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ARTICLE

Reframing ‘Scum’ (Çapulcu): A Frame Analysis of the Gezi Park Movement in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the Gezi Park protests in Türkiye by focusing on how the term “scum” (çapulcu), initially used by government representatives as a derogatory label, was reinterpreted and transformed into a collective identity by protesters. The study aims to analyze how competing sociological interpretations of the Gezi Park Movement relate to this process of symbolic reframing. The research adopts a qualitative approach based on thematic classification and document analysis of academic writings and social media content. Drawing on Erving Goffman’s frame analysis and a relational cultural sociology perspective, the study examines how meanings are constructed, contested, and transformed. The analysis identifies three main strands of interpretation—class/political, civil society, and culture/identity-based approaches—and shows that, despite their differences, all converge in recognizing the movement’s transformative impact. The findings demonstrate that the term “çapulcu” was successfully reframed through humor, creativity, and digital communication, becoming a unifying and empowering identity. The study highlights the importance of cultural processes, symbolic interaction, and social media in contemporary social movements, suggesting that meaning-making practices are as significant as structural conditions in shaping collective action. The article argues that contemporary social movements cannot be adequately understood without attending to cultural processes and symbolic interaction alongside structural conditions.

Keywords: Gezi Park Movement; Frame Analysis; Cultural Sociology; Social Movements; Türkiye

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1. Introduction

The Gezi Park protests, which began in Istanbul in late May 2013 as a localized environmental demonstration, rapidly evolved into one of the most significant social movements in contemporary Türkiye. Initially organized to oppose the redevelopment of a public park near Taksim Square, the protests quickly expanded into a nationwide mobilization articulating broader grievances related to governance, urban transformation, and interventions into everyday life.

One of the most distinctive features of the movement was the emergence of a highly creative and reflexive protest language, particularly visible in digital spaces. Among these symbolic expressions, the term “*çapulcu*” (scum)—used by political authorities to delegitimize protesters—was reappropriated and resignified as a positive and unifying identity. This transformation provides a particularly revealing case for examining how meanings are constructed, contested, and stabilized within social movements.

This article asks: How was the term “*çapulcu*” reframed during the Gezi Park Movement, and how can different sociological perspectives help explain this process?

To address this question, the study combines frame analysis with a cultural sociology perspective and reviews three major strands of sociological interpretation in Türkiye: class/political, civil society, and culture/identity-based approaches. It argues that the transformation of “*çapulcu*” exemplifies the dynamic interplay between structure, culture, and agency in contemporary social movements.

The Gezi protests began as a small-scale environmental action against the planned redevelopment of Gezi Park but quickly escalated following police intervention. The use of force against demonstrators triggered widespread public reaction, leading to protests across major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir.

The movement brought together a diverse range of participants, including students, professionals, workers, artists, and activists with varying ideological orientations. This heterogeneity made the movement difficult to categorize within traditional sociological frameworks.

Government discourse played a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of the protests. Protesters were frequently labeled using stigmatizing terms such as “*çapulcu*” and “*drunkards*,” which contributed to the symbolic struggle over meaning that became central to the movement.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on frame analysis as developed by Erving Goffman, which conceptualizes social life as organized through interpretive frameworks that structure experience^[1]. These frames are not static; rather, they are subject to contestation, negotiation, and transformation.

In social movements, framing processes play a central role in shaping how events are understood and communicated. The reinterpretation of “*çapulcu*” can be understood as a case of frame transformation, whereby a stigmatizing label is redefined and invested with new meaning.

To complement this perspective, the study also engages with cultural sociology, particularly Pierre Bourdieu’s insights into the relationship between culture and power^[2]. While Bourdieu emphasizes the role of habitus in reproducing social hierarchies, this study highlights the capacity of actors to rework symbolic meanings through cultural practices.

Finally, building on Max Weber’s notion of lifestyle and subsequent discussions of “life politics,” the article situates the Gezi Movement within broader shifts from class-based mobilization to identity- and lifestyle-oriented forms of collective action^[3].

Frame Analysis: This study draws on the concept of frame analysis developed by Erving Goffman, which examines how individuals interpret and organize experience through socially constructed frames. Frames are not fixed; they can be contested and transformed through interaction.

