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Digital Archives: How Western Newspapers Frame Our Remembrance of the Gezi Park Protest

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Abstract

We analyze the coverage of the Gezi Park protests by two major Western newspapers—*The New York Times* and *The Guardian*—through the lens of media framing, rhetoric, and collective memory. We argue that these digital archives frame Turkey's Gezi Park protests as a challenge to an authoritarian government by promoting the themes of unrest as a conflict of ideologies, oppression of citizens, and the park as a site of memory. In a concluding section, we focus on the significance of digital archives as repositories of collective memory and the role of media framing in shaping these reconstructions of events in the past.

Keywords

Gezi Park, Digital Archives, Collective Memory, Media Framing

Perhaps no other political unrest impacted the political landscape of Turkey in the modern era as much as the Gezi Park protests. Beginning on May 28, 2013, the protests led to demonstrations of resistance over president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government (Whitehead & Bozoglu, 2017). Gezi Park, located right in the middle of busy Taksim Square, is the last remaining green space surrounding the busy skyline of Istanbul. Initially, the protests began as a type of environmental movement, with a small group of people protesting the construction of a mall that would lead to the destruction of the green space. The park was the only space for civilians living around the busy skyline of Istanbul to partake in leisurely activities. Erdogan's government planned to implement what they termed an "urban renewal project": construct an

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Ottoman Artillery Barrack, previously demolished in 1939 (Whitehead & Bozoglu, 2017). The small organization of the environmental group, while successful in preventing the construction, could not stop a bulldozer that tore down trees in the park (Odabaş & Reynolds-Stenson, 2018). The government eventually responded with force by evicting the small group of protesters. Little did they know this would lead to a large-scale four-month anti-government protest (Chrona & Bee, 2017).

Police use of pepper spray and water cannons increased the image of violence, which further increased the number of protestors gathering around the park (Seckinelgin, 2016). By June 1, 2013, protests spread to other parts of the country (Seckinelgin, 2016). Erdogan's response incited large-scale protests after he referred to the protestors as *çapulcu,* translating to "looters" in English (Seckinelgin, 2016). The government's response culminated in a major civic unrest surrounding contentious issues like civil rights, freedom of speech, political status of minorities, and expression. While these protests were taking place, mainstream media in Turkey, including channels such as CNN Turk and NTV, instead chose to broadcast cooking shows (Martinez, 2013). There was no trace of reports or visuals of the protests due to media organizations' connections with the government:

> Media owners were extremely dependent on the clientelist relations with the state which enabled them to acquire tenders to undertake massive projects financed by the public. This has prevented these companies from performing the watchdog function expected from the media in established democracies. (Martinez, 2013, para. 5)

Turkey is infamous for its freedom of press index. Ranked 154 out of 179 countries, Turkey lies at the bottom of the World Press Freedom Index (Martinez, 2013). The media blackout, an illustration of Erdogan's power and influence over mainstream media, further led to increased agitation among protestors, who took to tweeting. International news media remained informed on the protests through tweets from Turkey (Oz, 2016, p. 178). Twitter, henceforth, became a primary avenue for protestors to express and report on the events surrounding the protests. The protesters also launched a campaign the objective of which was to be heard by other Western media such as *The New York Times*, where they wanted an ad to be published on the front page (Martinez, 2013). A sum of over $50,000 dollars was raised for this campaign, and *The New York Times* published the ad on June 7, 2013 (Martinez, 2013). Here, Western media such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* played a huge role in covering these protests. The media blackout in Turkey gave the protestors no choice but to express, interact, and

communicate with Western media journalists. It is, therefore, necessary to examine how Western newspapers such as *The New York Times* (USA) and *The Guardian* (UK) covered the events that transpired at Gezi Park.

There are approximately 350,000 Americans of Turkish descent that live across the United States (Turkish Coalition of America, 2020). The second author of this paper is an American citizen of Turkish descent. As someone who is an outsider to both America and Turkey, I asked them how he came across the protests in Turkey and how this information (of the protests) shaped his identity. His response:

> I constantly negotiate with the identity of the two cultures, American and Turkish. This is done through my personal experiences and exposure to media. Through media, I construct and affirm my cultural citizenship. However, in times of uncertainty and instability, this further puts my understanding and perceptions of my cultures in jeopardy. When the protest at Gezi Park occurred, I relied on the narrative of the Western media. This narrative had a strong impact on shaping how I viewed and interpreted the protests and the future of Turkey. Furthermore, their rhetoric influenced how I remember these protests and the government's reaction to them.

Essentially, Western media's framing of such incidents not only impacts foreign audiences (such as myself) but also audiences that have an intrinsic connection to these events. A common aspect of convergence here is that, for most of us (whether we are a foreign national, an American, or a Turkish American), media is the only avenue for receiving information on a particular event that occurs far from our social landscape. Consequently, we are compelled to give media institutions the power to construct, frame, contest, and revise our memories of a particular event.

