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ECHOES OF RESISTANCE

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ECHOES OF RESISTANCE: MUSIC,
MEMORY, AND PROTEST IN TURKEY

A Master's Thesis

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To all the young people in Turkey who are not afraid to sing their songs



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IN TURKEY

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Science
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by

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ANKARA

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By Zeren İldoğan

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.

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ABSTRACT

ECHOES OF RESISTANCE: MUSIC, MEMORY, AND PROTEST IN TURKEY

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M.A. in Media and Visual Studies

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Music has been an inseparable part of our lives, accompanying our daily routines, activities, and emotional states from the early periods of history to the present day. The impact of music on individual emotions has also led it to become an integral component of the collective activities of societies and states. With its ability to appeal to communities, translate emotions, and mobilize masses, music has also become an important tool of political communication. This study examines the role of music in protest culture and its function as a means of constructing collective memory through the recollected experiences of participants in two significant social movements in Turkey: the student movements of the 1970s and the 2013 Gezi Park protests. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 individuals who experienced their youth in the 1970s and participated in the Gezi Park protests of 2013. The participants were asked about their musical preferences and political views, as well as the connections between the songs used in the protests they

attended and their personal experiences. The study observed the role of music as a mnemonic device for the participants. It was found that the differing political contexts and protest cultures of these two periods influenced the types of music used in the movements. However, despite these historical differences, the songs used in both periods were found to have similar emotional effects on individuals, transforming personal memories into a collective narrative and serving as reminders that help preserve and transmit the memory of past social movements to new generations. By analyzing the relationship between protest culture, music, and collective memory in the Turkish context, this study argues that music is not only an expressive form but also an essential component that sustains and reconstructs resistance within social movements.

Keywords: Music, Social Movements, Collective Memory, Protest Culture, Political Communication

ÖZET

DİRENİŞİN YANKILARI: TÜRKİYE’DE MÜZİK, HAFIZA VE PROTESTO

İldoğan, Zeren

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Emel Özdora

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Müzik, tarihin erken dönemlerinden günümüze kadar günlük rutinlerimize, etkinliklerimize ve duygu durumlarımıza eşlik eden, hayatımızın ayrılmaz bir parçası olmuştur. Müziğin bu bireysel duygular üzerinde yarattığı etki, toplumların ve devletlerin de kolektif faaliyetlerinin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmesine sebebiyet vermiştir. Topluluklara hitap edebilmesi, duyguları tercüme edebilmesi ve bu sayede kitleleri harekete geçirme gücüyle birlikte müzik aynı zamanda önemli bir siyasi iletişim aracı haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de farklı dönemlerde ortaya çıkan iki önemli toplumsal hareket, 1970’lerin öğrenci hareketleri ve 2013 Gezi Parkı protestoları üzerinden müziğin protesto kültüründe nasıl bir rol oynadığını ve kolektif hafızanın inşasında nasıl bir araç haline geldiğini katılımcıların hatırladıkları deneyimleri üzerinden incelemektedir. Çalışmada, gençlik yıllarını 1970’lerde yaşamış ve 2013 Gezi Parkı protestolarına katılmış 30 bireyle derinlemesine yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş, kendilerine müzik beğenileri ve siyasi görüşleri, katıldıkları protestolarda kullanılan şarkılar ve deneyimleri arasındaki

bağlantılar üzerine sorular sorulmuştur, katılımcılar üzerinde müziğin bir hatırlama unsuru olarak nasıl bir rolü olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu iki farklı dönemin siyasi koşulları ve protesto kültürleri arasındaki farkların, eylemlerde kullanılan müzik türlerinin de farklılaşmasına sebep olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Ancak bu dönemsel farklılıklara rağmen toplumsal hareketlerde kullanılan şarkıların insanlar üzerinde duygusal anlamda benzer etkiler yarattığı, bireysel hafızaları kolektif bir hikâye anlatısına dönüştürerek geçmiş toplumsal hareketlerin hatırlanmasında ve yeni kuşaklara aktarılmasında bir hatırlatıcı işlevi gördüğü tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye özelinde protesto kültürü, müzik ve kolektif hafıza ilişkisini analiz ederek, müziğin toplumsal hareketlerin ve protestoların ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müzik, Toplumsal Hareketler, Kolektif Hafıza, Protesto Kültürü, Siyasi İletişim

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	vi
ÖZET	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2	6
THE POLITICAL RESONANCE OF MUSIC: A LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 The Role of Music in Social Movements	6
2.1.2 Social Movements as “Cognitive Praxis”	9
2.1.3 Music as a Protest Tactic	12
2.1.4 Synchronicity and Bodily Movement	16
2.1.5 Lyrics of Protest Songs	20
2.2 Popular Culture, Protest Music, and Political Socialization	23
2.3 Music in Collective Identity Formation	28
2.4 Music and Recollecting the Past	34
2.4.1 How Do We Remember Through Music – A Scientific Approach	34
2.4.2 Music and Collective Memory Formation	37
2.5 The Relationship Between Social Movements and Music in Turkey	46
2.5.1 1970s	47
2.5.2 The 1980s and Beyond	55
2.5.3 New Social Movements and the Path to Gezi	56
2.5.4 The Gezi Park Protests	58
CHAPTER 3	65
METHODOLOGY	65
3.1 Ethical Considerations	65
3.2 Research Design	66
3.3 Sampling and Recruitment	66
3.3.1 Sample Characteristics	67
3.4 Data Collection	70
3.4.1 Data Analysis	75
3.4.2 Codes and Themes	76

CHAPTER 4	78
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	78
4.1 Political Background and Views	78
4.2 Musical Preferences	81
4.3 Musical Preferences and Political Identity	83
4.4 Music and Protests.....	94
4.4.1 1970s & 1980s	94
4.4.2 1990s & Gezi Park.....	97
4.5 The Function of Music During Protests	103
4.5.1 Unification and Solidarity.....	105
4.5.2 Formation of a Collective Identity.....	107
4.5.3 Motivation, Activation, and Mobilization	111
4.5.4 Expression and Communication	114
4.5.5 Atmosphere and Experience	116
4.5.6 Resistance and Resilience.....	120
4.6 Music and Collective Memory	123
CHAPTER 5	135
CONCLUSION.....	135
REFERENCES.....	144
APPENDICES	153
APPENDIX A: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM	154
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	155
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	159
APPENDIX D: SONG LIST	163

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Age, Degree, and Occupation of Male Participants	69
Table 2: Age, Degree and Occupation of Female Participants.....	70
Table 3: Interview Questions	71
Table 4: Differences of Musical Styles in Two Periods	102

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“These songs bind us together, give us courage together, help us march together.”

–Martin Luther King Jr., Why We Can't Wait

When I was just 8 or 9 years old, long before I could even understand English, I grew up listening to songs by legendary bands like Pink Floyd and The Beatles, which my parents had uploaded to my MP3 player. This intergenerational transmission played a significant role in shaping my musical taste at a very young age.

By the time I turned 10, I listened to Michael Jackson's "They Don't Care About Us" for the first time. Even though I didn't understand the lyrics at the time, I could feel that the song was trying to say something important. It had a message and it moved me deeply. That moment sparked my interest in protest music, and eventually, in social issues around the world. When I started university at METU in 2017, I was profoundly influenced by the atmosphere of the school, which has a long-standing history of student activism. I always felt the spirit of those students who fought for their beliefs in the 1970s, and it accompanied me throughout my own student years. Later on, working at Radyo ODTÜ allowed me to connect with people through music, to build powerful emotional bonds, and to explore the stories behind songs. It

helped me truly experience the impact of music as a powerful tool of communication. That is why I wanted to reflect the powerful influence music has had on my personal life into this research.

Music has always been an integral part of our lives, whether we listen to songs consciously or unconsciously, they always accompany our daily routines, activities, and emotional states. Music has great power to influence daily life, from shaping people's emotions, energy, and behavior, to how they spend their time, how they feel about themselves, others, and the problems they face (Bennett, 2013). In addition to influencing our perception and emotions, music has a fundamental role in life by shaping phenomena such as learning, memory recall, social life, identity, personality, beliefs, and cultural capital (Kutluk, 2024).

In addition to being an important part of our individual lives, it is undeniable that music is also an integral part of the collective activities of social groups, societies, and countries, from the early periods of history to the present day. Songs are always used in ritualistic ceremonies, such as funerals, weddings, feasts, or wars, taking forms of national anthems, traditional songs, laments, or marches, because of their power to appeal to emotions. In Turkey, the connection between music and social movements can be traced back to periods even before the Ottoman Empire era. Many songs and marches were created to depict significant historical events to this day, such as the War of Independence and the revolutions of the period, as well as the innovations that emerged from these movements. As a result, it is possible to say that there are songs accompanying the background of all social events throughout history, that both express and document the feelings of people who live in that society, which goes through a social change.

As early as the 6th century BCE, Confucius, one of the earliest thinkers to articulate music's ethical and social functions, emphasized that music in a society gives us a clue about how that community is organized and ruled, because he argued that music is essential for a person's education and music used in rituals has the power to unite a society with the universe (Eren, 2017; Kirkendall, 2017). Similarly, Aristotle and Plato associate morals, judgment, and order in a society with musical quality as music has a role on influencing one's moral qualities and character, and shaping social interactions (Street, 2007; 2012). Thus, Plato, like Confucius, puts music at the core of education as a superior means of teaching children moral values in harmony with the society (Oğul, 2023). In *The Republic* he carries his analysis to the dimension of state laws and emphasizes the importance of music for the proper management of the state and associates some music modes as suitable for some social classes, even argues that the laws of the state change according to different music modes (Byerly, 2013; Street, 2012; Oğul, 2023). So, the power of music serving as a political communication tool dates back to the early civilizations, such as the Hittites, which utilized music to influence their social and military structures. (Umunç & Ulusal, 2020).

Due to its power to influence communities, beyond its artistic and entertainment value, music serves as a powerful tool for political expression and communication as it is capable of conveying complex emotions, cultural narratives, and social messages. Of course, the fact that the songs, the melody, and the rhythm are memorable, due to their catchy nature, also plays a big role in this process. In this way, it serves as an important propaganda tool for political parties, organizations,

and governments. Even totalitarian governments, such as the Soviet Union and the Nazi regime used popular music for propaganda purposes (Street, 2003). However, at the same time, music can also pose a threat to authoritarian regimes, and has been censored many times throughout history by the governments. For example, when Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996, one of their first acts was to ban music, even at weddings such as weddings and the sanction was imprisonment. When they were overthrown from the government, people celebrated it by playing music, and the news were portrayed with the photographs of citizens who were holding cassette players and radios (Street, 2012). Freedom was associated with music that the Taliban had banned.

Music is an emotional element that allows people to establish an emotional connection with the message to be given or allows them to give their message to the outside world without using their own words, but through playing or singing a song. Thus, music has long been intertwined with social movements, acting as a vehicle for communication, solidarity, motivation, and resistance. Throughout history, thousands of protest songs have been composed and have inspired this research, dragging masses of people behind them in different social movements throughout the world. In this study, the aim is to explore the relationship between music and social movements, which is generally identified with movements around the world, particularly the Civil Rights Movement, the 1968 Student Movements, or big events like Woodstock or Live Aid, has resonated in Turkey. Therefore, two distinct periods were chosen specifically for analysis in Turkish history: the student movements of the 1970s and the 2013 Gezi Park protests.

The aim of this research is to analyze the function of music in two different political movements that took place in Turkey in different periods of time. It seeks to answer

whether music really played a motivating and unifying role in these protests, and what kinds of similarities and differences existed between the songs used in these two distinct periods and their functions within the protest environments. Since these questions are aimed to be answered through the memories of the participants in the study, the effect of music on remembering the past, collective memories, and emotions are among the fundamental bases of the study.

Research Questions

RQ1: How has music been described as a tool for mobilization and expression in Turkey during the 1970s movements and the Gezi Park protests, according to participants' recollections?

RQ2: How did protest music impact the emotions and motivations of participants in social movements?

RQ3: How does music evoke collective memories and shared emotions among participants in Turkish protests?

RQ4: What are the similarities and differences in the format and function of songs used in the social movements of the 1970s and the Gezi Park protests, due to the historical and contextual differences of these periods?

CHAPTER 2

THE POLITICAL RESONANCE OF MUSIC: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Role of Music in Social Movements

A social movement involves a collective effort that not only seeks to bring about social or political change but also is a cultural act that engages deeply with different forms of art as a means of expression and mobilization. Social movements are more than political endeavors, they also offer venues for cultural development and experimentation with the involvement of musical and other artistic forms, and resulting in introduction of new meanings into music with the movement's ideals (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Cultural elements in social movements often have the ability to transcend linguistic and national boundaries, making them universally relatable. In this way, they create a participatory ground for the audience, and over time, these artistic expressions created during these movements by the participants can become iconic symbols of the movement itself and create a legacy within popular culture.

Edwards and McCarthy (2004) divide the resources that are required for a social movement into five: moral, cultural, social-organizational, human, and material

resources. Music used in a social movement can be described both as a moral and a cultural resource. Cultural resources in a social movement include artistic productions such as music, literature, films, videos, and newspapers. These cultural resources not only enable a social movement to attract more people and become more visible but also reinforce the sense of unity as they help bring people together on a common ground. These works of art, that are, cultural resources, used in social movements and protests, also identify with that movement and enable the movement to be passed on to future generations.

The existence of cultural and moral resources are also essential for the formation of a collective action and they can also attract human and material resources to the movement. Benefit concerts, such as Live Aid that was organized in 1985 to raise funds for relief of the famine in Ethiopia or Farm Aid which is an annual benefit concert organized for the American farmers can be great examples how moral and cultural resources can attract human and material resources with the high participation in these events and the number of donations collected (Lahausen, 1996). Or, the solidary support can come from celebrities and popular public figures, and their involvement can create an effect of legitimacy for the cause of the movement among the public. In addition to providing moral support to the public, the involvement of a celebrity, a musician, or a group in a social movement or protest can attract attention to the issue, and it can lead to a wider media coverage, making them able to access policymakers or material resource providers (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004).

The lasting remembrance of a protest or social movement is closely tied to the existence of the artistic works produced during that period. Songs, paintings, poems,

and other forms of artistic expression serve as vessels of memory, which carry the spirit and ideals of the movement into the future. Even after the initial heat of the events has faded and slowly begins to be forgotten, art can continue to preserve the meaning of the protest, reflecting the emotions of the people who were involved, thus keeping the collective consciousness alive. For instance, when we think of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, songs like "We Shall Overcome" not only remind us of the resistance of that time but also keep its ideals relevant today. These artworks allow a movement to secure its place in social memory and become a source of inspiration for future struggles. In this way, the art produced in the past inspires the symbols of new movements, keeping the spirit of resistance alive. Even though a social movement or a protest comes to an end, the music, the songs that are used remain as a memory and are also used in protests that take place years later, inspiring new waves of mobilization and resistance, gaining a place in the collective consciousness (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). They define the spirit of the protest itself and become archival works and powerful vehicles for conveying the movement's purpose, both for future protests and historical understanding. For example, when we look back at the '68 generation, it is the artists and songs from that era that best remind us of and explain those times. When we think of protests, those songs immediately come to mind. The collective action combined with music becomes a sort of ritual, and this ritualized performance connects the individual to a symbolic past, while simultaneously tying them to the movement itself, a movement with its own history, unique narrative, heroes, and cultural practices (Eyerman, 2002). The globally prominent examples, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement in the USA, the May 1968 Protests in France, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa, all produced their own artworks and music.

These global movements and their artworks also influenced different cases in Turkey, as it is also examined in this research, such as the 1968 Student Movement, the 1970s political turmoil, and the Gezi Park Protests. These movements both produced their own original songs and were influenced by their predecessors. The existence of the artistic works created and used during that time is crucial for a protest or social movement to be remembered years after it has ended. So, to understand the historical narratives and political struggles in a society, songs can provide sensory experience; by listening to a song, one can “hear societal crises in its sounds, noises, and vibrations” (Wood, 1995, p. 608).

2.1.2 Social Movements as “Cognitive Praxis”

Protests are collective actions that serve to build a collective memory. So, social movements are not only political entities but also cultural and intellectual ones. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) use the term “cognitive praxis” to emphasize the knowledge-producing processes that occur within social movements. There are new ideas, identities, and ideals are produced within the social movements. Even after the political aspect of the movement fades, new meanings, traditions, and impact left on society remain. When the knowledge and rituals produced in a social movement are transferred to a new movement, a cognitive praxis also emerges in this interaction (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). The combination of old and new values helps in the development of new practices in these movements, each contemporary movement borrows ideals and strategies from older ones, challenges, updates, and adapts them. This dissemination of knowledge happens often through artistic and cultural mediums such as music, art, and literature, which in turn influence broader societal values and practices.

Music, as part of this cognitive praxis, does more than express a movement's ideals or serve its "soundtrack," it actively contributes to shaping knowledge, mobilizing collective action, and solidarity. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) argue that music within social movements is both personal and communal, which bridge individual and collective experiences. Its performance and the memories it evokes allow a song to transcend personal boundaries and foster a collective consciousness that unites individuals around shared goals and values. Music, songs, and sound in general, with their ability to emerge instantly and directly touch people's emotions, are the strongest tools for mobilization among these cognitive praxis products, as argued in this research. The atmosphere and spirit of a movement are preserved within the sound itself; they are "blowin' in the wind" when we hear a song. Thus, music is a bridge between older and new movements, and these older messages are reinterpreted for today's context.