In the context of social movements, framing processes are crucial for shaping collective understanding and mobilization. The reinterpretation of “*çapulcu*” can be understood as a case of frame transformation, where a stigmatizing label is redefined and given new meaning.

Cultural Sociology and Symbolic Violence: The analysis also incorporates insights from Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his emphasis on the relationship between culture and power^[2]. While Bourdieu highlights how cultural meanings reproduce social hierarchies, this study emphasizes that meanings can also be contested and reworked through symbolic struggle.

The Gezi protests demonstrate how cultural resources—such as humor, irony, and creativity—can be mobilized to challenge dominant meanings and produce alternative interpretations.

Beyond Class Lifestyle and Life Politics: Building on Max Weber's concept of lifestyle, contemporary approaches emphasize "life politics," focusing on identity, self-expression, and everyday practices. These perspectives suggest that social movements are not driven solely by economic grievances but also by concerns related to lifestyle, autonomy, and cultural recognition.

The Gezi Movement reflects this shift, as participants mobilized around issues such as urban space, personal freedoms, and cultural expression.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on document analysis and thematic classification. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative document analysis and thematic classification of academic texts and social media content. By linking theoretical discussions with empirical examples, it demonstrates that symbolic reframing—particularly through humor and creativity—played a central role in shaping the movement's collective identity.

Frame analysis, developed by Erving Goffman, examines how individuals interpret and organize their experiences through socially constructed "frames." These frames are not fixed; they can be contested, reinterpreted, and transformed^[1].

In the context of social movements, framing processes are crucial because they shape how events are understood and communicated. The reinterpretation of "çapulcu" illustrates how a stigmatizing label can be inverted and transformed into a symbol of resistance and solidarity.

Data Sources:

- Academic articles and commentaries on the Gezi Movement (primarily 2013–2022).
- Public statements and writings by key sociologists.
- Social media content (e.g., Twitter hashtags such as #DirenGeziParkı).

Selection Criteria:

- Widely cited or publicly influential texts.
- Contributions representing different analytical perspectives.
- Social media examples that gained broad visibility.

Analytical Procedure:

1. Collection of relevant texts and materials.
2. Thematic coding (class, civil society, identity, culture).
3. Identification of framing processes.
4. Interpretation of symbolic transformations.

This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of how meanings were constructed and contested during the movement. Include: a) Data sources (articles, media, Twitter hashtags); b) Selection criteria (e.g., most cited scholars, widely circulated posts); c) Time frame (May–June 2013, etc.). Analytical steps: a) Coding; b) Thematic grouping; c) Discourse interpretation.

During the data collection phase, a thematic classification method was used during the systematic analysis of the available literature. Document and text analysis was conducted using examples within the scope of the article^[4]. Thus, the discourses, strategies, and forms of discourse regarding the Gezi Movement were comparatively examined. In the analysis section, the data were analyzed thematically and discourse themes were identified^[5]. Consequently, this study follows an inductive qualitative research roadmap. Thus, an attempt was made to blend the theoretical depth and empirical representations of the semantic worlds of new social movements. Drawing on the subjective experiences of sociologists writing on the Gezi Park movement, this study comparatively reviewed the stages of cultural and symbolic interaction rooted in social existence^[5, 6].

Because of the significant influence of social media in today's information society, the sociological analysis of discourses is gaining importance by acting as a mirror for understanding society^[7, 8]. However, before delving into the analysis, it would be appropriate to provide basic theoretical information on the concepts of "life policy" and "lifestyle," based on Weber, which were developed as alternatives to classical Marxist class analysis and conceptualization and have gained importance due to their current relevance.

4. Sociological Interpretations of the Gezi Movement

It is possible to examine the writings on the Gezi social movement by dividing them into two fundamental groups: those that advocate for a "political" society, which includes

class, and those that advocate for a “civil” society. However, due to the widespread use of a relatively more liberal discourse based on culture and identity by some sociologists, they were also included under a third heading.

