet-krizi-23549027>, Accessed on 20.11.2016

³⁹ Ticket Crisis in Mediterranean Olympics (Akdeniz Oyunları’nda Bilet Krizi), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akdeniz-oyunlarinda-bilet-krizi-23549027>, Accessed on 20.11.2016

⁴⁰ Ticket Crisis in Mediterranean Olympics (Akdeniz Oyunları’nda Bilet Krizi), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akdeniz-oyunlarinda-bilet-krizi-23549027>, Accessed on 20.11.2016

⁴¹ Ticket Crisis in Mediterranean Olympics (Akdeniz Oyunları’nda Bilet Krizi), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akdeniz-oyunlarinda-bilet-krizi-23549027>, Accessed on 20.11.2016

claimed that he was attacked by some civilians.⁴² He had a stroke that night and was being treated at Osmangazi University hospital in Eskişehir.⁴³ After he died in Eskişehir, it was learned that he was a big fan of Fenerbahçe.⁴⁴ Upon learning this detail, the fans of Fenerbahçe immediately decided to do something for him and composed a march which combines love of Fenerbahçe and a commemoration of Ali İsmail.

The lyrics of this march are as follows: “He was 19 year-old yet free world in his dreams; the uniform he kisses will live in his memory; Ali İsmail Korkmaz Fenerbahçe cannot be demolished (Daha 19 yaşında düşlerinde özgür dünya; öptüğü çubuklu forma yaşayacak anısında; Ali İsmail Korkmaz Fenerbahçe Yıkılmaz)”. Here, Ali İsmail Korkmaz is praised for being a fan of Fenerbahçe. Fenerbahçe fans imply that they cannot be demolished due to the accusations of the match fixing case.

The Gezi Movement continued until August and every scene literally blended into the politics in Turkey. Even if people were not on the streets in big cities, they continued to protest everywhere they went. On 17 August 2013, the Turkish football season started. The matches were televised on Lig TV, a private media channel which has the legal right to broadcast the football matches of this league. When the fans of the big three football clubs came together in the stands, they started to protest and chant during football matches. Their slogans were the same as those in the Gezi Movements. Every thirty fourth minute of the match, fans started to protest, as the number 34 represents the license plate number prefix of Istanbul, where the Gezi Movement started in the center of Istanbul, Taksim. The only difference is that they

⁴² Gezi Protests: Ali İsmail Korkmaz Lost His Life (Gezi Eylemleri: Ali İsmail Korkmaz Hayatını Kaybetti), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/07/130710_gezi_olum, Accessed on 20.07.2017

⁴³ Gezi Protests: Ali İsmail Korkmaz Lost His Life (Gezi Eylemleri: Ali İsmail Korkmaz Hayatını Kaybetti), http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/07/130710_gezi_olum, Accessed on 20.07.2017

⁴⁴ Fenerbahçe Supporters Composed A Song for Ali İsmail(Fenerbahçe Taraftarları Ali İsmail İçin Şarkı Besteledi), <http://haber.sol.org.tr/spor/fenerbahce-taraftarlari-ali-ismail-icin-sarki-besteledi-haberi-78944>, Accessed on 20.07.2017

chanted them in a different place, this time in the stadiums. The audiences of Lig TV heard these slogans and the protest against government was there in a continuous base. Upon these alternative protests, Lig TV started to mute the sound on their broadcasting during these protests.⁴⁵ As a counter attack, football players who did not support the Gezi Movement also showed their political stances. For instance, on 17 August 2013, Emre Belözoğlu, a player for Fenerbahçe, scored a goal in the match between Fenerbahçe and Torqu Konyaspor. After he scored, he raised his four fingers and made a sign of “Rabia”.⁴⁶ Rabia means “fourth” in Arabic, and this hand sign became the symbol of resistance against the coup in Egypt.⁴⁷

In the following months, the dissent stemming from the Gezi Movement continued even though there were no longer any Gezi Park-oriented street protests. On 16 February 2014, Fenerbahçe organized a big walk called “Justice for Turkey, Justice for Fenerbahçe (Türkiye için Adalet, Fenerbahçe için Adalet)” that took place on Bağdat Street with the participants of almost 400,000 fans in order to demand a fair trial in the match fixing case.⁴⁸ Slogans such as “Ali İsmail Korkmaz Fenerbahçe can’t be demolished”, “We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal (Mustafa Kemal’in Askerleriyiz)” were chanted in marches where justice was demanded.⁴⁹ Turkish flags, Fenerbahçe flags and Atatürk posters were opened during marches.⁵⁰ In addition to Fenerbahçe fans, Galatasaray and Beşiktaş fans participated in this rally

⁴⁵ Big Reaction to Digitürk (Digitürk’e Büyük Tepki), <http://www.posta.com.tr/digiturke-buyuk-tepki-haberi-191103> Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁴⁶ Egypt Message from Emre Belözoğlu (Emre Belözoğlu’ndan Mısır Mesajı), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/emre-belozoglundan-misir-mesaji-24540019>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁴⁷ What’s ‘4’ Rabia Sign? Here is the Meaning of Rabia Sign (‘4’ Rabia İşareti Nedir? İşte Rabia İşaretinin Anlamı), <http://www.aksam.com.tr/yasam/4-rabia-isareti-nedir-iste-rabia-isaretinin-anlami/haber-236339>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁴⁸ Justice for Turkey, Justice for Fenerbahçe (Türkiye İçin Adalet, Fenerbahçe İçin Adalet), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38549>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁴⁹ Justice for Turkey, Justice for Fenerbahçe (Türkiye İçin Adalet, Fenerbahçe İçin Adalet), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38549>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁵⁰ Justice for Turkey, Justice for Fenerbahçe (Türkiye İçin Adalet, Fenerbahçe İçin Adalet), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38549>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

and walked with their fellows. It was one of the moments that such a number of fans came together for a political aim after the Gezi Movement in Turkey.

In the aftermath of this march, Fenerbahçe fans hosted Ali İsmail Korkmaz's family in the Fenerbahçe Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium.⁵¹ After the march for Ali İsmail Korkmaz was composed by the Fenerbahçe fans, Fenerbahçe executives invited Ali İsmail Korkmaz's family into Fenerbahçe Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium. On 16 February 2014, the family of Ali İsmail Korkmaz was in Şükrü Saracoğlu Stadium for a match between Fenerbahçe and Kasımpaşa, and this was declared from the official Fenerbahçe website.⁵²

On 27 April 2014, Fenerbahçe became the champion of the 2013-2014 Turkish football season for the nineteenth time. The nineteenth championship of Fenerbahçe was dedicated to Ali İsmail Korkmaz since he died when he was 19. This unintended coincidence also became the symbolic sign of the championship of Fenerbahçe. This symbolic sign was also commodified through Fenerbahçe fan t-shirts on which was written "19 Fenerbahçe Korkmaz" on the front and "07 Fenerbahçe Yıkılmaz" on the back"⁵³ as shown in Figure 13.

⁵¹ The Family of Ali İsmail Korkmaz is hosted by our fans (Ali İsmail Korkmaz'ın Ailesi Taraftarlarımızca Ağırlandı), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38545>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁵² The Family of Ali İsmail Korkmaz is hosted by our fans (Ali İsmail Korkmaz'ın Ailesi Taraftarlarımızca Ağırlandı), <http://www.fenerbahce.org/detay.asp?ContentID=38545>, Accessed on 24.07.2017

⁵³ Ali İsmail Korkmaz T-shirt from F.Bahçe (F.Bahçe'den Ali İsmail Korkmaz Tişörtü), http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/futbol/63667/F.Bahce_den_Ali_ismail_Korkmaz_tisortu.html, Accessed on 24.07.2017



Fig. 13. Fenerbahçe t-shirts

Source: <http://www.diken.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/20140422-fenerbahce.jpg>

Before moving into the chapter on the conceptualization of football and politics, I would like to mention the institutional position of major football clubs vis-à-vis the Gezi Movement. The institutional positions of the big three football clubs are not directly related with my thesis subject, but I would like to mention the official views of football clubs so that we can have a better framework for placing football fans in the Gezi Movement.

For instance, the president of Galatasaray at the time, Ünal Aysal, mentioned that he saw the Gezi Movement as a peaceful demonstration and he supported this in these words:

“In fact, we live a rivalry in the field. I always say that this should not go out of the field. The fans have showed us good examples of this in recent days. It’s our responsibility to evaluate and realize the signals. I’m pleased to do any duty on my part. But I must say that I see Gezi Park events as a pacifist, friendly and reflective of social psychology in the optimum level movement. We all support this. This support expresses the friendship of football clubs as well as the friendship and fraternity among the Turkish people.”⁵⁴

Unlike these statements, the president of Beşiktaş, Fikret Orman, stated that they had no connection to politics and he did not comment on political developments. When he was asked about the Çarşı presence in the Gezi Movement, he said:

⁵⁴ Super League – Ünal Aysal: We Support Gezi Park (Süper Lig – Ünal Aysal: Gezi Parkı’na Destek Veriyoruz), http://tr.eurosport.com/futbol/super-lig/2012-2013/super-lig-unal-aysal-gezi-parki-na-destek-veriyoruz_sto3795010/story.shtml, Accessed on 20.06.2017

“They are very colorful and creative. I think that Beşiktaş has so many colors. The cheering, banners and humors of Çarşı have contributed to Beşiktaş so much. We also enjoy this situation. In the Gezi Movement, they have also done many things that most of the people couldn’t do. Now, the fans of Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray also support Beşiktaş. This is such sympathy. All the people sympathize with Beşiktaş now. But I always say that, as the president and management board of a sport club, political affairs are not our business. Politics is the work of politicians. We are a sports club. Football, basketball, referees, volleyball, and handball are our work. The Beşiktaş fans have chosen us to serve Beşiktaş and make it a champion, not to do politics. That’s why I don’t comment on issues other than sport. Gezi Park is situated next to our neighborhood. The events have taken place in our neighborhood and I think this affected this situation. Of course we don’t want to see violence or clashes in sport and I don’t approve of any kind of violence.”⁵⁵

He also stated that they counted the days until the Gezi Movement was over so they could start to construct a new stadium (the Gezi Movement occurred right before the decision of Beşiktaş to construct a new stadium to replace the old İnönü Stadium) near to where many of the events in the Gezi Movement took place. He said:

“We have got the approval for stadium construction but the Gezi events affected our neighborhood the most. They are taking construction machines and breaking them. The police department has asked us to remove all machines from there until the Gezi events are over. So, we are counting the days so that we can start to construct our new stadium.”⁵⁶

The president of Fenerbahçe, Aziz Yıldırım, said after the Gezi Movement about the Ali İsmail Korkmaz march:

“I’m against cursing in the stadium. I’m against it if it’s an insult. But let’s say that they chant about the Gezi Movement in the thirthy fourth minute. It’s a natural right of people. Let them do it. The governor comes and talks to people. Meddling this much is wrong. They can demand that the government resign, so what’s the matter? If you intervene through police forces, then it will increase. Nobody can hamper the Ali İsmail Korkmaz march. Fenerbahçe fans sing it. Let this thing go. If you oppress people, people revolt against

⁵⁵ Gezi Evaluation from Fikret Orman (Fikret Orman’dan Gezi Değerlendirmesi), <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/spor/43620.aspx>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁵⁶ Fikret Orman: Gezi Park Events Hit Beşiktaş the Most (Fikret Orman: Gezi Parkı Olayları En Çok Beşiktaş’ı Vurdu), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/fikret-orman-gezi-parki-olaylari-en-cok-besiktasi-vurdu-23457940>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

this. It comes to no good. Everybody has their own head screwed on the right way.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Shattering Piece of Explanations from Aziz Yıldırım (Aziz Yıldırım’dan Bomba Açıklamalar), <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/aziz-yildirim-cnnturk-te-fenerbahce-1835903-skorerhaber/>, Accessed on 27.07.2017

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF FOOTBALL AND POLITICS

3.1 Football from above: Football as a form of state power

After contextualizing and exemplifying football fandom in the Gezi Movement historically, I would like to give a theoretical outlook on football fandom mobilization in order to capture examples from all around the world and situate the politics of football fans during the Gezi Movement in comparative perspective. One significant line of differentiation in the literature on football and politics is between those arguing for football from above and those arguing for football from below.

The literature on approaching football from above generally concentrates on football as a form or tool of state power. The arguments found in this literature generally take support from long-lasting historical evidence. It is well known that sports hold a crucial place in the social life since it enables ruling classes to spread and strengthen their power in daily practices and future expectations of the people (Sert, 2000, p. 38). The state's role in the organization of sports is important in understanding how the state has extensive multiple powers over sports (Sert, 2000, p. 113). According to Kurthan Fişek, there are two crucial points to keep in mind in thinking of sports, politics, and the state. The first one is that the state always has an interest in intervening in social life to secure its domination. The second is that sports cannot be separated from the other realms of social life, and it reflects the features of the nation where it takes place. Hence, sports cannot be considered without state and politics (Sert, 2000, p. 107). In parallel with this, Talimciler argues that football as a common social ground removes attention and anger from the political foundation by promising people identity and belonging (Talimciler, 2005, p. 149).

In the literature covering the sports world, an anti-political approach is offered. According to this approach, the intentions of power groups on sports are considered the mingling of the politics and sports. However, sports itself is politics in both a technical and an intellectual sense. When we look at the policies on sports throughout the world, we see that, regardless of the regime type, all governments have their own sports policies. Not only in current world, but also in history there are examples of power struggles of ruling elites by manipulating football. In that sense, this argument has a very strong historical basis. Generally, undemocratic and disreputable political regimes used football as a means of propaganda. According to Jean-Marie Brohm and Marc Perelman, who are the leaders of this argument, football is the opium of the people, the attempt to stupify people and the source of social fragmentation. All these reasons serve to transform the thinking of people into becoming Le Pen (Boniface, 2007, p. 113). In that regard, the phenomenon of sports is used to justify an unwarrantable political regime and can only serve as tyrannical propaganda or as a distraction from the political and social demands of the people (Boniface, 2007, p. 113).

Like Brohm and Perelman, Patrick Vassort thinks that sports has a very important function in justifying an established political order (Boniface, 2007, p. 114). Rivalry between equals in sports represents democratic equality in an ideal society, if we establish a link between them based on their essence (Boniface, 2007, p. 114). He also argues that sports is an ideological state apparatus that makes people forget their political and economical rights; thus, it has a very powerful hypnotic effect on people (Boniface, 2007, p. 114).

There are several examples of these explanations in history. The 1934 World Cup, which was held in Italy could have been the leading example of this. Mussolini

used this event to show the world that fascism is the best choice and he wanted to justify his political order through that way. The stadium which was built in Rome for this event was named “Stadium of the Fascist Party” and the other stadium which was built in Torine was named “Mussolini Stadium”. The architectural design of these stadiums reflects the fascistic nostalgia of Italy. General Vacaro stated that their aim was to show the world the fascistic ideal of sports (Boniface, 2007, p. 117).

General Mascardo, who was the responsible person for the organization of the sports in the Franco regime, said, “Sports and football are some of the important tools for us to achieve our political aims” (Sert, 2000, p. 76), clearly showing how football was used in the political life. In Italy, Berlusconi used his football club, Milan,⁵⁸ to strengthen his political position since Milan was one of the most successful football teams in the Champions League of Europe. In times of economic crisis and when politicians were seen as the source of corruption, he convinced people that he was the right figure in politics. He repeated again and again: “We will make Italy like Milan” (Foer, 2012, p. 174). He had a populist logic that helped him to manipulate people by using football as a metaphor for society. This approach gave him a way to be on the same line with the lower-middle class, which was the political base of Berlusconi supporters. He further stated during the election times that since the midfield was empty, the play was more dangerous and took place only in the penalty area (Foer, 2012, p. 175).

Kuper shows us that football is a realm of war, citing Netherland and Germany (Kuper, 1994, p. 4). In the Second World War, Germany occupied Netherland for five years but the Dutch people did not forget their heritage. During football matches between the two countries, Dutch people thought that these

⁵⁸ Milan is an Italian football team which is owned by Berlusconi.

Germans represented the invaders and as a result, they fought after the match (Kuper, 1994, p. 10). This fight, which was the result of the football match, did not relate to the football, in fact. However, it represented the anger of the Dutch people to the occupation by the Germans in the Second World War. Thus, the German and Dutch states have a certain effect on the football fans in their mobilization against each other.

When we look at Turkey, we do not see a difference from the rest of the world about using football for political purposes. The football clubs of Turkey took place in the sports arena by the hands of the state (Sert, 2000, p. 95) (Kurthan Fişek, 2003). Ahmet Talimciler argues that football was used to depoliticize the masses after the 1980 military coup and to prevent the masses from thinking about social problems (Talimciler, 2005, p. 148). For instance, he stated that the operations of the Turgut Özal government marked Turkish football history throughout 1980s (Talimciler, 2005, p. 149). He used football extensively in order to show that he was always with people, and he furthermore went to abroad to support our national football team. He enabled the expansion of the relationship between political power and football (Talimciler, 2005, p. 149).

In the 1997-1998 football season of Turkey, the teams who were less successful were from the east and southeast of Turkey. They were demoted to the second league from the first league. However, the deputies of these regions took action and allowed these teams to stay in the first league. A law which removed the demotion for that year in the football leagues was passed. The reason behind this move was to eliminate the social exclusion of the people who lived in these regions of Turkey, given the huge economic inequality between these regions and the other parts of the country (Sert, 2000, p. 43). Thus, this state intervention to the Turkish

league shows us that football is a tool to gain respect and is politicized in the proper meaning of the word (Sert, 2000, p. 43).