While the movement identity is identified as "cognitive praxis", the actors that take part in the movement are "movement intellectuals" according to Eyerman and Jamison (1991). So, musicians can be said to play an important role in the development of cognitive praxis as movement intellectuals. For instance, artists such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Pete Seeger played an important role in mobilizing people with their songs during the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s. The folk music that became popular thanks to them was associated with the type of "freedom songs" (King, 1987). In his letter to the Minister of Defense of the time, Robert McNamara, the American anti-war poet Allen Ginsberg wrote "Now is the time to read the foundational texts of Buddhism and listen to Dylan. These are the writings and suggestions that will enable us to escape from war." (Turhanlı, 1996, p. 79).

Mary King, who actively worked in the Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee during the Civil Rights Movement period wrote a memorial called “Freedom Songs” and expressed that the repertoire of the Civil Rights Movement, performed during protests, had the capacity to remind the movement’s objectives, console the suffering, evoke moral power, bravery, dedication and to bring together complete strangers into a “circle of trust and a band of brothers and sisters” (King, 1987, p. 23). The fact that the movement was embraced by a mass audience is related to the inclusiveness of the songs made during this period. Gospel and folk music, with the message they intend to give and their emotional resonance, had a profound influence on the sound and spirit of the Civil Rights Movement. Gospel, deeply rooted in the Black church, provided the movement with spiritual anthems that reflected hope, resilience, and a collective call for justice. Traditional gospel songs such as “We Shall Overcome” and “A Change Is Gonna Come” were reinterpreted and have been reintroduced to popular culture, even sometimes sung by conservative groups despite their leftist origins, because they were globally recognized and adopted by everyone due to their embracing and uplifting nature (Eyerma, 2002; Lofland, 1995; King, 1987). Simultaneously, white singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez became voices of the movement, and they used their platforms to support civil rights and further the message of equality with country and folk songs, originally owned by white Americans living in the rural side. There was a cross-racial collaboration in music, while still centering the struggles and resilience of the Black community, the inclusiveness of the movement’s music showed once again that the power of art can foster solidarity and bridge divides.

2.1.3 Music as a Protest Tactic

A protest can take a multiple variety of forms. It can take the form of a march, a strike, a boycott, a petition, or more violent forms that can cause physical damage. In these different types of protests, people use multiple tactics to gather public attention, display political expression, and obtain political persuasion. The employment of unconventional and noninstitutionalized means of political expression to try to influence public opinion and exert pressure on those in positions of power is what sets social movements apart from other political actors (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Scholars refer to these unique and unconventional combinations of methods and tactics that protest organizations have created over time and employ to act collectively as "repertoires of contention" (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004; Tilly 1978, 1995; Traugott 1995; Tarrow 1995, Kubal & Becerra, 2014). These repertoires are cultural products that are sets of actions, tactics, and cultural expressions developed over time to make a social movement's cause resonate and stay legitimate with the public and maintain continuity. Essentially, repertoires are inherited strategies and symbolic tools that help movements navigate between tradition and innovation (Kubal & Becerra, 2014).

These tactics are divided into different categories according to their methods and goals. One of the categorizations consists of two characteristics: whether a protest has an insider tactic, which is an internal movement that use institutionalized political action elements such as petitions, letters or conferences; or it can have a confrontational or outsider tactic, that consists of public displays such as marches or strikes (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Artistic performances, such as singing, dancing, or organizing a spectacle can also be referred to as a modern, unconventional and an

outsider tactic. These are the adaptive and improvisational ways that individuals use, some tricks and a resistant escape against the dominant structures as De Certeau defines (1984). These tactics and ways are operating are everyday practices that people use to navigate against dominant institutions as people find a way to creatively adapt and subvert the structured environments they live in, but they are also crucial for activism, resistance and forming a collective identity during a protest movement.

Tilly (1999) refers to these repertoires as cultural products. Artistic strategies, including poetry, theater, music, speak-outs, and street performances, are some of the ways social movements are given visibility to function as catalysts for cultural change. Tilly (1999) emphasizes the capacity of building a collective identity of these actions; he argues that these identities do not exist in advance and are activated in these movements. They are formed through these tactics, so the cultural performances can incentivize people to gather on a common ground and act together. As Putnam (2000) argues, a common ideology or a shared ethnic background is not required to sing together, and that may create a sense of togetherness that would not exist otherwise (Street, 2012).

Buffonge (2001) uses the example of the Rastafarian movement and reggae music; the usage of Jamaican culture, familiar themes, and religion in reggae music as a political expression by Jamaican people went beyond from just vocalizing the social and economic problems of the local people to a global peace movement with the songs of artists such as Bob Marley (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Roscigno and Danaher (2001) examine the textile strikes from 1929 to 1934 in the US South and conclude that protest music aired on local radio stations was a crucial tactical tool for

workers to express their complaints and foster unity. They emphasize music and radio's role in shaping political perceptions and forming a unity among a geographically dispersed population (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001).

The tactical musical repertoires also can act as a conciliator to sustain the protest in a severe and hostile political environment (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). There is generally a tiring and stressful environment in a protest area. Sometimes there is a concern about a possible police intervention, and sometimes it is very tiring to stand for long hours, especially if it is a rally area. In such cases, in order to keep the crowd alive, it is necessary to keep the rhythm of that action area by playing a song, having them sing a march or slogan, or get people to dance the "halay", in Turkish context. Here, music is a tactic that gives people the strength to endure in such environments. Street (2012) talks about the example of a Washington-based musical collective called Infernal Noise Brigade (INB), who performed in various large-scale anti-capitalist protests. They represented themselves as a band who was dedicated to promote political action and also "tactical advisors" who "provide entertainment, energy and support" for the protestors (Street, 2012, p. 160). Here, music is also used as a tactic to ensure the continuity of the social movement, by enriching the atmosphere with enthusiasm and emotion. As Rosenberg (2013) notes, demonstrations and protests require more than just physical spaces to come together; the atmosphere in these places is equally important. This is where music becomes essential in shaping the atmosphere by influencing the emotional mood of the event.

Sometimes, a protest tactic is humor, irony, satire, or laughter. Instead of harsh slogans, serious marches, or aggressive actions, discourse that mocks those in power and more humorous slogans have also emerged as a form of protest through time.

The use of satire and humorous content can serve as a powerful means of protest, because it has the potential to provoke and unsettle authorities. This was particularly evident in Turkey during the Gezi protests, where the widespread use of social media led to the circulation of humorous posts, a phenomenon that will be discussed in later sections. This form of protest, which can be described as a “festive opposition,” resembles Bakhtin’s concept of the “carnival”. In *Rebelais and His World* (1984), Bakhtin draws a connection to the rise of the Renaissance when he speaks of the liberating and transformative power that emerged in carnivals in the Medieval period. These carnivals were more than festive events; they were cultural moments where hierarchies were inverted, bodily experiences were celebrated, and official discourses were openly mocked (Bakhtin, 1984). He argues that carnival provided a space for the collective expression of the people. He provides a framework for understanding how marginalized or oppressed groups use humor, art, and festivity as tools of resistance. It is more than just festivity; it is a dynamic and transformative source where traditional hierarchies are overturned, and a new sense of freedom and uninhibited communication emerges (Bakhtin, 1984). It is possible to argue that this carnivalesque atmosphere is also present in protests and demonstrations. Through dancing and singing, people express their dissent and stage a form of rebellion against the conditions they oppose. In the face of repression and authority, they generate a creative force, using their silenced voices to produce artistic forms of expression. The humorous content, slogans, and songs that refuse to yield to any kind of oppression, alongside collective acts of dancing, laughing, and celebrating, take on a political character. Carnival thus becomes a space where individuals with shared grievances freely meet, laugh, and form bonds, and challenge the authority indirectly yet powerfully. In this context, humor serves as a foundation for resistance.

However, there are opposing views that advocate that the overuse of music or humor in general has the risk of undermining social movements and reducing the movement to a simple form of entertainment. Even if it is done involuntarily, certain lyrics and songs that adopt an overly confrontational or disrespectful style may create barriers to dialogue or alienate those it aims to influence, or it can result in the loss of clarity and the core of the message the movement aims to communicate (Bogad, 2006).

Still, a joyful and relaxed atmosphere where people feel comfortable is naturally more appealing, and therefore likely to increase participation in protests. Being part of a setting where music and performances are present, and where people smile at one another, can draw more individuals into the protest. Wood (1995) describes the usage of music in these setting as “therapeutic and liberating” (p. 608). Similarly, humorous content shared on social media tends to generate greater engagement. As a result, the core message of the movement may, in fact, be communicated more effectively under these conditions, as it becomes more accessible, relatable, and emotionally resonant for a wider audience.

2.1.4 Synchronicity and Bodily Movement

With the spread of new media, technology, and the internet, social movements and protests can now reach a much wider audience more easily. People now often use social media tools to make their voices heard and share their opinions about an issue. However, physically being present in such environments, “being there,” still plays a crucial role in fostering collective consciousness and gaining visibility. It is the direct experience and being there that is central to the process of constructing a collective identity (Eyerman, 2002). The physical closeness of individuals generates “a sort of

electricity” as described by Durkheim (1995), which leads people to a state of sublimation (p. 217). The shared emotions that emerged during this act of physical closeness can lead to spontaneous collective bodily and vocal expressions, such as singing and dancing.

Turino (2008) emphasizes the importance of synchronicity and motion in participatory musical performances. This argument can also be applied to protests, which are also participatory settings. In these situations, individuals directly experience a sense of belonging and profoundly feel likeness, and so a shared identity, as they move and sound together as a group (Turino, 2008). Despite the physical distance between protestors, the collective rhythm can connect people in solidarity. For example, when a “halay” is being performed, in Turkish protest contexts especially, people instinctively feel the urge to join in. What is critical here is the rhythm, as Frith (1996) argues, “to grasp the rhythm of a piece of music”, is both a physical and mental process (p. 153).

When participants successfully harmonize, the performance embodies a direct expression of social unity, making them feel closely connected. When people listen to something collectively, when they move or dance together, even their breathing and heartbeats become synchronized, especially relevant for the choir singers, according to the psychological research conducted (Müller & Lindenberg, 2011). This, in itself, is something that unites and brings people together, both spiritually and scientifically. During actions such as collective performances, singing, or dancing, interpersonal synchronization activates neural networks, which leads participants to feel psychologically and physically closer to each other. At the same

time, the endorphin release during group activities contributes to the social bonding within a group (Tarr et al., 2014).

As it also has a scientific explanation, this bodily movement and synchronicity are essential for the formation and renewal of social groups, their identities, and their ideals according to Durkheim (1995), because they are essential for the creation of a “collective effervescence”, as he describes (p. 228).

Not only protests, but certain rituals, ceremonies, such as military chanting, church singing require group music and dance, even groups like Nazis used collective singing for this effect of unity and solidarity. This same potential is also exploited by political, fascist, and nationalist movements to unify and strengthen group identity (Turino, 2008). In addition, the usage of music also has an organizing effect over a group, as it can act as a “prosthetic technology of the body”, as described by DeNora (1999), as an external aid that can extend the body’s capabilities. She discusses the role music plays in the labor sector with the advent of industrialization. She gives the example of textile workers who were made to work while listening to music, explaining how the synchronization of their hand movements with the rhythm of the music resulted in evenly woven wool (DeNora, 1999). Just as we adjust our steps to the rhythm of a song while walking in our daily lives. Similar to this example, the use of music is also crucial in ensuring that people in a crowded space stay organized, synchronized, and orderly.

Singing and listening to protest songs together in a shared space is a powerful experience that goes beyond merely paying attention to the lyrics and message behind the song. The rhythm captures people. As Eyerman (2002) explains, the collective experience of listening to a song together is more important than

understanding the song as a text, because of the encouragement of bodily movement and contact caused by the music.

Adorno criticizes popular music's repetitive nature in its melody and lyrics as he thinks that it undermines people's ability to think critically and take part in political activism eventually (Street, 2012). However, thinkers like Frith (2007) and Bennett (2001) differ from this idea as they focus on the political participatory potential of music. Bennett (2001) emphasizes the importance of the act of signing together; following rhythmic patterns, repetition of lyrics together, the effect of sound has a direct influence on moral sentiments because through singing aloud collectively we feel connected with one another and feel an "enchantment", these sentiments provide the motivation for the commitment to a movement. She argues that rather than lyrics, "the sonority of language", the experience of singing is what uncovers new meanings and thus transforms a collective activity (Bennett, 2001, p. 131). Sound, she states, is what causes the "enchantment" against the injustice or oppression. So, music is a significant tool that gives the political ideas and the motivation behind the protest the emotional aspect and importance. Frith (2007) describes music making and music listening as bodily matters because they are "direct experiences" on people. Through gestures and bodily significations, the ideas that are discussed in a song are manifested in real life. Umunç and Ulusal (2020) support this idea and note that music has the capacity to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers, and this makes it a powerful tool for expressing resistance.

2.1.5 Lyrics of Protest Songs

On the other hand, some highlight the lyrics of the protest songs. They argue that protest songs must act as political weapons that challenge the existing structure through the message that they convey, and they must address existing cultural, social, and political problems and present a solution to them through their lyrics (Denisoff, 1969; Cooper, 1988; Berger, 2008). Thus, their lyrics are what make them a valuable source for them to be acknowledged as a protest song. Mattern (1998) also emphasizes the role of music as a form of political communication and attributes this role to the lyrics of a song for its ability to convey messages.

Although protest songs' lyrics contain powerful messages, music is a universal communication tool that transcends language barriers. As Byerly (2013) suggests, unlike any other form of protest, music is a global communicator since it breaks down restrictions and censorship by transcending language borders. Music can become a tool for expression and solidarity, even when its lyrics are not explicitly political. When they succeed in resonating with the listeners emotionally, they can convey protest sentiments in an uplifting and motivational way. Rousseau (1997) also argued that music, particularly melody, is deeply connected to human emotion, and it can convey meaning through sound that words alone cannot fully capture. He believed that music expresses the emotional and passionate aspects of human experience, which are universal and can be understood beyond specific languages or cultures. As music and singing generate and reflect feelings directly, Rousseau (1997) puts music as the greatest form of art.

Nietzsche, like Rousseau, viewed music as something that transcends language, that carries a deeper, more fundamental power than words (Street, 2012). He argued that lyrics depend on music for having an emotional depth, whereas music itself is independent from any language or imagery for transmitting an emotion; they are just tools that accompany it. According to Nietzsche, “language can only skim the surface of what music expresses” (Street, 2012, p. 147). Music’s true strength lies in enabling listeners to experience the different emotions, in ways that words alone cannot convey. This makes music a direct force in engaging in the most essential aspects of human life and emotions.

While lyrics do not have to be political, the act of making music can be political itself. Especially in repressive political environments, making music is a way for individuals and communities to make their existence, identity, views, and values visible. Music is a powerful and flexible tool for social and political expression, capable of fostering creativity and offering a “protected” space for social change (Byerly, 2013, p. 235). A musical piece can have multiple layers of meaning; artists can express their opinion sometimes in a subtle and sometimes in an overt way. So, listeners can interpret a wide range of meanings based on their perspectives. This interpretive flexibility means that musicians can convey messages without needing to explicitly state them, allowing audiences to find their own understanding of the music’s social or political significance (Byerly, 2013). The analysis of a “protest song” should be open to embedded meanings and various interpretations (Brandellero et.al., 2018). Sometimes there may be no literary meanings in the lyrics of a song, the ambiguity in the words makes a song open to interpretation, the audience may fill the spaces left by music with their own thoughts and emotions, this process can also strengthen the emotional ties within the audience (Street, 1986;

Grant et al., 2010). Songs do not have fixed interpretations; they are experienced differently depending on context, audience, and setting. For example, Bruce Springsteen's "Born In The U.S.A." is actually a sarcastic song, which criticizes the struggles of Vietnam War veterans and working-class Americans. However, its anthemic sound led to it being misinterpreted as a patriotic celebration and used in political campaigns, such as Trump's rallies in 2016 (Siegel, 2024).

Tiina Rosenberg (2013) gives another striking example of this notion from her personal life. She talks about how she felt emotionally moved, even started to cry when she heard "Hasta Siempre" in her trip to Cuba, the popular song composed for Che Guevara. She criticizes the song's stereotypical, altruistic male revolutionary archetype, portraying him as a heroic figure, almost with religious overtones like Jesus Christ. This raises questions in Rosenberg's mind, as a Swedish queer feminist, about the emotional response evoked by the song, despite recognizing its problematic aspects related to gender and hero-worship. She wonders why she feels deeply moved by Hasta Siempre while acknowledging some problematic issues about its lyrics. She concludes that it's because Hasta Siempre resonates as a personal memory of her early political awakening, linked to the 1973 Chilean military coup and her introduction to leftist politics. Music can evoke deeply personal and collective memories, carrying layers of emotional and cultural significance beyond its surface meaning, which will be discussed later in another chapter.