Class/Political Analyses: Those who shared their thoughts on the Gezi movement with the public can be categorized according to certain characteristics. Chief among these are those who view the events from a class perspective. For example, Korkut Boratav (2013) is among those who claim the Gezi movement was class-based^[9]. Boratav is also notable for objecting to the characterization of the events using the term “middle class” because it does not conform to Marxist terminology. According to him, the fact that the large segments of the population who participated in the Gezi events share certain common characteristics does not justify conceptualizing them as middle class. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the class origins of the supporter groups involved in the resistance. For example, a significant portion of the participants were university and high school students, and the term “middle class” is meaningless for them; it is necessary to know the class origins of their parents. Furthermore, they are potentially highly likely to belong to the working class. On the other hand, those working in jobs requiring unskilled labor in the “services” sector are essentially wage workers who create surplus value. Therefore, they are automatically included within the working class as elements of the real or reserve labor army in the broadest sense.

On the other hand, Boratav argues that independent professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, consultants, architects, engineers, and financial advisors, who he describes as huddled within the “middle class” bloc and who earn their living by selling their skills acquired through education, can also be included within the educated, white-collar working class. Boratav, who sees the slogan “Everywhere is Taksim; everywhere is resistance” as a call for unlimited, direct democracy, a historical longing of the working class, says, “The students, intellectuals, workers, and intellectuals in Taksim have gifted us this ‘turmoil.’ Of course, they will eventually be defeated, but the ‘universal’ law of dialectics will operate: by elevating Türkiye to a higher plane and leaving a significant gift to the history of social struggles,” essentially evoking Mao Zedong’s statement, “There is chaos in the world. The situation is very good.” Consequently, Boratav (2013) believes that the protests represent a “mature

class reaction.” According to him, highly qualified, educated workers, together with their future class comrades (students), and with the participation of professionals, oppose the attempts of the snatch-grabbing bourgeoisie and the political power integrated with it to seize huge urban rents^[9].

Metin Özügür (2013) also claims that the process he describes as the “Great People’s Uprising” is “class-based”^[10]. According to him, “The neoliberal phase of capitalism has swept aside the ‘middle classes,’ largely comprised of professionals, for the last 30 years; professions/labor have been devalued, the conditions of reproduction have been commodified, and social status has been re-proletarianized.” Furthermore, according to him, there are similarities between the process he describes as the “Chapulling Rebellion” and the 1968 movement. The most significant indicator of this is that, contrary to the liberal view that separates equality and freedom, the movement, which demonstrates their inseparability, has reached a universal dimension. On the other hand, Özügür (2013) believes that the Gezi Movement presented a concrete political program. According to him, the first step was to ensure freedom of cultural affiliation and freedom of belief; the second was to establish public sovereignty and the independent organization of social classes. Finally, the core principles of this program are organizing based on work and employment, and providing opportunities for a decent life. Özügür (2013) also points to the legitimization power of the creativity, aesthetics, and intelligence of street expression. He also notes the widespread prevalence of political diagnoses based on indicators such as codes and symbols in leftist culture, and criticizes this reductionist approach. He explains the display of Atatürk and the Turkish flag during the Gezi Park protests with the concept of “folk Kemalism,” carefully emphasizing that this carries a symbolic meaning in the public eye: “Stay away from religious fanaticism; engage in science and art, etc.” This, in turn, distinguishes it from Kemalism as a state ideology^[10].

Kemal İnal’s (2013) compilation of articles by 28 local and five foreign scholars, “Gezi, Rebellion, and Freedom: The Street’s Festive Opposition,” has also found its place in the relevant literature^[11]. İnal (2013), who seriously challenges liberal discourse, assesses the events as a popular movement and a rebellion, emphasizing that these events possessed “political and social” dimensions based on the long-standing struggles of socialists and that they were not

merely a cultural struggle but a “sociological event beyond democracy.” According to him, “Gezi was a revolutionary rebellion of a public movement whose political nature was too comprehensive, cutting across classes, and whose scope could not be explained by pathology, paternalism, and individualism, seeking refuge in popularity.” It is also wrong and unacceptable to view Gezi as a “youth” or “civil society” movement. Similarly, “Gezi is not only a popular, individualist, anti-consumerist movement, but also a complete struggle for freedom against capitalists responsible for policies that exploit nature, people, and labor.” It is also important that İnal (2013) offers some suggestions for what to do next. According to him, Gezi cannot continue as an electoral and formal democratic movement. The goal must be a new order. Furthermore, Gezi must not be limited to mere forms but must also be formally organized as a party. Otherwise, as has happened in similar examples around the world, it risks being forgotten. Finally, “the resisters should not fetishize anything,” they should see the events as tools for freedom and work to solve the problems through comprehensive campaigns, and “all of Turkey should be transformed into a school where everyone learns from everyone else”^[11].