In this paper, we analyze the coverage of the Gezi Park protests by two major Western newspapers—*The New York Times* and *The Guardian*—through the lens of media framing and collective memory. Essentially, we examine how these two major Western newspapers frame our remembrance of these events in the past. We argue that these digital archives frame Turkey's Gezi Park protests as a challenge to an authoritarian government by promoting the themes of unrest as a conflict of ideologies, oppression of citizens, and the park as a site of memory. In the next two sections, we lay out the theoretical framework for our study. Particularly, we focus on the significance of digital archives as repositories of collective memory and the role of media framing in shaping these reconstructions of events in the past.

Memory and Digital Archives

Blair, Dickinson and Ott (2010) theorize *public memory* (used interchangeably with *collective memory*) as narrating a common identity. "Collective memory of a group is a shared representation of the group's past knowledge and information based on a common identity" (Licata & Mercy, 2015, p. 194). Sustaining these memories provides a sense of belonging and connection among individuals in a community. Nora (1989) affirms that this discourse surrounding a particular memory is constantly contested and revised. However, despite this constant contestation, the strength of these memories lies in their will to be remembered. Nora's (1989) influential work on collective memory particularly explicates the transformation of memory through capitalist economic development. It is this transformation that leads to the drive and necessity to remember our past. This transformed interaction is the reason why people and governments make active endeavors to remember certain events and sites by constituting (and reconstructing) them as a part of history. We see these reconstructions manifest in the form of museums, monuments, and other sites of memory. Lipsitz (1990) too upholds the view that capitalism and the print revolution have transformed the dominant memories of societies while also legitimizing a hierarchical system of elites. Political leaders and powerful organizations such as media, have the authority to dominantly shape collective memories of a society. The elites, which media is a part of, have the ability to impose memories over the population by articulating a dominant discourse surrounding the popular culture. Further, print revolution accentuated the process of transformation in storing memories since the events could now be stored as archives: "Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (Nora, 1989, p. 13). Assmann (2001, p. 6822) refers to the articulation of Jacques Le Goff, a French historian, of the transformation in storing memory as the "history of changing media from orality and writing to ever more mechanical technologies of storing information." He further articulates that there are two types of media in which memory of a "group can stabilized or transformed – performative media and material media" (Assmann, 2001, p. 6822). Performative media are essentially categorized as festivals, rites, and ceremonies that connect to a symbolic date in a specific day of a year. These ceremonies, festivals, or traditions recur after certain time periods (mostly every year) and perform a function of revitalizing the collective memories of the group (Assmann, 2001). Material media, on the other hand, involves material sources of memory such as films, photographs, books, monuments, and other material sites that serve as forms of remembering the past. Commemorations, for example, incorporate a form

of both material and performative media, to provide an avenue for revitalizing and reconstructing memories of significant events. The many sources and sites that invite memories from the past could be categorized as:

> topographical places (archives, libraries, museums); monumental places (cemeteries, architectural edifices); symbolic places (commemorative rites, pilgrimages, emblems); functional places (manuals, autobiographies, associations); and places of power (states, elites, milieux) which constitute their historical archives in relation to the different uses they make of memory. (Linke, 2015, p. 183)

This study, therefore, advances the argument that stored archives (topographical places) manifest as sites of memory.

The dawn of the internet along with globalization have changed how collective memories are constituted (Linke, 2015). The internet provides both individuals and collectives with huge amounts of data that can be accessed at any point in time in the current milieu. The internet has a significant impact on collective memory and on the process of remembering and forgetting (Gavilanes, Mollgaard, Tsvetkova, & Yasseri, 2016, p. 1). Linke (2015, p. 186) writes that memories in the globalized world are portable and events from the past can be accessed from various people at the same time. The "portability" of memory, as Linke (2015) terms it, is further enhanced by the ubiquity of smartphones. To illustrate, we are increasingly experiencing moments such as concerts, travel, protests, and even gatherings through the lens of our camera/display of our phone, and these events can be relived at a later point in time by accessing the stored archives from our phones. Events that have significance in a much more collective sense can be stored and accessed from a smart phone, rendering and enhancing the portability of memories. Technology has literally altered our experience of time and space. Linke (2015) writes "the planetary proliferation of electronic media has altered the possibilities of memory recall and input across the globe: moments in time can be recorded, stored, then brought back to life, restaged, or replayed" (p. 186). Essentially, electronic media becomes an avenue for storing memories through archives, particularly digital archives. Almost six years after the events at Gezi Park, the digital archives on Gezi Park protests from *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* can still be accessed from their websites and other databases.