Some songs do not inherently contain any political implications in their lyrics, even if the musician did not compose the song with the intention of expressing a political message in mind; some songs may become "accidentally" political and used in protests by the public. *Dancing In The Street*, originally released by Martha and the

Vandellas in 1964, later covered by many artists such as David Bowie and Mick Jagger, became a “civil rights anthem”. Although it was composed as “a party song”, but later adapted by activists during the Civil Rights Movement, with its call to “dancing in the street” took a defiant, collective action meaning. As a more up-to-date, an example which is completely a product of popular culture can be given from Turkey, a song called “Nerdesin Aşkım” performed by Turkish singer Hadise. As the singer specifies herself, written as a love song, with no political implications, it has been internalized by the LGBTI+ community with the feeling of freedom created by the words and rhythm, started to be used in the protests. It has become a catchphrase within popular culture, used in humorous and ironic contexts. Such usage has made the song a symbol of the community. Songs used in political campaigns also serve as a compelling example of this phenomenon. In particular, during Turkey’s 2023 general elections, the campaign songs used by opposition parties became deeply embedded in the public’s memory. The Workers’ Party of Turkey (TİP) adopted “Karşıyım”, performed by Sezen Aksu, while the Republican People’s Party (CHP) used Levent Yüksel’s “Tuana”, neither of which was originally written with political intent or contains political lyrics. However, once readapted by these parties, the songs took on new meanings and turned into political symbols for the public.

2.2 Popular Culture, Protest Music, and Political Socialization

While protest music seems to denote a single genre definitionally, it encompasses multiple music genres. Including genres such as Pop, Punk, Reggae, and Hip Hop, many different music styles can be found among the artists who make protest music. Furthermore, when it comes to the performance of protest music, how musical practices are reflected by the musician also affects the positioning of the protest

musician within the subfield of protest music. Additionally, it should be noted that since protest music shows variability contextually and temporally, the definitions of "protest musician" or "protest music group" should also be considered temporally and contextually (Eren, 2017, p. 56).

Various factors, such as the increasing support for the civil rights movement of African American citizens in the mid-20th century, the freedoms brought by the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and the need for musicians to raise their voices against wars, especially the Vietnam War, contributed to the growing impact of protest music. This movement was particularly embraced by university students. It is already known that universities, along with small bars, were among the places where protest music was most performed. In the 1960s, protest music not only solidified its definition but also gained visibility by spreading to larger audiences. As American musician Frank Zappa noted in 1967, "During this period, American youth were loyal neither to the flag, nor to the country, nor to doctrines; their only loyalty was to music" (Eren, 2017, p.59).

According to Umunç and Ulusal (2020), popular culture often serves as a reinforcement of dominant ideologies, but protest culture, through music, offers an alternative discourse. Popular resistance culture reflects people's hopes for a better world, engaging directly with the political discourse of the time. In Turkey, protest music genres such as Arabesque, Anadolu Pop, and punk rock emerged in response to socio-political changes, highlighting how different subcultures use music as a form of opposition.

Although protest music has had a large place in popular culture throughout history, thinkers like Adorno and Horkheimer define the consumers of popular culture as

"culturally ignorant" who are sedated by commoditized art products. Adorno, who evaluates cultural products through the concept of the culture industry, clearly distinguishes between works of art and popular art. Since Adorno's evaluation of musical genres is based on whether or not they are associated with culture industry products, a sharp distinction emerges between "serious music" and popular (standard) music. Although he believes that music can transform consciousness, it does not necessarily happen in a good and valuable way (DeNora, 2003). Because he argues that the products that emerge as a result of the culture industry obey the social hierarchy, and therefore these songs cannot be a tool to change the existing order (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002). As popular music is an outcome of mass production, it does not serve to challenge the system; in contrast, it pacifies people by contributing to the creation of a conformist environment (Street, 2012; Krolo & Tonkovic, 2024). He is interested in the tonal structure of music rather than its ability to shape social interaction, because he argues that it is not popular music, but atonal music that challenges people while listening, so it contributes to intellectual development. Therefore, popular culture, thus popular music is not conceived as an arena for political struggle by the thinkers of Frankfurt School in general (Garofalo, 1992).

However, alternative approaches argue that popular music can still have a protest potential and act as a tool in challenging existing norms and fostering political transformation (Krolo & Tonkovic, 2024). For instance, Stuart Hall, saw the potential of challenging existing norms in the everyday practices and style of youth subcultures. Given the example of the youth subcultures in post-war Britain, he talks about how different groups such as "mods", "rockers", "skinheads" and "punks" expressed their discontent with mainstream society and offered creative responses in

order to do so (Clarke et al., 2003). These creative responses included clothing, slang, rituals, and protest music. The psychedelic rock movement which emerged in 1960s England stood against racism and gender discrimination, punk in the 1970s raised its voice against class conflict and post-punk in the 1980s continued to show its anger against political structures (Uyar, 2023). These movements all turned into consumer trends at the end of the day, especially in the fashion industry, but their liberating potential, especially for marginalized groups and countercultural movements, should not be forgotten. These movements become a way for people to express themselves through the clothes they wear and the music they listen to, and they contribute to the creation of a group to which they can feel a sense of belonging. While explaining Hall and Birmingham School thinkers' perspective, Özçetin (2018) defines popular culture as a "dynamic area of struggle", in which there is both "resistance and acceptance", "rebellion and submission", where subcultures, lower classes, and the working class continue to create their own sets and standards within this popular realm (p. 188).

Garofalo (1992) places popular music as the main form of resistance with the decline of mass participation in grassroots political movements, since the 1980s (p. 16). As highlighted by Edwards and McCarthy (2004) as "resources of a social movement", Garofalo (1992) also emphasizes the role of "mega events" and mass charity concerts as a way of political socialization. Although they are also a part of popular culture and sometimes criticized for being commercial events, charity organizations such as Live Aid, Band Aid, or songs that were composed with the aim of fundraising such as We Are The World, played significant roles in raising consciousness about social issues, beyond their fundraising intent (Garofalo, 1992). Of course, celebrity endorsement is one of the key aspects here. Although when protest musicians

become popular and their work gets commercialized, they are generally criticized for becoming a product of popular culture, but Garofalo (1992) argues that artists play a crucial role in shaping the political character of popular culture and mobilizing people for political action as they can draw great attention to the issue. Jackson (2002) further argues that artists are as influential as parents in the process of political socialization of young people, because as they are already “emotionally invested in the music”, they are also open to be influenced by the ideologies of the genre’s performers (p. 82). So, he points out to the educative role of popular culture and music. Similarly, Hyman (1963) argues that popular culture products, even non-political ones, that do not aim to explicitly convey a political message can act as vehicles of political socialization, because they are engaging and can leave an impact on people in a subtle way.

Although it becomes a product of the mainstream culture, popular music products can form a realm of resistance against dominant ideology, as individuals convey their personal worlds of meaning through music, and audiences reinterpret these meanings through their own experiences (Uyar, 2023). Its “catchy” nature, because of its memorability and thus being able to be spread by word of mouth, is also important in terms of the ideas that are intended to be expressed reaching everyone. Street (1986) suggests that the significance of a song's popularity lies in its ability to connect personal emotions with broader social experiences. Of course, it is not possible to talk about every popular song that carries a social message in itself or has such an intention. But even if it does not, sometimes a song, a melody can resonate with listeners, by bridging private feelings and the public world, and putting individual identities and collective realities together. So, music is a perfect tool to shape our individual identities, and simultaneously, it can connect people through shared

experiences and foster a sense of community. Bennett (2016) argues that whether a person identifies themselves as a “rocker”, “hippie”, or “punk” during their youth, it becomes a lifetime identity that continues to influence their lifestyles in the following periods of their lives.

2.3 Music in Collective Identity Formation

Our musical preferences can often be effective in giving the outside world a clue about who we are. Subcultures, mostly youth movements, use music to define themselves against societal norms and express group identities. Ultimately, we all felt a sense of belonging to a social group when we were younger, especially. If we listen to rock music, we tend to dress accordingly and gather with others who share our taste in the venues. In this way, individuals who listen to rock, punk, or metal can often be distinguished from those who listen to K-pop, for example. Fans of a particular artist come together, participate in joint activities, and form communities. In essence, we express ourselves through the music we listen to. Jackson (2002) calls these subcultures created by young people as “imagined communities” in which they feel a sense of belonging, and among all the forms of media in the popular culture realm, he places music as the most essential form that has the ability to influence the political views of young people, according to the research he has conducted among American students (p. 77).

In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu examines the differences in tastes of individuals from different social groups in areas such as music, art, and literature and says that the cultural, economic, and social capital of individuals affects their artistic tastes and the music they listen to. In his direct words, “Nothing more clearly affirms one’s ‘class’, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music.” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.

18). Thus, he suggests that preferences for particular types of music, or any cultural product, are not only reflections of personal identity but also markers of social positioning and cultural capital.

However, music not only reflects the socio-economic values of its creators and listeners, who often mirror their class and cultural identities in musical choices, but it also actively constructs these identities (Oğul, 2023). This connection between music and identity is not only a reflection of existing social dynamics but an active force in shaping and reinforcing social and cultural ties within communities. If music is an identity-building tool, the songs we listen to shape our personality, then a textual analysis of songs is not enough to understand this identity-building process; the interaction between people in a performance or in a social movement should be analyzed in a contextual manner.

Sometimes our music preferences and listening habits can be shaped by the groups we are in and the communities we feel we belong to. Frith (2007) argues that identity is fluid and constantly changing, influenced by the music we listen to and according to the group we feel we belong to. Rather than merely reflecting pre-existing beliefs or group identities, music actively shapes how individuals and groups understand their social relationships and values. Identity formation through music transcends distinctions like high or low culture, which are more about social practices than inherent tastes (Frith, 2007).

Mattern (1998) divides the political action power of popular music into three: confrontational, deliberative, and pragmatic. In the deliberative form of political action, people use musical practices to reflect on and negotiate their sense of belonging and commitment to the group. Music forms a communicative arena where

participants in a political action can discuss their differences, disagreements, and finally create a collective group characteristic, thus resulting in discovery and the formation of a collective identity (Mattern, 1998).

When we look at social movements as a whole, at their core lies the issue of constructing a “collective identity”. People from different backgrounds, cultures, and perhaps even political views come together to raise their voices against a shared concern. Durkheim (1995) describes it as attaching individual identities to something greater than themselves when people become intimate with each other during rites and ceremonies. In such moments, individual differences fade into the background as a new identity emerges, one formed by a group of people united for a common cause. Here, music serves as a medium through which people express and reinforce their shared sense of belonging.

Of course, music is not the primary reason people participate in a protest or form a collective identity, people are there because they believe in a shared cause. However, music, and specifically the act of singing together, serves as a facilitator in overcoming individual differences. It helps create a shared emotional atmosphere that brings people closer, reinforcing the sense of unity among those who may come from diverse backgrounds.

Music’s power to being able to make people feel like they belong to a certain group makes it a perfect tool for social movements and protests. Tilly describes these collective social movements as “clusters of interactive performances” that generate these identities through engagement and repetition (1999, p. 262). Chanting slogans and marching together can be great examples of this repetition phenomenon. The songs used in protest contexts are shared in a collective experience and express an

agreement with the existence of an injustice (Payerhin, 2012). They can reinforce the bond between the diverse individuals who gathered around a common cause; these people can communicate their goals or grievances through a shared musical expression. Furthermore, music operates as a form of political expression by connecting public claims with collective identity, a crucial strategy for social movements. Tilly (1999) and Melucci (1995) suggest that collective identities rarely pre-exist fully formed; they are not static; rather, it is an interactive process, they are crafted through collective actions, the interactions, negotiations between the actors who participate in a movement. Similarly, Tajfel (1974) explains the psychological effects on how individuals perceive themselves in relation to groups they belong to and how this influences their behavior. In “social identity theory”, Tajfel (1974) argues that part of a person’s “self-concept” comes from the social group they belong to, and the emotional significance they attach to this membership also constitutes social identity (p. 69). In addition, people seek to maintain a positive social identity through “social comparison” by comparing their “intergroup” with “outgroups”, and can change their social identity if they feel like they cannot receive a positive outcome from belonging to this group (p. 72). So, identities are fluid and interactive, as Melucci (1995) also suggests. Tajfel’s (1974) social identity theory serves as a strong psychological answer in what motivates people to participate in collective actions, because feeling a belonging to a group forms a bridge between social identity at an individual level and the collective identity of the group. People are more motivated to act on behalf of the community when their common values get integrated into their social identities (van Stekelenburg, 2013).

There are different views on how music serves as a tool in social movements to help build a collective identity. Language in general and music in particular have

historically been among the most evident ways that group identity has been expressed and conveyed (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Therefore, song lyrics and the unifying language used in songs are among the leading factors in the formation of a collective identity. Coming together for the same purpose and singing common songs creates a community and also draws the boundaries of this community. While a common "we" language is used in the songs, it also determines who the other party, "they", is (Mattern, 1998, p. 140). Distinguishing "us" from "them" is also significant for Tajfel's (1974) "social comparison" concept, the solidarity within the group people feel belong to, the "intergroup", is reinforced while defining the "outgroup", which can be the state, the authority figures in the social movements' context. The Gezi Park protests in Turkey serve as a powerful example of collective identity formation, as they showed how diverse social groups can unite around common values and aspirations despite their differences. This movement fostered new forms of social interaction and cooperation among people who did not necessarily share the same identity, political ideology, or class, religious, or educational background (Yeğenoğlu, 2013). One striking example of this collective identity was the response to negative stereotypes and labels. When protestors were called "bir avuç çapulcu" (a handful of looters), "bir grup marjinal" (a group of marginals) by the government, they embraced the term and transformed it into a collective name to define themselves and their purpose to foster a sense of unity by using humor. This term, which could have been divisive, instead became a unifying symbol adopted by many to express resistance and solidarity, and inspiring many songs called "Çapulcu Musun Vay Vay – Boğaziçi Jazz Choir", "Çapulcu Senfonisi", "Çapulcu Türküsü", "Chapulling In Peace". People from many different political identities and backgrounds came together and created a common language,

uniting under the term “çapulcu.” At the same time, although music offers a common arena of communication where all differences can come together, Mattern (1998) argues that it should not be forgotten that ethnic, racial, class or gender divides may sometimes prevent music from serving as a bridge, because of interpretation issues. At this point, it is important to revisit the notion of collective identity that emerges not only through lyrics and language but also through the very act of being together. Beyond words, it is the shared presence, the collective experience of singing, moving, and feeling as one body that solidifies a sense of belonging and unity. This embodied togetherness plays a crucial role in the formation of collective identity, often even more powerfully than the lyrical content itself.

Turino (2008) gives the example of Nazi regime to highlight music’s power in forming and sustaining social communities and how music’s participatory potential can sometimes be used in an exploitative nature. He talks about how Nazi regime used mass singing in particular, to strengthen collective bravery, eradicate individual self-doubt, and foster solidarity and obedience in the Nazi rule (Turino, 2008).

Because at that moment, being with people and singing together becomes a motivating force by instantly and directly evoking feelings and actions, even sometimes making people engage in activities they would not do otherwise (Street, 2012). “Collective effervescence” as described Durkheim (1995) is what emerges here, he highlights the necessity of intense emotions felt among people for the formation of solidarity and collective identity, and for an event to be recollected in the future. In order to do so, music has a great function to bring up these intense emotions.

What is striking is that the creation of music itself does not have to be the product of a collective community. The power of a song played, composed, and sung by a single person to mobilize the masses and later become an anthem for a collective community, and the potential of this song to spread by word of mouth, sets it apart from other art forms. There is human interaction that sets music apart from other art forms. A film or a play can be watched together, but in the end, that often becomes a solitary act. Of course, it also depends on how music is listened. It can be listened to individually, but when experienced collectively, probably no other art form allows for such deep interaction. A painting can be analyzed together with a group, a movie can be watched collectively, but those acts are done in silence, even when they are done with a group. With music, when it is listened to as a group, people can sing along and dance together. Even at an ordinary concert, it does not have to be a political event; one can feel stronger, more hopeful, and more joyful when they sing a song in unison with the crowd. People might have their own personal memories associated with that song, but in that moment, being within a collective group and sharing something together can shift the existing meaning associated to it.

2.4 Music and Recollecting the Past

2.4.1 How Do We Remember Through Music – A Scientific Approach

When we try to remember a memory, we cannot visualize every detail of that moment, but certain images of that moment appear in our minds. These may be the clothes we are wearing at that moment, the objects around us, but especially a song playing in the background at that moment. In explaining why music and memories are directly linked, and music is a more powerful trigger for memories than other

material objects, DeNora (1999) highlights music's characteristic as a "temporal medium" (p. 66). Music unfolds over time, unlike a still image or an object. It has rhythm, duration, and progression. Songs mirror how we experience those memories, as a sequence of moments. Because it is time-based, she argues that this is why we feel the emotions, movements, and atmosphere of a memory, like it "comes alive" (DeNora, 1999, p. 67).

Because we associate memories and songs in our minds, we recall a specific memory when we hear a song. Music sometimes brings beautiful memories to our minds, and sometimes moments we don't want to remember. Maybe that's why people listen to music when they're in love or after a breakup, and sometimes they stay away from music because they can't cope with the intensity of their emotions. Music is a manifestation of people's emotional world. The meanings of songs can change suddenly depending on the emotions and experiences we associate them with. A song that once brought us happiness and evoked joyful memories can suddenly turn into a song full of sadness and sorrow when it is identified with a bad memory or a person we want to forget. Especially older people, revive the experiences from their youth, such as "earlier freedoms, events" and the emotions triggered by these events such as "nostalgia, reminiscence, or even regret" (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p. 223).