Civil Society Analyses: As is well known, old social movements were classically working-class political movements, while new social movements are environmentalist, feminist, religious, anti-militarist, and so on, movements that do not seek political power and therefore prioritize civil society. While there is a rich literature on social movements, this article examines only the views of Coşkun and Alpman, two sociologists who generally use the term “social movement” in their analysis of the Gezi Park protests^[12, 13]. Coşkun shares very similar views with Boratav (2013), attributing the protests that began with Gezi Park and spread throughout the country to the government’s authoritarian and oppressive rule and pro-capital policies in recent years. According to him, the claim that this movement is comprised of “middle classes” and “young people” is problematic. Because, “The activists’ proficient use of cutting-edge technologies, such as computers and social media, their high level of cultural capital, and their development of diverse protest methods cannot be characteristics that make them middle class. Class can be determined by their position vis-à-vis the means of production, not by their consumption habits.” According to Coşkun, this is a reaction against the government’s years

of profiteering-based policies. “In this sense, this ‘social movement’ that began with Gezi Park is not only a reaction to the intervention in lifestyles, but also a resistance directed at this rentier bourgeoisie.” Kemal also explains the violent suppression and spread of the protests as “the handing over of public rights in the cities to capitalists, and the people’s opposition to this.” Finally, Coşkun (2013), stating that the unification of different fractions of the working class has still not been achieved, does not despair about the future. His statement, “Unions, albeit belatedly, participated in the Gezi Park protests, but the unification of different segments of the class has still not been achieved. The more they achieve this, the more a strong class movement will begin,” indicates his view that the Gezi protests do not yet possess class characteristics^[12].

Evaluating the Gezi events from a sociological perspective, Alpman (2013) first incorporates some of the views expressed in Guy Debord’s (1996) work, *The Society of the Spectacle*, to provide a theoretical foundation for the Gezi movement^[14]. Citing Debord’s view that “not only Paris but all the streets of the world must be shared for living, sharing, and freedom,” and that, despite government policies of street control, “class liberation lies in conquering the streets,” Alpman draws attention to the true nature of the urban transformation policies underlying the Gezi events. Alpman (2013) also points to Henri Lefebvre’s concept of the “Right to the City,” arguing that this concept was “created to justify the defense of the rights of the dispossessed living in the city”^[15]. Lefebvre’s emphasis on “the capital class, as a powerful class that determines urban transformation, reproduces urban exploitation through the exchange value of spaces” and his suggestion that “city dwellers organize and recapture the city” are meaningful for Alpman in understanding the Gezi movement. Alpman (2013) also provides an example or hint that resistance can be addressed from a class perspective by stating, “Lefebvre interpreted the city as a site of class struggle, arguing that the fundamental contradiction of economic growth and industrialization problems was class, and that this classism had transformed into urban problems.” After noting David Harvey’s preference for the broader concept of “human rights” rather than the right to the city, as a counterargument to those who claim urban struggles are class-based, Alpman then reveals his view that the Gezi movement was not a youth or middle-class movement^[16].

At the end of his article, he offers his main assessment: “The Gezi Park protests, which progressed from objection to rebellion and from rebellion to resistance, became the most effective ‘social movement’ in Türkiye, emphasizing the need for democracy to shift from personal projections to institutionalization.” Furthermore, Alpman’s observation that social opposition transcended national boundaries and became global is also noteworthy.

