

DAWN OF AN ANARCHIZED SOCIAL IMAGINARY:

A Redefinition of Anarchism through Decolonizing Public Space

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The meanings of the concepts of “the colonizer” and “the colonized” have been transforming interrelatedly with the new neoliberal order during the last couple of decades due to the emergence of new forms of concealed authoritarian power and control under the guise of liberation. In consideration of such shift regarding the context and concept of colonization, what lies beneath the unintended transformation of the Gezi Park protests of Turkey into a people’s resistance of a redefined anarchist character against an excessive governmental control that is of “colonizing” nature will be analyzed.

In that sense, the ways neoliberal order re-formed the context, motivations and objectives of the colonial mindset and how the government has become the new colonizer will be analyzed with regard to *Gezi Park* protests initiated in May 2013 in Turkey. In relation to this, an alternative definition of anarchism will be outlined by referring to the parallelisms between the basic motives and features of those protests and the anarchist mindset. At this point, this redefined, alternative form of anarchism can be defined as *unintended anarchism*, emerging in an unplanned fashion that does not necessarily seek and take action for a stateless/government-less structure as its primary objective but “a different form of decentralized, participatory organization in which power is dispersed” (Ramnath 2011).

It’s worth emphasizing that this is not an attempt to simplify the historical context of the anarchist ideology and explain Gezi Park demonstrations in a reductionist manner. Rather,

the main purpose is to point out the dynamic nature of anarchism through the lens of the aforementioned demonstration act; a demonstration act that took place in order to challenge what is being offered by the government due to an encroachment by taking away people's right to have a say on a common space – a public park that is one of the limited number of green fields standing still in a metropolitan area. “Dynamic nature” refers to a predisposition towards transformation in parallel with the course of any social, political and economic changes a people go through. In that sense, systematized historical definitions attributed to ideologies or ways of thinking no longer would apply to the new motivations associated with constantly evolving status quo. Since there is no separate Platonic realm comprised by mere intellectual phenomena, ideologies are becoming, being re-formed and re-defined within this one universe where those motivations are experienced in a constant flux - emerging, merging, and evolving. These reformations and redefinitions are not artificially constructed by bodies or institutions reproducing or exerting various types of power but rather emanate as a consequence of such reproduction and exertion of power since people are inseparable from their actions formed by and within an immanent political surrounding inclusive of any social, cultural, technological, religious, emotional dimensions. In the end, as Sureyya Evren points out quoting the poet Ilhan Berk, “everything is political, even water flows politically” (Evren 2013).

The way the concepts of the colonizer, the colonized and the anarchist mindset are used in flexible or secondary ways other than what those concepts initially invoke was influenced by Maia Ramnath's take on the relationship between anarchism and colonialism in South Asia as such relation may at the first glance seem irrelevant due to the conditioned understanding of anarchist thought as a product of the West. What she aims at doing in her book *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Anti-Authoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (2011) is not pointing out the anarchism in India, if there had been any, but rather “exploring

a slice of South Asian history through the lens of an anarchist analysis” (Ramnath 2011, 5). In a parallel way of thinking, the relation between colonizing hegemonic power and the emergence of an anarchist reaction within the specific context of Turkey’s social and political environment will be examined. In this regard, in the first part, the parallels between the colonial mindset and the political tendencies of the AKP government of Turkey will be outlined. In the second part, the ways Gezi Park protests emerged in reaction to such political tendencies as an unintended form of anarchist protest will be explained.

The End of Colonialism?

“What we need now are creative solutions for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. If the United Nations is to fulfill its obligations in supporting the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of these Territories, a pragmatic and realistic approach -- taking into account the specific circumstances of each -- is most likely to lead to concrete results.”