Sometimes, a song we hear by chance brings back a memory we had completely forgotten or never thought of before. DeNora (1999) refers to this phenomenon, when we listen to a song, in addition to re-living a past experience, we can also recall a new memory within a memory that we were not previously aware of or feel a new emotion that we were not feeling at the time. She argues that this "retrospection" through music is not only looking back at the past, but it is also a "projection for the

future”, which guides individuals to reconstruct their identity, and direct how they will behave in the future (DeNora, 1999, p. 66).

Cognitive research and psychologists confirm that “musical memory is an emotional investment”, because specific songs can trigger certain moods according to the events people associate them with (Van Dijck, 2006, p. 362). Listening to music is an action that activates a wide range of cognitive processes. The moment we hear a song, many different cognitive processes are triggered, such as evoking various emotions, stimulating our memory, activating learning, and enabling us to make judgments. This is why the psychological and memory-triggering effects of music on the brain have been a frequent subject of scientific research.

The memories that are triggered by music are specifically named as “Music-Evoked Autobiographical Memories (MEAMS)”. These MEAMS are directly associated with episodic memories, which are autobiographical memories that enable us to remember events in a specific time and place context (Ferbinteanu et al., 2006). For example, remembering the first concert or a political protest that was attended, or where a person was when they first heard a particular song, are all instances of episodic memory. Tulving (2002) describes episodic memory as allowing individuals to "mentally travel back in time" and re-experience past events. Music here plays a powerful role in terms of triggering episodic memory and autobiographical memory, which enables us to feel the emotions experienced during the original event, and it is because it activates brain regions responsible for memory and emotion, such as hippocampus and amygdala (Ferbinteanu et al., 2006; Koelsch, 2014). Also, musical imagery and memory share overlapping brain regions. Regions activated during auditory perception are also active during musical imagery, such as the supplementary motor area (SMA) and premotor cortex. Familiar music and MEAMs

also have shown similar activation in brain regions like the dorsal and lateral medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) (Janata et al., 2007; Schaefer, 2017). In addition, when we hear a piece of emotionally impactful music, the brain's reward systems, such as the mesolimbic pathway, are activated, and dopamine, a neurotransmitter directly linked with memory and mood, is released. Dopamine release during this process plays an impactful role in memory consolidation (Jancke, 2018). Why we are addicted to nostalgia, why we generally love to reminisce about the past and memories through emotional songs, and why the feeling of nostalgia evokes a feeling of relief and pleasure, even though we also feel sadness that comes with longing for the past, can be explained by this phenomenon. It is actually a way for the brain to secrete dopamine.

2.4.2 Music and Collective Memory Formation

Some songs are “our songs”. Either because of our family, friends, lovers, a peer group, or as a society as a whole. Wherever we feel we belong, we all have a song in our mind that identifies with that place or people. These are also made possible by stories told with songs. Stories passed down from generation to generation, folk sayings are an example of this. Or if we look closer to our lives, our parents' taste in music influences us from a young age. Krumhansl and Zupnick (2013) conducted research with adolescents to understand the psychological effects of this phenomenon. Hearing a familiar song, especially from adolescence and early adulthood periods, can instantly evoke detailed memories of past experiences, and this phenomenon is called “reminiscence bump”. They found out that participants not only remembered their memories from late adolescence and early adulthood periods through music, but also a second, unexpected bump occurred for music popular

during their parents' youth, even though they were from approximately 20-25 years before participants' birth, and even a third, smaller bump appeared for music from the 1960s, likely influenced by grandparents or the enduring popularity of classic rock genre. They named this “cascading reminiscence bumps”, suggesting that musical preferences and memories are not solely personal but are shaped by intergenerational transmission (Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013). This is one of the ways in which collective memory is formed, actually. We feel strong emotions when we hear some songs, even though we do not have a specific memory about that song or a specific time period. What the songs remind us of, maybe, is an individual aspect, but taking the concept of collective memory further, Halbwachs (1992) argues that there is no such thing as individual memory, because memory is what we form through social interactions, and it is impacted by how the past is portrayed collectively. In this way, social movements are also passed down from generation to generation through songs.

In *On Collective Memory* (1992), Halbwachs gives a powerful example; when we come across a book from our childhood, we would want to read it again with the hope of reliving the same emotions we did while reading it as a child, we can recall our past versions, and relive our memories. But we realize that our memories have changed, because “the mind reconstructs the memories” through the interactions we have within a society (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 51). Halbwachs classifies the types of collective memory as “collective memory of family”, “religious collective memory”, and the “collective memory of social classes”, and our interactions within these different groups reconstruct our memories. Through the experiences, narratives, and symbols within these different groups, a cluster of shared memories is formed and reflects the movements, struggles, achievements, or traumas of that community,

transferring a common understanding of the past, the common identities, and values. He also differs collective memory from history, while history is described as something situated above the groups, external to group sentiments, collective memory is grounded in lived experience; thus, can be different from chronologically factual events (Halbwachs, 1992).

Collective memory is passed down from generation to generation through various means, such as commemorative ceremonies, symbols, monuments, stories, music, and written and oral histories. This transmission strengthens the sense of solidarity and belonging within groups, while the way the past is remembered plays an essential role in shaping contemporary identities and politics. The memories of wars or struggles for independence, the triumphant memories that are narrated in a country, can serve as a source of unity and a source of mobilization in times when society needs to be motivated, especially. Halbwachs, who comes from the Durkheimian tradition also emphasized the importance of rites and ceremonies for the reproduction of the society and believed that through participating in commemorative meetings with group members of the present generation, it is possible to recreate the past which has the risk of slowly fading away (Coser, 1992; Halbwachs, 1992).

Collective memory not only encompasses how a group remembers the past but also how the past is interpreted and connected to the present. Therefore, collective memory can be reshaped or reinterpreted for specific political or social purposes, sometimes leading to conflicts between different narratives.

Social movements can draw inspiration from past strategies and tactics when planning their current struggles. Forms of protest, songs, slogans, or action strategies

that were successful in the past can be reused in new movements. In this way, collective memory functions as a kind of “repertoire of movement,” guiding new generations of activists and music used in these commemorative meetings and rituals, such as folk dances, chants, and ballads, plays a significant role in this process.

The fact that music can touch our emotions so powerfully also makes it an effective mobilizer while bringing people together. Like songs are marches are sung at sport games and competitions to increase enthusiasm and excitement; this is exactly why it is included in ceremonies and protests to revive national or collective feelings and strengthen the sense of unity. Music creates a deep impact by gathering people around a common goal or emotion, with its power to shape social memory and activate collective emotions. In this context, the emotional impact of a song is decisive in the lives of individuals as well as at the social and cultural level. This is why Frith (2007) separates music from other products of popular culture in the transmission and creation of memory, because “we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies” in his own words, this is why they are immediately accessible within us, as they become a part of our identities, but “at the same time, and equally significantly, music is obviously collective.” (Frith, 2007, p. 306).

Those who directly experience an event may have different memories compared to those who learn about it later through films, television, or music. Even if they did not live through that era, their memories are shaped by these media. Music can provide a cognitive framework for the transfer of collectively constructed meanings into individual memory, resulting in a complex blend of remembrance and imagination, where memories intertwine with speculation and myth beyond observation. Media coverage also plays an important role here. Those who directly experience an event

may have different memories compared to those who learn about it later through films, television, or music. Even if they did not live through that era, their memories are shaped by these media. In this context, music plays a crucial role in passing events from one generation to another, sometimes leading to their recollection in a grander, more mythic way than they might have been originally. Bennett (2016) gives the example of Woodstock Festival, he argues that its documentary that was released in 1970 had such an impact that it offered a completely different experience to those who were not physically present at the festival, and in fact, people attributed a much greater significance to this festival than the immediate influence it had at the time. This contributed to Woodstock becoming a defining symbol of the 1960s in terms of counterculture, ideology, and music. Van Dijck (2006) also quotes the experience of a Beatles listener, who feels deeply moved, and feels a “nostalgic longing” when they hear a Beatles song from the 1960s, “Penny Lane”, even if they were born decades later, because of the historical and cultural weight the song and the band carries (p. 363).

Van Dijck (2006) calls this phenomenon “mediated memories”; individuals’ recollections and understandings of political events are not only shaped by firsthand experience but also through different media representations. Jeffrey P. Jones (2010) similarly emphasizes that “Media are our primary points of access to politics” (p. 23). Different media forms, both fictional or nonfictional, such as television, books, radio, film, they do much more than merely provide information about politics, but actively shape our “mental maps”, on how we construct a narrative and interpret political events, even in the lack of direct experience (Jones, 2010, p. 23).

Sometimes, the media's portrayal becomes more influential than the original events themselves. For instance, younger generations who did not directly experience the

Civil Rights Movement era still "remember" it as a significant event. This is due to "memory entrepreneurs", individuals or groups who shape and disseminate narratives through media and texts (Kubal & Becerra, p. 886). These mediated memories create a lasting impression and can allow younger generations to connect with the Civil Rights Movement, even without firsthand experience. As a result, the movement's legacy continues to resonate across diverse generations and ethnic groups (Van Dijck, 2006; Kubal & Becerra, 2014).

Landsberg's prosthetic memory theory (2004) fits into this framework of collective memory and mediated memories. While collective memory is typically passed down through generations and embedded in cultural traditions, prosthetic memory allows individuals to "adopt" memories that do not originate from their personal or collective past. When we think about the concept of collective memory, we do not have to have experienced an event or a historical process individually. The memories conveyed through stories, songs, and films told in the society we belong to also affect us. Because even if we did not live in those times, even if we did not participate in the social movements that are the subject of this study, since we are part of the same society, community or family, what happened in that time also affects us. According to prosthetic memory framework, individuals may also empathize with people from different backgrounds, transcending identity politics. Landsberg (2004) gives the examples of Holocaust and slavery that the African Americans have faced, she argues that the memories of these events do not only belong to the particular groups, to Jews and African Americans in these cases, but to anyone regardless of their background or ethnicity who have consumed the mass cultural products that have produced after these events, such as films and television series. These can create emotional connections between audiences and historical

traumas, even if they have no direct link to those events. Eyerman (2004) mentions the concept of “cultural trauma”, which is passed down from generation to generation through media and representation and can create emotional response similar to an individual memory, even though it is not experienced individually but it is embedded in collective memory. Landsberg (2004) mainly focuses on “mass cultural technologies of reproduction”, which are films, television series and museums, blurring the distinction between real lived memories and culturally mediated experiences. Although she does not specifically mention music as a prosthetic memory medium, music may play a more active role in creating a prosthetic memory than any other form of media. Because songs that belong to a period and were composed during that period are not an example of adaptation. They are the result of direct experiences and emotions felt at that moment. A song about historical trauma, for example, could enable listeners to develop empathetic connections with the past, similar to watching a film about the same event.

Music is one of the most essential tools in this cultural transfer, as it has the ability to evoke communal memory in addition to individual memories. A culture or an age group may experience nostalgia and shared feelings as a result of certain songs or melodies that become cultural touchstones. These songs highlight the relationship between music, memory, and collective consciousness by acting as a time capsule that may take us back to certain times in our lives or historical events. This also applies to protests and social movements. The lyrics, melodies, and rhythms of songs that were used in the movements serve as a reminder of past struggles and social events. Protest songs and anthems keep the collective memory alive by bringing past successes, losses, and historical moments to the present. For example, a song that has become a symbol of a particular movement ensures that, each time it is sung, past

struggles are remembered, and future actions are shaped by this memory. Music has a profound impact on collective memory; through its transmission, even someone who has not lived through a particular event or was not physically present can experience intense emotions when they hear a song associated with that social moment. For instance, someone who did not live during the civil rights movement or who is not even American might feel the emotional resonance of the era when listening to a Pete Seeger song. Similarly, a person born long after the 1968 worker and student movements, which influenced the entire world, can grasp the spirit of that time through the music of artists like Selda Bağcan or Cem Karaca. The collective memory of popular music is a field of social struggle, and inequalities are both reproduced and questioned in this field (Green, 2018). Just as we can learn about the conditions of that period and the events that took place during that time, thanks to these songs, the stories attributed to these songs are also a good guide for us to reflect the past struggles and demands to the present day.

Therefore, a song listened to or sung together during a protest is engraved into the minds of individuals as a personal memory, and it is also recorded into the collective memory, allowing that protest to be transferred from generation to generation through a song, even if individual experiences differ from person to person, because subjective experience and historical experience coexist in a person's memory (Özdemir, 2023, p. 105).

Just as we can remember a memory or a social movement through music, music also has a great impact on the formation of that moment. One of the important elements that brings people together at that moment, motivates them, and reminds them that they are there for a common purpose is music and the act of collective listening and singing. Music does more than simply evoke memories or recall the emotional

essence of a particular moment; it can play a role in creating and shaping the emotional character of those moments from the beginning. Music thus acts as a formative force in shaping the way we experience and remember events emotionally and collectively (DeNora, 2000, p. 67). Songs are inherently tied to the context in which they are heard, they are tied to a specific event, and the context in which they are heard influences their meaning (Green, 2018). Over time, this link between music and the situation can transform from an initially random connection into a deeply meaningful one that is embedded in a person's life. Listening to a song alone through headphones evokes different emotions and interpretations compared to experiencing it within a group setting. As a result, through this communal experience, certain pieces of music can become powerful symbols of complex interactions and emotions from the past (DeNora, 2000, p. 66). Essentially, music gains personal and collective significance through its associations with particular experiences and memories. As much as music is important for the creation of a moment, songs also play a significant role in conveying the intense emotions of that moment to future generations and remembering the movement later. Through reawakening forgotten emotions and sentiments, songs have the power to revive past movements. In this sense, the songs associated with social movements play a significant role in shaping cultural transformations and influencing the historical connections between prevailing, lingering, and emerging cultural forms (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998, p. 161).

Thus, listening to music is not an individual activity; the meaning we give to that song, the memory it reminds us of, and the place where we first heard it are all the results of a social setting. Therefore, how people relate to songs is determined not only by the individual, but also by the collective memory that is embedded to this

song, which travels through time, transferred to different generations, the culture we are all a part of in general (Eyerman, 2004; Van Dijck, 2006; Frith, 1996; Rosenberg, 2013).

Having discussed how music functions as a powerful medium in the expression of ideas, the construction and transmission of collective identity and memory, the aim of this research is to investigate how these theoretical frameworks operate in the Turkish social movements context. The following chapter explores how protest music has been utilized within two key historical moments, the student movements of the 1970s and the 2013 Gezi Park protests.

2.5 The Relationship Between Social Movements and Music in Turkey

While the general role of music in politics and social movements has been discussed in previous sections, this research focuses specifically on the dynamic relationship between music and social movements in Turkey. Protest music has a long history in Turkey, which became a soundtrack for diverse political and social movements. Sometimes they took their roots from Turkish folk music, sometimes they were influenced by Western musical forms and formed the "Anatolian rock" movement, and in later periods, a new genre emerged under the name of "özgün music" (Way, 2015). To understand the emergence of different forms of protest music and their usage by the public across different periods, this chapter takes a closer look at particular moments of Turkish history: The students' movement in the 1970s and the Gezi Park protests in 2013.

2.5.1 1970s

The 1970s in Turkey were a period full of political turmoil, ideological polarization, and social movements. The effects of the 1968 youth movement in Europe continued in different ways in this period. While the winds of freedom blowing around the world also affected Turkey, it was also seen that the state was effectively using its monopoly on violence against the public (Duran, 2021).

However, the impact of the 1968 movements on the left in Turkey was not exactly the same as the social projections in the world. Although the new left in Turkey was synchronized with the 1968 revolutionary movement worldwide, they did not carry the same social/ideological concerns. While movements such as environmentalism and feminism emerged in Europe during this period, these movements did not become a current issue in Turkey until after the September 12 coup (Eren, 2017). In addition, while '68 Generation was a global concept that referred to the youth of that period, the '78 Generation emerged as a term specific to Turkey, describing the youth who were involved in political struggles between the 1970s and 1980. The events associated with the '78 generation correspond to a period that began after the March 12, 1971 memorandum but especially intensified after political figures, who were imprisoned during this memorandum period, were released under amnesty in 1974. This period saw a shift toward armed struggle and continued until the 1980 coup. (Durmaz, 2024).

The 1970s in Turkey were a period marked by sharp right-left conflicts, political instability, changing coalition governments, and economic crises. While inequalities in the education system, political arrests, executions, and oppressive policies increased social unrest, inflation, high cost of living, and unemployment forced

workers and peasants to live under harsh economic conditions. These factors formed the basis of the social movements and protests of the period. The 1970s were a period when mass organization gained significant visibility in Turkey. At the heart of this organizational wave were student movements and youth organizations. Groups such as the Federation of Revolutionary Youth of Turkey (DEV-GENÇ), the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C), the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO), and Revolutionary Path (DEV-YOL) emerged during this period. Many of these organizations were the result of theoretical and practical disagreements that arose within the broader youth movement, leading to the formation of various distinct groups (Durmaz, 2024).

Universities, with their associations, cafeterias, and vibrant campuses, were not only living spaces but also key arenas for the organization of the left in Turkey. For this reason, they often became targets of fascist attacks. One of the most effective tools in resisting these attacks and responding to the need for open dialogue between students and university administrations was the months-long boycotts that took place on campuses. At METU (Middle East Technical University), a boycott that began in April 1975 and lasted six months resulted in the establishment of the Student Representatives Council (ÖTK). This marked a significant step that later spread to other universities, granting students a voice in university governance. However, following the military coup on September 12, 1980, all democratic structures within universities were dismantled (Durmaz, 2024; Tanyeri, 2025).