Culture and identity-based analyses: There are many social scientists who have conducted analyses of the Gezi Park protests based on culture and identity rather than class and political content^[17, 18]. However, only the views of Ali Akay and Nilüfer Göle are used here. Akay prefers to use the concept of “micro politics.” According to him, policies based on political parties have come to an end^[18]. Akay states that “as a result of the micro politics of desire, young people are putting their desires in the squares and streets; they do not want their desires to be snatched away by political parties.” According to him, “Gezi Park stands before us not as a symbol, as the place where a collective desire crystallizes, but as a real arena of struggle... The resistance movement has become a micro politics of desire.” In other words, in contrast to the macropolitics through which political parties try to capture desire, youth today are laying out on the roads the micropolitics of desire, which is a true politics of desire that has crystallized in many cities^[18].

Young people are opposing the duality of power and opposition established by the government and political parties as binary oppositions. Akay opposes the portrayal of “everything as class dichotomies, theoretical binary oppositions such as bourgeois capital and the working class, oppressors and oppressed, workers and unemployed, youth and the elderly, women and men.” He adds that “collectively, the micro-politics of desire that intersects with distinctions such as young and old, male and female, worker or unemployed, boss or employee crystallizes in the Gezi Park and Taksim squares.” He also emphasizes the global nature of the events by saying, “From New York to Cologne, from Izmir to Adana and Antalya, from Ankara to Bursa, they involve not only the youth and the elderly of Turkey but also the entire world in the resistance field of a horizontal struggle: All together they resonate that the micro-political desire is resonating together”^[18]. According to Göle (2013), another sociologist within the liberal discourse, the Gezi Square

movement is a combination of the French uprising of “68,” the “Arab Spring,” the “Occupy Wallstreet,” the European “Indignant Movement”. While it resembles movements like these, it is different from them. Because, like all of them, it is a movement of taking to the streets, occupying the square, and keeping watch by citizens. However, it has a uniqueness that distinguishes it from all of them. Despite stating that the movement in Türkiye is “a critique of majority democracy,” Göle vehemently opposes its politicization. She argues, “It is wrong to interpret the movement through a political lens... To the extent that the square movement remains independent and autonomous from political parties, and maintains its innocence in the shade of trees, it can renew the social imagination and fabric of democracy. Conversely, if it substitutes itself for a political movement, it will move away from democracy.” According to Göle, the Gezi movement expressed a new urban awareness against hyperdevelopment that prioritizes consumption over culture. Prior to Gezi, Göle criticized the shrinking of public space and the mainstream media’s failure to cover the events, concluding, “Today’s movement is a voluntary civil resistance movement. It is a youth movement that does not embrace the exclusionary interpretation of secularism under state authority and embodies secular values in lifestyles.” She also points to the movement’s pluralism and the unifying power of the square. She describes its difference from political movements as follows: “Unlike political movements, it is a movement open to improvisation, humor, and creativity. Indeed, young people are experiencing a kind of communal life in the square, with music, ecology, politics, flowers, and beer, reminiscent of the Woodstock rock festival, the emblem of the peace and counterculture movements of the 1960s”^[17]. Finally, Göle states that “The Gezi Square Movement demonstrates that we have reached a new threshold in democracy.” She states that “the opposing dichotomies that have marked our political and intellectual life—Kemalist Islamist, nationalist separatist, reformist putschist, and innovative conservative—are no longer as functional as we thought,” thus revealing her liberal ideology, which has rather postmodern connotations^[17].

5. Findings: Reframing “Çapulcu”

In fact, in a process based analysis of the concept of the scump, it is possible to speak of four fundamental relational

sociological components:

From Stigma to Collective Identity: The term “*çapulcu*,” initially used to delegitimize protesters, was rapidly reappropriated and embraced by participants. This inversion transformed a negative label into a badge of solidarity.

Humor and Cultural Creativity: Humor played a central role in this process. Protesters produced slogans, posters, and performances that reinterpreted the term in ironic and creative ways. This aligns with frame transformation processes described by Goffman.

Social Media and Diffusion: Social media platforms enabled the rapid circulation of these new meanings. Hash-tags, memes, and videos amplified the reframing process and facilitated collective identification.

Historical and Cultural Context: The reinterpretation of “*çapulcu*” also drew on historical and cultural references, demonstrating that framing processes are embedded in broader cultural narratives.