While the manipulation of football by power groups is obvious, there are other alternatives to look at the relationship between politics and the football. Against the impositions by power groups, it is seen that the masses can use this football weapon for their resistance movements (Sert, 2000, p. 68). All these intertwined interactions between fans and governments give a new distinctive meaning, an aura, to football (Sert, 2000, p. 68). In that sense, the originality of this aura is fandom and the society in which fans live since the fans are a micro image of the society's profile. This micro image of society on the football fans through interactions and conflicts between the two loads football a deeper meaning (Sert, 2000, p. 68). Thus, aside from keeping sports distant from the power blocks and their discourses, we should evaluate sport as an enabling tool for the power groups to produce policies in these intertwined and mesh networks (Sert, 2000, p .72).

3.2 Football from below: Football fandom as a form of resistance realm

After stating the first approach to football, now I will frame my argument by delving into the literature that analyzes football from below, as this helps us understand the subjectivity of football fandom. This literature and the related examples can show us how football fans use football against power groups or governments. In addition, it can show us the politically contingent nature of football in terms of the social contexts. This is not to say that my research is a concretized form of these theories; rather, I will benefit from the literature on a case basis, since the starting point of my thesis is the very concrete experience of ordinary people. In that sense, it is a story of football as a weapon of fans in a political sense. Before moving on to the resistance

realms, there is need to explain why football plays a connective role between people around the world.

3.2.1 Football is simple, democratic and peaceful

Why is football easily adopted by people as a weapon in the political sense? How is it possible? Approximately two billion people watched the 1994 World Cup around the world and it was the most crowded audience in history. What makes football such a widely accepted phenomenon? As a first step to answering this question, it should be remembered that football is the most common sport in the world. According to Bromberger, the reason why football is superior to other sports is its simplicity: Football can be played in streets, gardens, fields, parking lots, on beaches—essentially anywhere, regardless of whether there is grass or not (Boniface, 2007, p. 11). It is also played without an organization or special equipment. The desire to play is enough; it does not create any financial burden on the players. Anyone can play football in a small room with two chairs used as goalposts. But other sports are not that simple to organize, as they require special equipment, physical traits, and so on. For instance, volleyball or basketball requires a tall player. In football, every person regardless of their physical features can find a suitable position to play. (Boniface, 2007, p. 13). Football is embedded in the life of regular people (Sert, 2000, pp. 140-141).

Football is also a useful conversation starter between people. It is the best way to launch a conversation without requiring any special subject to talk about (Boniface, 2007, p. 15). It is an instantaneous meeting without any protocol in that sense; there is no need to speak same language. An incredibly skillful player or a

fall-down player might unite the people. It is a both temporary and permanent friendship which is offered; yet it is a sincere relationship without any obligations (Boniface, 2007, p. 192).

Since football has a democratic structure and is based on the concept of equality, it attracts so many people with different backgrounds. For instance, wearing the same sportsgear of a team, abiding by the standard rules of the game, and standing side by side in the stands surpass all differences such as class, race, religion, political ideology, age, and language and make people unite under the same fandom identity. Which sports branches can bring together a worker from Lens, a high-level white collar worker from Tokyo, a child from the Rio slums, a soldier or a boss from Milan, and an unemployed person from Moscow? (Donuk and Şenduran, 2006, p. 36). These people from different class backgrounds can meet and get along with each other, thanks to having same fandom identity.

In addition, football establishes its authority easily since people come together by themselves when football is on the table. Football does not compel anyone to do anything. On the contrary, it encourages people by offering enthusiasm for sports (Boniface, 2007, p. 10). In that sense, football is a unifying and popular sport which has an umbrella identity, and the stands are spaces where social hierarchies are blurred or even destroyed for moments for the sake of fandom identity. Football gives a poor child with nothing more than a ball, the opportunity for social promotion because this ball is the only silver bullet that he may believe in. He can earn his bread from this ball and this ball can turn him into a football god (Galeano, 2008, p. 60).

3.2.2 The collective identity of football fandom

All the above mentioned dimensions pave the way for football fans to come together. But the most important dimension, I think, is that football promises people an abstract common identity. It enables people to feel that they belong to a group of people who come together to support their football teams. It automatically produces spatial and social competitions among the fan groups: two or more groups compete to win the game. Sports accommodates opposite groups: us (positive side) and them (negative side); thus, it offers fans a sense of belonging through group association (Boniface, 2007, p. 49).

To open up this argument, Brown (1998) declares that football is a powerful catalyst for social identities: “Football teams and matches are usually a primary motivating factor and place for assertion and celebration of various identities whether they be local, religious, ethnic, professional, or whatever” (p. 159). Furthermore, the performance of football teams sometimes gains a social signification and symbolism. It involves the main values and themes of modern societies: solidarity, competition, success, failure, individualism, and teamwork (Brown, 1998, p. 159). Thus, the immense popular exaltation around football is not surprising, and it always represents an identity in opposition to many others (Brown, 1998, p. 159). National identity in particular is the most developed identity in all forms of the social identification issue, according to Brown (Brown, 1998, p. 159). This can be a similar identification which I research in my thesis: political identification.

The world consists of nations. Nationality is an inseparable part of us. Carrington says that sport is a symbol of the production and reproduction of social identities (Brown, 1998, p. 102). In parallel with that, Hobsbawn’s argument on identity of a nation of millions seem more real when a team of eleven people can

help us to understand the relationship between national identity construction and football (Brown, 1998, p. 102). According to Brown, all people can be a little bit nationalist when their national teams are playing (Brown, 1998, p. 159). Football can unify groups which cannot be unified under normal circumstances. For instance, multiethnic or multinational states such as Spain can unify around the national football team (Brown, 1998, p. 161). But we know that in Spain there are separatist groups such as the Catalans, whose football team Barcelona is the capital of their region. This is one explanation on how football promises several identities to people. All these explanations can tell us something about the connective role of football among many people around the world.

In addition to these examples, we can talk about more individualistic features of fandom identity related to the modern age. According to this dimension, football carries a dissident character, representing resistance to the routinized work and life habits of modern age. In this way, football plays an important role that decreases the effects of mechanization and the alienation of the modern age (Kaplan, 2004, pp. 295-300). Thus, football fandom can offer people peace and a chance for clearing the mind. Fandom is loaded with an identity which goes beyond the entertainment or sports. Fandom identity is such an entity that fans can define themselves among millions of fans and think that they have the same values as them (Şentürk, 2007, p. 36). Through this way, a person who is unsuccessful or unlucky in real life can get credit from the success of his football team. For instance, the only moment when a civil servant who supports Fenerbahçe can feel more successful than his boss who supports Galatasaray is the moment when Fenerbahçe wins against Galatasaray. I think it is a remarkable example developed by Şentürk (Şentürk, 2007, p. 37) based

on an argument of Galeano (2008): “One does not say so much that my team is playing today but one says that we are playing” (pp. 21-22).

3.2.3 Creating realms of resistance through football fandom

All these features of football unveil the role of football in social identification. My aim is to reveal the subjectivity of football fandom by going beyond the social identification or accessibility of football. As I explained, social identification is an important step in the mobilization of football fans. I will now dig into political identification in the mobilization of fans. I claim that football fandom offers people realms of resistance in times of social upheaval as well as realms of performance of the dissent of people on political issues. This section will show how football fans use football fandom against power groups or governments and how football fans use football fandom as a medium of politics. It will tell the story of the football as a weapon of the fans in political sense as I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. In addition, this chapter will show the uniqueness of the character of the Gezi Movement by comparing it with different examples of fandom mobilizations from other countries around the world.

Some left wing scholars think that football cannot be a weapon; they argue that it is used as an opiate to subordinate people (Boniface, 2007, p. 125). For instance, at the beginning of the 1900s in Latin America, football was seen from this perspective (Boniface, 2007, p. 125). However, this idea was negated by leftist intellectuals such as Che Guevara, who praised football and who was a huge fan of

football,⁵⁹ and Antonio Gramsci, who contributed to the newspaper *Avanti*, not only theater reviews but also the odd match report.⁶⁰ Gramsci wrote that “football is a model of an individualistic society. It demands initiative, competition and conflict. But it is regulated by the unwritten rule of fair play.”⁶¹ To give another example, FC Metz participated in the France Cup in 1984. The miners from Lorraine who came to the match in Paris to support FC Metz protested in Paris streets the closure of their factories (Bora, Reiter & Horak, 1993, p. 125). Thus, what we see here is not an opium effect, but a real protest.

Boniface argues that sometimes associations of national teams or football clubs intersect with the movements regarding the demand of the people (Boniface, 2007, p. 127). In the authoritarian states in particular, coming together in football stadiums is an exceptional moment which is tolerated by the authoritarian government. When football fans voice their demands under the guise of supporting their teams, a prohibited opposition concretizes in this condition (Boniface, 2007, p. 127). For instance, in the Roman Empire, stadiums and circuses were special places where there was an only chance to give voice to the opposition. People could show their oppositions through supporting the team that the emperor did not support. This is one instance from history that shows us places where opposition was voiced (Boniface, 2007, p. 126).

With regard to this approach, Brown (1998) states:

It is difficult to think of any other industry where those at the bottom of the hierarchy have been able to overturn the running and ownership of what are multi-million pound enterprises. It illustrates above all else the power that

⁵⁹ Brazilian Football Club Celebrates Che Guevara Link, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-25489007>, Accessed on 28.08.2017

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, Camus, Grass – The Dream Team, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2006/apr/21/sport.comment1>, Accessed on 28.08.2017

⁶¹ Nietzsche, Camus, Grass – The Dream Team, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2006/apr/21/sport.comment1>, Accessed on 28.08.2017

supporters can wield and represents a politicization of football's fandom and an economic and ideological challenge to the status quo (p. 53).

As I explained in the beginning of this chapter, history shows us government manipulation of football to extend their power. But the following examples can show that the counter-argument is also true. For instance, the Mexican government organized the World Cup of 1986, hoping that its regime would have popular support; however, it turned out to be an anti-government show. Mexican people walked in the streets and chanted, "We want beans, not goals!" (Boniface, 2007, p. 124).

3.2.4 Football as a display of ethnic identity: FC Barcelona and Catalan

It is worth mentioning the Football Club (FC) of Barcelona as a remarkable example of expression of ethnic identity and ethnic struggle through football fandom.

Barcelona represents the resistance of the Catalans against the official Spanish identity. This situation is defined by Artells as the epic exaltation of Catalan identity in the form of a football team (as cited in Llopis-Goig, 2015). There is a slogan of FC Barcelona on its website that states: "More than a club".⁶² It is a historic slogan which characterizes the club. Under the "More than a club" slogan, FC Barcelona introduces the club:

The slogan "more than a club" expresses the commitment that Football Club Barcelona has maintained and still maintains beyond what belongs in the realm of sport. For many years, this commitment specifically referred to Catalan society, which for many decades of the 20th century lived under dictatorship that persecuted its language and culture. Under these circumstances, Barça always supported Catalan sentiments, and the defence of its own language and culture...Outside of Catalonia, Barça became

⁶² More Than A Club: A Historic Slogan, <https://www.fcbarcelona.com/club/identity/card/more-than-a-club->, Accessed on 25.07.2017

symbolic of democracy and anti-centralism...Barça continues to be “more than a club” both in Catalonia and elsewhere in the world, and is implied in numerous cultural, social and charity initiatives.⁶³

We need to ask how come this football club went beyond the sportive boundaries and became a symbol for a non-sportive sociological phenomenon. It is argued that FC Barcelona symbolizes frustrations and aspirations of the Catalan people as a nation without a state (Bora, Reiter & Horak, 1993, p. 125) and that without understanding Catalonia, we cannot understand FC Barcelona (Bora, Reiter & Horak, 1993, p. 126). For this reason, sportive victories of FC Barcelona are taken as political victories of the Catalan people or vice versa. For instance, both the ethnic and the sportive rivalry of FC Barcelona and Real Madrid signify the Catalan struggle for freedom for years against the Spanish state (Foer, 2004, p. 183). For instance, Franco had enmity against FC Barcelona and was a strong supporter of Real Madrid, who represented the Spanish authorities. When the unions of Franco attacked Catalonia, they immediately bombed the building where the FC Barcelona cups are located.

The supporters of Franco tried to change the identity of FC Barcelona. For instance, they requested that they change the name of the club from “Football Club Barcelona” to “Club de Football Barcelona” and to remove the Catalan flag from the team emblem. (Foer, 2004, p. 190). It was not a simple name change; it was the translation of the name into Castilian Spanish. The Franco regime found a president, the leader of an anti-Marxist division in the civil war, for FC Barcelona in order to monitor the change in the ideology of the club. He archived everything about the people related to FC Barcelona. It was thought that he could identify and prevent people who had secret sympathy towards FC Barcelona (Foer, 2004, p. 190).

⁶³ More Than A Club: A Historic Slogan, <https://www.fcbarcelona.com/club/identity/card/more-than-a-club->, Accessed on 25.07.2017

Hence, FC Barcelona symbolizes Catalonia, and Real Madrid symbolizes the Kingdom of Spain, the status quo. All the matches, regardless of the context between the two teams, are called “El Clasico/The Classic.” These matches are not only football matches; they lie on deep historical and political roots. Thus, these El Clasico matches have a symbolic importance for both sides:

Barca-Real Madrid matches have a nickname: “El Clasico/The Classic” and they are some of the world’s most-watched sporting events, seen by 400 people in 30 countries. But local passions run high. In Spain, where football has deep political and cultural connotations, many see the clashes of Spain’s most successful teams as a proxy battle between wealthy Catalonia and the central government in Madrid. If Barca is a symbol of Catalan nationalism, Real Madrid is an emblem of a united Spain.⁶⁴

Ramon L. Goig states that FC Barcelona used mostly native players until the 1960s, when they started to transfer foreign players to make itself more powerful against Real Madrid (Goig, 2008, p. 60). Although this policy did not work until the mid 1980s, FC Barcelona became one of the most important institutions of Catalonia in terms of economic and political discourse. Specifically, the pressure on Catalonia loaded a special meaning to this club after the Spanish civil war. The Les Corts stadium became the powerful performance space of Catalan nationalism, where Catalan flags (Senyeres) are waved, Catalan songs (Els Segadors) are sung and Catalan is spoken (Goig, 2008, p. 60). In parallel with this, FC Barcelona went beyond figurativeness and became a tool to express collective Catalan identity in times of prohibition. Supporting FC Barcelona became a consistent way for Catalan nationalism and Catalan identity in the atmosphere consisting of political and cultural pressure as well as pressure on Catalan language (Zelyurt, 2013, p. 190).

⁶⁴ Barcelona More Than a Soccer Club; It’s an Identity for Catalans, <https://www.si.com/soccer/2012/10/29/barcelona-catalan-identity-ap>, Accessed on 27.07.2017

3.2.5 Football as a display of ethnic identity: Football in the Balkans

For the Balkan region, where ethnic and religious differences have caused bloody massacres and wars, football means much more than a branch of sports. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was composed of different ethnic groups and states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

The fragmentation of Yugoslavia and hostilities during the civil war were reflected in sports as well. For instance, the Yugoslavia national basketball team beat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and became the world champion at the 1990 FIBA World Championship. After the final match, Serbian players celebrated in one place while Croatian players celebrated in another place of the basketball court (Alili, 2010, p.53). Croatia players were waving checkered Dalmatian flags while Serbian players were waving the Yugoslav flag. Luckily, Drazen Petrović grabbed a picture of Tito and gathered the team in midfield, thus preventing possible chaos among the team players (Alili, 2010, p. 53).

Yugoslavia was in the process of fragmentation in 1990, and ethnic violence was increasing. As a result of this political polarization of Serbian and Croatia identities, football became a tool for nationalist violence and politics through football fan organizations (Zelyurt, 2013, p. 194). On 13 May 1990, there was a match between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star that was played in the Maksimir Stadium of Zagreb.⁶⁵ This match ignited the civil war between Serbia and Croatia, so it has a historical and political importance, considering its results. Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star were already big rivals in the Yugoslavian league and the ethnic dispute was already tense between the two sides who were affected by nationalist ideologies and

⁶⁵ 25th Anniversary of Kick Fragmenting Yugoslavia (Yugoslavya'yı Bölen Tekmenin 25. Yıl Dönümü), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yugoslavyayi-bolen-tekmenin-25-yildonumu-28995379>, Accessed on 28.07.2017

the government. The Maksimir Stadium was full of Bad Blue Boys—a football fan group—of Dinamo Zagreb and Delije—a football fan group of Red Star.⁶⁶

Two weeks before this match, a far-right nationalist politician, Franjo Tudjman, was elected as the new president of Croatia and he took an oath to make Croatia independent. He also adopted the symbol “Ustache³⁹” of the Croatian fascists who had helped in the killing of hundreds of thousands Serbians by the Nazis (Foer, 2004, p. 21). All these developments awakened the nationalist desires of the Croatian people. Right before the match began at Maksimir Stadium, the two rival groups burned their cars outside of the stadium. When the match started, Delije melted the wire fences of the stadium and invaded the field. Bad Blue Boys responded in the same way and the events got out of hand. Red Stars players left the field and went to changing room while Dinamo Zagreb players stayed in the field under the leadership of Boban, one of the players in the team.⁶⁷ The Croatian fans and the Serbian police suddenly started to fight. Boban kicked a police officer, which resulted in his being banished from football. In the beginning, it was thought that the police officer was Serbian, but later it was learned that he was a Bosnian. Boban said, “I would kick him again if it happened again.”⁶⁸ As a result, on that day, 59 fans and 79 police officers were injured.