Political turmoil and state oppression have also led to the emergence of the greatest works of protest music in Turkey. In a global sense, the foundations of the protest music movement that rose in the '70s were laid with the student movements that started in 1968. The position that the US had taken with the Vietnam War mobilized

the youth of the period and led to the various demonstrations protesting the war. Groups and musicians such as The Beatles, John Lennon, The Rolling Stones, and Pink Floyd began to shape the music world with the pro-peace and anti-war rhetoric in their songs. Rock and Roll in particular, which was identified with the protest music at that period, became the voice of the youth trying to articulate their opposition. Anatolian pop, which later became known as Anatolian rock, was one of the genres influenced by this global protest music and rock 'n roll movement. Unconventional sound of rock music, mainly defined as “psychedelic rock”, exemplified by bands like The Beatles, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, and Pink Floyd, influenced pioneering artists and groups such as Moğollar, Dervişan, Cem Karaca, Erkin Koray, Apaşlar, Kardaşlar, Kaygısızlar, and Barış Manço (Eren, 2017). These musicians adapted the revolutionary theme and sound of Western rock music, blended it with local traditions, and created a unique form of protest music that reflected the social and political dynamics of the time. Anti-imperialist rhetoric against the US was prominent in demonstrations organized by university students in Turkey, and this discourse was also reflected in the songs. It is also possible to speak of mutual inspiration; there were mutual exchanges and interactions between Anatolian rock and psychedelic rock. There are many examples in the songs where Artists like Erkin Koray and Selda Bağcan influenced major bands such as The Rolling Stones in a musical sense in that period.

The protest attitude in Turkish music, similar to its international counterparts, drew inspiration from the rebellious themes found in folk music. The earliest examples of protest music in Anatolian culture are rooted in folk traditions. The songs coming from “ozan-aşık” (bard-minstrel) tradition, associated with figures such as Köroğlu, Karacaoğlu, Emrah, Pir Sultan Abdal, and Dadaloğlu share a common

characteristic: they represent a defiance against oppressive forces. These folk songs were frequently reinterpreted by musicians during the early period of Anatolian Pop. This process parallels the reinterpretation of traditional folk songs by figures like Pete Seeger in the West. Traditional melodies were combined with Western instruments, leading to the creation of a new genre, by adaptation of rising trends of psychedelic rock to the Turkish context and Anatolian folk songs.

While music took a protest stance with Anatolian pop, it was also born as a reaction to the arrangement culture that was on the rise, especially in the 1960s. Arranging foreign songs with Turkish lyrics became a pioneering musical genre in the 1960s, and Anatolian pop artists took a stance against this monopolizing music market. However, over time, even those who were called "pop musicians" could not remain silent against the protest music movement. Even artists such as Füsün Önal, Tanju Okan, and Ajda Pekkan made records that focused on national issues for a while, focusing on poverty and successive price hikes; oil, sugar, and gasoline queues, the killing of many young people, and the Cyprus Peace Operation (Meriç, 2021).

As an alternative to the arrangement music trend, efforts to rearrange traditional Anatolian folk songs with Western instruments while preserving their original forms and melodies brought figures like Tülay German to prominence. German's arrangement of the folk song "Burçak Tarlası" and her composition "Yarının Şarkısı" were significant; the latter was even used by the Turkish Workers' Party (TİP) in the 1965 elections, marking the first instance of a political party using a campaign song in Turkish political history (Kızılkaya, 2021).

Cem Karaca can be cited as one of the pioneers of the politicization of music that began in the late 1960s, especially with "Dadaloğlu," which came out in 1970.

Especially in the second part of the 1970s, the union struggle became widespread and strengthened; Cem Karaca's popular works, such as "Tamirci ıraęı" and "Yoksulluk Kader Olamaz", and the Workers' March he composed for the Workers' and Laborers' Day which was celebrated for the first time since 1926 on May 1, 1977, caused the banning of his records as they were alleged to be promoting communist propaganda. Apart from these, most of the records composed in this period focused on the rights of the workers, "Maden İřçileri" by Selda Baęcan, "Fabrika Kızı" and "Güven Parkı" by Alpay, "Makine Yiyor Beni" by Melike Demiraę can be prominent examples for this theme (Meri, 2016). Timur Seluk also released an album in 1977 that is considered one of the symbols of political music, and he specifically requested that this record be reproduced and distributed. "Hürriyet Marşı", "Türkiye İřçi Sınıfına Selam", "1 Mayıs" were marches composed by him that were sung by the masses in the areas (Meri, 2021; Duran, 2021).

As well as the "ozan-ařık" tradition, protest music was nourished by the poems of contemporary poets, especially Nazım Hikmet, whose works were banned at the time, were made available to the public through pirated records. Nazım Hikmet's poems, which could not be published legally until the 1990s, were pirated onto records with his own voice, and his poems were also composed by names such as Ruhi Su and Zülfü Livaneli. Kerem Güney, who came to prominence essentially with his arabesque songs in the 1960s, also became politicized in the 1970s and composed poems by poets such as Nazım Hikmet and Sabahattin Ali. One of the most popular works of protest music, "Aldırma Gönöl", was composed by him and later covered by many artists. The most well-known version belongs to Edip Akbayram, who started his career by singing Ařık Veysel and Mahsuni řerif songs and became one of the most important symbols of protest music (Meri, 2021).

Along with names such as Zülfü Livaneli, Rahmi Saltuk, and Sadık Gürbüz, Selda Bağcan became the leading female name of the political pop of the 1970s. She also entered the music scene by singing the folk songs of names like Mahsuni Şerif and expressed the problems of the working and peasant classes.

In the 1970s, many songs with political content were composed in Turkey. These included both Anatolian Rock songs and more mainstream-style tracks by popular artists like Edip Akbayram and Zülfü Livaneli, which also carried political messages. However, these were not the songs typically sung during protests or political demonstrations. Instead, march-style songs were preferred, especially for their mobilizing power. These were often adapted from military marches, with altered lyrics. The main goal was to have simple, memorable melodies that everyone could sing together in unison.

Alongside these marches, in student gatherings and forums, lament-like songs (ağıtlar) were also popular. These were usually performed with a single instrument, typically the saz, as there was a general reluctance toward using other instruments due to concerns over Western influence. For instance, Zülfü Livaneli initially received criticism from the left for incorporating orchestral arrangements into his music.

Similarly, Timur Selçuk is a prime example for performing revolutionary songs with the piano and causing an initial confusion. Murat Meriç (2025) narrates that before Timur Selçuk performed in METU, the university's student association and related groups held a large forum to debate one single question: Is the piano a revolutionary instrument? They wanted to invite Timur Selçuk, but he did not play the saz; he played the piano. Since the piano was seen as a bourgeois instrument, the idea of

someone performing revolutionary songs with it seemed almost absurd. The students were listening to Pink Floyd, The Beatles, and were admiring other political Western bands at the time, but those were accepted because they belonged to the West. It was difficult to adapt these instruments into the local revolutionary context. The forum eventually concluded: "Yes, the piano is a bourgeois instrument and not suitable for revolutionary expression; however, if a revolutionary situation arises and the piano becomes necessary, it can be used". And with that, Timur Selçuk was granted permission to perform. This memoir recalls the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, when Bob Dylan took the stage with an electric guitar and his new blues band instead of the familiar acoustic guitar that folk singers were known for. He was booed and met with a strong backlash from the audience (Garofalo, 1992; Kutluk, 2020). His choice to play electric guitar instead of an acoustic guitar was considered as a betrayal of folk music, which was deeply associated with the protest spirit of the time, and, by extension, protest music. This situation stems from the belief that "protest music cannot be a part of popular culture." The idea that "protest music can only be performed in a certain way" has been a topic with strict boundaries, both in Turkey and internationally, largely due to the spirit of the time.

It wasn't until the 1980s, especially with the rise of Grup Yorum, that these rigid views began to loosen, and the idea of revolutionary music expanded significantly. But in the 1970s, there was still a very fixed mindset: Everything must be done with the saz. The saz was the revolutionary instrument. Even the guitar was unacceptable.

Interestingly, Jethro Tull had a major influence on this shift. Jethro Tull was very popular among leftist groups at that time in Turkey as they were considered as oppositional and part of the counterculture. Once people heard and liked the flute in Jethro Tull's music, Turkish protest bands began to use it as well. So, alongside the

saz, the flute also began to be used in the early protest songs in Turkey. For them, the flute became a “revolutionary instrument” of the West, and therefore, it was considered acceptable (Meriç, 2025).

In the midst of all the political turmoil of the 1970s, in an environment of conflict where dozens of people were killed every day, music was an element that motivated people, reminded them that they were fighting for a cause, and allowed them to look to the future with hope despite everything. In the 1980s, with the September 12 coup, a period began in which political activities were seriously restricted, banned, and the left was tried to be depoliticized. The junta administration began to regulate the music industry as early as the morning of September 12, 1980, and the forced exile of figures such as Cem Karaca and the banning of various albums, as well as the prosecution and denaturalization of figures such as Melike Demirağ and Selda Bağcan, were on the agenda (Meriç, 2016). In this period when rock music in Turkey lost its former political power, arabesque music, which expressed more personal troubles than social problems and adopted a fatalistic approach, was on the rise and was supported by the state.

Despite the government's efforts to dissolve the activist structure of the ‘70s and create an apolitical youth, there were still musicians who tried to keep the revolutionary spirit alive, and despite all the bans, music was still used as a weapon in order to transfer the social opposition of the ‘70s and the struggle of the youth to the 1980s and to keep the collective memory alive (Duran, 2021).

2.5.2 The 1980s and Beyond

In the 1980s, music in Turkey was constructed around collectives and communities. This decade saw the rise of *özgün müzik* (original music) with bands such as Yeni Türkü, Çağdaş Türkü, Kızılırmak, and Bulutsuzluk Özlemi. These bands combined traditional folk elements with contemporary sounds and socially conscious lyrics, which shaped the music landscape of the era (Way, 2015).

University-based groups also played a pivotal role in defining 1980s music culture. Ezginin Günlüğü was formed by students from Istanbul University and Boğaziçi University, blending poetic lyrics with folk influences. Another significant band, Mozaik, also emerged from Boğaziçi University. They also performed songs of the international protest musicians like Pete Seeger and Inti-Illimani, and used their music to express resistance and social commentary (Meriç, 2021).

During a period when efforts were made to erase collective memory following the 1980 military coup, these bands stood in defiance, preserving cultural and social consciousness through their music. Grup Yorum is another important example of this resistance. Also established within a university setting, Grup Yorum gained recognition by performing concerts that voiced the concerns of the oppressed and highlighted social injustices (Meriç, 2021; Meriç, 2016; Eren, 2017).

Following the 1980s, especially in the 1990s and aftermaths, it is possible to say that every political movement had their own music group, expressing their ideas and performing in their rallies, like Grup Baran, Grup Munzur, Kızılırmak and Kutup Yıldızı. These left/socialist groups became particularly involved with the Kurdish movement in the nineties and also began to touch on issues such as environmental

issues in their songs. They were closely tied to leftist student movements, often performing at campus events and street protests.

In the 2000s, Bandista stood out in the political music scene by blending ska, reggae, punk, and Anatolian sounds, adopting a playful yet politically sharp tone in their songs. Kardeş Türküler, also a band with academic roots, formed by Boğaziçi University students, embraced a music with multicultural roots. Other bands like Bajar also combined Turkish and Kurdish in their political lyrics. Though more mainstream, bands like Mor ve Ötesi and Duman also incorporated political critique in their songs and became bands that shaped rock music in Turkey during 2000s.

Thus, especially after the 1990s, the music used in political protests began to take on a more joyful and accessible tone, becoming a more integrated part of everyday life. The marches and revolutionary anthems that were prominent in the 1970s gradually gave way to popular music. Pop songs, which were often approached with skepticism during the 1970s, became central to political movements in the post-90s period, thanks to the emergence of these new music groups. This shift contributed to the development of a “festive opposition” theme that characterizes many new-generation social movements, breaking away from the usual “strict” tone within protest environments.

2.5.3 New Social Movements and the Path to Gezi

The 1990s marked a significant transformation in the nature of social movements, both globally and in Turkey, with the emergence of more participatory, performative, and culturally expressive forms of protest (St John, 2008; Tunali, 2023). The forms of action that Bakhtin (1984) described as “carnavalesque” evolved in the 1990s into

what came to be known as “protestivals,” giving rise to a new type of resistance (St John, 2008). The anti-globalization movements across the world, landmark events such as Carnival Against Capital in 1999, Seattle WTO Protests in 1999, and Genoa G8 in 2001 incorporated carnivalesque tactics, street theater, dancing, music, and humor as tools of disruption and solidarity (St John, 2008; Hammond, 2020; Tunali, 2023). The strategies and aesthetics developed in these protestivals significantly influenced later movements, such as the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013.

Indeed, the use of social media is one of the main components that contributed to the transformation of social movements. The strictly organized and hierarchical structure of old social movements has been replaced by more flexible, spontaneous, and participatory movements, because people started to be organized more easily and quickly through social media platforms (Işık, 2013). The common phrase “The revolution will be tweeted” became a slogan for the global movements following the uprisings of the Arab Spring (Kidd & McIntosh, 2016). In his prominent work, “Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age”, Castells (2012) connects a series of social movements, including Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution, Egypt’s Tahrir Square Protests, Spanish Indignados Movement, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement, and later the Gezi Park protests, for inspiring each other due to the shared characteristics of their decentralized nature and being mainly organized spontaneously through social media. As in Tunisia and Egypt, many of the Arab uprisings began with online organizing and calls to take action, then continued to took shape in urban space (Castells, 2012). Similarly, “Occupy Wall Street was born digital”, Castells argues (2012, p. 174). With the hashtag “#occuppywallstreet” was spread among various blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, people started to be organized. (Castells, 2012). Likewise, The notion of "occupied space," where

protestors meet and organize, was also present in Gezi Park, popularized through the “#occupygezi” hashtags on Twitter, spreading globally and resulting in the formation of international Facebook groups such as “Occupy Gezi New York”, “Occupy Gezi Deutschland”, and “Occupy Gezi Milano” (Kidd & McIntosh, 2016; Baban & Güzel, 2015). At the core of all these new social movements is the online environment where people come together to challenge institutional authority by occupying public spaces in cities, bypassing the mainstream media that ignored the protests (Castells, 2012). Since the mainstream media did not cover the protests, people witnessed events like police violence online, communicated through tweets on social media, and organized quickly, both in the cases of the Arab Spring and the Gezi Park protests.

2.5.4 The Gezi Park Protests

After the workers' and students' movements of the 1970s, which were suppressed throughout the 80s with the September 12 coup, when we fast forward to the 2000s, there was no social movement large enough to affect the whole country for a long time, until May 28, 2013. The plan to cut down the trees in Gezi Park in Taksim Square and build a 19th-century Ottoman artillery barracks, a shopping mall, and a mosque in their place under the name of "urban development plan" led to protests that lasted for about twenty days in various cities of the country. The environmental movement, which began as a reaction to the cutting down of trees, soon turned into a countrywide uprising against the oppressive policies of the AKP government and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Even after 12 years, we still remember the artistic works that emerged during that time, and through these creations, we can still feel the hope shared by people from different backgrounds, political identities, and even rival sports teams who came together during that period. With the resistance spilling over into various forms of artistic expression, such as theater, literature, painting, and especially music, the Gezi Park protests have become one of the best examples of how a politically fueled social movement can give rise to cultural products.

Despite the repression faced by activists, the Gezi protests demonstrated the capacity of music to contribute to cultural change, even when political change seemed unattainable. As Melucci (1995) highlights, the aim of social movements is not only to achieve political goals but also to bring about cultural transformation, and it is done through a set of rituals, practices, and artifacts. In the case of Gezi, music played a central role in shaping a new cultural sensibility, providing a voice to marginalized groups and creating a collective identity that was both diverse and united in its antagonism to the ruling regime (Bianchi, 2018).

Just in the first month of the protests, about 30 new songs were specifically composed for Gezi by famous groups in Turkey (Bianchi, 2018). Most essential examples can be cited as “Eyvallah” by Duman (2013), “Tencere Tava Havası” by Kardeş Türküler (2013). International artists also supported the protests and used their music as a tool for showing global support. From the very early days of the Gezi protests, artists known for their activist personas, such as Roger Waters and Joan Baez, expressed their support for the demonstrators through social media. Joan Baez shared a video message in which she spoke in Turkish and performed “Imagine” by John Lennon, offering a gesture of solidarity. Roger Waters, in addition

to posting a message on Twitter, dedicated his songs to the victims who were killed during the protests in his İstanbul concert in August 2013. Similarly, during their 2013 concert at İnönü Stadium, Iron Maiden performed their iconic song “Fear of the Dark” with the lyrics changed to “Fear of the Park” as a clear reference to the Gezi Park protests. A Canadian artist, Michelle Gurevich, released a song called “Kiss in the Taksim Square” in the same year, 2013.