As is well known, conducting a relational “Comprehensive Cultural Sociology” means considering “structure,” “culture,” and “individual” together and examining their interactions^[7]. In fact, this approach was also partially employed by C.W. Mills. As is recalled, it is necessary to relate the individual’s character (biographically) to the structural characteristics of the society in which they live and to identify the dominant human type^[8]. This is the first step of Mills’s analysis. The second step requires placing the society under study within a specific framework by asking, “What is the place of the society under study within world history?” Such an analysis is a crucial methodological approach that oscillates between the macro (structure) and the micro (individual) and incorporates both the present and the past into the analysis. In fact, Giddens’s (1997) theory of structuration also follows Mills by giving importance to the interaction between structure and individual. However, what is lacking here is the neglect of the cultural factor^[19]. Therefore, Comprehensive Cultural Sociology, which proposes to combine Bourdieu’s approach linking structure and culture with Goffman’s frame analysis, is a very rich option^[1, 2]. For our topic, it is crucial that frames not remain fixed but rather be redefined. This involves overturning and redefining concepts with negative connotations, and in doing so, utilizing historical cultural heritage. In fact, an alternative project, drawing on theoretical discussions, could be to consider lived culture and class;

cultural and economic capital together. Undoubtedly, like Giddens, space is considered as important as history, geography, or time, and the city as a space is incorporated into the analysis^[19]. Goffman, introduced by Edles^[7] as an “urban ethnographer” whose Symbolic Interactionist aspects predominate rather than the naturalistic characteristics typically associated with urban ethnographers, has also been called a “sociologist of everyday social life”^[20]. It is significant that he went beyond describing the lifestyles of established urban groups and aimed to understand society in general^[21]. He is also known to be interested in explaining the subjective cultural schemas underlying social organization. Goffman (1974), who examined interactions in daily social life by relating them to the cultural factors that guide them, developed the analytical technique known as “frame analysis.” According to him, individuals do not develop these frames themselves. However, individuals can reinterpret and recode these frames they find readily available in socio-cultural life. Thus, he points to the interaction between structure, individual, and culture, and the possibility of individuals using existing frames by modifying them or interpreting them differently for their own benefit. The possibility of renewing (recoding) existing frames (cultural codes), as well as starting from them, makes Goffman and his frame analysis particularly important for our topic. It is clear that struggles between competing frames are waged to defeat each other and become more visible. “Symbolic competition” actually occurs between frames, and social movements frequently utilize these frames to reveal realities to society^[22]. Social movements, in particular, because of their apolitical nature or distance from political power, use frames as a primary basis for redefining conditions rather than reordering the world^[23]. Numerous analyses have been conducted on the language of Gezi. Because terms like “scum” or “drunkards” were frequently used by the authorities, they were met with intense criticism. “Every negatively connoted concept associated with the crowd was quickly taken, reversed, discredited, caricatured, and emptied of its meaning” was frequently observed^[24]. The vulgarity of the word “drunkards” was pointed out, and it was argued that, as Mustafa Kuleli suggested, the word “drinking in the evenings” better describes those who drink the traditional Turkish drink “raki” at night^[25]. The Prime Minister’s frequent use of the words drunkard and scum has become a rich source of material for

social media; even İhsan Varol, host of a well-known and watched word game competition, was witnessed changing the dictionary meaning of *scum*^[26].

Varol posed his question by defining *scum* as “a person who actively tries to realize his ideas; an activist”^[26]. If we look at the historical background of the evaluation that “All the rebels presented themselves as drunkards, especially *scum*, and reversed the offensive and wounding words; this formed the common identity of the movement”^[17], it is useful to remember that the Operations Army, which suppressed the 31 March uprising in 1909 during the Ottoman period, was defined as *scum* by the conservative circles. Therefore, the then-Prime Minister’s definition of “*scum*” is not coincidental. Similarly, it should be considered that Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye and commander of the Operational Army that suppressed reactionaries during the Ottoman period, heightened sensitivities. It should even be remembered that the Prime Minister’s characterization of “two drunkards” (Mustafa Kemal and İnönü), which he did not deny, drew public anger. In short, sociological analysis becomes more competent when placed within a historical and cultural context. “Folk Kemalism,” as Özügürü^[10] defines it, cannot be dismissed because it still represents a significant fault line in a significant segment of society. In contemporary Türkiye, people’s sensitivity to the current government’s rhetoric on issues ranging from childbearing, alcohol sales permits, and religious youth to prohibiting pregnant women from walking around the streets has increased. The Prime Minister’s use of the term “*scums*,” in particular, drew significant criticism, primarily for the reasons mentioned above, and the concept has been reframed as “we are all *scum*.” Therefore, it would be a mistake to ignore the cultural context and dynamic framework. Indeed, during the increasingly widespread protests, people showed support by turning lights on and off in homes, banging pots and pans from windows, and honking car horns. The Prime Minister stated, “It’s all the same old story. This has happened in the past too,” while famous Turkish musician Fazıl Say joined the protest by playing pots and pans at his concert.