Capitalist economic development across the world has invited competition among media, with several competing versions of one event being projected across various channels (Linke, 2015). Further, the need for spectacle and hype (in media) acts as a catalyst for increasing the fluidity of memory, making

collective memory more unstable than it already is (Linke, 2015). Power and authority, major factors in capitalism, aid in this contestation and negotiation of a society's collective memory. This process of contesting and revising of memories, along with these memories being replaced by other memories, is fundamentally a rhetorical process (Phillips, 2004). In other words, the ways in which "memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories – is rhetorical" (Phillips, 2004, pp. 2–3). We might use certain symbols or messages for recollecting a particular event; however, these symbols and messages themselves are being constantly contested through a rhetorical process of remembering and forgetting.

In this constant contestation of memories, media's role in shaping our memories should by no means be disregarded. How many of us remember the events of 9/11 through the lens of our TV? The haunting replays of the planes crashing into the building is the frame through which most of us remember the event. Media essentially framed our remembrance of this event; this is particularly true of people who were not present in the vicinity of the terrorist attack or in and around the city of New York. In other words, the farther we are from the event in question, the more we rely on media to get our information. Consequently, the frames utilized by the media organization are eventually the way we remember these events that were taking place far from our social landscape. Hence, we not only must emphasize the significance of stored digital archives in shaping our memories of an event, but also study the ways (or the "how") these stored digital archives are performing a rhetorical function of framing collective memory.

The Role of Media Framing of Collective Memory

Human beings are able to create meaning in our society through the action of arranging, organizing, and interpreting their life experiences into specific frames, permitting them to understand, comprehend, and identify the infinite amounts of information (Goffman, 1974). The phenomenon of framing categorizes changes/formulation of opinions (sometimes very strong) often originating from minute presentation modifications of issues. In other words, framing could be defined as a phenomenon that constructs audiences' conceptualization of particular issues, reaffirming or changing perceptions in the process (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) specified frames as packages comprising arguments, information, symbols, metaphors, and images that are used to characterize issues in our society. Entman (1993) presents a detailed explanation of framing theory by

defining selection and salience as two essential factors. In essence, the framing process is a selection of specific aspects, and then making them prominent through communication in ways that promote/demote particular issues, representations, moral implications, and recommendations.

Through their daily routines, journalists and media organizations categorize the vast amount of information into frames that they communicate for easy comprehension and understanding for their audiences (Camaj, 2010). Journalistic practices enable integration of interpretations and choosing specific topics of engagement. Value judgments (made by journalists) based on the noteworthiness of certain frames of text, provide a broader perspective on journalism practices. Contentious issues provide a much higher scope for journalistic interpretations and frame construction. We tend come across severely opinionated frames when it comes to contentious issues (immigration, political unrest, protests, etc.). Another contentious issue is how journalists (in the US) interpret Middle Eastern countries and report war stories from an international news perspective. Here, frame setting and frame construction can be a powerful entity influencing public opinion on international conflicts. Melki (2014), for example, observes frame construction of journalists in the context of the 2006 Lebanon–Israel war from the perspectives of US, Israeli, and Arab TV news. Melki (2014) observes a strong trend of varied frames in each TV network's journalism due to different political views and varied cultural and economic factors. It is observed that ideology plays a key factor in journalistic practice. A journalist's active news interpretation can depend on his/her ideology based on political, cultural, and economic factors. Journalistic frames can vary on a continuum from passively interpreting the issue (subconsciously or using information from sources) to actively presenting highly individualistic interpretations/frames of issues to the audience (Brüggemann, 2014).

These frames constructed by journalists and media impact how we perceive issues and events in our societies, essentially negotiating how these events and issues are remembered. Kuypers (2009) writes:

> Frames are so powerful because they induce us to filter our perceptions of the world in particular ways, essentially making some aspects of our multi-dimensional reality more noticeable than other aspects. They operate by making some information more salient than other information; therefore, they highlight some features of reality while omitting others. We rarely notice this process, especially the omission of information, because our public attention is highly selective; we too often rely upon and accept information that is easily accessible. Our

> judgments about the world are in part due to what standards come to our minds, but also are related to information that is easily accessible. (p. 181)

In essence, the framing process is a selection of specific aspects followed by making them prominent through communication in ways that promote/demote particular issues, representations, moral implications, and recommendations (Entman, 1993). What we are explaining is a highly rhetorical process. The process of media, consciously or unconsciously, promoting or denoting a specific attribute or aspect of an issue through visuals, symbols, texts, language, is inherently a rhetorical process:

> Framing involves how the press organizes the context through which the public views its news. At its heart this is a rhetorical process, and this is why I believe framing theory can be especially fruitful when adapted to a rhetorical perspective. (Kuypers, 2009, p. 185)