This match between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star ignited the civil war between Serbia and Croatia. This example shows how people can mobilize through football fandom and how football can be connected to politics. Related to this, the

⁶⁶ 25th Anniversary of Kick Fragmenting Yugoslavia (Yugoslavya’yı Bölen Tekmenin 25. Yıl Dönümü), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yugoslavyayi-bolen-tekmenin-25-yildonumu-28995379>, Accessed on 28.07.2017

⁶⁷ 25th Anniversary of Kick Fragmenting Yugoslavia (Yugoslavya’yı Bölen Tekmenin 25. Yıl Dönümü), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yugoslavyayi-bolen-tekmenin-25-yildonumu-28995379>, Accessed on 28.07.2017

⁶⁸ 25th Anniversary of Kick Fragmenting Yugoslavia (Yugoslavya’yı Bölen Tekmenin 25. Yıl Dönümü), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yugoslavyayi-bolen-tekmenin-25-yildonumu-28995379>, Accessed on 28.07.2017

Croatian player Hrvoje Cale, who had played in a Turkish football team (Trabzonspor), stated that a regional league in Yugoslavia should not be established since it can ignite the hostilities between different ethnic groups:

“I don’t believe the establishment of such a league because there are lots of hostilities between the fans. The fans will create a scene in every match until the hostilities are removed. This may seem right to use unifying role of sports, yet many people still live with their war memories. It can be risky to establish this since the memories are still fresh. The war means death of people. It’s very bad to make a war for the issues people can solve through talking. Me, my family and my people experienced this.”⁶⁹

3.2.6 Football as a display of religious identity: The United Kingdom context

Attached to the United Kingdom, Scottish football also has a football competition between Celtic FC and Rangers FC, reflecting different sectarian identities in the region. This competition is based on the separation of Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom and has a predominantly Catholic population. Sectarianism reflects the history of ethnic separation between Protestant Scots and Irish Catholics.

According to Joseph M. Bradley (1998), the character of football in Scotland has a symbolic value:

The origins and development of Rangers and Celtic as well as their links to the wider society in Scotland and beyond, gives much of Scottish football a character which rises above the mere mundane of sport in all its simplicity and beauty, and which gives it an intrinsic symbolic value (p. 204).

Celtic FC was established by Catholic priests who migrated from Ireland to Scotland in 1888. The Celtic name comes from the Celts because the Irish Celts wanted to give a distinctive name to their football club. Catholics, who supported Celtic FC were despised because of their migrant and minority identity, and they remained

⁶⁹ War Starter Match From the Eyes of Trabzonspor Player (Trabzonsporlu Oyuncunun Gözünden Savaş Başlatan Maç), <http://www.radikal.com.tr/spor/trabzonsporlu-oyuncunun-gozunden-savas-baslata-mac-926785/>, Accessed on 28.07.2017

under pressure of Protestants in Scotland. The Rangers FC was established by Protestants in 1873. Since 1888, there have been matches between the two clubs since Celtic FC always wanted an independent Scotland while the Rangers FC supported the unification of Scotland with England. The Celtic FC has always showed a better performance than the Rangers FC, even from the first match, which concluded 1-0 with the superiority of the Celtic FC. Protestants had always a hard time absorbing it. Moreover, the matches between the two teams are called “Old Firm,” which underlines the importance of the commercial side of this historical competition.

The Rangers FC hangs the United Kingdom flag and the Celtic FC hangs the Irish flags in the stadiums. Moreover, the Rangers FC uses “Billy Boys” as their march even though this march is forbidden by the UEFA and the Scotland Football Federation. The Rangers FC is always punished for this violation, but the Rangers FC fans continue to sing it as a sign of rebellion. Celtic FC fans, as a response to the Billy Boys, sing “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” the song of the Liverpool football club, and the Irish independence march. As Bradley (1998) underlines, “In Scotland football is often characterized by songs which convey a set of identities which are indicative of many of the identities and underlying features of society.” (Bradley, 1998, p. 203). According to Bradley, these marches symbolize fundamental aspects of the identity of most football fans in Scotland; hence, these are important in the social and political analysis of Scottish society (p. 203).

This football competition does not take place only in Scotland. Foer (2012) states that the eternal rivalry between Celtic FC and Rangers FC also unsettles Northern Ireland even more from Glasgow’s scene (p. 64). On a match day, the

border between the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods had burning cars, marches, fireworks, gunfights and knife fights (p. 64).

According to Bradley, Celtic FC is the proof of the Irish presence in Scotland (Bradley, 2006). Moreover, for the Irish diaspora in Scotland, Celtic FC is a tool for Irish identity construction in the public space (Bradley, 2006). Tom Gallagher argues that the matches between the Celtic FC and the Rangers FC ignite nationalist feelings, and these are used as war metaphors (Zelyurt, 2013, p. 197). He states that the rivalry between the two groups, whose members usually have a working class background, contributes to their identity construction through football competition (Zelyurt, 2013, p. 197). Furthermore, Craig McGill emphasizes the role of religion in this competition: “Connection of some beliefs with a specific team is much more about demography rather than religion. However, religion is attributed such a big importance in Scotland more than ever in any place in Western Europe, except for Northern Ireland. Playing a match doesn’t cause any hate to rise due to religious differences anywhere else of the world” (Zelyurt, 2013, p. 197). Bradley stated that Celtic is seen as a metaphor for the entire Irish Catholic tradition, while Scottish anti-Catholicism has evolved within Scottish football in response to this social, cultural and political reality (Bradley, 1998, p. 216).

3.2.7 Football as a resistance realm: The colonial context

Another example of football as a resistance realm can be seen in the colonial context. The development of football in the colonial experience can show us the diversity of football fandom in relation to the transformation into political dissent. We can talk about football as a form of imperial power in this context. According to Brown,

FIFA was seen as an extended family of a paternal and neocolonial view of world development, which means the transmission of economic and cultural hegemony from a modern European center to a premier third world periphery (Brown, 1998, p.27). Football itself was seen uncritically as a good play for the “savages” (Brown, 1998, p. 27). However, when football was introduced in the colonies, Africa in particular, it was adopted by the indigenous people (Brown, 1998, p. 28). During the African struggle for independence, football became the channel in which people expressed their republican hopes. In addition to that, in the post-colonial times, especially in the regions which suffered from a low level of economic prosperity, football became the symbol of national identity on the international occasions (Brown, 1998, p. 28).

3.2.8 Football and politics in Latin America

In Latin America, football is not only football but it is a passion and unifying force across a wide range of people living there. Raul Perez Torres rewrote Jorge Manuel Rodrigues’s argument on the position of football in Latin America: “When we compare our position, progress in drinking water, corruption, rate of literacy, institutionalization, canalization and democracy as a country which is on the FIFA list, unfortunately this branch of sport has much better condition. As a result of this, we are not proud of our highways, health centers or education system but of having a world cup” (as cited in Pilpil Yöney, 2012, p. 36).

The Latin American society is radicalized according to the football clubs they support. Eduardo Galeano (2008) states: “A deep fan enjoys more not with the victory of his club but with the defeat of his rival club” (pp. 153-154). For instance, a

man who chanted against River Plate all his life wanted to be buried wrapped in this team's flag so that people would think a person from "others" has died (Galeano, 2008, pp. 153-154). Eduardo Galeano states that we can find a lot of villages without schools in Brazil, but we cannot find a village without football fields anywhere in the country. Hence, football in the Brazilian context is not only a branch of sports but it is a significant part of everyday life and an ideal that people cling to (Galeano, 2008, p. 191).

I would like to give some specific examples that prove the interconnectivity of football and politics in Latin America. Argentina and Peru had a playoff football match at the Tokyo Olympics on 24 May 1964. This date was the day football turned into violence. Towards the end of this match, the referee cancelled the goal that the Peruvian team scored. As a result, angry Peru supporters started to riot, which ended up with 318 dead and 5,000 injured. In the end, the Peruvian government had to declare state of emergency in the country (Donuk and Şenduran, 2006, p. 123).

In 1982, Argentinean leader Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri Castelli occupied the Falkland Islands and this naturally increased the tensions. This tension was obvious in many areas, including football. Regardless of whether the match was a friendly match or an official match, the two sides were always cut-throat and they still are (Donuk and Şenduran, 2006, pp. 106-107).

3.2.9 Football as a display of peasant dissent

One can say that the most prominent example of the connectivity between football and politics in Latin America is The Soccer War. The reason behind this war was not only football; yet football became the igniting power of the incidents. Honduras had

a population of 2,333,000 people and occupies 42,300 square miles. El Salvador had a population of 3,000,000 people and occupies 8,000 square miles. Inevitably, an estimated 300,000 Salvadorans migrated into Honduran territory. The Salvadoran people were about 20% of all the peasant population of Honduras, and Honduran lands are largely owned by big corporations or big landowners. Many Salvadorans found jobs in factories. Thus, many peasant Hondurans started to get annoyed by this situation because they were also poor (Barrett et al.). Besides, due to dense migration, the borders between the two countries are not clearly defined. Many actions were taken to control border problems. The last one was a two-year accord which expired in 1969 and was not renewed. Then Honduras started to implement a law which required taking lands away from some of the Salvadorans. These situations also accelerated the tension between the two countries, who met for a soccer match in Tegucigalpa on 8 June 1969 (Barrett et al).

The Salvadoran team arrived in Tegucigalpa and spent a sleepless night right before the match because they were the target of psychological war performed by Honduran fans, who clustered around the hotel. These fans were throwing stones at the windows and hitting empty tins and this lasted all night long so that the Salvadoran team would lose the match. The next day, Honduras beat El Salvador and 18-year-old Amelia Bolanias killed herself in due to this result. The return match was held a week later at the Flora Blanca Stadium in El Salvador. This time the Honduran team spent a sleepless night due to broken windows, eggs being thrown, and so on. The Honduran team was taken to the stadium with a police escort and an armored vehicle due to the hot-blooded and revengeful crowd of people who were angry because of the death of Amelia Bolanias. The Salvadorans burned the Honduran flag and hung up torn fabric instead. They whistled during the national

anthem of Honduras. El Salvador beat Honduras. The Honduran fans who had come to support their team were beaten by Salvadoran fans, and two Hondurans died. All the vehicles were burned and the border between the two countries was closed. A plane bombed Tegucigalpa in the night and knocked out all the electric power supply (Donuk and Şenduran, 2006, p. 111).

This is called the Soccer War and it is known that it lasted for 100 hours. It caused 400 people to be killed and more than 12,000 people injured. Around 50,000 people lost their houses and land and many villages were evacuated. The match which determined the team who would be eligible for World Cup was played at a neutral place, in Mexico. The Salvadoran team beat the Honduran team. Among the fans, there were 5,000 Mexican police armed with very thick nightsticks (Donuk and Şenduran, 2006, pp. 111-112). The effects of the Soccer War lasted for many years and caused huge damage on both sides.

3.2.10 Football in the economic development context

Colombia's political and social history passed with the stories of violence, and the perception of the international community has been shaped by these stories. The early exit of Colombia from the 1994 World Cup and the incidents following this exit have reinforced this image of Colombia in the international community.

In the 1990s, the Colombian football team was so successful that even the football legend Pele picked the Colombian team to win the World Cup in 1994. Everyone thought that Colombia could easily win against Romania, Switzerland and

the United States who were members of its group.⁷⁰ Yet they lost against Romania in the first match. Everybody was shocked and Colombia urgently needed to win against the United States. Colombian coach Francisco Maturana and halfback Gabriel Gomez were receiving death threats in these days. According to the newspaper *La Prensa*, a “shadowy death squad” had warned Maturana about bomb in his house and Gomez’s house if Maturana put Gomez on the field.⁷¹ The threat further instructed Maturana to put Hernan Gaviria in place of Gomez. Maturana did not accept this, yet senior Colombian soccer officials overrode him in the match and replaced Gomez with Gaviria.⁷² But Colombia could not defeat United States and the score of the match was 1-1 with a goal of Andres Escobar, who hit the ball into his own net. This was seen as an American victory.

The next day, the headlines were so disgracing for the Colombian team: *La Prensa*’s “Humiliated by the United States” and *The Guardian*’s “Soccer: A Defeat that Stunk Out the Field”.⁷³ Even though Colombia defeated Switzerland 2-0, they did not manage to go further in the World Cup in 1994. A week after this event, a player of the Colombian team, Andres Escobar, was murdered in a shooting. His fiancée, Pamela Cascardo, said that the shooter was saying “Gooooal!” after each shot. Other witnesses said that the shooter screamed as “Thanks for the self-goal, you son of a bitch.”⁷⁴ Escobar’s death was so shocking-since it happened right after the World Cup 1994, which was watched by 2 billion people throughout the world.

⁷⁰ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷¹ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷² Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷³ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷⁴ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

The death of Escobar, indeed, was not the only soccer-related homicide in Colombia. There were several killings throughout the years, including a referee, Alvaro Ortega, the secretary of the Metropolitan Soccer League. The widespread belief is that these killings were done by Colombian gamblers who were connected to cocaine cartels. These gamblers bet hundreds of thousands of dollars on a single game.⁷⁵ Thus, we may argue that the violence in Colombian soccer is related to cocaine cartels. Colombian cartels were producing 62% of world's cocaine now, down from 80% before.⁷⁶ According to an estimation, 10 to 15 cents of every dollar of cocaine goes into Colombia's armed right and left groups of, deepening the political guerilla fighting.⁷⁷

Most scholars think it is not a coincidence that the most successful years of Colombian soccer were the years of increasing cocaine popularity.⁷⁸ For instance, a popular drug king and the main financier of the Medellin soccer club, Pablo Escobar, was buried with an Atletico national flag. In parallel with this indicator, Colombia's Justice Minister Rodrigo Bonilla was assassinated since he was the first critic of cartel clubs such as Medellin. But Courtney Ginn argues that laundering cocaine money through soccer clubs is not the only reason for cartels to invest in these clubs.⁷⁹ Rather, in Latin America soccer is a prevalent obsession in Colombia, and cartels gain power, status and the ability to affect the public opinion through soccer

⁷⁵ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷⁶ Political Football: Rene Higueta, <http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/world/americas/political+football+rene+higueta/2154447.html>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷⁷ Political Football: Rene Higueta, <http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/world/americas/political+football+rene+higueta/2154447.html>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷⁸ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

⁷⁹ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

clubs, and this power is important to fight against the Colombian government and other international governments.⁸⁰

Since football has been an obsession in Colombia for so many years, we cannot think of the history of football without social processes and its regional and institutional role in the country (Bolivar, 2012). Ingrid J. Bolivar argues that the stories of interrelatedness of drug cartels and soccer clubs ignores the players themselves and their experiences in social struggles in their communities of origin, and Colombian social scientists have not studied the social history of sports and sports players (Bolivar, 2012). According to him, we need to evaluate their use of sports and leisure within the history of public spaces in poor or working class neighborhoods (Bolivar, 2012). This will also enlighten us about their experiences on other processes such as political violence, which is one of the characteristics of national society (Bolivar, 2012). A Colombian historian states:

Colombians should play in their own style, essentially short-passing game based on the individual ball control of the players, but he (Maturana) also insisted on the importance of teamwork, maximizing the regional characteristics of the players. So in midfield the need was for hard workers and well-disciplined players, provided by Alvarez and Gomez from the Antioquia region where such qualities are commonplace, while the fantasy was left to Valderrama, Asprilla and Rincon, people from Cali and the Coast who were harder to discipline but more creative (Mason, 1995, p. 140).

Bolivar argues that these sentences actually offer us a new soccer-oriented geography (Bolivar, 2012). Antioquians are presented as hard-working, while the Caribbean people, especially Afro-Americans are presented as “difficult to discipline, but creative.” Bolivar thinks that the geography which is imagined by soccer players according to their capabilities can give some insight to us on the bond between the state and forms of popular culture expressed in the social origins of many players in Colombia (Bolivar, 2012).

⁸⁰ Colombia, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/politics-and-sport-in-latin-america/columbia/>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

3.2.11 Football as a resistance realm: Egyptian context

In the Egyptian revolution of 2011, football fans played a significant role during the anti-authoritarian resistance against the Egyptian government. The football fan groups brought together politically unorganized and dispersed masses during the police violence they experienced in this revolution process. The Egyptian experience and the Turkish experience are not the same in character. The Egyptian experience of football fandom mobilization has a nationalist character, while Turkish experience is a civic resistance. However, similarities allow us to compare them. Özçetin and Turan state that the Egyptian government suppressed the opposition groups so much that there were only two groups that could breath under those conditions: Muslim Brotherhood in the mosques and Ultras in the stadiums (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 120).

Assad the stands leader underlines the importance of football fan groups in the Egyptian Revolution: “There was no any independent institutions, not even syndicates or political parties. Then we started to organize the Ultras... For them, Ultras were young, crowded and smart. They can be organized so fast. They feared us” (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 120). That was the reason why football fans became suspects in the Egyptian revolution (Woltering, 2013, p. 290). However, we should consider the politicization of football fan groups as a part of the social and political movements of Egypt in the 2000s since the opposition groups started to make a sound against the authoritarian Mubarek government (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 121).