On June 17th, an artist named Erdem Gündüz protested police brutality by turning his face toward the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) and using the “standing man” symbol^[27]. When the protest quickly spread via social media, similar demonstrations of support were observed in many other loca-

tions. Social media, along with Facebook and Twitter, significantly impacted protesters’ communication with one another. Starting on the afternoon of May 31st, approximately 20 million messages of support were sent to Gezi Park through the groups #OccupyGezi and #DirenGeziParki^[11].

Some popular examples supporting the Gezi Park protests include: For example, the Prime Minister’s rhetoric, who first used the concept of “*scum*,” and the visual discourse developed in response to it emerged through an extremely creative and dynamic process and serve as excellent examples of Goffman’s framework analysis^[28]. Addressing the public in Adana, Mersin, and Ankara, the Prime Minister used the expressions “*scums*, dishonests” to refer to the hundreds of thousands of people who continue their resistance across Türkiye^[29]. Here are the statements made by the Prime Minister in his speeches in Adana and Ankara:

“Esteemed and beautiful people of Adana... From Seyhan, Tufanbeyli, and Yumurtalık, my dear young people, stand tall and don’t be so stubborn. We won’t do what those few *scum* did. They burn and destroy; that’s the very definition of *scum*: they burn and destroy public property, they destroy the shops of private citizens. They burn and destroy the property of private citizens as well. A youth who curses their own prime minister in unspeakable ways cannot be my youth. A youth who writes this on walls cannot be a youth seeking rights. Those who raided various businesses and shopping malls today cannot be the youth of this country seeking rights. I call out to our sensible youth: Stop this game, don’t fall for it. I’m speaking sincerely: if you are truly an environmentalist, we have an environmentalist Prime Minister here. If you are truly an environmentalist, you should not be with those who remove stones from the streets and destroy public vehicles.”

In Ankara, the Prime Minister said: “There are seven months until you go to Gezi Park, to Kuğulu, be patient. Let us meet you at the ballot box in seven months. If you say ‘democracy, freedoms,’ if you say rights, liberty, these cannot be achieved through violence. They can be achieved within the rule of law. They were disturbed when I used that expression. If they were so disturbed, they should look in the dictionary to see who is called ‘*scum*.’ When they look there, they will see how appropriate the Prime Minister used the expression. Those who burn, destroy, and attack are called *scum*. Therefore, with all due respect, those who

support them are also considered members of the same family. What they do is nothing but hit and break. Attacking public buildings, burning and destroying public buildings. Burning and destroying civilian vehicles. They didn't stop there. They attacked my headscarved daughters and my headscarved sisters. They didn't stop there. By entering the Dolmabahçe Mosque, unfortunately, with beer bottles and shoes..." The Prime Minister often called those who drink alcohol "drunkard/ayyaş" and those who protest "scum/çapulcu." Social media is still not calm, and a multitude of terms are being created using the word "scum." In fact, there are 10 banners displaying the Prime Minister's words "scum" or "çapulcu" (chapulcu). All those who created these banners call themselves scum/çapulcu. Two examples are given below^[29].

1. The first image is published as "EVERYDAY I'M ÇAPULING." There is also a VIDEO VERSION OF "EVERYDAY I'M ÇAPULING." This video combines the song "Everything I'm shuffling" with the phrase "scum" or "çapulcu."
2. The second is "KEEP CALM AND BE SCUM." The "Keep Calm and Carry On" poster, printed by the Queen during the bombing of London by Germany during World War II, is very famous. It adorned the streets of London, symbolizing "keep calm and carry on." The 'Scum/Çapulcu' version of that poster reads "Keep calm and be a scum."