Despite the fundamentally rhetorical nature of framing, the study of media framing is more popular and prevalent among social scientific enquiries, although rhetorical scholars in recent times have started to employ the theory of media framing in their critiques (see Ott & Aoki, 2002; Kuypers, 2002; Kuypers & Cooper, 2005; Edwards, 2009; Valenzano, 2009). We, however, not only argue that framing theory is closely linked to rhetorical criticism but that it is also linked to collective memory. Both the processes of promoting and denoting a specific aspect of an issue (framing) and contesting and revising of memories are rhetorical processes. Media is a substantial entity in a society, with an apparatus to frame collective memory by framing certain issues (or aspects of issues). This is particularly true in the case of events (such as the Gezi Park protests) happening far from the audience's social landscape. We give media the power and opportunity to construct, promote/denote, and contest/revise our recollection and reminiscence (and even commemoration) of an event in the past. It is, henceforth, of utmost importance that we are cognizant of the significance that the theory of media framing holds in contributing to the contesting and revising of our collective memories.

Digital Archives as "Text"

The digital archives from *The New York Times* (NYT) and *The Guardian* are considered as texts for this rhetorical analysis. The articles were collected through the LexisNexis database, with a performed search for the keyword "Gezi Park" for each of these two newspapers. The selected timeline for the collection process was from May 2013 to November 2018. While the protests

subsided by the end of August 2013, we look at newspaper coverage long after the transpired events—analyzing a total of 258 stories from *The New York Times* (107) and *The Guardian* (151) ensuing from the search results. The various themes from the analysis are presented under the dominant overarching themes. The process of analysis for these texts incorporated an inductive approach by close text reading of every news article during the timeline. With each repeated reading we organized and grouped our themes under an overarching topic of discourse. The discourse topic is essentially what the overarching topic of the text falls under (Hoenisch, 2009, para. 1) and the topical progressions are delineated under each of the discourse topics:

> The development of the discourse topic within an extensive piece of discourse may be thought of in terms of a succession of hierarchically ordered subtopics, each of which contributes to the discourse topic, and is treated as a sequence of ideas, expressed in the written language as sentences. The way the written sentences in discourse relate to the discourse topic is called topical development of discourse. (Lautamatti, 1978, p. 71)

The topics of discourse in our paper are nothing but the overarching themes: "the subject of discussion, or that which is the subject of the thought expressed and the media frames are then suggesting a particular interpretation of the theme" (Kuypers, 2009, p. 187). The dominant frame of discourse of the texts was to present the protests as a challenge to authoritarian government. Each of the discourse topics (representing a frame of discourse) such as conflict of ideologies, oppression of citizens, and the park as a site of memory, contribute to the dominant frame of discourse. In the following paragraphs, we illustrate how *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* project each of these frames of discourse as a challenge to an authoritarian government.

Conflict of Ideologies

From the narratives embedded within the stories of *The New York Times* (NYT) and *The Guardian*, a common observed frame was to focus on the protests as a demonstration of an ideological battle between the protesters and Erdogan. The narrative in both *NYT* and *The Guardian* was on how the protests began as the actions of a small environmental movement, but very quickly transformed into a conflict between the two ends of an ideological scale. According to the texts, Gezi Park, which signified the last remaining green space in the busy Taksim Square, and its attempted destruction to build

a replica of an Ottoman-era military barrack, was a manifestation of a far-right consumerist ideology:

> The impending destruction of Gezi Park and Taksim Square, an important civic space with beautiful water fountains and flower stands, has touched a nerve because it seems an effort to erase the face of the old, majestic Istanbul, which has largely disappeared in recent years in favor of shallow, gaudy, stupefied consumerism. (Beaumont, 2013, para. 1)

However, according to both *NYT* and *The Guardian,* the protests had a symbolism that went beyond the destruction of the park. Preceding the demonstrations, people in Turkey were already disconcerted by several restrictions imposed by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) party led by Erdogan. Beaumont (2013, para. 3) from the *NYT* wrote that Erdogan's "culture war" against the secular class of society and "the illiberal form of democracy he is advancing" such as curbs on drinking and serving alcohol in the public spaces and bringing up the issue of abortion—with an intention to pass a legislation that reduces the rights of women to get an abortion—have led to an increase in frustration among a section of society. The *NYT* reporter uses first person to state "I've heard many Turks, both devout and non-observant, say: 'If consuming alcohol is a sin, let me reckon with my own maker. The government cannot force us not to sin'" (Beaumont, 2013, para. 3). Urquhart (2013, para. 16) in *The Guardian* also reports on the controversial issue of curbing alcohol: "last week, the government passed legislation preventing the sale and advertisement of alcoholic drinks, alarming secularists. Many felt insulted when he defended the legislation by calling people who drink alcoholics." *NYT* had a much more in-depth discourse surrounding the issue of Erdogan's right-wing policies. The newspaper's stories incorporated a narrative frame of the government involving themselves in the private lives of citizens and assaulting civil liberties. *NYT* frequently framed the people it was interviewing as "secularists," further promoting the protests as a conflict between the secular left and the authoritarian right: "'We were born naked,' said Mr. Isin, the son of a doctor, who grew up in a secular, middle-class family in a village outside Istanbul. 'We are part of the nature, like the trees and the animals'" (Arango & Yeginsu, 2013a, para. 4). *NYT* stories integrated the frames of discourse on abortion laws and also other conservative statements by Erdogan, that included asking young people to not kiss in public and also, perhaps in a nationalistic call, suggesting that women give birth to three children to increase the population of Turkey:

> It was about the autocratic turn of a conservative leader in power for 11 years. It was about Erdogan's invasion of Turks' personal lives, the way he calls them alcoholics if they drink, or advises them not to kiss on the subway, or comments on their dress. He is not the Sultan! (Cohen, 2013, para. 10)

"He is not the Sultan!" emphatically writes a columnist from *NYT* referring to the mindset of the protesters (Cohen, 2013, para. 10). While both *NYT* and *The Guardian* incorporated frames that promoted the unrest as a manifestation of conflicting ideologies among citizens and the government, *The Guardian* had a much more simplified approach. Essentially, journalists from *The Guardian* rarely wrote in first person—a style of narrative framing that was much more frequent in the *NYT*—and comparatively presented fewer anecdotes and interviews from actual protestors. *The Guardian* employed a matter-of-fact style of reporting in discussing the topic of conflict of ideologies among citizens and the government: "The protesters are predominantly young, educated and secular Turks unhappy with Erdogan's creeping conservative social programme. They include students, IT programmers and teachers but also jewellery designers and housewives" (Harding, 2013a, para. 7). The framing of the unrest as a form of ideological conflict was still reported in lieu of the dominant discourse topic: the protests as a challenge to Erdogan's authoritarian government. *NYT* and *The Guardian*, while framing the protests through the lens of conflicting ideologies, also emphasized the policies and style of Erdogan as increasingly authoritarian—a leader at the peak of his power, imposing his Islamist beliefs on the secular middle class (Harding, 2013b). The discourse of this authoritarian persona of Erdogan, leading to an increasing anxiety among the leftist young citizens, was heavily referenced through the stories:

> The square has become an arena for clashing worldviews: an unyielding leader's top-down, neo-Ottoman, conservative vision of the nation as a regional power versus a bottom-up, pluralist, disordered, primarily young, less Islamist vision of the country as a modern democracy. (Kimmelman, 2013, para. 2)

The above excerpt is an illustration of news stories framing Erdogan as an authoritarian leader with nationalist conservative views. Six years after the protests, the memories of the events are still stored in the digital spaces of these two newspapers. The texts perform an important rhetorical function by not only framing the dominant discourse of protests as challenge to an authoritarian government but also on how the protests turned into a

conflict of ideologies. The stringent laws on alcohol consumption, regulations on abortion, and the authoritarian leader's statements on people's personal choices were the themes of coverage that contribute to the framing of the unrest as a conflict of ideologies. Further, the news stories perform a rhetorical function of reconstructing the memories of the readers, reminding them that with Erdogan still the Prime Minister—6 years after the protests—for the secular left population, the struggle against the conservative right-wing government still continues.

Oppression of Citizens

The Guardian and *NYT* framed the protests as an ideological conflict between the secular left sections of the society and the conservative Islamist government. The following narrative is a prolongation of the discourse surrounding the authoritarian government. However, the focus here is on the government using various means of oppression against the secular-left sections of society. This discourse had several facets, in both the style of reporting and its content. During the initial stages of the protests, *NYT* was quick to report on the media blackout in Turkey. Oppression of citizens' free speech due to the mainstream media not covering the protests was a significant part of the framing discourse in *NYT*:

> As the city center turned into a battlefield, 24/7 news channels opted to air documentaries about penguins or to go on with their talk shows. One channel, Haberturk TV, only 200 yards from the now famous Gezi Park, had three medical experts discussing schizophrenia—an apt metaphor for the state of journalism in Turkey. (Baydar, 2013, para. 3)

As illustrated above, *NYT* directly criticized the state of media and free speech in Turkey, calling it an insult to democracy (Baydar, 2013). This argument was further supported through quotes from people participating in the protests:

> "It has come to a point where members can't even tweet without fear of being investigated for their thoughts" said Mr. Muhcu, one of the few activists still willing to offer a public critique of the government. Dozens of journalists have lost their jobs for reporting on the demonstrations. (Arango & Yeginsu, 2013b, para. 7)