The politicization of the Ultras in Egypt has a history of violence during police encounters. The Ultras’ past experiences with police violence played a key role in the revolution and defense of Tahrir Square. The presence of the Ultras was a

source of trust and courage for many people. For instance, one protester stated, “They are very organized and don’t care about media attention. They have a disposition to struggle in hard times” (Tuastad, 2014, p. 378). This person further underlined that, without the presence of football fan groups, they could not have taken and held Tahrir Square:

“Especially the protesters needed to be protected by vanguards in order for them to stay at Tahrir Square. The years of clashes with police forces made the Ultras the ideal guards of revolution. They knew hit and run tactics and how to behave collectively, how to survive and escape. They exposed to tear gas for long periods of time, communicated by drums in order to alert others to police attacks, identified provocateurs, whistled and sang as tactics to retreat, prevented stampedes, responded to attacks with fireworks, and endured pain (most of them had experienced maltreatment and even torture in police stations).” (Tuastad, 2014, p. 378).

Football fan groups were leaders in defending the people in Tahrir Square against the pro-government paramilitary forces with horses and camels on 25 January 2011 (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 127). This event is known as the “Camels’ War” and football fan groups played a significant role in this war and in spreading the resistance. They knew how to fight with the police and how to move collectively (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 127). This was also a chance to be even for Ultras against the security forces. As Ahmet from the Ultras White Chevaliers of Zamalek said: “We fight with the police in every match. We know them. We know when they run and when we need to make them run. We teach protesters how to throw bricks.”⁸¹

What do these experiences say about the Egyptian revolution and the politicization of football fan groups in Egypt, then? Tuastad argues that social upheavals and football fans who are part of them are far from sharing a common political consciousness, and they have an ideology which can be called “negative

⁸¹ James Montague, “Egypt’s politicised football hooligans”, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/02/20122215833232195.html>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

class consciousness.” According to Tuastad, this negative class consciousness defines itself in terms of its enemies rather than specified and limited ideological factors (Tuastad, 2014, pp. 380-381). Furthermore, he underlines that common political or ideological indicators (right, left, Islamist, pro-regime/anti-regime) do not have a place in their political orientation. Muhammed Beşir, an expert on the Ultras, supports the argument of Tuastad:

“It’s safe to say that 80 per cent of the Egyptian population doesn’t know anything about politics, and the same goes for the Ultras. The Ultras only stand out because they are a sizeable group, but they are not really unified when it comes to politics. Some members might be from all across the political spectrum, others are completely apathetic. Some participate in demonstrations, others don’t. They are like any other community; you can find all kinds of people in the Ultras groups. Outside the stadium, therefore, they move and act as individuals. They only appear as one body when they all agree on one thing, which happens very seldom.”⁸²

Özçetin and Turan indicate that, according to Tuastad, the point is the manifestation of the youth trying to be free from the patriarchal ties of the Arab world, which is full of political and social upheavals rather than a political partnership or an ideological unity (Özçetin and Turan, 2015, p. 129). In that sense, football has been transformed into a weapon of self-expression for the weak in Arab world (Tuastad, 2014, p. 384).

⁸² Sherif Tarek, “Egypt’s Ultras: Politically involved but not politically driven, yet”, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/0/31904/Egypt/0/Egypt%E2%80%99s-Ultras-Politically-involved-but-not-politi.aspx>, Accessed on 20.06.2017

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Having established the historical and theoretical background on football fandom mobilization, I would like to turn to the findings of my interviews. These findings are crucial to address politicization of people through football fandom since they are the concrete experiences of individuals. They also constitute a collective imagination, and these common experiences help demonstrate how football fandom is mobilized from below by the fans. I will evaluate my interviews within the framework of themes: Why football and why football fan groups; leftist organizations versus football fan groups, attitudes towards football fan groups and encounters, trust in football fans, Beşiktaş as a living space of Çarşı, Passoleague and Çarşı trials.

4.1 Why football and why football fan groups?

Before moving into my interview themes, I would like to give a brief introduction about the ideas of my interviewees on football in general and football fan groups in particular. They generally told me about their opinions of Çarşı, stands, football slogans, and so on. These opinions directed them when the time came for the Gezi Movement. They had prior opinions, and it was really interesting to hear them considering their change of ideas and feelings.

For instance, Bilge and İlber said that the atmosphere in the stands and the football slogans were always attractive to him:

Bilge: “It is really a beautiful environment, 55,000 people came together and were watching the same thing in the same place and I was watching them more than the match. It was terrific I think bigger stadiums should be built. You see the image coming before sound, the opposite team says something to your team while you answer them... Football fans actually led us through

these slogans. These football slogans were transforming into politics and Çarşı and others led this.”

İlber: “In that period, it was common to make slogans out of marches in the stands. For instance, shoot it, shoot it, fire the tear gas was always chanted. Everybody was supporting this march. It was humorous and dissident. This slogan was good. I remember singing it for 15-20 minutes without stopping.”

Bradley argued that football marches symbolize the fundamental aspects of identities of the most football fans and these are important in the social and political analysis of the relevant society (Bradley, 1998, p. 203). Along the same lines, Serra mentioned his passion for collective cheering and marches in the stands in order to have a sense of belonging:

“I am a fan of Galatasaray because I love the crowds. In fact, I used to go to the Ultraslan stands in the basketball matches on purpose. I was near the shirtless male fans. Maybe this was disgusting but I liked yelling together and cheering together and being a part of this group both there and the Gezi Movement.”

Serra was not compelled by anyone to cheer and march with football fans, as Boniface reports. Football encouraged Serra by offering enthusiasm of the sport itself (Boniface, 2007, p. 10). Besides these features of football as sports, we need to give credit to Çarşı for taking all the sympathy of people who attended the Gezi Movement. Sinan gave the impression he had about Çarşı group before the Gezi Movement:

“Çarşı didn’t embarrass me and made me proud of them in the Gezi Movement. I knew them from my childhood. I associate Beşiktaş with left-wing politics due to Çarşı. It is also a more sympathetic team than the hegemony of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe. They said, “Feda (Sacrifice)”, can I tell you? They have this sympathy always. They don’t have a stadium for two years and their players always get injured; but they still introduce goodness... The reason why I love Çarşı was their leftist position.”

Kaan told that he appreciates the sincere desire of Çarşı to defend their beliefs:

“I always believe one thing. It doesn’t matter how, where or in front of whom you defend your belief, even if you are the only one. If someone sees you or is aware of what you defend, it means that you have affected lots of people. Çarşı as a group, defended something, they were in the public eye and it

didn't matter what they did. They backed up what they defended and that's why they affected everyone. They defended their beliefs by making us believe in that thing and by making it strong.”

Güney thinks that football is one of the most logical areas that you can use to reach a large number of people in Turkey:

“I think an awakening is started, Gezi Park started an awakening. Football is one of the most logical areas that one can use in terms of reaching people. When you look at Çarşı, Sol Açık or Tek Yumruk, these are already leftist groups and most of the people came there thanks to their motivation. Even if they weren't included in them, they allied with them after seeing that they thought in a similar way.”

İlber mentioned that the unification of rival football fan groups can give us so many messages if we know how to comment about previous deadly rivalries:

“We shouldn't think only of Istanbul-based football fan groups. I think the biggest derby of Turkey is between Göztepe and Karşıyaka. I'm saying this as a supporter of both Fenerbahçe and Karşıyaka. The derby between Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray is a world derby because it has appeared in the Istanbul media. This rage and competition even don't exist between Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray. It was a shocking thing for everyone in Izmir. A Karşıyaka and a Göztepe supporter were together on a pole. It was so impossible that I wouldn't even give a possibility for this. It's a history of the groups who never come side by side.”

All these comments from my interviewees might show that all these people had some prior opinions on football fan groups, the football atmosphere and these might steer them in a particular direction at the Gezi Movement. All these comments are consistent with my previous distinction between approaching football from above versus from below. As my interviewees commented, we may see football as a people's game and as a tool for mobilization or, as weapon of the fans, in my case.

4.2 Leftist organizations versus football fan groups

My interviewees were not politically organized, as I stated in the introduction since my target group were the ones that were not politically organized and walked with the football fans. In my first attempt to analyze the interview notes, I came to recognize that the common point of them is about the “humanistic” side of football fan groups. For instance, Feyza told me that the most important reason why he walked with Çarşı is the humanistic part of this group. She explains her choice:

“We can differentiate the several groups. I chose the most humanistic one. I have a political belief, but I chose the humanistic side. When I look humanistically, I saw that the football fan groups, specifically Çarşı, is the most humanistic one. The places where fan groups called us were safer for me. I went to these places, it’s a fact. Because everybody called for different places. I don’t go to a place where Ahmet or Mehmet calls or communist party calls; but I went to the place where Ultraslan called.”

Yavuz, in parallel with Feyza, stated a similar reason for walking and chanting with football fans. He saw Çarşı as a suprapolitical platform and he took the humanistic point of Çarşı as the most important thing:

“Çarşı is placed on a suprapolitics platform. It’s not a side of politics. Other political groups such as HDP, TKP, EMEP are all a part of politics, according to their political ideologies. But Çarşı went to Gezi Park only to make things right, while the political groups didn’t have such a notion. Çarşı is concerned about humanistic points rather than politics.”

In addition to the humanistic point, the notion of political benefit was also a concern of my interviewees. For instance, Feyza and Yavuz mentioned this issue. Feyza told me that he did not want to be a part of political benefit of any political organization:

“They are the people who don’t use people for a political aim. They put on their foulards and some of them have cafes in Beşiktaş where we saw these people every day. They didn’t approach the protests politically, they even protected AKP fans when there was an injustice. But in the other organizations, there were some political benefits. I didn’t want to be a part of this benefit.”

Yavuz also did not want to be a part of political benefit of any political platform. He underlined that political groups pursue their own political benefits. That is why he did not prefer these groups and he did not see a humanistic point in these platforms:

“Other parties or organizations give importance to the political benefits rather than the humanistic side. Politics, in fact, cannot be humane, it’s a dirty thing. It’s abstracted from humanity and situated on the basis of power and government. Hence, these organizations cannot easily be humane.”

Similarly, Sinan argued that unorganized people did not want to be seen associated with political organizations during the Gezi Movement because there was an immense diversity of people and groups, and Çarşı gathered many people under the same umbrella:

“The mass was so complex, supporters of MHP, Atatürkists, leftist groups and so on. Some people didn’t want to walk with leftist groups or to be seen under their umbrella. That’s why they raised Çarşı, a group seen as nice and apolitical. Opposition groups such as the youth branches of SDP, HDP, Kolektifler guided only some parts of masses. Çarşı was the only group which brought football fandom together.”

Feyza thought that, in the last days of the Gezi Movement, political organizations tried to pursue their own benefits and that the peaceful environment had gone:

“The last days turned into chaos, in fact. The last days weren’t like the old days and I didn’t feel well the last five six days. Extremist groups created chaos and started to appeal people. They tried to score points. There was no respect for trees, freedom, Gezi Park, or human rights. Football fans started to step back in those days. The supporters of Fenerbahçe decreased. Çarşı was always there since the events started in Beşiktaş. Forums were started. People gathered at Abbasağa Park. Çarşı minimized its presence. They were against the disproportionate use of force. But they dropped back since extremist groups provoked the events. Disproportionate force was used on extremist groups and Çarşı didn’t want to be a part of it. I was also alienated from the events when the extremist groups were heard in the park. This was a fight for freedom. The questions were “Why do you destroy the park? Why did you kill people when they said not to cut the trees? Why did you limit our freedom?” I respect you, but you limit my freedom.”

Sinan also thought about political organizations like Feyza. Every political organization started to appropriate the dynamics of the Gezi Movement so that they could pull people into their side:

“I remember the day Gezi Park was evacuated. In the beginning, Çarşı was more active, but later, political groups tried to own the movement and the effect of Çarşı was decreased. The effects of Çarşı were there only in the beginning. When everybody organized, Çarşı’s role decreased.”

We can think that people who have political awareness did not prefer fan groups, specifically since they were predicting every possible situation, while politically unaware people approached the fan groups. Yet some people thought that everyone should resist or protest individually. For instance, in evaluating the political organizations, Serra believed in the power of individuals to resist the government:

“Frankly, I don’t believe in being organized because in the times of Gezi Park, there was a spirit when people were not organized, but then flags of political parties or other organizations/collectives came to the park. Okay, the times of living in tents at Gezi was very nice, there was a communal life, everything was done through collective work. I didn’t have to be connected with an organization or syndicate or collective to make a sound. People thought that they were individuals and they could resist in that way; I also thought like this. My dad always wanted me to be organized, yet I didn’t want to. But my presence with a Galatasaray foulard in there didn’t mean a political connection with an organization. It’s more like I was with a group, but not a political group, in the end.”

Serra further explained that the methods of leftist organizations kept her away from them. She did not like the attitudes of these leftist organizations towards other leftist organizations. Every leftist organization thought that they were doing the right thing and the others were doing wrong things. Filled with these prejudices, she thought that most of the leftist organizations could not come together due to different ways of doing things:

“Everything was done through their style. I think partisans or organizers had some fascist tendencies although they said that they were against it. My father fully supports CHP, yet when there is a demonstration or rebellion, he says:

We had better not to go to a demonstration on that day since HDP supporters will also be there. It might not be nice standing near them. Besides, bureaucratism comes into play such as doing in due form, not doing in other way, and so on.”

Serra also complained about the political benefit of these organizations. She thought that many leftist organizations approached other groups with prejudice. This point also might explain why many young people walked and chanted with football fan groups:

“They mostly chased political benefit. For instance, my father wasn’t involved after the tents were set up because there were HDP flags, there were Kurdish songs, folk dances (halays) in Gezi Park. He was more active in the beginning when there were no organizations. Then the organizations and political parties came into play. I didn’t like the attitudes of some leftists organizations.”

Serra explicitly stated that she felt happier with football fan groups than with organizations. This is the point that she made in the beginning; it was actually about the humanistic side of the football fan groups:

“I would probably be safer with an organization rather than Ultraslan because they didn’t do anything. They were shouting slogans, but since we were younger, we were more agile. But the place where I feel happiest and most beautiful was near the football fans.”

Because her experience with leftist organizations distracted her, she preferred football fan groups. She experienced being an organized person and as a result, she developed an aversion towards the way many leftist organizations worked:

“I went to an association once. They gave me 30 magazines. I was a first year university student. My fridays were off and they told me to go to school with these magazines, call the members in advance and ask if they wanted to buy a magazine. I was supposed to carry the magazines to buyers faculty by faculty. They were giving me a member list, and I was supposed to call them and sell the magazines. Then, we would get a book and read that in two weeks so that we could discuss the book. I didn’t want to read that book. I didn’t approve of the constant presence of politics. I really didn’t have any idea what these people were doing in Gezi Park and I’m sure that they did nothing in the beginning. They had not even stepped into Gezi Park before 31 May. When the events blew up and they saw that there was a movement, they all participated in this moment. But they participated with their flags again. I

mean, if there was an intervention in the morning, I assume that they came and shouted slogans around 4 pm towards evening, waving their flags.”

She thinks that the world should not consist of organizations only. This can push people to be fascistic since it prevents interaction with other people, mainly unorganized people. She also complains about the huge separation among leftist organizations that she experienced. These experiences might have caused her to walk and chant with football fan groups rather than political organizations:

“I suffered a lot from organizations at university. Our university was full of action. The entire life of people shouldn’t consist of politics. For instance, we had a meeting and were talking what to do. We were taking meeting notes and going out to eat; it continued even during mealtime. I didn’t like it. After some point, when people are so busy with the same thing, their entire life becomes this thing. Leftist people in our university were behaving in a fascistic way towards people who don’t like them— there was constant fighting between Kemalist leftists and collective Kurds for instance. Followers of the sharia were coming into the university with sticks and they were breaking chairs and desks. They were attacking Kemalist leftists and collective Kurds and these two groups weren’t helping each other. My family and HDP supporters are also leftists, but they don’t move together. They have a clear separation, actually.”

Ulaş, who joined a leftist party after the Gezi Movement, thinks that during the resistance moments it was unnecessary to be organized since the organizations were composed of people, not flags:

“I think that the flag carrying of organizations might be due to disciplinary attitude or it can project the attitude of “We are here”. When you think about it, it doesn’t sound so necessary. If you stand there, you don’t need to stand with that flag, if you are there as you are, then you can protect people as you are. Your presence means your organization’s presence. People make the organizations not the flags; flags are just signs.”

Kaan’s statements also support these arguments, and he thinks that a person should come to Gezi Park with a human identity, not with a flag of political platform since it was a resistance of many people. He stated that these flags harmed the movement since they were associated with clashes with the state. Many people did not approve of flags being there:

“I didn’t differentiate between leftist organizations and fan groups. But when I saw the flags, I wondered why were they waving them. Why did they need these, I didn’t support it. They were in Gezi Park and they were defending the Gezi Movement. In fact, it was hard to admit, because it wasn’t a resistance of an organization or a club; but of people or a community. When you came there, you should have come with your human identity and not with the flag of an organization, because you were not starting this resistance. Having a flag was harmful for us because they had been fighting with the state for years; but we were defending something peaceful. For instance, we were defending our right to stand there and breathe all the tear gas. Fighting was not our first aim, our first aim was to stay there and not to exit from the park. When the organizations were there, good or bad ideas would be reflected. Okay, people accepted to live with the people who they don’t like but there were hindrances due to the presence of these people. They were known by specific features such as being extremists or terrorists. What can you say if something happens? Police forces were ready to take anyone into custody.”