In addition to officially released songs and support coming from well-known artists, user-generated content also played a huge part in the music of Gezi; many people shared their own songs and videos through social media platforms. These also included original compositions and covers of popular songs and traditional folk songs by re-adapting the lyrics. Some of the most memorable covers from the protests included the reinterpretation of the folk song “Entarisi Ala Benziyor” by Boğaziçi Jazz Choir under the title “Çapulcu Musun Vay Vay” and Erdi Uçar’s adaptation of John Lennon’s “Imagine” as “Chapulling in Peace”. These covers both demonstrated the creativity of the movement, and the diverse range of musical styles that were used during the protests. Different genres such as folk tones, global protest songs, and traditional came together and created a voice of solidarity. These songs, created both by professional and amateur musicians, contributed to the atmosphere of the protests and were often shared and performed during street gatherings.

Besides physical action on the streets, posts on social media have also become an active means of resistance. Not only the posts shared on social media, tweets, hashtags, but also sharing songs on social media in addition to music played on the street became a form of political communication. 148 songs consisting of both newly composed ones for the Gezi protests and old protest songs were put in a playlist called “Çapulcu Şarkılar” and became an online directory that we can still access

today and reminisce about the spirit of those days (Bianchi, 2018). Also, user-created content, such as YouTube videos that remixed the footage from the protests with songs, served as a response to the mainstream media that did not cover the protests (Jenzen et al, 2019). Individuals who were not physically present at the protests also demonstrated their support by sharing protest songs on social media, and in this way, music still served as an important medium to connect with the movement, whether it was virtual or performed on the streets.

The Gezici Müzisyenler (Nomadic Musicians) played an important role in the movement, they did not only perform to entertain and boost morale to the public but they also worked to raise funds for those injured during the protests. Their performances were often held in intimate and small settings within the park without a stage, and this allowed for a direct connection between musicians and the protestors. This spatial organization, where musicians performed without formal stages, was a deliberate attempt to democratize the space and blur the boundaries between artist and audience (Bianchi, 2018).

“Sound” in general was a vital part of Gezi; organized music, chants, dancing in the streets, and even spontaneous sounds such as the banging of pots and pans formed a unique soundscape that reflected the collective energy of the protests. These sounds, along with repeated rhythmic beats from barricades, formed an essential aspect of the protest's atmosphere, as noted by Üzümkesci (2018), who highlights how street musicians and amateurs contributed to the spontaneous creation of protest music. This was not merely music but a broader sonic experience that helped mobilize protestors.

Perhaps one of the biggest factors in Gezi's emergence as a peaceful movement idea was the existence of this music and performance as a form of resistance. People tried to make their voices heard by keeping a rhythm and making noise, and they tried to make the atmosphere joyful by putting on a performance against an environment of oppression, creating a “carnavalesque” event, which can be linked to Bakhtin’s theory (1984). Gezi is a great example of a carnivalesque demonstration, where people expressed themselves through performativity, humor, irony, and theatricality (Yeğenoğlu, 2013). With its satirical defiance of authority and the use of humor to convey messages through popular culture imagery, this playful style resonated in all slogans and songs. The music produced in the Gezi Park, much like the graffiti, slogans, social media posts, especially Tweets, all carried a playful tone. The act of turning oneself into a creator of humor and maintaining an attitude of indifference toward authority was also reflected in the music (Semercioğlu, 2014). Songs like “Tencere Tava Havası”, “Çapulcu Senfonisi”, “Çapulcu Türküsü”, “Dağılın Lan” were examples of joyful and humorous songs composed for the protests (*Çapulcu Şarkılar*, 2013).

The humorous aspect of Gezi was one of the important factors that distinguished the songs used there from the music used in the protests of the 1970s, reflecting the nature of “protestivals” that emerged with the new social movements of the 1990s (St John, 2008). In contrast to the protest songs created during the Gezi Park movement, revolutionary anthems from the 1960s to the 1980s rarely incorporated humor. Because, those earlier songs reflected the political climate and practices of their time; thus, they conveyed a sense of solemnity and seriousness (Semercioğlu, 2014). The shift in the political environment, protest spaces, and methods naturally influenced the music produced in both eras. In contrast to the seriousness and formality of

earlier revolutionary anthems, Gezi's protest music embraced humor and playfulness; it also reflected the place, the park, where people created a peaceful environment for themselves against the violence. This carnivalesque tone distinguished Gezi's musical output from the more serious, rigid anthems of past movements. However, the spirit of resistance and the demand for freedom are, of course, timeless, resulting in the creation of immortal songs that were also used in the Gezi protests, approximately 40 years later. We can observe the use of some traditional elements from earlier protest practices. For instance, "Ciao Bella," an iconic international revolutionary song, an integral part of every protest and rally from the 1970s to the present day, was also frequently sung during the Gezi protests. Similarly, Gündoğdu, an anthem that has been identified with the left wing in Turkey for years, and also used by the military army, was also often chanted, demonstrating the preservation of connection to the past traditions.

The participatory nature of the musical performances during the protests also fostered a sense of unity and belonging. Bennett (2001) and Turino (2008) emphasize, participatory performances create social synchrony, where individuals become acutely aware of their connection to others through rhythm and movement. "Halay" was an important example of bodily movement and synchronicity during the Gezi movements, where people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds came together to perform a collective action. The rhythmic sounds of drums, pots, and pans created a shared experience that transcended individual differences, fostering a collective antagonist identity as described by Fominaya (2010).

The Gezi protests also highlighted the emergence of new political identities and the importance of inclusivity within social movements. Bianchi (2018) points out that

Taksim Square, the epicenter of the protests, became a space for unprecedented dialogue among different groups. For instance, LGBT groups engaged in conversations with football supporters, Kurds danced hand in hand with nationalists, and secular individuals shared Iftar dinners with a group called “Anticapitalist Muslims” (Bianchi, 2018). A collective identity was formed, The term “*çapulcular*” (looters), initially used as a degrading label to insult the protesters, was humorously reclaimed and transformed into a “collective antagonist identity” that transcended all political and ethnic affiliations (p. 215). It became a unifying and playful label that people proudly embraced. Because this newly formed collective identity was fighting against a “common enemy,” the main argument here is that music and the collective performance and synchronization therein make a great contribution to the elimination of these differences. Because, as Bianchi (2018) suggests, the aim was “not to set boundaries within the movement, but between the movement and government”, so all protest tactics, including song repertoire with its diversity, reflected this objective (p. 228).

People from diverse ethnic backgrounds and ideological views came together, singing songs in Turkish, Kurdish, Laz, English, and various other languages. This shared musical experience symbolized a powerful sense of unity and solidarity, breaking down cultural and linguistic barriers, again emphasizing the importance of sound and performance in a song to be called a “protest”, rather than its lyrics. This form of grassroots music activism was framed as an expression of political solidarity and joy, and capturing the free and joyful spirit of the protest. (Bianchi, 2018)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design, using in-depth interviews to explore the role of music in protests and its impact on collective memory formation among individuals who experienced their youth in Turkey during the 1970s, commonly referred to as the “78 Generation,” and those who participated in the 2013 Gezi Park protests. The primary objective is to understand how music functioned as a tool for articulating ideas and fostering solidarity in social movements and how it shaped collective memory within the socio-political movements of these decades.

3.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from Bilkent University’s Ethics Committee prior to conducting the interviews. Participants were informed about the study’s purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was ensured, and pseudonyms were used in the transcripts and final report to protect their identities. Participants' names were not used. Instead, they were coded as M1, M2 (M stands for male) and F1, F2 (F stands for female) in the Findings and Discussion chapter.

Informed consent was obtained before recording the interviews, ensuring compliance with research ethics guidelines.

3.2 Research Design

This research is based on qualitative data collection, as its aim is to explore personal experiences, practices, and internal feelings of the people (Flick, 2018; Naderifar et al., 2017). Their interactions with different documents are also observed, which are musical pieces in this case (Flick, 2018). In order to do so, in-depth semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary data collection method. The audience's perspective, their meaning-making, and emotional states were important in the data collection process, so qualitative interviews were used as the main research methodology in this study (Roulston & Choi, 2018).

These interviews were designed as semi-structured to give space and flexibility to participants to share their personal stories and experiences that may not be covered in rigid interview questions. Their stories, inquiries about the past, were important for the research to obtain data that would not be obtained from other sources (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017), because the focus of this research is meaning-making, memory, and personal experience. With the follow-up questions, participants were able to provide more detailed insights that they may not have considered initially (Gill et al., 2008) or clarify their responses.

3.3 Sampling and Recruitment

In the recruitment process of the participants, both purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed to identify the people who had actively taken part in political protests. Snowball sampling, in which new participants are accessed through contact information provided by other participants, is frequently used in qualitative research as a particularly useful technique for gaining access to and knowledge about

"hidden populations" (Noy, 2008). The "hidden population" in this study consisted of individuals who had engaged in political activities and had been detained or prosecuted due to their participation in protests. Since these individuals often preferred not to openly share this information on social media or similar platforms, the most suitable way to reach them was through acquaintances, using the snowball sampling method.

Initially, participants who were known to have spent their student years at Middle East Technical University (METU) during the 1970s were purposefully selected, as they were likely to have engaged in political movements of the time. Following the initial interviews, a snowball sampling strategy was adopted, and new participants from different educational backgrounds were contacted through recommendations from those already interviewed. This allowed access to a broader range of individuals who had been involved in various protest movements and student groups from different universities in the 1970s.

For the Gezi Park protests, a similar approach was followed. Individuals known to have participated in the 2013 protests were contacted first, and then additional participants were recruited through their personal networks and suggestions. As a result, 30 participants were interviewed in total, 13 of them participated in the protests during the 1970s, and 17 of them participated in the Gezi Park demonstrations in 2013.

3.3.1 Sample Characteristics

This research was conducted with the participation of 30 interviewees, 21 of whom were male and 9 female. Although the gender distribution of the participants is not

balanced, this is due to the difficulty of reaching women who actively participated in political movements in Turkey during the 1970s. Although it was possible to reach more female participants specifically for the Gezi Park protests, due to the comparative nature of the study, an attempt was made to keep the sample as balanced as possible in order to conduct interviews under similar structural conditions in both periods. However, due to the nature of the interview questions, themes such as the participants' relationship with music, protest experiences, and perceptions of collective memory focus on individual and experiential aspects rather than gender-based differences. Nonetheless, this situation was noted as a limitation for more representative future studies.

All participants in the study were at least university graduates, having completed their higher education in either Ankara or Istanbul. The sample includes individuals from two key periods in Turkey: those who experienced their youth and university years during the 1970s, and those who participated in the Gezi Park protests in 2013. Notably, several participants who took part in Gezi had also been politically active during their student years in the 1990s; thus, their insights and experiences from these periods were also taken into consideration while analyzing the findings from the interviews. The age range of participants who were active in the 1970s protests was between 60 and 80, while those involved in the Gezi protests were between 30 and 60 years old.

All participants had similar political views, sharing a leftist and oppositional political orientation. This homogeneity was a deliberate outcome of the research focus, which centers on protest movements in Turkey that were predominantly organized and led by left-wing and oppositional groups. Both the 1970s student movements and the 2013 Gezi Park protests were largely associated with the leftist political spectrum,

and thus, participants were selected accordingly to ensure relevance to the research questions.

In addition to the social movement participants, the sample also included expert interviews with figures who have contributed to these social movements through their artistic or intellectual production, such as academics, musicians, poets, and filmmakers. These individuals not only reflected on their personal experiences but also offered a broader cultural and historical perspective on the role of music and art in protest movements.

Table 1: Age, Degree, and Occupation of Male Participants

	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Male	68	METU Civil Engineering	Contractor
2	Male	69	METU Metallurgical and Materials Engineering	Retired engineer
3	Male	69	Ankara University The Faculty of Communication	Director
4	Male	67	METU Electrical and Electronics Engineering/MSc	Engineer
5	Male	61	Gazi University Faculty of Law	Retired judge
6	Male	35	Ankara University Journalism	CHP Municipality council member
7	Male	71	Yükseliş School of Engineering and Architecture	Retired engineer
8	Male	46	Ankara University Anthropology/Ankara University Adult Education MSc	Book editor
9	Male	46	Hacettepe University English Linguistics/Ankara University Adult Education MSc	UNICEF Türkiye Education Officer
10	Male	50	Universita degli Studi di Milano	Director/Musician
11	Male	53	Ankara University Chemical Engineering	Music author/DJ
12	Male	54	Istanbul University Economics/Marmara University MA	Musician
13	Male	78	Gazi Institute for Education	Poet
14	Male	33	Anadolu University Business Administration	CHP District Chairman
15	Male	33	Marmara University Economics	CHP Party Assembly Member
16	Male	62	METU Civil Engineering	Retired engineer
17	Male	64	Ankara State Conservatory Voice/Opera MA	Musician

18	Male	63	Ankara University Public Administration	Poet
19	Male	29	İstanbul Bilgi University Music/Conservatorium van Amsterdam Composing for Film MA	Content creator/Musician
20	Male	49	İstanbul University Philosophy	Advertiser
21	Male	80	Ankara University Faculty of Law	Musician

Table 2: Age, Degree and Occupation of Female Participants

	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Female	53	METU Economics/MSc/Ankara University Journalism PhD	Consultant
2	Female	70	Ankara University Radio, TV, and Film	Retired
3	Female	45	Ankara University Anthropology	Chamber of Electrical Engineers Press and Publication Officer
4	Female	43	Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Musicology/MA/İTÜ Music PhD	Academician/Musician
5	Female	35	ITU Mechanical Engineering	Engineer
6	Female	54	Gazi University Fine Arts Education	Art teacher
7	Female	56	Ankara University History	History teacher
8	Female	58	METU Business Administration	Retired banker
9	Female	82	METU Civil Engineering	Academician

3.4 Data Collection

This study's focus is on individual experiences and memory, so semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the main data collection tool. The interviews incorporated both directive and nondirective questions. Directive questions helped focus the discussion on specific periods, contexts, and questions and ensured relevance to the research objectives. Nondirective questions were also used to encourage participants to recall and share their memories without restriction, to prevent them from answering what they think the interviewer wants to hear, but give them freedom to express what they really feel (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017), fostering spontaneous storytelling and emotional expression.

The interviews consisted of five sections:

1. Personal Background: Education, occupation, and demographic information.
2. Political Background and Views: Exploring participants' engagement with political movements, identifying the specific movements they were involved in.
3. Music Preferences and Consumption: Understanding their relationship with music in their daily lives.
4. The Relation Between Music and Participation in Protests: Understanding the music's role in their political affiliations and the protests they have participated in.
5. Music and Collective Memory: Identifying key protest songs and their significance for the participants, reflecting on their memories.
6. Song Recall Activity: Participants listened to a song they had previously mentioned and described any emotions or memories it evoked.

Table 3: Interview Questions

Question Number	Questions
	Background Information
1	What is your age, educational background, and current occupation?
2	In which city or cities did you live in during your youth?
	Political Background and Views
3	How would you define your political views or ideologies? Which political party/parties do you support?
4	Have your political beliefs changed or evolved over time? If so, how?

5	Were you a member of any political groups or organizations?
6	How would you describe the political atmosphere in Turkey during the period that you participated in the protests? What were the main challenges?
7	Did you participate in protests during your youth/student years? If so, what were these protests about?
8	What did '78/Gezi mean to you, and why was it important? What did it symbolize?
9	What roles did you take on in these protests (participant, organizer, supporter, etc.)?
10	What motivated you to become involved in protests or social movements?
11	Are there similarities or differences between the current political situation in Turkey compared to the period that you have participated in protests?
12	Do you still engage in political or social activism today?
	Music Preferences and Consumption
13	What are your current musical preferences? What genres or artists do you enjoy listening to today?
14	How have your musical tastes evolved over the years?
15	Is music an important part of your daily life?
16	Do you see it more as entertainment, a source of comfort, or a tool for social connection?
17	Can you describe your music preferences during your youth?
18	Were your musical choices influenced by the social or political environment at the time?
19	How do you usually consume music today? What platforms or methods do you use (e.g., streaming services, radio, vinyl, CDs)?

20	Do you attend live concerts or music festivals?
21	How did you listen to music in the past? What were the primary ways you accessed music during your youth?
22	Did you share or exchange music with friends or within activist groups?
	The Relationship Between Music and Participation in Protests
23	What role did you believe music played in the political landscape of that time?
24	Did music influence or reinforce your political beliefs?
25	Were there any songs or musicians that you associated with particular political ideologies or movements?
26	How did your political views affect your musical preferences?
27	Were there any artists or genres that you avoided due to their political associations?
28	Were there particular songs or artists that shaped your political views or inspired you?
29	How would you describe the role of music in the protests you participated in?
30	What types of music or specific songs were popular during those protests?
31	Were there any particular songs or artists that symbolized the movement? What messages or themes did these songs convey?
32	How were songs typically used during protests? Were they sung collectively, played over loudspeakers?
33	Can you recall any specific moments when a song had a powerful impact on the crowd?

34	How do you view the relationship between music and politics today?
	Music and Collective Memory
35	Do any songs from that period evoke strong memories or emotions for you? What do you feel or think about when you hear them today?
36	How did music help in articulating the ideas or values of the movement?
37	How do you think the meaning of these songs has changed over time?
38	Do you think younger generations associate the same meanings with these songs?
	Song Recall Activity
39	Does this song bring back any specific memories or feelings?
40	Do you remember the first time you heard this song?
41	Can you describe the significance of this song during the protests you experienced?
42	What does this song mean to you now, compared to when you first heard it?
43	How did music help bridge differences (political, social, or cultural) among protestors?