NYT's critique on the authoritarian government's control over media extended to remembering famous Turkish personalities such as Orhan Pamuk, a Nobel laureate novelist who had earlier been tried on charges of defaming the

government (Donadio, 2014). Essentially the narrative frame was built around how free speech and journalistic integrity were in a state of crisis in Turkey, with Erdogan's authoritarian regime controlling most of the mainstream media. *The Guardian* employed similar frames, albeit focusing on discourses of oppression—as a violent action taken by the police and government on a peaceful group of protestors. Shafak (2013, para. 3) of *The Guardian* explains the origins of the protests: "It all started as a peaceful sit-in to save one of the last remaining public parks in a city of almost 14 million people." Another of *The Guardian's* journalists emphatically wrote:

> The violent response to a peaceful protest to save Istanbul's Gezi Park symbolizes an autocratic government's increasing encroachment on the civil rights of the country's citizens. We hope for new dialogue—one that can restore the trust of Turkish citizens in a government that positioned Turkey as a global economic power, but which is now getting recognition around the world for condoning harsh police retaliation that strikes at the pillars of democracy. (Jalabi, 2013, para. 7)

As mentioned before, *The Guardian* had presented fewer interviews and anecdotes from people than the *NYT*. The interviews they conducted, however, focused on a very conspicuous discourse surrounding the undesired act of violence on peaceful protesters. Further, the discourse of oppression also incorporated a rhetoric of resistance. Protesters were depicted as the oppressed, fighting back against the authoritarian government. They were not just an oppressed melancholic group of people airing their grievances to the foreign journalists, but in fact were active rebels fighting against the oppression and force of police and government. Topics surrounding Erdogan insulting the protesters by referring to them as *çapulcu* and protesters subsequently embracing the term as form of resistance received extensive coverage from *The Guardian*. There were dedicated stories surrounding the topic of how Erdogan's usage of the word *çapulcu* has backfired, with people actually naming several places and referring themselves as *çapulcu*:

> It has become synonymous with the alternative, youth-driven anti-Erdogan movement. Students sleeping under the plane trees in Gezi Park, Istanbul, have dubbed their makeshift camp Capulistan, with many mounting cardboard signs next to their dwellings that read Capul residence. Meanwhile, the city's must-have fashion accessory is a white T-shirt with the slogan: Every day I'm capuling. (Harding, 2013c, para. 4)

This framing of discourse surrounding citizens fighting back against the oppressive government had far more narratives than just the young population embracing the word *çapulcu*. *NYT*'s quotes from protesters incorporated a narrative of citizens fighting through extreme adversities:

> I started to breathe again (after the tear gas), thankfully, but I saw the water cannon, and I was scared, and people got panicked. I kept checking behind me to see if it was going to hit me, and it did. But then I thought, O.K., we passed this, we can survive it. And I became braver. We went back maybe 10 times that night. When everyone in the neighborhoods began banging pots and pans from their windows for us, I was going to cry. I thought, Wow, we are doing something good. (Hansen, 2014, para. 15)

Due to the media blackout in the mainstream Turkish media, the protesters raised a campaign to publish a full-page ad in the *NYT* to mobilize support and build awareness on the civic and political situation in Turkey. *NYT*'s support of the protesters was evident in their coverage of several events that transpired during the events of unrest. *NYT* gave opportunities to protesters and analysts alike to voice their thoughts on the protests and incorporated narratives that strongly built on the discourse of the authoritarian government's oppression and use of violence against citizens:

> Our investigation in Turkey confirmed that the government has been engaged in the excessive and unnecessary use of force—including using tear gas as a weapon of mass scale—which has claimed several lives and led to thousands of injuries, Dr. Vincent Iacopino, the senior medical adviser to the Physicians for Human Rights, a Boston-based group that participated in the research and publication of the report, said in a statement on its Web site. (Gladstone, 2013, para. 3)

The rhetorical framing of the digital archives from *NYT* especially reminds readers that, by publishing a front-page ad on the protests and conducting several interviews of protesters and analysts around the world, the newspaper organization turned into the principal coverage station for the Gezi Park protests. The symbolic frame here is that *NYT* is the voice of the voiceless: the organization was providing an avenue for these oppressed citizens fighting back against the authoritarian regime. This rhetorical function was further emphasized through *NYT* incorporating a significant number of interviews, quotes, and anecdotes from the protesters. Both the *NYT* and *The Guardian's* digital archives evoke a reconstruction of the protests by framing them as a challenge to the authoritarian government and further substantiating

this narrative through the discourse surrounding issues such as free speech, Turkey's media blackout, police brutality, and use of violence on peaceful protesters.