Kaan was with a group of people for the first time and he actually felt comfortable with the crowd in the Gezi Movement. He stated that he had never understood how these leftist organizations defended their political opinions:

“...All the other things were no important and it was so serious. It was one of the most serious events that I experienced in all my life because I couldn’t be included in community things so much. It sounds like that they were defending something wrong, I wondered how a person could defend something in such a strong way.”

Kaan explained why he walked with football fan groups rather than the political organizations. He approached the issue in a sarcastic way, introducing his city and his football team as the organizations he was a member of. I think that this example, considering the graffitis and political humor which developed during the Gezi Movement, could address the emotions and political opinions of my interviews and many young people who attended the Gezi Movement:

“I really don’t know much about organizations in a way that put me side by side with them. I’m not a supporter of any party and I think that supporting parties is a little nonsense to me. The most important thing I can say when someone asked why I was there, the answer was that there was a park. If someone asked me which organizations I was from, I said I am from Adana and I don’t know anything about organizations. If they asked “What are you doing here?” and if he associated me with an organization; if a name of a football club was mentioned, then I said “Yes, I am the supporter of it”. If he asked “Are you a supporter of Beşiktaş?” and I said “Yes, I am. We were 9

people, Pancu scored a goal and we were a perfect team.” If the name of Galatasaray is talked, then I say “We won UEFA cup”. That’s why their presence was so bad for us. Actually, maybe their presence was nice, but presence of flags and pennants was criticized and people asked for removing of flags. You don’t say to anybody “Support our team”. Our father told us “My son, support Galatasaray or Beşiktaş” in our childhood, but no one told me to support Fenerbahçe. Yet, those leftist organizations had this attitude, I could feel it. I guess there were stands. There were chargers for our telephones where there was no electricity, this was nice but it was written “Join us our organization” in the brochures. Honestly, I wasn’t interested in these. These were the least interesting for me. Why would I be interested?”

Burçak explained her experiences with leftist organizations and, as a result, she believes that many of these organizations exclude rather than include people.

According to her, Çarşı included many people because they did not have a political background, which can possibly deter some people:

“My flatmate at the university was a supporter of TKP and a close friend was a member of Halkevleri. The hardline position of my flatmate and her finding ignorant and cold other organizations, including other leftists, pushed me away from organizations. She hated Halkevleri, for instance. I was finding it repellent. I was thinking that everybody is loaded with too many beliefs. If you are trying to organize something good, you can’t do it by excluding someone. This was highlighted in the Gezi Movement and I liked it so much. I think the reason I sympathize with Çarşı is that they don’t have a political background like this. I was thinking that anybody from all fractions could be included here. They have a heterogeneous structure in terms of opinions. They defend not only Beşiktaş, they defend adolescence.”

Burçak liked the non-political and humanistic side of football fan groups due to her past experiences with leftist organizations. She stated that Çarşı was nonpolitical and people did not have to accept any political idea when they were walking with Çarşı:

“Apolitical stance and not defending only one opinion pulled me towards fan groups. I wasn’t political there, only belonging made me happy. I think we are talking about something very simple, I mean a simple human need. But you’re asking why not the other groups... Because if I walked with other leftist groups, I would feel that I had to support their opinion too. However, I didn’t know their opinion and even if I knew, I didn’t approve the most part of it; but Çarşı was not like this.”

She also mentioned about avoiding the notion of political benefit and political ideology of the organizations. She sees football fan groups such as Çarşı as more naive than political organizations, and, it was easier for her to justify walking with Çarşı during an emergency since it was not a political platform:

“I didn’t think that political organizations would use me like a subject but I didn’t want to provide numbers to them. Because they would say we were ten thousand in Gezi but now we don’t have a vote. But no, I wasn’t supporting you, I wasn’t supporting your opinion. These were the reasons. I didn’t want to be with them, nonviolence was so important to me. Çarşı’s stance was not like an attack but a defence. Others’ stances were also defensive but I thought that if I supported them, then I would support their opinion too. What’s the ideology of the Communist Party? Having a communist government. If I walked with them, I would support them. Yet when I walked with Çarşı, I wouldn’t have to support Beşiktaş and I could be a Beşiktaş sympathizer. The thing we call Beşiktaş is much more naive. If they took me into custody, I would ask which team they support. I had no connection with leftist organizations.”

She underlined the separatist attitudes of some groups and the unifying power of football fan groups among the people who attended the Gezi Movement at the same time. She gave an example to explain the power of Çarşı over any political organization in the Gezi Movement:

“For instance, there is an organization. I didn’t like them, they were too fascistic. They were like ‘are you sure, do you want to be here, why are you here?’ For them, young people came to promenade, but we were resisting always, leftists have this attitude. They were like: You’re coming here to see fancy stuff, what were you doing before, the situations were always like this, why are you here now? In fact, something much more special was shared there. We were defending so many things over Gezi but the first objection was Gezi. But others, yes, they were trying to establish a background, pulling or pushing someone. Çarşı however, didn’t ask if we supported Beşiktaş; it was nonsense to ask anyway.”

When I compare the unity of the football fan groups in the Gezi Movement with the cases I have cited in the literature section, I see that every case has its own unique position. Nearly all the cases involved ethnic or religious identities, including the FC Barcelona case, the Balkan case, the United Kingdom context, and the colonial and Latin American context. The unique feature of the Gezi Movement was that

regardless of ethnic or religious identities, football fan groups brought people from different backgrounds together. We cannot name this situation using an ethnic name such as FC Barcelona or Catalan identity or Rangers FC or Protestant identity.

If we continue with the unifying power of the Gezi Movement, Güney, like Ulaş, explained that there was no need for organizations of flags since people were like a whole group. The main aim was to protect Gezi Park and to create public opinion in order to reach the people:

“Even if there were people carrying flags, they were lowering down the flags and trying to be more beneficial. Appearance of this flag would be beneficial for the relevant organization, yet lowering it down and resisting collectively were more beneficial, that’s why nobody had them. For me, I am speaking for myself, it wasn’t important. We were crowded, I wasn’t aware if I was near an organization or if I was near Çarşı. I was only believing in community, creating public opinion. Not for the sake of being an organization but Gezi was like an organization. It was like a community moving for the common beliefs. There was only one aim and people generally didn’t care who was near them. They were trusting in the community.”

They called themselves “Independents”. By this definition, he tried to explain the antipolitical nature of the crowd in the Gezi Movement. This situation actually steered this thesis to ask the question “Why?”. Güney’s sentences simply give the background of many people who are the scrutinized subjects of this thesis. This point may constitute a basis for my research, which is about football fandom mobilization as an alternative to leftist organizations for unorganized people:

“I was talking about people who didn’t have any connection with organizations and came only to protect the park. They didn’t have any guidance and their political ideologies were not important. We did have a political opinion but... I have sat with both leftists and rightists and we didn’t talk politics, we only talked about Gezi Park. They were there, with me, and it was not important which organization they were from.”

The humanistic side is also prevalent in Güney’s statement, as I mentioned previously in this chapter. He thought that to accept a person, their presence in Gezi Park was enough and it did not matter which organization they were affiliated with:

“I don’t remember with whom I was most of the time in terms of organizations, I only remember people. I remember someone tall, having goatee, wearing green t-shirt; but I didn’t ask or wonder about his organization. I knew his name and it was enough for me, he came to protest and that was enough for me. Humanism was important there rather than being organized.”

He linked the banners on the AKM building in Taksim to his views towards leftist organizations. He stated that the banners on the AKM building were exciting for him because so many people from different backgrounds saw that they could live together in a more democratic and peaceful country:

“I didn’t care which organizations they belonged to because that was a message. A message conveying we can unify, we raise our voice. A message showing what we can achieve when we unify. I got goose bumps whenever I looked at AKM. I am neither leftist nor rightist, I see myself as more centrist, liberal person and that was encouraging for apolitical people like me. Not only this scene, but the whole scene. We saw the idea that religious people and atheists can live together, which we thought was the hardest thing in Turkey. Atheists were protecting people who pray, it was something which showed us that we can live together... Gezi is a place which taught us to respect others’ living spaces. Because we all want to live a beautiful life, we all want to live a quality life in a democratic environment. Gezi was a hope for us in terms of this, in terms of living together, in terms of democracy.”

As a last point about leftist organizations, İlber drew attention to a different point and argued that leftists also started to see football as a political arena:

“Generally leftists don’t like football, they find it masculine and lumpen. The active role of football fans in the Gezi Movement showed that football is not a stupid game, 22 men don’t go after a ball, football is not only football, football includes many political elements, and stadiums host a lot of people from different cultural backgrounds. Football is not a tool of losers who get a basic salary. Football is sport that accommodates many elements. Hence, we can say that the perspective of political people has changed. If they want to do massive protests and reach different people, it’s revealed that they need to attribute more meaning to football fans. Both the government and the dissidents saw this. Everybody understood that all football audiences are not lumpen. Educated white collar worker are also in the stands, and the crowds are not homogenous. Football is a political channel, this is clear. Football was apolitical people running after a ball in the past, but the stands changed everything now.”

This comment of İlber can be considered as an extension of my previous arguments explained in the introduction chapter. These diverse social groups and sociological changes in the crowd might lead to people to appropriate that space to start a political mobilization or to voice their political dissent. The crowds and the colors of their teams became the channel through which they reflected themselves. The politically passive fans of the football clubs, including many people of different backgrounds, experienced a political revival, as I have argued so far.

4.3 Attitudes towards football fan groups and encounters

Most of my interviewees directly interacted with football fan groups and they shared their thoughts and experiences, which support the above statements about resistance, walking together, and so on. The common experiences of my interviewees resemble the Egyptian context in terms of the role and effects of football fan groups. As I explained in the literature section, the past experiences of the Ultras with the police forces played an important role in defending Taksim Square. Whether they were political or not, they unified and became one body. In the Gezi Movement, as one can see from the common experiences and collective interpretations of my interviewees, football fan groups also unified under the same political objective whether they were political or not. The presence of the Ultras reassured many people in Tahrir Square in the same way that the presence of Çarşı reassured many people in Gezi Park.

For instance, Güney explained his experience and the role of Çarşı during the resistance. According to him, Çarşı was leading the movement since they had experience with police in the past:

“We were generally independent but I walked mostly with Çarşı in the confrontations in Beşiktaş or in İstiklal. Çarşı was guiding us there. But Çarşı was not saying: We deal with this, you support us only. Çarşı was leading the group. They were more experienced than us against these situations. What they did was really slowing down the police.”

Serra’s experience tells us the spirit of unity among the football fans who support different or even rival teams. She was a deep fan of Galatasaray and she was saved by a Fenerbahçe fan during the clashes with police forces. This one experience even tells us so many things that this thesis tries to answer. The two teams have a long history of antagonism against each other, yet the fans of these teams united under the same political objective and helped each other during a crisis moment:

“The day of 1 June. A group was attacking from Barbaros, another one from Dolmabahçe. A group of police got jammed at the bus stop. Attacking means that we, Gezi supporters, were coming from Barbaros and Dolmabahçe. The police got jammed here. There is a prime ministry house in Beşiktaş, they were wanting to protect it and they were throwing tear gas constantly. My friend said that there might not be police in Taksim, but there were police interventions in Dolmabahçe and Beşiktaş and we weren’t many people. I was with my friends. Then we went down from Gümüşsuyu and tried to go towards Beşiktaş from Dolmabahçe. There is police in the front, they were throwing tear gas and we were running away. Then I met Ultraslan. I don’t go to football matches but I always go basketball matches and Engelsiz Aslanlar (Disabled Lions) basketball matches of Galatasaray, I mean disabled basketball. I met friends from this group. We were resisting, screams came from behind, there was police in the front. There was no escape from Dolmabahçe, nothing, there was only wall. Three or four TOMAs were coming and they were shooting water cannons constantly. We got jammed in, what were we going to do, and so on. I had Galatasaray foulard in my neck, we stucked in front of the walls. TOMAs shot water on us. A guy stood in front of the TOMAs and was screaming and someone pulled him off the road. We stucked in front of the walls and they watered all of us and we were dying. There were contact lenses in the eyes of my friend and she fell down after we got sprayed, but we were all supporters of Galatasaray, a group of Ultraslan. We were university youth with foulards and t-shirts. A supporter of Fenerbahçe flushed Talcid to our eyes.”

Güney underlined that he trusted Çarşı because they were in the front during the resistance to protect the crowd. They were more experienced and knew what to do, like the Ultras in the Egyptian context knew what to do:

“Presence of Çarşı was giving confidence because the vanguard was Çarşı. They were the first to encounter with police, they were always standing in the front. I’m speaking specifically about Çarşı because Çarşı did the most. Otherwise, I remember the uniforms of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe, others coming from different places in Anatolia and wearing uniforms. Çarşı was giving confidence rather than whipping. But I didn’t meet any fan group, it was the period when I fell out of love with football. I was running away from fan groups, how can I say—they were repugnant, that’s why I didn’t communicate with them. The sole aim of Çarşı was to give confidence. Because they knew how far that stone could go when they were throwing it. I participated in things that had already been done, the barricade was started to be established and I joined. In other words, Çarşı was not like a boss, they didn’t provide organization by telling you what to do or they didn’t provide communication between anybody. But people were repeating what they did and people were following them because they approached the situation in a tactical way. They were knowing the police better from the people and knowing the incidents in the stands. They were exposed to tear gas more than us. Maybe they were in the front for this reason, I don’t know.”

Burçak trusted Çarşı when she was left on her own during a police attack. She normally does not like football slogans and finds football fans rude. Yet during the Gezi Movement, Çarşı was her assurance and this shows how a football fan group can turn into a platform for many people to voice their political dissent:

“Once, I went without my friends. We got separated and I was thinking if I should go to Çarşı if I get bored with loneliness or I get fear, I don’t know what to do. I was thinking like this and this happened many times. We were trying to go to Taksim from Dikilitaş and we got stuck somewhere at the registry office. We were two female friends and one girl who we didn’t know, so we were three people. We saw that Çarşı was passing by with slogans and we said okay let’s go after them. We went with them and we asked if we could go with them. One of them looked at me as if wondering why I was asking. I mean I always saw Çarşı as a guarantee. I thought about it later and I saw that anything could happen but we were together. Normally, I find fan groups rude and not nice. I liked their slogans but generally it’s too much expression, what is it? I couldn’t understand belonging to something until then. I was reading so much on being organized. Why ‘The love is being organized’ (Aşk Örgütlenmektir) because that’s why, it makes you stronger in a group.”

She also sees Çarşı as the main element of resistance in the Gezi Movement. She said that the members of Çarşı were so brave and they were fighting in the front, throwing tear gas back. It is similar what I have explained about the Egyptian context. For instance, the Ultras knew how to behave collectively, how to survive or escape

during crisis moments. It resembled Çarşı and other fan groups in the Gezi

Movement, as Burçak mentions:

“I saw them as a fundamental element of resistance. I mean, if we didn’t know we asked Çarşı and we confirmed it through Çarşı. But Çarşı wasn’t only a person, there was no such community or institution. You don’t even know who Çarşı was in that turmoil, but it reassured you. I immediately separated Çarşı from other fan groups. That day there was an intervention in the park. The police were throwing tear gas into the park. Someone from Çarşı who had a black hat and red noseband was constantly taking the bombs and putting them into water; every time I had my heart in my mouth for fear that it would explode in his face and his face would be ruined. It was hard to breathe, there was too much gas. You can also take it and maybe you can say give me a glove but it was a little scary. That police can also take you, anything can happen and you can be alone. These guys were going and taking the gas without any fear and we said well done. We wanted to get them going, there was something like I can’t but you can do, you’re sweet, don’t give up. Maybe it was the reason why we supported them. We can’t do but you are from Çarşı, you can do.”

Kaan thinks that Çarşı took the responsibility and they played a unifying role among many people attended in the Gezi Movement:

“They took the responsibility from beginning to the end, they didn’t expect anything from anybody. We were aware of each other, we would explain ourselves clearly and we knew our power, these guys were like this. I was following all the Twitter accounts of Çarşı. Thousands, hundreds of people, it goes up to million people, they were an interesting group.”

He also observed the methods of Çarşı members when they were confronting the police. He remembered some moments and gave a descriptive narrative about the resistance:

“I remember the Çarşı uniform, foulards, scarves. I remember someone from Çarşı who run after a TOMA. I was one of the people carrying Talcid, I was asking everybody if they were okay and if they wanted lemons. I was kind of support power because the front was strong, very strong. The guys in masks at the front were dressed better than us, they were taking tear gas. The ones who were angry were throwing them back, the ones who were calm were putting them into bin and waiting for them to burn out. There were bins full of water like trash bins, they were closing the lid and it would burn out. We learned in the day one not to run and to move back calmly. Tear gas was coming or police forces were coming to us. In the meantime, if there were 15-20 people in the front, the crowd behind them was constantly shouting slogans. You can’t count, you definitely can’t count because there were people all the way down the street, side streets, in the trees, in the parks and

the occupants were outside and I wasn't scared. It was like scary, someone was waging a war on you but I don't remember that I got scared.”