Since the interviews were semi-structured, the order of some questions was changed, some were omitted or added depending on the participants' responses, and certain questions were modified according to their answers or the participants' profiles.

Interviews were conducted during the period of December 2024 and April 2025, either face-to-face or via Zoom, depending on the participants' preferences and

availability. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent for accuracy and transcription purposes.

3.4.1 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through the thematic analysis method. Firstly, all of the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, then all the transcriptions were read in detail, and codes and themes were determined inductively, according to the recurring themes in the participants' answers. Similar expression patterns and common themes were identified among the data; these themes were structured by considering the conceptual framework in the literature.

The transcripts were read repeatedly, taking into account these codes and themes; each participant's statements related to a particular theme were grouped as direct quotes from the interview transcripts. The coding process was carried out manually, without using any analysis software; quotes were systematically recorded in an Excel file under themes.

Quotes were selected in accordance with the thematic structure and classified in a way that supported the relationship established with the literature. In the analysis and discussion stage, a narrative was created in light of these themes, and the place of music in the protest experience, and its effect on memory and emotions were discussed, using direct quotes from the interviews.

In the analysis process, not only what the participants said but also how they said it was taken into consideration. In particular, their reactions during the song recall activity section, changes in their emotional expressions, such as their tone of voice and physical gestures, were included in the analysis process.

3.4.2 Codes and Themes

The data that emerged during the analysis process were systematically coded into a total of 10 themes and organized according to themes in an Excel table. Before the themes and related quotes by the participants were identified, background information of the participants, such as university attended, graduation year, current occupation, political group they are affiliated with/political views were also classified accordingly.

To analyze the interview data, all transcriptions were read in depth to gain familiarity with the narratives and to identify recurring patterns. After re-reading the interview transcriptions, initial observations, key words, and emergent concepts were noted. As common themes began to emerge across participant answers, similar themes were grouped together and were transformed into broader categories.

With the emotional and discursive dimensions that emerged through participant narratives, following themes were emerged: Nostalgia, Positive Sentiment, Negative Sentiment, Critical Sentiment, Musical Influence, Music and Movements, Music and Emotions, Music and Memory, Music and Political Views, and Music and Collective Identity. “Nostalgia, Positive, Negative, and Critical Sentiment” themes were determined to reflect how participants described their emotions according to their past protest experiences, and which words they used to describe their sentiments, such as “joy, excitement, sadness, trauma, or skepticism”. “Musical Influence” recorded specific artists or genres mentioned by participants, which they listen to most frequently. “Music and Movements” explored the specific songs that were used in particular protests that they participated in. “Music and Emotions” and “Music and Collective Memory” themes explored the emotional responses and the memories

attached to certain songs they listened to during the protests they participated in. The aim was to identify if songs were associated with vivid recollections of past protests, which causes the reliving the past experiences and resurfacing the emotions that were not identified before (DeNora, 1999). “Music and Political Views” and “Music and Collective Identity” themes focused on participants’ discussions on the relationship between their political affiliations and musical choices, whether their musical taste played a part in the construction of their social identity (Tajfel, 1974) and whether songs used in protests fostered a sense of unity, created a sense of emotional atmosphere by reducing the differences of individual identities of the participants and really played a part in the interactive process of building a collective identity through participatory nature of music and the interaction among participants (Melucci, 1995; Turino, 2008).

These themes were selected according to the topics that were investigated in the literature review, and under each theme, thematic analysis was conducted using quotes directly from participant statements, and comparative interpretations were made. This approach served in conducting a structured yet flexible analysis that remained closely tied to participants’ own language and lived experiences.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings from interviews conducted with individuals who participated in student movements in the 1970s in Ankara and the Gezi Park protests both in Ankara and İstanbul in 2013, focusing on the role of music in shaping and expressing political consciousness within these movements.

4.1 Political Background and Views

In the first part, participants were asked about their educational background, political background and views, their affiliation with any political organization or group, their participation in social and political movements/protests, and their motivation behind their participation in these movements.

All participants are university graduates, and they all hold left-wing views; they all defined their political stance as “social democrat” or “socialist”. None of them said that their political views changed over time; only a few mentioned that as time passed and they got older, the "sharp" views they had during their student years became somewhat more moderated:

“When I was younger, I could view life from a more left-wing, more radical perspective, but now I am more of a social democrat, someone trying to take a slower, broader view.” (M6)

“Of course, when you first encounter revolutionary ideas during your student years, you tend to be more rigid. But over time, as you develop your own experiences and understanding of life, some of those edges can be softened.” (F3)

11 participants stated that they were involved in organized politics as a member of a political group during their student years, and 3 of them are currently working in a political party. M10, M11, M12, M13, M17, M18, and F4 consist of people who directly contributed to the protests with their artistic creations. The remaining participants stated that they were not directly involved in any political organization, but still participated in the protests as individuals.

M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M7, M13, M17, M18, M21, F2, F8, F9 participated in the protests during the 1970s and M6, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M14, M15, M16, M19, M20, F1, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7 have participated in the Gezi Park protests. Some of the participants who participated in the Gezi Park movement also mentioned the protests they participated in the 1990s in their answers, so they were also included in the findings and analysis section.

When asked what the topics of these protests they attended were, the main topic in the 1970s was political opposition and ideological conflict, particularly the right-left clashes. Protest topics consisted mainly of anti-fascism, against MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) affiliated groups, against university administrations for academic freedom, and boycotts, particularly in Middle East Technical University, were organized. They also participated in marches and demonstrations organized on 1 May

and commemorations such as those related to the deaths of their friends who lost their lives in the conflicts and prominent figures such as Deniz Gezmiş.

In the period from the 1990s to the Gezi Park protests, rather than ideological conflicts, the main issues of protest revolved around social and human rights issues such as price increases and issues related to the minimum wage, women's rights, and murders, feminist and LGBTQ+ rights protests, such as March 8th demonstrations.

The Gezi Park protests in 2013 stand out as a significant event where people from many diverse political, ideological, and ethnic backgrounds came together with similar motivations. Initial protests that started against the destruction of the park, the cutting down of trees, and the massacre of nature later turned into a general demand for freedom, as described by the interviewees. Many interviewees described the mobilization for Gezi as largely spontaneous; many who took to the streets were not necessarily deeply political but were simply reacting to the situation and feeling a sense of unease. F1 thinks that “the right-left conflicts, ideological distinctions lost their significance among young people. Now politics are more focused on freedoms,” and she stated that “I was there for freedom, for my children. It was a demand for freedom.” This highlights that, unlike the protests organized in the 1970s, it was an unorganized and spontaneous, completely reactive movement. M20 described the Gezi Park “as a space where he truly existed.” The participation to the protests felt so natural to him that “his existence there felt like breathing.” These differences between the two periods were also reflected in the music used and the general atmosphere of the protests, as will be discussed in later parts.

4.2 Musical Preferences

Before delving into the role of music in the protests in which they participated, general questions were asked about their musical preferences and consumption to understand the role of music in their daily lives and whether their musical preferences were shaped by the political environment of the time when they were young. They were also asked if their musical preferences have evolved over the years, and how they usually consume music today/and how they consumed it during their youth.

It is observed that participants exhibit a wide range of musical preferences, based on their answers. Considering that all the interviewees have a "left-leaning" political view, it is possible to say that the most preferred music aligns with protest songs commonly associated with the left-wing. These include various sub-genres such as marches, folk songs, laments, pop songs, and authentic music. The top 10 most listened to musicians among the participants were: Zülfü Livaneli, Duman, Grup Yorum, Ahmet Kaya, Kardeş Türküler, Ruhi Su, Cem Karaca, Timur Selçuk, The Beatles, and Yeni Türkü, all of the names mentioned being protest music artists. It is also noteworthy that the newest group listened to among different age groups is Duman, and the only foreign music group is The Beatles. Musicians who rose to prominence during the 1970s period, such as Zülfü Livaneli, Ruhi Su, and Timur Selçuk were also listened to by the younger generations who were active in Gezi Park protests; while the older generation, who are the '78 generation in this context, generally do not listen to relatively newer musicians and bands like Kardeş Türküler or Duman.

However, most participants mentioned that they don't limit themselves to just these genres and also listen to "any type of music that sounds pleasant to the ear," as described by M6, or that "sounds good" in general. The most important factor here is that their music choices change according to their mood. For example, F3 stated that "listening to music is related to her mood." When she is at work in the early morning, she starts the day with folk songs, but in the afternoon, when she starts to feel stressed, tired, or overwhelmed, she switches to pop music to cheer herself up. M6 stated that his "emotional state" determines what he prefers to listen. When he feels sad, he prefers folk music, but when he is feeling cheerful, he also prefers pop. Music serves various functions for the participants, including entertainment, relaxation, motivation, and a way to connect with memories and emotions. Some have dedicated music listening habits, they mentioned that no matter what they are doing at that moment in their daily lives, there is always music playing in the background that accompanies them. M1, F1, and M16 stated that they always start their day with music, and there is always a song in the background while they work, whether they are actively listening or not.

"I wouldn't say it's just a part of my daily life, but it's the most important part of my daily life. I wake up and I press the radio button. Sometimes I create a music time for myself, I retreat to my room and listen to music for a few hours." (M16)

Some participants have stated that they listen to music more casually or in specific contexts, like while working or exercising. There are also those who say that they do not listen to music as often as they used to. M9 stated that the place of music in his life has changed; he doesn't listen to music when he wants to relax, but on the contrary, he listens to it while exercising at the gym, as a motivational tool. F3 says

that music can become tiring at times, “because there's already an inner voice speaking, and there's constant background noise from the surroundings,” she states.

4.3 Musical Preferences and Political Identity

In order to understand if there is a relationship between the political views of the participants and their musical preferences, the following questions were asked to them: “Do you think your musical taste reflects your personal or political identity? If so, how?”, “Did your musical preferences influence your involvement in protests or social movements?” and “Were there particular songs or artists that shaped your political views or inspired you?”

Based on the answers given, it is observed that there is a complex relationship between musical preferences and political identity. It cannot be said that the participants directly shaped their political views or decided to participate in the protests by being directly influenced by a song or musician. It has been observed that for some participants, the main driving force in this interaction between musical preferences and political views is the political view itself. As Participant M2 states; “I was listening to those songs because I was already a revolutionary.”

For some participants, songs do not reinforce a political opinion, instead, people generally prefer listening to specific songs and artists that reflect their political views. Participants F2 and F4 also stated that they do not think the music itself influenced them, but their political interests influenced the music they listened to. F2 states that “If you share that viewpoint, you are drawn to that song, to that artist. It's probably an interaction within the human soul.”

However, it is also true that a reciprocal relationship exists between musical preferences and political identity, both feeding and influencing each other.

Participant M5 stated that both his political views influenced what he listened to and what he listened to influenced his life. He especially points to Bob Dylan and John Lennon as his biggest inspirations, “my life continued to evolve based on their influence. It still does.”

As Jackson (2002) argues, artists play a critical role in influencing political views of people, because people feel an emotional connection to the music they listen to, also an emotional bond ideologically is formed between the listener and the musician.

It can be said that music has a role in strengthening the views and identities of those who hold a certain political view (Jackson, 2002). This aspect sometimes appears as a source of motivation for continuing that political identity, sometimes the songs they listen to are aimed at gaining more knowledge on the subject, and sometimes the songs fuel the excitement they feel from researching these issues and defending a particular viewpoint during that period. For this reason, it is possible to say that music has an effect in strengthening political views. M15, as a person who actively works in a political party, states that music connects a person to politics; he even describes the power of music on himself in getting interested in politics as “just like an enzyme acts as a catalyst in cells”. M14, who is also a member of the same political party, describes politics as “about sacrifice, loyalty, struggle, and dedication,” and states music as a motivation behind these aspects, “while contributing to his politicization”.

Although there have been some nuances over time, most participants stated that their fundamental political views were actually shaped during their childhood, primarily influenced by their families' views. Therefore, it cannot be stated that “the music they listened to shaped the participants' political views.” However, it is true that,

especially when they were children and unable to fully understand certain terms, political figures, or historical events, songs with social messages could play an educational role. Participant M16 stated that even though he had a political viewpoint when he was younger, “he couldn’t fully grasp the whole picture,” and the songs he listened to “contributed incredibly to his ability to think more universally.”

“You hear a piece of it somewhere, and you look at how the subject is approached, and you think, 'Yes, I should approach it that way too.'” (M16)

Here, as Jones (2010) argues, music, as a part of media form, acts more than merely providing information about politics but actively provides a “mental map” for the participants, “to grasp the picture” of political ideals they did not directly experience (p. 23).

Similarly, Participant M6 said that when he was researching the movements of the 1970s and prominent figures such as Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan when he was younger, he was listening to the old protest songs of the 1970s, he was also feeling excited and motivated while he was learning about these topics and listening to these songs; “I mean, our blood was running faster, so to speak, we were more excited, and that's why we listened to these kinds of songs more”

Participants F5 and M8 state that sometimes listening to protest songs that focus on social topics is really tiring due to their highly didactic nature, but M8 also believes that it is necessary to be exposed to them if one wants to educate themselves about the societal issues:

“After all, where did we learn about the class anger and the divisions that arise from class? We learned it from Tamirci Çırağı, or we learned about young children being shot from Cem Karaca's Parka. We learned about the workers' movement by singing Internationale, the Austrian Workers' Anthem, Venceremos, and Ciao Bella. Therefore, I think the educational value of these works, their didactic function, is incredibly functional and accurate. Well, are

some of them bad? Yes, some are bad, to be honest. But on the other hand, I believe they should be read and listened to, and that it is necessary” (M8)

Participants M1 and F8 specifically remembered two songs that helped them to reinforce their political identity when they were children. M1 narrates:

“I attended elementary and middle school in a village-like area. When I came here, I learned about the left and right; these things didn’t exist in the village. I first heard "The Internationale" in high school. They would gather in Kurtuluş Square, and they would sing it, which caught my attention. There was a lot of right-left tension there as well. On my way there, they would stop me and ask, "Are you from right-wing or left-wing?" Since I had just arrived, I didn’t know. I would say, "I’m neither right-wing nor left-wing," and then they would hit me, “learn it then”. Yes, I first heard Internationale there, and I liked it. My father worked as a laborer, so I was closer to the working class, and we grew up with them. I didn’t know much, but when I first heard Internationale, I liked it, and I decided I would be a leftist.”

Just like M1 decided that he would call himself a “leftist” when he first heard Internationale, F8 told that she first heard the word “socialism” in Zülfü Livaneli’s “Hoş Geldin Bebek” song.

“And from then on, I became interested, started researching, and I defined myself as a socialist at that time.” (F8)

Hyman (1963) and Jackson (2009) place pop culture and media products as educational forces through which young people can actively learn political values, rather than just formal education. Music that engages with political themes can spark a political awakening among young people, as it is seen in these direct experiences of the participants. Sometimes, this happens in a more subtle way. Hyman (1963) argues that the “latent” messages embedded in mass media products, which may seem non-political, can also quietly promote the development of political values (p. 131). However, here in these examples, it was observed that the songs mentioned in

these examples conveyed their political messages clearly in a didactic way, and they were successful in terms of educating the participants.

M19, who was a singer in the Boğaziçi Jazz Choir and sang at the Gezi Park protests, believes that because of their catchy nature and ease of memorization, songs are an effective way for learning something. This is why, compared to other art forms, songs are really impactful in conveying ideas about societal issues, because as Frith states, “they are immediately accessible within us” in our memory, in our minds (2007, p. 306). Therefore, it is much easier to transfer these songs to others.

“What we think at that moment, those four lines, maybe we can't memorize them as poetry, but if you sing 'Are you a looter? (Çapulcu musun vay vay)' and believe in the things you're singing, years later, you can say 'I believed in this back then' or in the moment, you can say 'I know what I believe, man' and act accordingly.” (M19)

Some artists and groups become associated with certain political movements, and as people feel connected to these political movements, the musicians whose songs are accepted within those groups become “movement intellectuals”, as defined by Eyerman and Jamison (1991). This aspect persisted both in the 1970s and the 1990s. When asked about the Gezi protests and nowadays, participants could not name new artists that they can associate with Gezi or protest music in general. M18 stated that

“By the time it was around 1976, almost every political circle had its own musician. A singer, a folk poet, was emerging from each of these circles. We would get excited with them or express ourselves with them.” (M18)

The phenomenon where each political group had its own music band persisted until the late 1990s. Participant M20 also stated that until 1995, almost all leftist groups had their own music bands; “You could say, this band belongs to this movement.”

Because of this association within specific musicians/bands and political organizations and groups, the connection between music preferences and political views goes beyond personal music tastes and preferences. Sometimes people don't necessarily listen to these songs because they really enjoy listening to them or because they appeal to their musical tastes. Due to the political environment they are in, they naturally find themselves listening to those songs and artists. But, in fact, sometimes they find these songs musically inadequate and do not prefer to listen to them individually.

Participant F4 recites the times when she tried to listen to folk music while she was becoming more involved in left-wing activities and started to identify herself as a socialist. She thought to herself that "We are so urban " and had to listen to folk music to match her musical taste to her ideology. Yet, she could not enjoy it.