Ban Ki-moon, The United Nations Secretary-General

The quote above assumes that the end of colonialism will come along with the “united” and universal responsibility of the members of the United Nations to make endeavors for the liberation of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing territories. The United Nations defines 17 territories as such (United Nations 2013). However, neither the protagonists of the Arab Spring nor the others colonized by the global capital fall under this definition of colonization. Well, not to mention the ironic institution of the United Nations considering the ways it operates but that would be the subject of another paper. So, does this definition of colonialism really make sense in today’s ‘globe’ with all those international and trans-territorial political institutions and organizations? Or does leaving the others out of this definition mean that they are not colonized? The answer to the first question is clearly a ‘No’ and to explain why is one of the motivations of the first part of this study. Such form of

colonization has come to be called neo-liberalism in general throughout the literature. However, it fails to address the oppression that occurs within a territory under a sovereign, democratic government – as in the case of Turkey. That is why there emerges a second question: in what ways the colonial mindset reveals itself as a universalized form of hegemonic power that adjusts itself to sovereign governmental authority, causing the emergence of an anarchistic spirit among the peoples?

The etymology of colonialism gives an idea of why the concept has been stuck within a restricted terrain of meaning. As Margaret Kohn (Kohn 2012) explains the roots of it,

[t]he term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin.

So, colonialism - in its etymological framework - requires the mobilization of a mass to another land or space as occupiers. Following the occupation and claiming of the space, it is the mission of the settler or colonizer to “normalize” the customs, religion and lifestyle of the other - mostly ‘the savage’. This definition is relevant to the Age of Discovery, considered as the emergence of European colonialism, and such mobilization today can be made possible only throughout a credible excuse, commonly under the name of ‘goodwill intervention’ – such as in the examples of the military interventions in Libya, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Liberia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many others (Grossman 2006). This form of colonialism that has disguised and adjusted itself to the post-World War II environment in reaction to the decolonization process is called neo-colonialism by the scholars. Motivated by the so-called universal responsibility assumed by the world’s “most advanced and civilized” members to prevent any kind of conflict and for the peoples of the world to have “better” lives according to some de facto human rights conditions, intervention has become an effective way to exert

indirect power and authority both politically and economically. In the end, the core element that remains unchanged along the transformation of the colonial seems to be the hegemony reproduced through an absolute truth taken granted as the point of reference for the imposition of power.

At this point, Anibal Quijano's work that investigates the colonial element within the globalized Euro-American mode of hegemony may offer an insight to a flexible and ahistorical understanding of the colonial today with regard to the context it is used within throughout this paper. Quijano defines two major elements of the new model of power that emerged with the constitution of America as "the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of 'race,' a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others" and "the constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its resources and products" (Quijano 2000, 553). Here, it is important to note that the latter is actually developed around the former as Quijano places the problem of 'race' at the core of his argument on Eurocentricism and the "coloniality of power" (*Ibid.*). Here, the problem of race is intended to be replaced with the problem of ideology to show how a particular ideology and ideological identity promoted by the governing authority creates an oppressive social and political environment reminiscent of the colonial in a similar way "race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social classification" (*Ibid.*, 534).

Quijano argues that the colonizers oppressed the colonized in several ways in order to establish their own physical, cultural, and intellectual spaces over those of the colonized. In his (*Ibid.*, 540) own words:

(...) [T]he colonizers exercised diverse operations that brought about the configuration of a new universe of intersubjective relations of domination between

Europe and the Europeans and the rest of the regions and peoples of the world, to whom new geocultural identities were being attributed in that process.

In the light of what Quijano offers in order to understand the relation between the colonizer and the colonized, Europe and the rest of the world in other words, how the recent Turkish government facilitated parallel methods of oppression in order to impose its own socio-political value judgments will be discussed. In other words, it is argued that the recent Turkish government used parallel ways to those of the European colonizers with regard to the definition of a social and political other that is to be assimilated into the dominating ideology which holds power – a form of conservative morality. So, the three ways the colonizers *otherized* and assimilated the colonized in reference to the potential reflections of those ways in the case of Turkey, which eventually gave rise to the Gezi park protests will be analyzed.