İlber pointed out that he admired Çarşı for their explanation on militarism and he told an experience he had. He was actually a leader in the promotion of the slogan that said that they were not soldiers of anyone, including the figures they supported. The main point was to keep peace:

“In that period, there were a lot of political factions in the park. When I looked to my side, there was everybody, including socialist organizations, Kemalists, Kurds in the park. It was the reason why the park is so colorful, that was the gathering of people from different opinions. There was a slogan: We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal, it was so influential. Beşiktaş fans are not a group with a nationalist reflection in the stands. As a supporter of Fenerbahçe, even if I don't like Beşiktaş I have sympathy for their political position. Beşiktaş fans made an explanation stating that they were not soldiers of anyone. It was so sympathetic to me. I'm supporting this slogan because I'm antimilitarist. Upon this slogan, there emerged another slogan, “We were the soldiers of Mustafa Keser” while dancing the halay with a handkerchief in our hands. I also shouted this slogan in that period. I remember very clearly I woke up one morning in the park. One woman was walking in the front and there was a group of 20 to 30 people in the back and they were holding a Turkish flag with a star, a crescent and a kalpak picture of Mustafa Kemal. They were walking through shouting “we are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal.” I stood up, I had no intention to humiliate the other side, I started to shout, “We are the soldiers of Mustafa Keser.” Then 3 to 5 of my friends accompanied me. Once our voice is amplified, thousands of people in the park started to shout, “We are the soldiers of Mustafa Keser.” Then the other group started to run away from there. But no one told them to go away, we were only saying that we are the soldiers of Mustafa Keser, too. They had to leave the park in embarrassment. I had this memory. The slogan of Çarşı “We're not the soldiers of anyone” was so important to me, I would like to underline it again.”

Kaan, Burçak, Teoman and İlber explained the enthusiasm that Çarşı and football fan groups created in the Gezi Park. Football fan groups also got closed. Every time the football fan groups entered Gezi Park, the people got excited and motivated. People immediately started to cheer slogans together with the football fans:

Kaan: “Çarşı was entering into park as a fan group, there were hundreds that you can't even count. They were entering the Gezi with marches, everybody accompanied and everybody was happy, let's applaud them they're here they're here. It wasn't only for Çarşı, Galatasaray fans came, Fenerbahçe fans came, Adanademirspor fans came and all of them had something. They had a

strong power which is something different and they were saying we're here, we're all together; and they were not repellent at all. I think fan groups gained rapprochement among them in football. They developed a particular attitude. Thousands of fans who were wearing the uniform of Trabzon, Galatasaray, Beşiktaş...”

Burçak: “We set up tents on the first day at park. We were lying around, someone was playing saxophone, playing music. Some groups were passing by, they were shouting slogans sometimes, I was living in a dream there. Something could happen, something bad could have happened but good things also happened and they fed you there. I don't usually listen to saxophone but I listened to wonderful music there. Or, in the normal times the slogans of football fans during listening music were bad. But the slogans were about Gezi and they were motivators and I didn't get bored once. Under normal circumstances maybe I would have called football fans barbarians and I would say we were listening to music but I was saying we were living such a nice place. That night was so peaceful.”

Teoman: “Çarşı was coming from Gümüşsuyu. Their arrival was already a legend. Their voices came first, then their images. It was like a rescue zone. When the fans came, the grey side of the park was colorful with their torches, foulards, uniforms, and t-shirts. The biggest image, Optik Başkan (Optics President), the banner that was hung at the AKM, was popular. In that period, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş supporters were intertwined. I remember that Sol Açık was coming, ordinary people who weren't wearing Fenerbahçe uniforms but who supported Fenerbahçe were coming, but if you looked, they were hand in hand. But when we evaluated it as a percentile, 60% of them were supporters of Beşiktaş, 30% of them were supporters of Fenerbahçe, 5% of them were supporters of Anatolian clubs. I couldn't imagine Galatasaray that much bad as a club. Everybody's reaction was towards them. Most of my friends told me that they were ashamed of being a Galatasaray supporter. They were saying that Galatasaray is intertwined so much with the government and they couldn't say anything for this reason. Galatasaray fans didn't have a stand group, there was nobody from Ultraslan. They were too few among the groups as individuals. In fact, most of them were from Fenerbahçe or Beşiktaş. Moreover, Fenerbahçe fans were coming with their brass band. They were coming with a brass band from Kadıköy with their uniforms. They were starting with the Fenerbahçe march and other marches, they were so melodic. They were so cheerful, they were one of the leads that excited the people in the park.”

İlber: “Everybody was using images and slogans that reflected their political opinions. There was a green area in the back and close to the Divan Hotel. Çarşı was there. It wasn't like a stand but they were hanging their banners in the trees, sitting together and shouting slogans. For instance, they were shouting everywhere is Taksim everywhere is resistance in the park and the rest was coming on its own. Actually you don't have to be from a fan group. A group of 10 people was shouting a slogan and everybody was supporting them, everybody was the source of motivation for everybody. Especially fan groups were igniting everyone.”

These experiences actually show the unity of people staying in Gezi Park. In all these examples, football was taken as a people's game, as I stated in my theoretical background section. Kaan also mentioned an experience of his relative and this is very similar what my interviewees said. A lot of people, regardless of their football team or political background, immediately joined Çarşı when they came across them because they thought that football fan groups, specifically Çarşı, were embracing all the people who participated in the Gezi Movement:

“I was with fan groups during confrontations with police. She said that there happened a turmoil in an instance, I saw that I was with Çarşı, I lost my son and my husband. One of them said how did you come here and what are you doing here. Then she walked among them shouting slogans. But she says that she felt good. When I was walking, I suddenly started to shout. She has this memory. She thought that nothing would happen to her.”

As opposed to these examples, Sinan had a bad experience with Çarşı. He is the only one whom I came across with a negative word about Çarşı. He told me that Çarşı members did not help to him in a time of crisis:

“One of the episodic nights at Dolmabahçe, all groups were there, and then police intervened and a few groups left, I lost my group. Çarşı was there and I acted together with them. These people clashed with police almost every week, Çarşı is known as the most violent fan group. They weren't known as well until Gezi. These guys were experienced, they knew what they do, they were there in every protest. Also, Çarşı attended a lot of protests before Gezi and they showed themselves, it also had an effect. From this point on, they had a public recognition, other fan groups didn't show themselves as Çarşı did. Ultraslan of Galatasaray took sides with AKP. Fenerbahçe had some Sol Açık. Then I was with them during withdrawal. It was better to be with Çarşı rather than supporters of other extremist organizations. I experienced so many things in that day. They didn't help me. There was an intervention and I didn't withdraw myself. We left 4 to 5 people in the front, there were 1 or 2 supporters wearing Beşiktaş foulards with Çarşı written on them. The rest withdrew. There were also 2 men from a leftist party in red foulards. When there were clashes, we tried to withdraw, we ran so fast and they were throwing tear gas, they were falling in front me without touching me. I was also running and breathing, I have asthma and I fell to the ground and couldn't get up. There were many people from Çarşı close to me and they saw me but they didn't help me. They saw me but they didn't even attempt to come and save me while the police were not so close. LGBTs saved me, trannies came and saved me, thanks to them. They took me to the German

hospital. They saved my life. If LGBTs would come and save me from a long distance, Çarşı would have also saved me. They might not see me I don't have any idea, there was too much fog, but those LGBTs saw me and saved me.”

Sinan also argued that in fact Çarşı did not have the experience that the leftist organizations had. He thinks that people who are political did not go round with them:

“Supporters of Çarşı, for instance, were an easily crumbling group. I can't say that they were specifically a group working well. But if the core group of these men consisted of 100 people, they became 1,500 people there, many irrelevant and apolitical people like me started to hang out with them. They didn't want to be seen under any political party. But for this reason the striking power of Çarşı was low. The people who experienced a protest and who have a political consciousness didn't hang out with Çarşı.”

On the other hand, İlber argued that football fan groups have much more police experience than leftist organizations. He explained which procedures and security measures football fan groups follow in order to enter the stadium for matches, especially outside their city. In that sense, they have much more experience than the leftist organizations:

“The groups which have the most interaction with the police in Turkey are football fan groups, not leftists. They see police when they go to an away match and they interact with police when they have a match in their own stadiums. For this reason, we can say that they benefited from their experience with the police. They live with the police, they can forecast the reflexes of the police. For instance, they have a police superior, they obey him because they know it. Or, ‘Look this guy is very good natured, you had better handle him tactfully, this guy is good there is no need to irritate him.’ In fact, they know even their superiors. They know which superior reacts how. Because they are searched by police even in departure, police checks GBT (general information check). They are stopped by police before the departure, they are checked whether they have guns, drugs, etc. The bus is all checked. It's searched whether all have tickets towards the stadium. If not, then they are sent back. When they enter the stadium, they are searched again for ticket. Fan groups were the ones who live with police most. Mingling with the police starts from the beginning. Not only interprovincial away matches, even in the intercity crossing the other side in Fenerbahçe Galatasaray matches is under police surveillance. Police officers escort to buses of fan groups. In short, we can say that interaction and past experiences between police and fan groups guided what happened in Gezi. In fact, we can say that everybody benefited from their experiences.”

Some interviewees specifically looked for Ultraslan who is the biggest fan group of Galatasaray and who had an official explanation which states that Ultraslan does not support the Gezi Movement. Yet my interviewees expressed their disapproval on the attitude of this fan group. For instance Serra, as a fan of Galatasaray, represents the dissident side of Ultraslan:

“Ultraslan wasn’t active, I was angry with Galatasaray. Çarşı supporters were unbelievable and amazing. They continued as independent Beşiktaş supporters without adhering to anything. Sometimes, Ultraslan made a ridiculous explanation and I was angry with them. We, as the university students and resisting members of Ultraslan, were angry with people managing Ultraslan due to their explanations. There were an Ultraslan and an Ultraslan university group as a sub group. The university group of Ultraslan was so angry with the explanation that there were fights on Facebook. I mean, they made an explanation on behalf of us and we were all angry with them.”

Serra associates her football fandom with human love. It is the point I stated in the beginning of this chapter. The common point of my interviewees was the humanistic position of the football fan groups.

“I liked to be seen under Galatasaray, I can say I was proud to resist with a Galatasaray foulard. Beşiktaş was so active, Galatasaray was pale beside them but I was also a supporter of Galatasaray, I’m a member of Ultraslan and I was resisting at Gezi Park. Ultraslan might have had another explanation, they might have had different people but I’m also Ultraslan and I was with them. I’m proud to be a supporter of Galatasaray. I think it’s philanthropy.”

Ulaş, a deep fan of Galatasaray, stated that if Ultraslan was calling to the Gezi Movement, he would not have gone to the streets since he disliked the political attitude of Ultraslan:

“I was knowing this. If Ultraslan called then there was no good for us because I was following them for a long time. In the Galatasaray stands, there was a war between Ülkücü (idealists) and Alperen (fighters). Most of them were Alperen. Most of Ultraslan were like this. Beşiktaş fans, for instance, came from the intensive part of their stand group. Çarşı is a fan group which belongs to the Beşiktaş neighborhood. Fenerbahçe fans belong to the Kadıköy neighborhood. Both of them are educated people but I’m looking at Galatasaray fans, the person they call as reis had a cafe in Güngören five six year ago. I mean all of them were from this crew. When I went to matches,

we returned home together. They dogmatized to everyone and were supporting reis I mean all of them were a team. That's why I understood that it wouldn't be good where they went, after a couple of days I withdrew. I wouldn't have gone if Ultraslan called because I knew where they would go. If they went to Taksim, it's because of motherland, nation, flag and they might say that they are bringing sultanate. I mean they didn't search for right or freedom and I never believed they did. As far as I understood from their explanations, I learned that Ultraslan was not in that business."

Ulaş looked for Tek Yumruk during his experiences and found out that they were becoming tek yumruk (one fist). At this point, we may remember the argument of Şentürk, who states that fandom is loaded with an identity which goes beyond the entertainment or sports. A fan can define himself/herself among millions of fans and think that s/he has the same values as them (Şentürk, 2007, p.36):

"On 31 May, there was a fan group of Galatasaray which is called Tek Yumruk, I heard them in the opening ceremony of Galatasaray stadium, they came to the fore during the booing against Erdoğan. I saw their call, I told my friends from Galatasaray stands. We decided to go with 10 to 15 people and we went to the tunnel by walking. There was humming and we couldn't understand what had happened. People couldn't imagine that there were ten thousand, a hundred thousand people there at that moment. When we came to Galatasaray, people were hitting shutters and shades, I got goose bumps. On the one side I said let's find Tek Yumruk, on the other side, we became Tek Yumruk and there was no need to search for anyone."

Despite his deep love for Galatasaray, he stood with Çarşı during the Gezi Movement and criticized Ultraslan for not taking a stand against industrial football like Çarşı:

"An anti-statist group who wasn't dissident much or who supported AKP in Çarşı, 1453 Çarşı, sub-group of Çarşı. It's a group who didn't know the 'a' in Çarşı came from anarchy. They tried to dictate that Çarşı didn't have an interest on these things, only a group of them brought the subject into this point, Çarşı didn't have only leftist ideology. But the time showed us that Çarşı was superior to other groups thanks to examples of political protests of Çarşı, throwing foulards and getting naked for the earthquake victims of Van. There is widespread corruption in the stands but I think the Çarşı stands different from others. Of course I'm keeping leftist groups in the stands aside, they aware of things, they're against the commercialization of football. They go to basketball, volleyball and U17 matches, I mean everywhere there is their emblem; but the other groups are chasing money. I can tell since I came across so much, Ultraslan was making an explanation from their website indicating that they were against the piracy on tickets, yet we saw that stands

leaders sold pirated tickets before the matches. There was a situation like we did, but in fact we didn't."

As I mentioned in the history of the Gezi Movement, people experienced a big march of football fans on 8 June 2013 in Taksim Square. Some of my interviewees did not attend this big meeting but some of them remarked this day as the happiest and the most important day in their life. For instance, Ulaş described these moments as below:

"I couldn't find the fans but I walked with Çarşı a few times. The first one was the day that all of the fans walked together. I saw from the internet, from Twitter. Çarşı made a call from their account and I was in Beşiktaş. I thought that since I was already going, why not go with them. I didn't know their road. I worked at Taksim for a long time in that period but still I didn't know how they went, I only remember passing by the police station at Nişantaşı. But I remember this well, we went from Çarşı then I don't know which way we turned but in every street we passed by, everybody was applauding us from their windows, waving their flags. People who were walking were calling the people on their windows and people were actually coming, the shoutings were actually bringing people in. I walked with Çarşı until Gezi, I remember that we didn't shout any Beşiktaş slogans. I don't know if we did, but they were shouting the slogans that everybody appropriates most such as there is no salvation alone, either all of us or none of us. If we included 31 May and if I think of the 7 most beautiful days of my life, I would put these 2 days. I put the day I went to Gezi with Çarşı and 31 May. I'm leaving love affairs aside because I felt very different things. Really, even thinking of it gives me goose bumps."

Then Ulaş told the details of his walking with Çarşı people in Taksim Square. One can see his ongoing enthusiasm when he was talking about these moments. This enthusiasm was created by football fan groups. As I stated in the beginning of this thesis, football fan groups were not the igniters of the people, but they channelled the existing dissent through their football club:

"We reached by walking from the back of Gezi Park, we were going from the side streets all the time. At last I said we are here finally when we came to the big street which connects Osmanbey and Taksim. It took so long to arrive yet I recognized that everybody was welcoming us enthusiastically when we came here. We were like heroes, it was like 300 Spartans went to Gezi. Fenerbahçe supporters were clapping, I saw some Galatasaray supporters but I don't remember seeing them as a group because when Ultraslan withdrew, the idea of individual Galatasaray supporters developed among Galatasaray

supporters. In the stands, a banner stating a saying of Tevfik Fikret was opened up. I'm a free Galatasaray supporter who has free thought and free consciousness. After Erdoğan's booing, these people took a decision to support Galatasaray as individuals, not as a group. This caused the crowds not to unite, that's why they were alone in Gezi. We went to Taksim from Gezi, there was something like construction and there was no entry there. Between Gezi Park and the Divan Hotel, the place where the trees are dug, I remember people were saluting Çarşı. We got out to square from a thin corridor, it was so crowded that Fenerbahçe supporters and Çarşı people were nested together. Everything became colorful in an instant. Then, everybody reached the square, the Optics President banner was hung, I looked at the sky during Gezi. I felt responsibility to look at it, I wanted to see the sky. We were told that good things come from the sky together with belief in god. When I look at the sky or the sea, I see infinity and that's how I'm collecting memories. In order to save these moments, I looked at the sky for these three days. I still don't forget."

Güney, as a supporter of Galatasaray, underlined the fact that there was a unity in Taksim Square and all the football fans demanded democracy and freedom. He explained that football fan groups were beneficial in terms of reaching and gathering many people:

"I attended a fan cortege on 8 June. Ultraslan was quiet and withdrew, they were not like Çarşı or Sol Açık. I remember the fans of Bursaspor, Bursa and Beşiktaş were like enemies but I remember they walked arm in arm, nothing was important at that moment. We only wanted to live a quality life, we wanted just a beautiful life, we wanted democracy. You know how narrow-minded and hostile fan groups treat other people who are involved in other fan groups, but nothing was important at that moment. We were all angry with them, angry because of the woman in red. A woman was standing with her red dress in front of TOMA and she got wet, we were angry with this. I walked with a cortege on that day but I don't remember the details. I wasn't involved with any fan group, I only stood with them. That's why I don't remember if I walked with Galatasaray fans, I remember people with different uniforms. I think the mission of Çarşı, Ultraslan, Tek Yumruk, Sol Açık was to reach these people. Football is a sensitive subject in Turkey. If you are involved with Çarşı, you want to join what Çarşı does. Especially if you think in the same way, you are present there. That's why Çarşı was calling people, they were there as the biggest fan group of the great Beşiktaş, we made our voices heard and people were coming to support this. Football fan groups were so beneficial in terms of reaching people."