Gezi Park as a Site of Memory

Urban parks are an effective representation of collective memories of the surrounding society (Aptekar, 2017). Taksim Square, home to Gezi Park, is an important public space that has since been the only green space in the area. Further, a protest on its own serves as a ground of memory and the space around these events manifests as a site of memory. White and Bozoğlu's (2016) study examined the Gezi Park protest as a heritage site. They argued that the protest site served as a ground of memories that are articulated and renewed by different groups (White & Bozoğlu, 2016). Additionally, they argued that these protests permit us to understand how heritage sites may open memory and critical exposures of sociopolitical conflict (White & Bozoğlu, 2016). *NYT* and *The Guardian* comprehend this powerful nature of public spaces:

> It was important for us to experience that kind of life. If you were hungry, the food was free. If you were wounded, someone would carry you to the emergency tent. If you needed a lawyer, he is always there. Gezi gave us a powerful sense of a world based on solidarity and equality, which we could not imagine before. No one can take away what we experienced in the park. (Hansen, 2014, para. 47)

The journalists from *NYT* spoke to several activists who shared their impressions on what the Gezi Park space symbolized and the above quote was an illustration of the same. The digital artifacts from *NYT* and *The Guardian* effectuate a function of memorializing the park's space in the middle of busy Taksim Square. The park no longer just symbolized a green space in the middle of a rising skyline, but rather a ground for memories—memories of people who were injured, of the young boy who was killed, and collective action and unification of people from several sectors of society. A journalist working for the *NYT*, who was interviewing people at a Palestinian refugee camp almost a year after the Gezi Park protests, wrote on how the refugee camp reminded him of Gezi Park space. He wrote:

> Along with headline sites like Tahrir Square in Cairo and Gezi Park in Istanbul, it's another example, small and off the radar, of how even the most unlikely public space can become a testing ground for entrenched political authority and the social status quo. (Kimmelman, 2014, para. 2)

The park, according to the journalist, was similar to a few other places that had a far greater connotation than being just a public access space; it symbolized a "testing ground for social status quo and political authority" (Kimmelman, 2014, para. 2). This aspect of the park space representing political authority was a frequent frame of discourse in both *NYT* and *The Guardian*. Jenkins (2013, para. 1) from *The Guardian* begins his story by reinforcing the symbolism of the space as an aspect of power and authority:

> Why does power hate a city square? A square fields no army, commands no votes, has nowhere to go. It is just a space. Yet it is space that invites occupation, an occupation hostile to power. Hence Turkey's president felt obliged yesterday to "recapture" Taksim Square in Istanbul. It had become an alternative seat of legitimacy, a place of defiance, an ugly gesture at his majesty. It took tanks, guns, gas and bulldozers, but cleared it had to be. (Jenkins, 2013, para. 1)

He further describes public spaces such as Gezi Park as "civic holy spaces" and notes that a space such as this "echoes past ghosts such as pain and uprising while at the same time holds a promise for the future" (Jenkins, 2013, para. 2). The journalist, in this context is essentially framing public spaces such as Gezi Park as evoking particular memories of the society. *NYT* follows along the same lines by quoting an academic who describes Gezi Park as a public space with deep symbolic and historic meaning:

> The square has great symbolic meaning for the republican history of Turkey in both a political and sociological sense, said Erhan Kelesoglu, a professor of political science at Istanbul University. The prime minister sees this as a milestone to clench his authority. He wants to create a new consolidation of his leadership through the restoration of the artillery barracks. That is why he acts as a mayor instead of a prime minister. (Arango, 2013, para. 14)

Even while encompassing the frames surrounding this symbolism of the park, the dominant discourse of Erdogan and his government authoritarianism was omnipresent. *NYT* quotes a protester stating that he felt Taksim Square was his "sitting room" and as though somebody "wanted to bulldoze his living room" (Arango & Yeginsu, 2013a, para. 8). The park was also a space of remembrance of the young boy Berkin Elvan who was killed by a tear gas cannister fired by the police (Temelkuran, 2016). The space surrounding the park held memories and experiences of several citizens of Istanbul and Turkey as a whole. Demolishing the park, henceforth, meant shattering the collective

memory of the Turkish people. *NYT* quoted the internationally acclaimed Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk's articulation of the symbolism of the park:

> Planning major changes in this area that holds memories of millions and in the park behind it without any consultation with Istanbulites and hastily bringing it to a stage that involved cutting trees was a major mistake by Erdogan's government. (Arsu, 2013a, para. 16)

The Gezi Park space had transformed into something more than a mere green space. The park was a place of memories and experiences—a site of memory. This rhetorical framing was further illustrated by an *NYT* journalist describing a performance from a German musician who was traveling the world. The musician stopped at Gezi Park right in the middle of a protest night, to perform for the people around the park (including the police). The *NYT* journalist then reminisces on how the space had transformed into an affective experience—"The square has long been a destination for gatherings and performances, but Mr. Martello—who played for 14 hours straight, starting Thursday evening—had an unusual and mesmerizing effect" (Arsu, 2013b, para. 6).