Those three major methods of hegemony re-creation are practiced in a parallel way within a sovereign governmental authority and Turkey exemplifies as such considering the current government's sequence of holding office. Since the first time Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took office in 2002, his party has been following an ideo-colonizing agenda and politics that started out with implicit political moves introducing itself as an extremely democratic party. As defined in the 2023 Political Vision statement of the party, "conservative democracy, which is in favor of limited and defined political government, views totalitarian and authoritarian approaches as enemies of democratic politics. Conservative democracy values political legitimacy based on the will of the people and the common values of humanity" (Justice and Development Party, 2013). However, through the discourse of the Prime Minister Erdoğan, recently the party has revealed its major objective as the modification of social and spiritual ways of existence in Turkish society in terms of people's lifestyles and their degree of Muslimness. In a way, the party and Erdoğan stressed the importance of commitment to Islamic moral values and living in accordance with those

values. This was actually what they meant by conservative values as the common values of humanity, where community merely referred to the worldwide Muslim community, *Ummah*. This judgmental attitude of the government has also brought about other forms of oppressive, colonial-like methods of governance to be explained in detailed below.

The first way used by the colonizers to oppress the colonized is, as Quijano points out (Quijano 2000, 541), is expropriation. In his own words:

[i]n the first place, they expropriated the cultural discoveries of the colonized peoples most apt for the development of capitalism to the profit of the European center.

More specifically, in the case of Turkey, this is revealed in the form of expropriation of public space by the government, as in the example of Gezi Park. Sociologist Nilüfer Göle writes: “The Gezi Park movement illustrates the importance of physical space for rethinking power relations between ordinary citizens and political and economic authorities” (Göle 2013). She points out the historical and cultural density of the park that once used to be Ottoman barracks, cradle for the childhood memories of a generation of Turkish-Jewish intellectuals who lived densely in the region of Pera, where the park is located, and an Armenian cemetery as of the 16th Century (*Ibid.*). However, such cultural and existential depth vividly appealing to the cosmopolitan character of the area has been facing the threat of transformation into a uniform shared space through the fascism embraced by global capitalism. By the transformation of a common space that has been self-re-creative in terms of the ways that space has come to be perceived differently by varying representations that take subjective multi-dimensional forms on a cosmopolitan basis, governmental authority aims at flattening that character of multiplicity through a global, common economic ground where multiplicity dissolves into the capital and such dissolution would be possible by a shopping mall in this

scenario. This way, colonial expropriation takes place as public space becomes occupied by the authoritarian capital. Athanasiadis explains this transition with the shift from empires to nation-states and then to transnational entities that established global, totalitarian ideologies among which capitalism and Islamism have blended into each other and laid the greater part of the ground for Gezi Park protests. He writes:

“Beyoğlu, or Pera, is very much the kind of neighborhood that the Alexandrian Greek poet C. P. Cavafy would have felt at home in and been creatively moved by: a district of grimy arcades, raucous taverns, dingy brothels and forgotten churches that encapsulated, in the early 20th century, the passing from the world of empires to the world of nation-states. A century later, those nation states are in danger of being swept away by transnational ideologies, whether commercial, political or religious. The apostle of these ideologies in the Middle East is Islam-compatible neoliberalism, and its centrifugal forces are redesigning Beyoğlu in its image: gleaming shopping malls, splendiferous mosques, militaristic Ottoman barracks and a puritan literalism completely lacking the abstraction and nuance fostered in historical Pera’s decrepitude and decay (Adhanasiadis 2013).”

In other words, the case of Gezi Park is one of the consequences of the transnationalization of neo-liberal power and its objective to remove the historical fabric of places like Taksim, Beyoğlu, the surroundings of the Gezi Park, in order to replace those historical “stacks” into shiny objects of construction convertible to capital.

The second way of colonial domination represents itself through the manipulation of knowledge production. As Quijano writes,

they repressed as much as possible the colonized forms of knowledge production, the models of the production of meaning, their symbolic universe, the model of expression and of objectification and subjectivity. . . (Quijano 2000, 541).

A similar kind of repression has been visible in the Turkish way of governance since the AKP, the ruling party under the leadership of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has taken office. Within this context, knowledge production in terms of freedom of thought and its expression have been restricted by the government in various ways. During the consecutive three election terms the party has been in power, its politics went through significant change. The party's conservative but democratic stance at the beginning of its governance gradually shifted to a merely conservative one and the inevitable element of democracy, tolerance, disappeared in the very colonizing ways among several others that would go beyond the scope of this study.