A T-shirt with the slogan /çapulcu was also produced. It's a creative T-shirt that says "Çapulcuym" (I'm a 'Çapulcu'), meaning I'm an activist. The hashtag #occupygezi is also printed on the message. The OK sign indicates that the wearer of the T-shirt is a 'Çapulcu/ Scum'). The word "Çapulcu/Scum" has become something to be proud of.

6. Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that the Gezi Movement cannot be fully understood through structural or political analysis alone. Instead, it requires attention to cultural processes and symbolic interaction.

The reframing of "çapulcu" illustrates how:

- Meanings are contested and transformed.
- Cultural resources are mobilized in political struggles.

- Collective identities emerge through symbolic practices.

By integrating Erving Goffman and Pierre Bourdieu, the study shows that social movements operate at the intersection of structure, culture, and agency.

This article has examined how the term "çapulcu" was reframed during the Gezi Park protests and how different sociological perspectives contribute to understanding this process.

The findings highlight that:

- Symbolic reframing played a central role in the movement.
- Cultural creativity and humor were key mechanisms.
- Social media facilitated rapid meaning-making.

The study contributes to the sociology of social movements by demonstrating that cultural and symbolic processes are as important as structural factors. Future research should further explore how digital communication reshapes collective identities in contemporary movements.

Supporting the view that new social movements are no longer sufficient, that discourse is formed first, and then groups are formed^[30], quite diverse social segments in Türkiye came together for the Gezi Park resistance. It was clear that the action initiated by environmentalist youth, artists, and intellectuals to protect Gezi Park had united the social opposition. The presence of a wide variety of groups, from Anti-Capitalist Muslims to the Taksim Solidarity platform, and the participation of women and youth in the resistance was particularly striking. The presence of high-earning professionals as well as the unemployed was significant. The Gezi Park movement gained significance in demonstrating that people could resist for cultural reasons as well as economic ones. The Deputy Prime Minister's regretful reception of the gathering of such diverse segments as an unintended consequence should not be dismissed lightly. It was essential to analyze cultural and economic capital, in other words, class and lived culture, together. In his speech in Uşak on International Women's Day, the Prime Minister said, "I am speaking to you not as a Prime Minister, but as a brother in distress. We must protect our young population as it is." The essence of an economy is people. They want to eradicate the Turkish nation. This is exactly what they're doing. If the prime minister is sincere in his statement, "Have at least three children so our young population doesn't shrink,"

he should be more compassionate towards young people, women, and all the segments marginalized by moralizing, and he should recognize that his authoritarian, authoritarian rhetoric is provoking backlash. Younger generations already understand that the global population is aging and that children are invaluable. However, the objection stems from the interference in lifestyles. Large segments of society, especially young people and women, desire to create and live their own lifestyles, particularly regarding food, drink, reproduction, beliefs, clothing, and leisure activities, and this must be respected. Providing citizens who want to protect their cities with the broadest possible participation in local government decisions is a requirement of modern democracies. It's time for local and central governments to remember that they exist to create multifaceted cities and living spaces that are diverse, respectful of diversity, and to develop policies with this awareness. Governments must also abandon the use of the police as a tool of oppression.

In a world where violence begets violence and violence is ubiquitous, we must tolerantly view our socioeconomic and cultural differences as our richness and embrace all who collaborate to develop appropriate life policies. Whether we engage in class-based analysis as socialists or strive to overcome it, it is time to recognize the similarities as well as the theoretical differences between us and to take action. Because, as İnal^[11] and Çevik^[28] summarizes, fears have been overcome, diverse perspectives have come together, youth have become political actors, communal traditions have been revived, a new understanding of social media has emerged, the language of humor has been politicized, artist participation has been achieved, socialists have been revived, LGBTQ+ individuals have come of age, anti-capitalist Muslims and the understanding of Islam have begun to be reconsidered, environmental awareness has increased, and parents have joined the struggle. This is a remarkable achievement^[31–35].

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