Similarly, Beste underlined the free will of people coming to this event to make their voices heard:

“The evening of 8 June was so impressive, one could’t see one’s hand in front of one’s face due to torches. If you looked up, there was the Turkish flag, and below, torches were everywhere. It was evening. I remember well, I was so emotional. The people coming there didn’t use any resources of the state, they were going there although the state didn’t want them to. They were not brought by private buses, no one was given food. People went there for something real.”

İlber underlined an important unifying force and compared this with the Gezi Movement in order to show the power of unity among football fans. He also mentioned Istanbul United as a unity of football fandom. At this point, we might follow the argument of Bradley, who says that football can rise above the mere mundane of sports in all its simplicity and beauty and it can be given an intrinsic symbolic value (Bradley, 1998, p. 204):

“Usually they swear at each other during the matches and outside of the matches, they hate each other but death unifies because it’s our common ground. Birth and death are the concepts that belong to humanity. When there is death, for instance, fan groups share the pain. If someone from a football fan group dies, Fenerbahçe fans deliver their condolences, Galatasaray fans deliver condolences for Beşiktaş fans, and so on. Death unifies people actually, and this is true for fan groups as well. The Optics President died, he is a person who contributed Beşiktaş stands, he was also a gentleman, I learned after my readings. He is someone who instills the culture of being gentleman into Beşiktaş stands, who appropriated the culture through which Beşiktaş defines itself. Even if I didn’t know the Optics President, many Fenerbahçe fans and I supported Beşiktaş fans when they clapped their hands and shouted. You feel sympathy on the one side and it’s a sign of feeling the same in a political position. Fenerbahçe fans shouted for something, Beşiktaş fans also shouted to support them. You understood that colors didn’t separate you but they unified you to make you a colorful structure. This unification was stated as Istanbul United. It was one of the most irritating issues which made the government angry. There are three big football clubs in Turkey. Almost 95% of Turkey support these teams. Like it or not, it’s a distorted situation of Turkey. Everybody supports the team of their neighborhood in England. This situation is similar to a sociological case originated from Istanbul, but the fans of these three football clubs constitute the majority of Turkey. The fans of these three clubs came together and showed a resistance against the government. It was a really shocking situation for the government. The Istanbul United situation, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş fans getting closer was so nice. I was so happy, I felt very beautiful. In the Optics President case, a man who gained a lot of sympathy of many people can’t be a bad man logically. So many people sympathized with him. Then you begin to respect him. For instance, I didn’t like Galatasaray, I hated them as a Fenerbahçe fan; but when the founder of Ultraslan, Alpaslan Dikmen, died, I was sad. You

like these kinds of people who devoted themselves to their team and who went to matches regardless of seasons. You respect people who go after their beliefs.”

All in all, we may say that the attitudes of these people towards football fan groups include many common points such as a spirit of unity or enthusiasm that fan groups created. I think that these experiences can show us ways to think about the effect and role of football fandom in the Gezi Movement.

4.4 Trust in football fan groups

All of my interviewees underlined the notions of protection and trust during the police violence. They gave me similar responses supporting football fans’ attitudes towards them. I would like to present three statements by my interviewees to show how much they trusted in Çarşı and saw them as their own police force during the protests:

Yavuz: “Football fans are trustworthy. Just as the state has police forces, our police force was Çarşı who protected, kept an eye on us and directed us. When there was a problem, we thought that Çarşı could deal with it. Siding with Çarşı gave confidence to us.”

Sinan: “When I was alone in the clashes with the police, I immediately sided with Çarşı since they gave me the confidence that they would protect me. Besides, they were sympathetic to me since I knew that they are left-oriented. They made me proud.”

Kaan: “We were really trusting. It wasn’t because of having no option, as you can see there were a lot of organizations, new groups and new platforms. But I only trusted in Çarşı, I don’t why.”

Feyza combined the notions of trustworthiness and the humanistic part of Çarşı, which I stated in the previous section. She thinks that Çarşı was protecting humanistic people while the political groups were protecting their own members:

“Çarşı had a special place in the Gezi Movement. Fenerbahçe fans also were there, but Çarşı got a TOMA and supported ordinary people. People who

didn't have political benefits took shelter with Çarşı because they were beaten. Çarşı resisted against the police and prevented people from being beaten. Other political organizations didn't look after me, they protected their own members. Members of leftist organizations protected each other; but Çarşı protected everybody. Political groups were not humanistic, they had political aims."

She further underlined that Çarşı was protecting unorganized people, that is why unorganized people trusted in them:

"Political organizations didn't protect you there. They didn't know me, when I was with them there was no one I could meet. They called each other comrade and they protected each other together with the people they knew. Moreover, the paranoia of presence of undercover policeman that occurred among us, the people supporting these organizations could think that there might have been a supporter of rival organizations. But the fandom groups could say 'If I'm civilian, so what? I haven't committed a crime here, I don't make politics here'. There was a logic in fandom groups: If you were civilian or not, it wasn't important. You couldn't do any harm to me because I was in good faith, you could stand by me and I would protect you. Political groups don't have this side naturally, it's one of the most important reasons why they are more secure."

Related with that, Sinan underlined the notion of fear of being politically organized and fear of leftist groups, who acquired a bad reputation:

"Çarşı protected everybody. They were experienced and knew what to do. It was better to side with Çarşı rather than extremist organizations. People chose to side with Çarşı rather than these organizations because an accusation related to them starts with getting prison sentence for 20 year. Thus, there was a fear of being organized and this situation stirred many people to Çarşı."

Yavuz said similar words about the political legacy of Turkey and the reasons people sided with Çarşı rather than political organizations. It is important in the sense that it is parallel with what I underlined in the beginning of this thesis. We can take a look at the past political history of Turkey. The political legacy can give some clues on why people prefer to walk with football fans rather than political platforms:

"Çarşı didn't support any political party or group. The reason why people walked with Çarşı is that they were not connected with any political party. I don't think that the existing political parties represented us. We were raised from our childhood as knowing that the political parties are not reliable. That's why the current generation is called apolitical. In fact, they are not apolitical; they seem apolitical because there is not a political party which can

represent them. They don't represent us and thus, the young people seem apolitical. The coming of Çarşı to the scene was significant at that point. That's why they took a lot of support from people and they became the voice of these people. Çarşı is different from other political groups."

Furthermore, Yavuz stated that football fans collected people under an umbrella and Çarşı was like a political platform in that sense:

"Everybody, including the fans of Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray and even people who don't like football internalized and liked Çarşı. Football seemed rather like an impartial platform since the people didn't want to be a part of a political party. The presence of football fans in the Gezi Movement brought people together around football. They needed to be gathered around a political identity; thus, Çarşı was like a political party and we were the members of it."

Kaan emphasized his trust in Çarşı through a personal experience. He was thinking that it was safe if Çarşı members were at the scene:

"When there was a clash somewhere and we checked Twitter, there were all kinds of news such as help was needed for Gümüşsuyu. Some news spread from Gezi, everybody started to shout for help. Help was needed for Sıreselviler, help was needed for Gümüşsuyu. It started from the beginning and spread into the park immediately. Help was needed for Gümüşsuyu and Çarşı was going. When someone said Çarşı was going, we said Çarşı is going to Gümüşsuyu, it's okay now and we can stay here. I lived this and I remember clearly. It was said that Çarşı was going and we relaxed."

All these experiences and examples clearly show that the unorganized people who are the scrutinized subjects of this thesis were trusting Çarşı and they did not hesitate to walk and chant with them. This trust of unorganized people actually constitutes the basis of the whole argument of this thesis, since all the effects and roles of football fan groups originated from this point. The distinction between football fan groups and other political groups points to the fact that football fan groups were the channels through which people raised their dissent in times of crisis.

4.5 Beşiktaş as a living space of Çarşı

An important dimension in analyzing the Gezi Movement should be the space dimension. For instance, even the name of the Beşiktaş Jockey Club (BJK) comes from the neighborhood of Beşiktaş, a district of Istanbul. Çarşı became very popular since most of the clashes with police took place in Beşiktaş and they were very much involved in every process of the Gezi Movement. All of my interviewees were aware of this fact and put it into words when it was necessary:

Güney: “There was a guidance of fan groups and the knowledge of Beşiktaş by Çarşı had a huge effect on this. Çarşı was beneficial because they knew Beşiktaş well. They were reassuring and knowing from what something could happen and from where one could escape, which steep roads TOMA couldn’t climb and where steep roads were and Çarşı was showing where to gather. In fact, they weren’t showing; they were going there and standing there, we were looking, we saw nothing was happening really, and we also went there and waited with them. Süleyman Seba, Akaretler, steep road, road that connects to Maçka, the road that connects to the upper side of the stadium, I really didn’t know those places.”

Feyza also emphasized the space dimension of Çarşı and its place in the Gezi Movement. He said that Çarşı was composed of people who had stores in the Beşiktaş market (Çarşı):

“If you threw tear gas at me, then Çarşı would get angry with this. Çarşı showed this and became a hero. If you did this in Kadıköy, then you find Fenerbahçe fans. Do you know what Çarşı is? Çarşı is the owners of these cafes in down there. If something happened there and if 50 people were gathered, 15 people out of those 50 are from Çarşı anyway. Çarşı was there because it was in Beşiktaş. The first day, they were there as individuals without any brand, but at some point, they became a brand. They said that if we were doing something, then we should hang out together as a group.”

Sinan also stated the importance of the space issue by comparing the Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe football teams and their places, namely Beşiktaş and Kadıköy:

“The stadium of Beşiktaş was there. Beşiktaş could appropriate the event in terms of compound, so many things were happening in Beşiktaş. If it happened in Kadıköy, then the visibility of Fenerbahçe would increase.”

We can say that the Gezi Movement was such a huge social movement for Turkey, yet it also had a prominent spatial dimension waiting to be analyzed in a more detailed way. One can ask whether the concentration of the events in Beşiktaş might have affected or guided the events themselves.

4.6 Passoleague

I also took the opinions of my interviewees on Passoleague since these are very much related to their politicization process regarding the association with football fan groups in the Gezi Movement. All of them think that Passoleague is a tool for preventing politicized football fan groups placed in the stadiums.

Sinan thinks that Passoleague brought an end to football fandom and because of Passoleague, sponsor companies withdrew their financial support to football clubs:

“The stadiums are emptier. It was a thing to end the football fan groups. For a Passoleague application, you needed to open an account in a bank. That bank is close to government. The football sector is one of the most hardcore sectors of capitalism. After these Gezi events, the sponsorship on football diminished so much. In fact, Turkish football was dealt a death blow. The stadium wasn't filled with fans, think about this.”

Bilge, Kaan and Güney think that Passoleague is a tool to diminish or even eliminate the effects of football fan groups in the stadiums. They gave examples from their environment in order to show that reactions were widespread against Passoleague:

Bilge: “Monopolization in Fenerbahçe on one side, Aziz Yıldırım conversations, the attitudes of federation and Passoleague of course... If one of these affected, Passoleague affected three or four times as much and I quit football and going to matches. Now, I don't have any interest on football. I watched the UEFA match of Beşiktaş last month, I don't even remember the period before this, maybe for a year, football got out of my life.”

Kaan: “I don't go to the matches often but many friends from university had a combined ticket. My flatmates had combined tickets, one of them was a fan of Galatasaray and the other one was a fan of Beşiktaş. But I didn't go to the matches properly, I was alienated from football. It wasn't about Gezi, but one

day I saw a thing as Passoleague and my friends were speaking, what were we going to do and what a nonsense thing it was, won't I able to go to the match now? I don't think that anyone was happy about Passoleague. No one came and said I have Passoleague and it's very easy. We were buying ticket and going to matches, everything was fine. But somehow someone had to stop this. I understand what they feared, actually. Ours were not afraid, they were shouting. When the people were in the stands, some of them were afraid and some of them weren't afraid, all of this is a game but the introduction of this system got a blow in the fervent fans, it is obviously a thing to restrain them."

Güney: "I had a combined ticket of Galatasaray for a year. There was a match between Galatasaray and Real Madrid. After that, I was alienated from football and I don't watch any matches now. I didn't get Passoleague and I haven't gone to matches since Passoleague was introduced. My interest has decreased, the introduction of Passoleague decreased my interest, the match fixing case, the low quality of football, and I was gradually alienated. When you look at it, stadiums of 50,000 people that only had 10,000 people due to Passoleague. Football is a pleasure, I was so pleased to watch it. As long as Passoleague is in place I may not go to the matches because it's a profiling tool. Even if Galatasaray becomes successful and plays in the quarter finals, I won't get a Passoleague."

İlber: "I have been following football since I was seven. I saw the goal scored by Rıdvan Dilmen against Altay in İzmir, I'm that much of a Fenerbahçe fan, I'm one who is coming from stands. I never missed Fenerbahçe coming to İzmir and I also went to derby matches in Istanbul. When I was living in Istanbul, I had a combined ticket. Since Passoleague has been in place, I went to a Karşıyaka match once. It was their one hundred fourth year, and Passoleague was not needed since it was a third league match. Other than that, I never went to a match that required Passoleague because I don't have it. For instance, I wanted to go to the match where Fenerbahçe beat Manchester United 2-1 in the UEFA Europe League. I wanted to go to the match, but it required Passoleague although it's a European league match. Okay, let's use Passoleague but use it for matches in Turkey. What's the connection with European league? I didn't get Passoleague and I will never get it. I'm coming from the stands, if I cannot go to the matches because I don't have it, then I agree with not going. Let them have the stadiums, crowds, and matches; I don't even care."

İlber stated that Passoleague did not diminish or eliminate the violent events in the stands. The teams still get punishment, the system does not work, and the system does not identify the guilty people who throw something onto the field:

"We have seen incidents on television since Passoleague was implemented. In Turkey, we have safety in the stadiums, there is a deterrent element against the fan groups. When the stands need to be safer, Passoleague is not

implemented in the upgrading matches at Turkish Super League. Can there be such an absurdity? It's the situation that they don't believe in the system they established. What did they say until today? We will give punishment specific to the person, we will monitor with cameras, the names will be seen at the entrance, we will see if someone swears or throws something into field. It's been said that clubs weren't aggrieved but Fenerbahçe still gets punishment. Then Passoleague is not something good to implement. It was already like this in the past, the teams were getting banned from the stadium, getting fines or playing an away match. Passoleague is introduced but the punishments were continuing in the same way, moreover we have Passoleague. Then, it can't be implemented. This system is wrong in the first instance. If there was punishment specific to a person, then I could say it's implemented well and I would respect it, but the system is not successful. I'm against it as a football lover. The date Passoleague was implemented in Turkey was after the Gezi protests. Football is over in Turkey. My interest on football has diminished. I don't follow it so much anymore. They finished football, the stands and our interest."

Teoman argued that Passoleague is mainly a political tool and it prevents people from different class backgrounds from meeting at the stadiums. As Donuk and Şenduran remind us, only football can bring together in the stands a worker from Lens or a high-level white-collar from Tokyo, a child from the Rio slums or an unemployed worker from Moscow (Donuk and Şenduran: 2006, p.36):

"Football stadiums indeed are one of the biggest channels to make politics. Many people from different backgrounds come into this. The worker who buys the cheapest ticket and the businessman who sits in a lodge have sympathy with each other for 90 minutes. That's why stands are different; they bring many different elements together. There is a heterogeneous structure which you can't find even in the rallies. That's why it's so important that TV channels broadcast these popular stands live in Turkey. The closing of the stands through Passoleague is a sign that shows us this is a political decision. That's why the cleaning of stands wasn't realistic, it's a political decision. In that period, every team was shouting, "everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance" in the thirteenth minute of the matches. The number of people was so low in those times because people didn't have Passoleague as a protest. The only thing they wanted was no massive protest and no reactions in the stands. That's why I see Passoleague as an obstacle. It's a profiling tool. That's why I didn't get Passoleague."

İlber also approached the issue from an economic perspective and complained that Passoleague works with a bank, and we are expected to pay a fee every year:

"For instance, I am a Fenerbahçe fan, and I've got Passoleague. But I can't go to an Antalya match, because my Passoleague only allows Fenerbahçe

matches. It is nonsense. With Passoleague you have your photograph and the logo of your club. It's a system which is based on preventing football lovers from accessing stadiums. They say take it and fill it like Akbil. Ok then, I work with Bank X, you work with Bank Y. But Passoleague only works with one bank. You can only buy a card via this bank. Why do I have to buy my card through a bank which I don't work with? If this is only football theme, why does it limit my economic preferences? It's a canalization of me by the hands of state. I'm against this. That's why I won't get Passoleague. Passoleague is a nest for profit. You say let's have one and get rid of this. You need to pay an update fee of 20 or 30 TL so that it will be still active after 1 year. Think of 20-30 TL from each fan, a great amount of money appears. It's a system for the government to establish its own income both politically and economically and I won't be a part of it. I don't care if I can't go to the stadium for this reason."

Serra claimed that she would never register for Passoleague and she has many friends who do not go to the stadiums anymore:

"I will never have Passoleague, I talk big on this issue. I have many friends who stopped going to matches after Passoleague. They don't go. I know that they establish projection in the home. They bought projection machine with installment payment and arranged curtain mechanisms. They are taking 5-10 TL from people who come to their home and they pay their installments. They sit in the home and watch the game rather than going to stadiums, they didn't get Passoleague."