The most prominent one among numerous other examples is the media repression that has been going on since Erdoğan took office. Drawing away even China and Iran, both of which countries are officially under non-democratic governance, Turkey reached a record number with 103 imprisoned journalists (although the accuracy of this number has been disputed and claimed by the critiques that there might be more than 120) due to several accusations in 2012 (Gibbons 2012).¹ Most of those accusations were about being connected to terrorist organizations such as PKK (*Kurdistan Workers' Party*), KCK (*Group of Communities in Kurdistan*), DHKP-C (*Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front*) or Ergenekon.² The first three groups admit their presence and had claimed responsibility for various terrorist attacks. Differing from the former three groups that focus on Kurdish minority claims against the Turkish state, Ergenekon is allegedly an organization acting as a shadow government having the intention to overthrow the Turkish government by military means as defined by the government. That allegation, despite the unreliability and

¹ Iran had 42 and China had 27 journalists behind bars according to the related newspaper article when it was published.

² Only the most prominent organizations (in terms of activity) are mentioned. For a detailed list, see START webpage. Accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organizations_by_country.asp.

insufficiency of evidence along with illegality such as being obtained by i.e. phone-hacking or midnight raids in people's homes, has never come to be proven or claimed by the so-called members of the organization. Under such conditions, the journalists who were accused of supporting the other three Kurdish organizations "in opinion" and expressing such opinion in their columns or books were arrested along with the other journalists who were accused of being members of this ghost and so-called Ergenekon organization. In brief, a political environment like that worked efficiently for the creation of a bullied media that would not dare to publish or broadcast in critique of the governing authorities.

This repressive attitude of the government towards knowledge production on media basis, the most accessible tool for the people, caused media companies to be reluctant to reveal any news or commentary that would be perceived in critique of the government. For example, one of the mostly watched news channels in Turkey, CNN Turk broadcast a penguin documentary while Gezi Park protests were taking place and the people were harshly attacked by the police using pepper gas and plastic bullets. As the situation was like that and no voice from Gezi Park was heard on mainstream media for the first couple of days, social media took over and through it people started their own alternative ways of news-spreading and criticism such as news-spreading and getting organized via Twitter and Facebook. Yet, the government even went one step further and arrested people based on their social media account activities related to Gezi park protests.

The third and last way Quijano defines is related to the assimilation of the colonized by the imposition of the colonizer's own cultural values and way of living. He writes:

[t]hird, in different ways in each case, they forced the colonized to learn the dominant culture in any way that would be useful to the reproduction of domination,

whether in the field of technology and material activity or subjectivity, especially

Judeo-Christian religiosity (Quijano 2000, p. 541).

In the case of Turkey, this happened in the form of the intention to impose particular Islamic-moral value judgments adopted by the AKP to the society in its entirety within the scope of the party's definition of conservatism. The party refers to the socio-cultural and moral characteristics of Turkey as somewhat pre-determined along with the line of Muslimness for the majority of the population (ninety nine percent) being Muslim. The party states that "the conservative-democrat political identity that AK Party has been trying to develop has overlapping characteristics with other practices of conservatism in the world. That said, this political identity has been shaped by Turkey's socio-cultural characteristics and has a political style that has been shaped by Turkey's local dynamics. In a predominantly Muslim country, this conservative-democrat understanding contributed significantly to the development of democratic experience and set a precedent in its region (Justice and Development Party 2013)."

However, such attitude overlooks the mosaic-like structure of Turkish society and ignores the remaining one percent that is comprised of a multiplicity of groups of different religious orientations. Moreover, even within the Muslim majority, the ways religion is practiced may vary and a considerable section of that ninety nine percent is only Muslim by the definition of their identity cards. Prior to the protests, there had been disputes over Prime Minister Erdoğan's statements on how many kids women should have, how young people should behave in public, and the case of pianist Fazıl Say being investigated after his declaration of being an atheist on Twitter and allegedly mocking Islam created an unrest within Turkish society since Erdoğan's statements on issues like those carried a judging tone coming from an Islamic mindset (See Chivers 2012; Gürsel 2013; Kiper 2013). As stated

elsewhere, this was one of the major reasons that poured masses on the streets: refusal of the imposition of Islam-based conservative morals by the government.