The framing of the digital artifacts from *NYT* and *The Guardian* surrounding the Gezi Park protest embody a rhetoric of reminding readers to consider the symbolism of the park space as not just another green space, but as a site of memory. The readers are invited to comprehend that the collective memories surrounding the park were too dominant for the authoritarian government to destroy. The government evidently sought to activate the memories of the Ottoman Empire past. However, the citizens were against the construction of the barrack—their collective memories surrounding the park were far more resolute than the authority and power of the government. The Gezi Park space had transformed into a place of memories and experiences—a site of memory.

Framing Digital Archives as Repositories for Collective Memory

The digital archives of *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* on the Gezi Park protests present a cognizance of how stories by media can frame our remembrance of certain events in the past. Centuries ago, before the existence of mass media, the process of remembering events materialized through social gatherings or meetings that involved discourses on events that were subsequently passed on to later generations through vocal dialogue. Later, books were introduced as an archival form of remembering these historical events that transcended generations. Consequently, the dawn of new media and the Internet provided far greater avenues for storing these events, albeit

digitally. These archives are easily accessible, further contributing to the reconstruction of past events and eventually enhancing the fluidity of memory. With the ubiquity of digital media and the emergence of powerful political systems across the 20th and 21st centuries, the "elites"—politicians, world leaders and media—have greater command in evoking dominant memories.

Memory is said to be "activated by issues and anxieties of the present" (Blair, Dickinson, & Ott, 2010, p. 6). The framing of *NYT* and *The Guardian* presenting the protests as a challenge to an authoritarian government further inculcate the discourse on present issues dealing with strongman-style politics across the world. The international relations of Turkey have transformed rapidly, especially since the U.S. has now withdrawn support from their longstanding Kurdish allies in Syria (Goldman, 2019). The Kurdish group was long regarded as one of the strongest and oldest allies of the United States (Goldman, 2019). U.S. withdrawal of support only provided an opportunity for the Turkish government to attack the Kurdish forces in Syria, who had long been deemed a terrorist organization by the Turkish government. The framing narratives present in these digital archives from the Gezi Park protests further invite the readers to view these protests from the lens of "anxieties and issues of the present" and reinforce the dominant narrative of Erdogan's nationalist, authoritative, and conservative ideology/policies.

The 2018 elections saw Erdogan reelected with 53% of the vote. The polls show that Erdogan remains popular, with almost half the voters' support ("Turkey election," 2018). Arguably, the people who participated in the protest and who were represented through *NYT* and *The Guardian*, fall on the other half of the spectrum, as Erdogan's detractors. If the two Western newspapers were any indication, these groups were the secular left who were increasingly unhappy with the conservative policies of the government. Essentially, by representing this specific group, *NYT* and *The Guardian* are performing a rhetorical action of remembering the secular section of the population and simultaneously forgetting the other conservative section—the messages themselves are being constantly contested through a rhetorical process of remembering and forgetting. This paper henceforth propounds the view of studying news media's digital archives as repositories for collective memory. Moreover, both rhetorical and social scientific scholars alike should acknowledge the inherently rhetorical nature of media framing. Bitzer (1968) writes that rhetoric involves a "creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. The rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes mediator of change" (p. 4). The rhetorical

process is henceforth strategic and persuasive. Rhetorical scholars are not strangers to the conceptualization of the framing process. Kenneth Burke discusses in *Attitudes Toward History* what he terms "frames of reference" and states that it is "out of such frames we derive our vocabularies for the charting of human motives" (Burke, 1984, p. 92). Burke (1984) suggests that frames of reference help us to better understand the motives and consequent actions related to a particular context. Constructing a frame of reference is a rhetorical strategic process and by ignoring or limiting the inherently rhetorical nature of framing, social scientific scholars are undercutting the inherently persuasive and strategic process of framing. As Kuypers (2010) writes, it is more common to see rhetorical scholars incorporate the concept of framing in their study, compared to social scientific scholars who are, in general, wary of incorporating, applying, or even acknowledging the rhetorical nature of the communication processes in their studies. This is not to say that rhetorical scholars are not wary of utilizing theories that have more traction among the social sciences (such as framing). We henceforth not only advocate for framing to be acknowledged as an inherently rhetorical process, but also for more rhetorical studies to comprehend the value of the framing process in shaping collective memory. The significance of media framing in this rhetorical process of storing memories should not be disregarded. In this process of contentious contesting of important events, media framing plays an exceedingly significant role in promoting (or denoting) and consequently shaping our remembrance of the past.

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