Feyza argued that the government can now decipher anyone who acts in a way that threatens the government. These sayings remind one of the arguments of Sert, who thinks that the state's role in the organization of the sports is important to understand how the state has an extensive and multiple power over sports (Sert, 2000, p.113):

"They are trying to pull politics from football in the Passloleague case. Politics is in football, Çarşı clashed with the police and became a legend, Fenerbahçe dealt with the match fixing case and got politicized too much. Some fans of Galatasaray also got politicized and the stands became empty. Then Gezi was over, politics was gone, stands became empty. Why is politics out of football? Because the first time, rarely seen, the politicization of fans damaged the government. When there is a problem, they need to empty the stands. They wanted to pull politics from football. Hence, Passoleague was introduced."

Beste pointed out that Passoleague is not used for national football matches so that a lot of people can go to the stadiums and support the national team. It actually means

that everybody is aware that Passoleague decreased the number of people coming into matches:

“In the Turkish national team matches, Passoleague wasn’t implemented because it was expected that people would come to stadiums; the national team needs to be supported. In the match which took place at Konya, how many audiences in Konya have Passoleague? A family watches the match on television if they don’t have Passoleague. If you take your children to see a national match, you can’t go in because you don’t have Passoleague and that’s why Passoleague isn’t required for national matches. If the stadiums are so important, one of the most important things we can show to Europe is that the matches are broadcasted live on many channels. Why don’t you apply it there? Passoleague is a prevention system based on not going into the stadiums. After Gezi, the government made the national matches only in the cities with new stadiums, such as Kayseri, Konya, Trabzon and Eskişehir. But we see that these cities are the polling districts where AKP got most of the votes. In this way, it’s aimed to prevent any possible dissident slogans in the stadiums by creating government’s electorate. That’s why no match is played in İzmir, even though there is an Olympic Stadium and İzmir is the third biggest city in Turkey. They are afraid of slogans and social structure here. That’s why Simon Kuper, who says that football is not only football, is right. In fact, the choice of these cities and Passoleague shows us how afraid of us the government is.”

All in all, this chapter gives us a picture of the implementation of Passoleague in the Turkish football leagues. Thanks to the explanations and opinions of my interviewees, we can see Passoleague’s implications and processes applied. Understanding the implementation of Passoleague is important in the sense that it helps us to understand what mechanisms were put in order to monitor the situation after the Gezi Movement.

4.7 The Çarşı trials

I also asked my interviewees about the Çarşı trials to show us whether the politicization of football fan groups continued after the Gezi Movement and whether they supported these trials against Çarşı. Çarşı was the locomotive of the crowd during the first days of the Gezi Movement against police attacks with water cannons

and tear gas. All the people had sympathy towards them, yet according to my interviewees, people did not show up in person at the trials and most of them only followed them through social media. But it doesn't mean that they did not support Çarşı anymore. It shows that politically unorganized young people had an aversion towards official processes, political trials, and so on. For instance Sinan stated that he did whatever he could do through social media:

“A fan group is accused of being a terrorist group in the end. It's really too much. I retweeted, I did what I could do at least over social media. When these things happen to Çarşı, the Beşiktaş president didn't own this, some players didn't support it, but after these events, the sympathy of everyone for Çarşı increased.”

Kaan thinks that everybody resisted during the Gezi Movement, yet Çarşı became the spacegoat in the eyes of the government and it is shame that they didn't show up in the meetings for trials:

“I said how can they do this to Çarşı, how can they think like this, how can they accuse, I was surprised but I couldn't do anything, but I admit that it's our shame. They were there as themselves, they put up a fight as themselves. We were there and we put up a fight as ourselves, they became the spacegoat, they were accused, we runned away as ourselves, I can summarize what happened actually. And while defending them like this, I was ashamed of not being at their hearing when I think about that.”

Furthermore, Kaan brought a different view to the issue and argued that they did not own their trials since it took place in a prison like judiciary system:

“The thing in Gezi was resistance and it wasn't political for us, I mean it wasn't about politics. When this thing comes into trial, we weren't included in this case since this was not the thing we were looking for or were defending. These men put Çarşı into a law process like prison, like you can't go out and we couldn't accept this.”

Ahmet also thinks that they did not own the trials and they lost interest in the Gezi Movement and specifically the Çarşı trials:

“I followed the news but I quitted after a point. Because we were getting apoliticized. We succeed in something very beautiful and we gave our message. Like Abdullah Gül's saying, “the message is received and everybody go home.” We saw that we can organize, actually not organize but

we can create public opinion but it has not been repeated for four years. My interest has also decreased since the time of these cases. I specifically didn't open the newspapers to look up for cases, but when I surfed the headlines, I would read what happened if I came across something.”

Feyza, on the other side, thinks that Çarşı was knowing this in the beginning. He thinks that if you captured a TOMA, which is public property, the state would certainly punish you, and Çarşı took this risk on purpose:

“Because I'm not a militaristic person, I didn't think that I would go to the courthouse and resist. Many people didn't think so. But it was a price anyway for the Çarşı people. People died there, clashed with police, it's a price but it's a sad price, of course we were all sad. But this price had to be paid in some way, they did it by taking this risk. Çarşı took this risk and that's why they are heroes, that's why we praise them. In the simplest term, if you clash with the police, get a TOMA, then they punish you for damaging public property, we were aware of this.”

The only interviewee who showed up for the trials was Ulaş. He did not go to the Çağlayan Justice Palace⁸³ but he went to Abbasağa Park, where Çarşı usually gathers and makes demonstrations:

“I followed and went to Abbasağa for the trial but I didn't go to Çağlayan. In the exit of some succeeded cases, I felt that I was living 31 May again. There was much enthusiasm but there was also reaction with enthusiasm. Beşiktaş fans got together but it wasn't to praise Beşiktaş or shout Beşiktaş slogans. I can say that Beşiktaş fans got together under the common ground of being a Beşiktaş fan for freedom.”

At the end of trials, Çarşı was acquitted and many people were pleased about this decision. Yet we can say that the support or association with football fan groups stayed limited to taking actions during the Gezi Movement. After that, many people preferred to support them through social media.

4.8 Additional evaluation

⁸³Çarşı trials took place in Çağlayan Justice Palace like many courts on the European side of Istanbul.

Political humor was also in place during Gezi Movement. Many of my interviewees added that if Çarşı was a political party, they would vote for them. For instance,

Kaan said:

“We could have been in a different situation if there was a Çarşı [political] party, if we had shouted slogans like “vote for Çarşı” or if we thought something like this. Now I wonder why it didn’t come to our minds. They were so reasonable and thoughtful at that period but the ideas didn’t represent us exactly. I’m sure that they would have got many votes during those times. I think if people thought for 15 seconds, they would vote for Çarşı.”

One interviewee, Bilge, registered for the Gezi Party, which was founded right after the Gezi Movement:

“I was a member of the Gezi Party, I paid a membership fee for the first time in my life. You know, I saw it in İstiklal Street and I became a member. I never looked at things like this, brochures, what was happening in my environment, and so on. I usually put my earphones and walk. I became a member at the stand. I was thinking that this party had recently been founded and it would grow. But no, they couldn’t attend the elections. You need to open branches in a certain numbers of cities throughout Turkey, they were only in three cities, so I dropped my membership later.”

Beste also started to attend political movements with the fan group she supported after the Gezi Movement:

“I knew Sol Açık, I had combined ticket. I usually hang out individually, I’m a man who doesn’t go into political groups. I had friend at Sol Açık. I’m not leftist but their attitudes and positions became attractive to me. For instance, in the period when I lived in Istanbul, we were attending reaction walking by saying, “All of us are Armenians” in the Hrant Dink commemorations. I always saw Sol Açık there. There were some times when I walked with them, it continued in the same way at Gezi. The latest interaction was 1 May. Now I have moved to İzmir, I was with Sol Açık the previous 1 May and it was the first 1 May in my life.”

Güney commented on an issue which I did not touch on in general. He thinks that the general patriarchal society of Turkey might be reflected in the football fan groups and this might have affected the general situation of fan groups in participating in the Gezi Movement:

“Fan groups are already civil society organizations in my eyes. They were always like this because they can unify people under the same roof and they can be dedicated to a certain objective and they can attract the masses. I think fan groups have something which comes from a patriarchal state. What the president says is everything. If the president of Çarşı says, “let’s attend this meeting”, then they attend. For instance, right-wing supporters have this so much in terms of state. The government can make mistakes but I’m always with my state and hence, I always support the government. But it doesn’t mean that all Çarşı members attend because their leader told them to; the ones who didn’t agree didn’t attend. They didn’t but I think that this understanding increased the participation. I’m only speaking in terms of fan groups.”

İlber pointed out a gender dimension in football fan groups during the Gezi Movement, which deserves more research.

“This detail about the fan groups was so beautiful. There were LGBTs in the park, they had a banner saying “no to sexist swearing”. Stadiums are not sterile environments, the stadium is an environment of swearing. There is a situation of no swearing with the ideological domination of leftist organizations in Gezi Park. Fan groups had to change their own language for the first time. They didn’t swear or they passed over the parts of slogans which included swearing. In fact, fan groups were tamed there. Swearing is praising one side while smashing other side. With the inability to swear, disproportionate reason is developed because swearing was established on sexism. Thus, fan groups were tamed together with the sociology of the park and turned into another structure. A man they called fag actually helped so much in the clashes. Football fans said that the real men were these men actually.”

I have included these topics as additional evaluation topics, yet there are still a lot of issues that I have not mentioned about the Gezi Movement. It was an urban unrest which was mainly about an urban transformation project of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Since this movement became widespread across Turkey, we cannot analyze it through only one dimension. This thesis only covered the football fandom mobilization part and it can shed light into this dimension of the Gezi Movement.

4.9 Causal mechanisms in analyzing the interviews

I would like to interpret the interviews that I conducted by making some reflections on the analysis. As I stated in the beginning, my all interviewees were politically

unorganized and this was typical for the young people who walked with football fan groups in the Gezi Movement. This reflects the state of political disorganization at the Gezi Movement when we consider political identities and affiliations of the protestors. Because the state of political disorganization was predominant among most of the protestors, they were inclined to join football fan groups that offered them organizational autonomy in the political sense. The football fan groups like Çarşı or Sol Açık promised them an organization-free environment, and it was a safe place or an apolitical place for the unorganized people who felt insecure near political organizations. In other words, football fan groups had no political agenda, and that was the source of attraction for politically unorganized protestors.

My interviewees saw politics as a dirty and illegitimate activity. There is also the effect of the criminalization and stigmatization of dissident politics, specifically for leftist organizations. As we can understand clearly from my interviews, most of people see leftist organizations as illegitimate in the larger context of the delegitimization of politics. In line with this explanation, my interviewees considered politicians untrustworthy, while football fan groups were seen as trustworthy. Political organizations were pursuing their own political benefits by trying to gain new members for their organizations and by carrying their flags. Yet football fan groups were free of any political ideology. These groups, a source of apolitical position, were inclusionary and pluralistic towards all the people, while political organizations were seen as divisive. The distinction made between dirty part of politics and a humanistic point of view of football fan groups enables us to interpret the common attitudes of the protestors. The divisions among leftist organizations also strengthened this distinction among protestors. This interpretation is also important to reveal the subjectivities of protestors, specifically my interviewees.

We can also talk about the preparedness of football fan groups in terms of physical force. For instance, my interviewees, as members of the secular middle class did not have any experience of confronting the police forces and did not have any practical knowledge on this. Yet football fan groups such as Çarşı and Sol Açık had the necessary physical equipment and practical knowledge on confronting the police forces. This might be another reason why the protestors walked with football fan groups.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis mainly examined the role and the effects of football fandom mobilization in the Gezi Movement, which was the biggest social upheaval Turkey had ever experienced. It is emphasized that many unorganized people who participated in this movement and stood by football fan groups got politicized and expressed themselves through the colors of the football team they supported. In this research, football fandom has been depicted as a channel of politicization of football fans and the people supporting them.

In order to contextualize football fandom in the Gezi Movement, I first portrayed the historical background of the football and politics in Turkey before the Gezi Movement. I discussed the past state policies on football leagues and purposeful actions of politicians on football (Kılıç, 2006). On the road to the Gezi Movement, the opening ceremony for the new stadium of the Galatasaray Sports Club, the match-fixing case of the Fenerbahçe Sports Club and the WTA Championships Istanbul Tennis Tournament can be seen as signals of the creation of political dissent before the Gezi Movement. After giving these signals of accumulated political dissent, I delineated the whole the Gezi Movement step by step so as to contextualize football fandom mobilization during this movement. I conveyed the turning points which were related to football fandom mobilization and the remarkable moments of football fan groups during the Gezi Movement. The graffitis on the walls turned into political slogans, and the football marches became meetings of football fans in Gezi Park, constituting the remarkable points in researching football fandom mobilization in the Gezi Movement.

As for the theoretical construction of this study, I used the literature approaching the relationship of football and politics from above and from below. I first depicted football as a form of state power since there were a lot of examples on the use of football by authoritarian statesmen (Sert, 2000). The findings of my research study contradict this literature through offering another explanation. The theoretical stance of this thesis takes football as people's game. My analysis and discussions reveal that football is democratic and peaceful (Boniface, 2007). Furthermore, in order to conceptualize more of football fandom mobilization and politics, I portrayed several examples from all over the world which offer an insightful comparative outlook on the Gezi Movement.

This literature offers an alternative approach to the relationship between football and politics. According to this approach, football fandom can promise resistance realms in times of social upheavals. For instance, FC Barcelona represents the resistance of the Catalans against the Spanish government (as cited in Llopis-Goig, 2015) in the same way that Celtic FC represents Irishness and Catholicism in Scotland while the Rangers FC represents Protestantism and United Kingdom (Bradley, 2006). In the Balkans, the political polarization between Serbia and Croatia generated a nationalist violence which happens in football fan organizations (Zelyurt, 2013). In the colonial context in Africa, football became a symbol against imperialist powers (Brown, 1998). The Soccer War between El Salvador and Honduras was the result of unclear borders between the two countries and the problems which occurred as a result of this situation (Barrett et al, 2009). As a common phenomenon in the whole of Latin America, football is also prevalent in Colombia through intertwined relationships between drug cartels, football clubs and political violence (Bolivar, 2012). One of the closest examples which could enlarge our thinking of the Gezi

Movement is the football fandom mobilization in the Egyptian resistance against the government, since football is used as a weapon for self-expression in Arab world (Tuastad, 2014).

My interviews with the unorganized people stood by football fan groups reiterated the initial thinking of this thesis in the beginning. In order to analyze my findings of the interviews, I conceptualized into some prominent themes. I revealed some critical engagements with theoretical construction specifically on the comparative cases. I scrutinized the concrete experiences of my interviewees in order to back up my arguments and research questions.

I think this thesis is important in the sense that it contributes to our understanding of politics through opening up new spaces of thinking and reflections about the transformation of the public spaces through dissident football fans in Turkey. The current developments in Turkish political life and its reflections on the football fans show us that the public sphere in the football has gained a dissident quality (Yurdesin, 2005, p.117). Turkish political scene was used to experience conventional politics for decades. However, after Gezi Movement, Turkish politics experienced the dissidence coming to public sphere through a new identity which is composed of the colors of prominent football clubs of Turkey. For instance, my interviewees who are not related with any political issues before Gezi Movement, reflected their political dissidence against the government through their football fandom identities.

As parallel with my interview analysis, appropriation of colors rather than organizations was more promising for the people and football fandom offered a political identity to them. This situation suggests that the fandom organizations are not only a group of audiences, but they could appropriate an active role in creating

public opinion (Yurdesin, 2005, p.117). In employing a Habermesian argument, the football society could gain a critical character over the execution of government rather than being an approving authority (Habermas, 1997, p.401). As experienced at Gezi Movement, football fan groups became the platforms in which many young people reflected their dissents towards the execution of government. This circumstance could play an important role in the creation of the public opinion in the long term at Turkish political arena.

In that way, Turkish politics might diversify from the conventional politics into alternative channels of making politics. These developments occurred through Gezi Movement might signify the emergence of a new type of making politics in Turkey through football fandom mobilization. The character of this mobilization resembles new social movements approach which is a distinctive view of the social movements due to its stance on how individuals respond, fit into or change the system (Pichardo, 1997). New Social Movements rejects the materialistic goals and demand for direct democracy, cooperative styles of social organization, etc. (Pichardo, 1997). In parallel with this, New Social Movements appropriate anti-institutional tactical orientation and the participants of the New Social Movements prefer to remain outside of the normal political channels through employing uneasy tactics (Pichardo, 1997). It is the point where I would like to highlight about my research study since the politicization of the football fandom in Turkey could bring a new perspective to this dimension.

I achieved to reveal that standing by football fan organizations was safer for an unorganized protester in comparing with the leftist organizations. I saw that most of the people trusted in football fan organizations most in times of crisis or in violent encounters with the police. My interviewees remained outside of conventional

political channels through participating in football fan groups and through avoiding political or leftist organizations. In that way, they actually created a new type of making politics in Turkey.

APPENDIX
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you attend the Gezi Movement?
2. Why did you prefer football fan groups to leftist organizations? Which alternatives did you have?
3. Did you have any experience you can tell about? Do you remember moments involving football fan groups?
4. Did you follow the calls of football fan groups on social media such as the tweets of Çarşı or Sol Açık when you went to the protests?
5. What do you think about Passoleague? Did you register for this?
6. Did you follow the Çarşı trials?

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