Gezi Park Protests: The Emergence of Unintended Anarchist Reaction

In May 2013, Turkish government's attempt to replace a public park (Gezi Park) located at the heart of Istanbul, the most populated city in Turkey, with a shopping mall mobilized millions of people from various social strata to gather and protest the government, not only by environmentalist motivations but much more than that. Nevertheless, the movement was initiated by a small environmentalist group who "occupied" Gezi Park on May 28, 2013 and resisted the municipal workers who entered the park with construction equipment to demolish the park. At this point, as the attempts of the workers to scare the protesters by driving the construction equipment towards the group did not work, the second best move seemed like coming back with police forces to make the protesters leave the park. After all, police had the right to use more efficient and legitimate ways of persuasion under the law. Despite the efforts of a parliamentary member among the protesters, who could detain the police forces by using his right of parliamentary immunity against an institution of the state, ironically enough, the police came back at 4 a.m. and started forcing people to leave the park and burning down the tents.

In somewhat an unexpected way, as the news spread through the social media, a huge crowd poured to the park and Taksim Square the following day. Thus the minor environmentalist protest took the form of a major uprising not only to protest the government's decision to demolish the park to build a shopping mall but also the overall

political atmosphere that has come to position the government as the absolute decision maker and implementer regardless of public consent and space.

It is important to note that as of the initiation of a broader reaction to the planned demolition of the park, it became impossible to define the groups of protesters with any particular political orientation and motivation. People from every section and age-group of the society were out on the streets not only with environmentalist motives but also to express their concern about the way of governance they have been subjected to. Even harsh and violent response of the police forces did not stop the people most of whom had not even attended any political demonstration before as many interviews with the protesters indicated. Along with identifiable groups such as Kurds, Laicists or Secularists, religious groups like Anti-Capitalist Muslims, Alevites, LGBT groups, workers' associations, major supporter groups of the three main Turkish football teams there were also housewives, white collars, entire families with children and elders, university students, academics, artists, and celebrities among the protesters. I think such heterogeneity is too important to be overlooked for the reason that it reflected itself in the form of a homogeneously motivated and acting mass regardless of those identified groups' long-ignored and unresolved individual issues. Because, those particular groups did not merely seek for the resolution or negotiation regarding their own problems; rather, they acted in solidarity as an organic whole. The protesters strongly denied being associated with any particular political party and claimed: "We are the people!"

Considering the random and unexpected emergence of the resistance movement and the broad social spectrum of protesters, I call this resistance movement an unintended anarchist reaction against the political environment resulting from the colonialist discourse and deeds of the governmental authority. At this point, before moving forward with the specifics of the movement in the context of Turkey, as stated elsewhere, it is important to

emphasize that Gezi Park revolt is different than the Arab Spring, although some interpreted it as an extension of the latter. These movements, including the preceding Occupy Wall Street protests can said to have been influential in terms of facilitating the methods of organization considering the role of social media in all those protest movements and no doubt they all stand in front of a common enemy: the big, nation-less monster of omnipresent Capitalism and the colonizing power it exerts. However, still each protest movement should also be considered within the particular contexts of where they emerge, as the targets of protests and criticism goes beyond whining about the neoliberal world order that has been taking over people's will for more than two decades. That is why Ramnath's suggestion of "decolonizing our concept of anarchism" (Ramnath 2011, p. 6) plays an important role regarding having a better grasp of context-specific movements in particular places.

Throughout the history of Turkey³, anarchism has always been used with a negative meaning, to describe any movement that had a revolting character against the will and policies of the governing authorities. Yet, the most common use of the word "anarchist" was identified with the leftist groups during 1970s, when the conflict between right-left groups⁴ reached its peak just before the resulting military coup in September 12, 1980. However, the first acknowledged anarchist publication called *Karam* was not published before 1986 (Maguire 2010). This indicates a shift in the way anarchism was perceived in pre- and post-coup periods. During the former, anarchist was a word to define potential criminals and rebels against law and state whereas after the coup, it became closer to what the etymology of the word asserts: "absence or denial of authority" (Merriam-Webster 2013); at least, to the longing for that.

³ Referring to the post-Ottoman Empire era.

⁴ A note should be made on the right and left within the context of Turkey. Briefly, leftists were comprised of a range of Marxists/communists and also the supporters of the Kurdish minority rights and independence whereas the right wing was mainly led by Turkish nationalists and fundamentalists.

Maguire points out the newly developing character of Turkish anarchist movements and outlines some of the groups that define themselves as anarchists. Since no particular focus on the Turkish anarchist movement in general but rather explaining the anarchist spirit of the Gezi park protests focused on, those groups and their activities will not be referred to in detail. Yet, in order to have a better grasp of the “unintentionality” regarding Gezi park anarchism, it should be noted that the anarchist groups in Turkey are mostly prominent in big cities and generally organize their protesting activities around the themes of anti-globalism, anti-capitalism, anti-sexism, and workers’ rights (Maguire 2010). In this sense, theme-wise, Gezi Park anarchism diverges from those groups for the reason that it cannot be identified with a particular theme that would fit in one of those anarchist structures or groups operating in Turkey for its impulsive and *disorderly organized* structure.

Going back to Ramnath’s suggestion on decolonizing the concept of anarchism as noted elsewhere, Gezi Park anarchism indicates such decolonization in practice. More specifically, it has come into being without an organized agenda or designated means of communication such as pamphlets, periodicals, etc. Rather, it was the movement itself that broke out firstly and then, in the same manner, the dis-organized forms of communication emerged and were absorbed into the movement by the anonymous contribution of an ideologically or agenda-wise undefinable mass.

A. J. Baker’s take on *Sydney Libertarians*⁵ perspective of anarchism would be a relevant example to understand the nature of Gezi Park protests. The crucial point made by Baker is their criticism of “utopian anarchism”, as

⁵ “‘Sydney Libertarianism’ was not so much a unified school, but a loosely shared perspective – developed a highly original and rigorously argued social theory in post-war Australia. Drawing on Australian philosopher John Anderson and elements of Marx, Sorel, Pareto, Reich, Max Nomad and classical anarchism, Libertarianism refused to map out future utopias, but advocated permanent opposition to all elites, new and old and criticisms of illusions and servility from an anti-activist, pluralist view. Strongest in the late 1950s-early 1960s. After 1980,

Sydney libertarians point out that although they share the anti-authoritarian interests of classical anarchists they cannot help but be critical of utopian anarchism — i.e., of the kind of anarchism which fixes its sights on the future and contends that the main thing is to work for the achievement of the future “free society.” Such a view is open to criticism (a) because it involves a false social theory and (b) because its emphasis on the future obscures what has always been the most important feature of anarchist and libertarian activity, being anarchist or libertarian here and now (Baker 1960).

This means that rather than being fixated on an absolute freedom to be achieved in an unforeseeable future, what matters is the improvisation of anarchistic activity within the current social and political milieu. The problem with the future-oriented expectation of any absolute form of freedom is that it would require some kind of manipulation or fabrication to make the ideologies (which hamper the emergence of such freedom) disappear and moreover, such manipulation or fabrication would mean the replacement of one ideology with another. The problem is that even if such ideology replacement is to be achieved by anarchistic means, it would no longer be of anarchistic character. As in Baker's example of Wilhelm Reich's argument on the sexually free society, “it is one thing to know how the prevailing sexual ideology affects the sexual life of most people and a quite different thing to bring about a significant disappearance of that ideology” (*Ibid.*). In other words, it would be utopian to expect that the demolition of the “religions and moralistic forces in society” that have laid the grounds for a particular set of moral value judgments would immediately give rise to “new social conditions” that would let “straightforward and non-guilt-ridden sexual relations” emerge per se within a foreseeable future (*Ibid.*). So, in a similar way, it would be utopian to initiate an anarchist act depending on a future expectation of a change in the ways of

strands of the classic Libertarian perspective continued in smaller, philosophically-oriented Australian circles of “realists, pluralists, and critical drinkers.” See “Sydney Libertarianism”, *Marxist Internet Archive*. Accessed on December 10, 2013, <http://marxists.anu.edu.au/history/australia/libertarians/index.htm>.

governance within the framework of today's domestic and international political traditions and realities.

Sydney Libertarians call such form of improvised anarchism as “anarchism without ends” or “pessimistic anarchism” which refers to anarchist activities that “can be carried for their own sake, here and now, without any reference to supposed future ends” (*Ibid.*). This form of anarchism marks a different form of anarchism compared to the classical anarchist tradition's emphasis on necessarily getting organized for deed. In a way, this alternative anarchism focuses on the deed itself rather than some future expectation that would emerge as a consequence of that deed. What makes this form of anarchism libertarian is that it liberates the deed from the burden of a future success and rather gets involved with the deed for the sake of the deed itself.

In the light of this libertarian understanding of a non-fixated anarchist thinking, Gezi Park movement made its way through impulsive improvisation rather than any pre-determined and hypothetical path to freedom or to the dissolution of authority. This movement emerged in an unplanned fashion and caused an unprecedented variety of groups of people to come together and improvise a common language of resistance. “The woman in red” standing in front of a police officer bravely, “the standing man” who stood in the middle of Taksim Square for eight hours and passively indicated his resistance, the ballet dancers and whirling Dervishes wearing gas masks, a man reading a book to the policemen in front of their barricade all made their own ways of protest into the Gezi Park movement along with many others including composing and singing protest themes, dancing, cooking and sharing food etc. within their occupied or re-claimed space – Gezi Park (See images below). Those moments of protest captured became iconized in an unintended way and spread through social media and blogs with many others that created the movement.



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Concluding Remarks: Oppressive Power Backfires

Gezi Park occupation created a space where environmentalist occupation was transformed into an unintentional anarchist reaction. It was unintentional in the sense that the people or protesters did not have any initial intention or agenda to get involved in such a massive movement. Besides, most of the people who attended the protests had obviously not got involved in any political party, group, or even protest before. This form of reaction was different than the form of historically defined anarchism which aimed at the absolute denial of any form of authority, because Gezi Park occupation was merely the denial of a particular form of governance. People wanted the oppressive and authoritarian government to either change its ways or be replaced with a more democratic and respectful form of governance that would not be judgmental based on a particular religious or moral truth or truths. Yet, despite not demanding a government-less structure, it was still an anarchist movement for its cooperative and symbolic structure. The symbolisms created within the movement had references to anarchist images and Gezi Park was reclaimed and re-defined as a common space of solidarity – the form of solidarity that can said to be typical of anarchism. People

⁶ Retrieved from Google Images. Search: Gezi park protests.

established their own library to share books and public kitchen to distribute free food. Graffiti was used as the most prominent way of expression claiming walls, pavements, and streets as people's own common space rather than being government property. Protesters also used passive weapons such as gas masks and chemical mixtures to soothe the impact of the pepper gas heavily used on them by the police.

In the final analysis, Gezi Park protests are an indication of the fact that at the point where individual freedom is challenged with some form of morals imposition by authoritarian power, rupture occurs and leads to an improvisational, unintended resistance. The government's colonial-like political discourse with respect to its judgmental attitude towards less-Islamic ways of living and other forms of belief or religious practice/non-practice was a major reason to trigger that reaction. That reaction emerged in the form of an un-classical anarchist way, in a decolonized anarchist account borrowing Ramnath's idea, in the sense that it has created its own ways of resistance outside of the Western-oriented context of a universally definable anarchist ideology. Rather, in the case of Gezi Park, anarchism was freed from its ideological mould and unlike other anarchist movements that were overshadowed by their preceding Western pacemakers, Gezi Park movement created its own context as a rupture coming into being per se. That is why the concepts of colonization and decolonization has been the key to this attempt of understanding Gezi Park protest movement as it helped getting to the bottom of both the movement itself and of the reasons that triggered the movement.

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