"We started buying albums like Musa Eroğlu and others, and listening to them on cassettes, trying to enjoy them. So, I did have this effort to listen to folk music, but I never really connected with it, I never truly embraced it."
(F4)

Participant M8 mentioned Ali Asker as the prominent figure for their political movement during the 1990s. He states that at first, he did not like the music he made as he found it "slightly above mediocre" and "lacking musical foundation". However, as he was an important musician who represented the political movement and party he belonged to, they repeatedly listened to his songs as a group and finally, "they managed to make me like Ali Asker. I still occasionally play and listen to his music." (M8)

Similarly, participant M3 stated that he wasn't too familiar with folk music during his childhood or youth, but when he started to attend the university during the 1970s and

get involved with the political circles, he came across the names such as Aşık Mahsuni and Ruhi Su. Although he attended their concerts, he did not enjoy their music too much. He said he wouldn't buy Ruhi Su's cassettes; he would prefer buying Erkin Koray or Pink Floyd, "because their music felt richer."

However, Participant M3 also mentioned that as a person who preferred pop and rock music, the political environment he entered at university and his friends who played the saz in the cafeteria introduced him to folk music, and this encouraged him to learn to play the saz. He said that he has been trying to learn the saz himself for the last three years.

The reason why people find the protest songs within a political movement musically insufficient is that these songs are generally in the format of marches or slogans. This is because these songs are not made to appeal to musical tastes; the important thing is that the political message is conveyed clearly and in a simple way, everyone can easily sing these songs together. Therefore, when these songs are sung together during protests, they become impactful. Most of the time, participants don't listen to these songs alone, personally. Participant M9 gives the example of "Gündoğdu March", he describes it as "Musically weak, similar to an elementary school anthem. But when you sing it with 200-300 people, it sounds beautiful. It wouldn't be the same with just a few people."

After understanding the relationship between participants' musical preferences and political views, they were asked, "Were there any artists or genres that you avoided due to their political associations?". The answer to this question is "yes" for some participants and "no" for others. Some say that depending on their mood, they can listen to those songs even if they don't support the political views of their artists. F3

emphasized once again that her listening habits are completely based on her mood, she stated that “I never had something like, ‘I’m a revolutionary, so I only listen to these types of music.’ If I’m really feeling down, I might switch to Yıldız Tilbe in the evening, or even listen to Serdar Ortaç and dance to them.” F1 also stated that she listens to all kinds of music, even arabesque, “I even listen to İbrahim Tatlıses, even though, politically and personally, he’s someone very far from me. But I still listen to him. I don’t really see them as separate, in that sense.”

Some mention that they used to listen to some songs secretly, as they had faced criticism from their friends in the political circles they were part of. Participant M2 said that he was criticized by his friends while he was listening to Sezen Aksu, a pop musician at his university dormitory, during the boycott time at METU, saying, "Can a revolutionary person listen to this?"

Especially in the 1970s, songs that did not have political content, such as pop, were criticized, and it was found strange for people from the opposition, left wing, to listen to these songs. At the same time, classical music was also considered by some oppositional groups as “bourgeois music,” which is why it was also criticized.

Participants M2 and F6 considered people who listened to classical music as “petty bourgeoisie” and criticized them. Participant M13 also pointed out the fact that the ones who were able to attend classical music concerts during their student years were the “elite”. This supports Bourdieu’s (1984) perspective that tastes in music determine one’s social class. From Bourdieu’s perspective, music listening habits can be part of social capital, reinforcing distinctions between social classes. Listening to classical music has historically been considered the cultural preference of a certain class, usually the bourgeoisie. It is seen as a sign of a certain level of education and

cultural capital of this class, which reinforces their social status. Participant M18

narrates his perspective on this issue and the differences between their music tastes:

“When I first arrived in Ankara, I was staying with Rıza Abi. To me, they were the petty bourgeoisie. Because they were always singing arias and listening to classical music. Meanwhile, I was listening to songs from folk poets like Fermani, Dermani, and Zamani, which made my chest swell and my fist tighten. I was singing songs like "Killer America." They, on the other hand, were constantly going to operas, singing arias, listening to classical music, and I was fighting with them. I used to say, "You don't understand the people, you're the petty bourgeoisie, you don't know our traditions." (M18)

However, Participant M18's perspective on classical has shifted over time as he started to listen to classical music and actually enjoy it. Similar to Participant M2's experience at the university dorm, Participant M18 also narrates that because he was listening to Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" from a small tape recorder in his room, the student committee at the dormitory threatened to expel him from the dorm for "listening to bourgeois music".

“At that time, there was a small tape recorder, Rıza Abi had given it to me. With that, I used to listen to Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The student committee at the dorm had even threatened to expel me from the dorm for listening to bourgeois music”. (M18)

Participant F8 stated that, although she finds this point of view “ridiculous” now, she believed that listening to foreign music was an “apolitical” act. She used to listen to bands such as Pink Floyd at her first year at the university, but when she was involved in “Turkish Folk Sciences Society (THBT)” in METU, her music taste has evolved over time and started to listen to only folk songs and Turkish protest music. She thought that this was a way to reflect her political identity, as Bennett (2013) emphasizes the role of musical taste as a way of reflecting the adapted cultural identity to others. In addition, as Frith (2007) argues, taste not only reflects

someone's social class, but identities are fluid and can be influenced by the groups we feel we belong to, creating a social identity accordingly (Tajfel, 1974).

“At that time, it wasn't so much about "I definitely wouldn't listen to it," but rather, it was a result of the environment I was in. Otherwise, I actually liked Pink Floyd back then, but over time, I became so immersed in folk songs. I used to think that apolitical people listened to those kinds of music. Now, looking back, that thought seems silly. But back then, only listening to folk or protest music was a way for me to define my political identity and even my personality. That's why I wouldn't listen to foreign music, and I certainly never listened to pop music. I also hated arabesque music.” (F8)

Similarly, Participant M7 also mentioned how at his first year of the university, he had an individual musical taste, but as they started to act collectively, the tastes and preferences of a group got ahead over the individual preferences;

“Maybe during the English preparatory program phase, we could build more personal relationships with each other, we had individual music tastes, but later we became more socialized, and instead of individual preferences, more common things started to be listened to once we began participating in protests.” (M7)

These are the examples of building collective identities, as Tilly (1995) and Melucci (1995) also emphasize, through interactions and negotiations between the actors of a collective movement.

For most participants, "musicality", the enjoyment of the music itself, is more important than its political message. They don't avoid listening to artists because of their political views. Instead, they don't listen to them because they simply don't like the music they produce. For instance, many avoid arabesque music, which is strongly associated with the right-wing, but this isn't due to their political views. Some simply don't like it, while others find it too fatalistic. Participants M4, M16 and M15 said that they do not listen to songs and artists that are generally associated with the right

wing, not because of their political views, but because they simply do not enjoy the music they produce. M4 said that; “If they made something good, I probably would have listened to it.” and M15 emphasized; “I would never listen to anyone from the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), I don’t think they have musical taste or musical ears. They are bad and very inadequate, in my opinion.”

However, there are also other participants who indicated that they do consider an artist’s political affiliations while deciding what to listen. Participants F7, F6, and M3 said they would never listen to arabesque music artists, such as İbrahim Tatlıses, Müslüm Gürses, or Orhan Gencebay, or some artists that have political affiliations such as Sezen Aksu, although they enjoy it, but “it would not align with their revolutionary identity” as Participant F6 states. Participant M19 also stated that he would feel uncomfortable while listening to some songs, and “there are some songs he loves that he can't listen to.”

Overall, when examining the responses to questions related to music preferences and political views, it is not accurate to define people's music tastes solely based on their political views, nor is it correct to conclude that "a person with left-wing views only listens to protest music." Acquiring a political identity is not a mechanical, one-sided process. Just as the environment to which people feel they belong, what they wear, do, read, and watch in this environment affects people, the music they listen to also plays a role in acquiring a political identity and the process of political socialization. It can be said that people's listening habits are shaped by the environment they are in, but the music they listen to individually, outside of a group context, can vary independently of their political views. This also brings up questions related to the use of music in protests.

4.4 Music and Protests

In the fourth section of the interview questions, questions related to the relationship between music and participation in the protests were asked to the participants.

Firstly, in order to learn about the most used songs at that time, the following questions were asked: “Were there any particular songs or artists that symbolized the movement?” and “What types of music or specific songs were popular during those protests?”

This section explores how music was used in protests in different periods, including the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2010s (specifically Gezi Park), and how it affected people. Based on the experiences of the participants, which songs were popular in the protests according to the different time periods, what was the place, function, and effect of music on people in these protests are analyzed.

4.4.1 1970s & 1980s

During the protests of the 1970s, a variety of songs and artists were significant for the participants, primarily those aligned with leftist and socialist ideologies. These musical choices often served to unify the protesters, express their political views, and create a sense of collective identity and purpose.

Marches, both local and international ones, were the most used types of songs during the protest. “Enternasyonal (The Internationale)” was an exceptionally popular and frequently sung international socialist anthem at almost every action. It was considered a song everyone embraced due to its international nature, as stated by M1, M3, M6, M16, M18.

"Of course, at that time, we preferred to listen to anthems that made us feel like the subject of that struggle. One of them was the Internationale anthem. The second was Ciao Bella, Dev-Genç anthem. Internationale is my hit song, for example, there were times when I always started my day with this song. After that, the second most important song for me is the Austrian Workers' Anthem." (M18)

Gündoğdu and Dev-Genç March were other significant marches that were mentioned by most of the participants. Avusturya İşçi Marşı (Austrian Workers' March) was also very commonly sung and widely known with its Turkish adaptation. Participant M3 mentioned that other international marches, Chilean Marches, and Spanish Marches were also quite common during these protests and were embraced by everyone.

Latin American protest songs, particularly those by Inti Illimani, such as "Venceremos," and the Italian song "Ciao Bella," gained popularity and resonated with the protesters, creating a sense of global solidarity

Another piece in march form, adapted and popularized by Rahmi Saltuk, was the piece "Jandarma", mentioned by all the interviewees, aimed at influencing security forces with its lyrics "Jandarma biz sosyalistiz, dostuz yalnız biz sana (Gendarmarie, we are socialists, we are only friends to you)". Participants M1 and M7 said that the motivation behind singing this song was to express their messages, to "reach the people, the villagers, and the lower classes, and appeal to the police and gendarmerie as well." (M1) Participant M4 also mentioned that it was used for both influencing other people and for motivating themselves.

"When we came face to face with the gendarmerie, we had our anthem. At that point, this really agitates the crowd." (M4)

Songs by specific artists were very popular among protesters during those times and they were widely listened. Most prominent artists who were mentioned by the interviewees were Cem Karaca, Zülfü Livaneli, Edip Akbayram, Selda Bağcan, and Fikret Kızılok. Later in the period, after the 1980s, Grup Yorum became incredibly influential by blending folk and contemporary sounds. However, since the most preferred format was marches, such popular songs were not sung during the protests. Nonetheless, Ruhi Su and Timur Selçuk were exceptions in this case: “They were being sung. Of course, they were being sung. Ruhi Su is a bit different from the others. So is Timur Selçuk. These were sung in addition to revolutionary anthems.”

(M1) Ruhi Su and Timur Selçuk were specifically mentioned by M1, M2, M7, M17, M18, F9.

"We learned the folk songs from Ruhi Su in these protests. I still sing them the way I learned from him. It seems we sang a lot of Ruhi Su's folk songs. I mean, those songs have stayed with us in their forms." (M7)

“Ruhi Su was sung with all the students and assistants at METU. He was a beautiful symbol in the squares. We went to concerts and lived that excitement with great enthusiasm.” (F9)

It is possible to define this period as a kind of “civil war.” Ideological conflicts between the right and the left were taking place with intense violence. As a result, this harsh situation was also reflected in the music used during protests. Songs in the form of marches were mostly preferred in order to excite people and allow them to sing together. More didactic songs were chosen for their instructive quality and to convey political messages directly. Popular songs were frowned upon by leftist circles for being considered apolitical, and their use in protests was out of the question. Likewise, foreign songs were not commonly listened to, except for a few key protest figures such as Pink Floyd, because they were considered as Western products. At the same time, since the “78 generation” refers to a student movement

that spanned many years, starting in 1968 and continuing into the 1980s, the number of protest songs produced during this period was significantly high. Artists and songs that became identified with these movements left a much clearer mark in people's memory.

4.4.2 1990s & Gezi Park

9 participants who participated in the Gezi Park protests were people who had already participated in different protests before Gezi, mostly during their student years, especially in the 1990s. Therefore, in this section, while the focus will be specifically on the songs used in the Gezi Park protests, a broader framework covering the post-1970s and 1980s will also be drawn in terms of making a comparison according to the answers of the interviewees.

The 1990s, built on the foundations of the 1970s and 1980s, saw the rise of new groups highly influential in the left-wing movements. Music became a vital component of the revolutionary struggle, seen not just as entertainment but as a part of the movement itself. There was a perception that nearly every left-wing group or organization had its own music group, almost as a requirement, as mentioned earlier by Participant M20. He said that "music was a serious part of political practice. It was like any other element, like a poster, a banner, or a meeting. You couldn't imagine an organization or a protest without music." (M20)

Artists that were popular in earlier decades (in the 1970s and 80s) remained important through their existing works, including Ahmet Kaya, Zülfü Livaneli, Ruhi Su, Timur Selçuk, Rahmi Saltuk, Sadık Gürbüz, Yeni Türkü, and Ezginin Günlüğü.

Traditional revolutionary marches from the 1970s, like Gündoğdu, Dev-Genç March, were still used, especially in events commemorating figures from the revolutionary political past. Participants M8, F3, and M9 who participated in the protests during the 1990s mentioned that these were fixed songs that would definitely be sung, and everyone would know them by heart.

Key artists and bands who emerged during the 1990s and mentioned as significant by the participants include Grup Yorum, Grup Kızılırmak, Grup Ekin, Grup Munzur, Grup Baran, Grup Vardiya, and Ali Asker. The prominent feature of the protest songs of the 1990s is the shift from the harsher march style of the 1970s towards music with differing lyrics and a richer and more cheerful sound musically. In addition, bands rather than individual artists were becoming more common. Participant M11 mentioned that the involvement of bands such as Bandista, Grup Yorum and Grup Kızılırmak into the movements “broke protests free from that serious, grim atmosphere”. Participant M16, who participated in the protests both before the 1980s and aftermath, defined the earlier songs as “more intense, more like marches”. But then, “the lyrics became different, and they underwent a transformation into shorter ones.” (M16)

The Gezi Park protests saw a very diverse musical landscape, reflecting the varied composition of the protesters. While traditional protest music had a presence, the atmosphere was often different, incorporating more spontaneous performances and mainstream artists. Some interviewees felt that music was less central in Gezi compared to earlier periods, with some slogans that stood out on social media, especially Twitter, being more prominent.

“I think there were more protest singers back in the ‘80s. It seemed like the edits made on Twitter and other social media during the Gezi period, with aphorisms and humor, were more intense.” (F1)

Back then, of course there were songs composed specifically for Gezi. But, other things were probably more influential. I mean, there was so much humor being made on Twitter and platforms like that.” (M6)

Twitter, during the Gezi period, played a major role in helping people remember the movement through the humorous posts and edits shared there, and it was also a platform where people gathered information online to come together physically, as Castells (2012) also argues.

When people were asked what specific songs they remember about Gezi, they generally said that there was constant music dominating the environment, but they could not remember a specific song that stood out. Although a lot of new songs were composed specifically for the Gezi protests and old songs were adapted, the songs that participants remember the most and heard during the protests were “Eyvallah” by Duman, “Tencere Tava Havası” by Kardeş Türküler, and the performances of Boğaziçi Jazz Choir in the park, their adaptations including “Çapulcular Oldu Mu” (adapted from “Kızılıçıklar Oldu Mu”) “Gaz Maskesi Ala Benziyor” (adapted from “Entarisi Ala Benziyor”).

Just like Boğaziçi Jazz Choir, spontaneous performances within the park created a soundtrack for the protests.

“Spontaneous groups were making music everywhere; as I mentioned, there was no Gezi without music. The sounds of music filled the entire space, it was truly incredible. People playing the kemençe, the guitar, the saz, and the drum came together, creating a powerful and unforgettable atmosphere. I believe it had a very significant impact.” (F6)

A German pianist, Davide Martello, was engraved in people’s minds as “the pianist at Taksim” and his performances were mentioned by the interviewees who

participated in the protests in İstanbul. He performed with his piano two days in a row in support of the protesters with a wide repertoire from classical music, such as Beethoven to the Beatles and to the iconic Turkish protest songs from the 1970s.

"One day, right in the middle of the Taksim metro station, there was a piano placed there and a foreign pianist came and started playing. He was playing Beatles songs, like Imagine and Hey Jude, and he even played Zülfü Livaneli's Karlı Kayın Ormanı and Yiğidim Aslanım. People were all singing along together. Everyone was sitting on the ground, listening. It was such a joyful moment. I remember it as if it was always like that." (F5)

Bands like Sambistanbul and Bandista also influenced the atmosphere with their spontaneous performances using their trumpets, saxophones, and drums.

When the participants' responses are examined in general, unlike the protests in the 1970s, in Gezi Park, it was not so much about an organized, unified singing of an anthem, but rather an environment where music was present everywhere. Participant M20 also compares it to the protests he had participated during the 1980s and 1980s, saying, it was almost like "gathering at the beach with a group, listening to music."

"There was music everywhere. But it wasn't as organized or as structured as the music relationships we had in the 80s and 90s" (M20)

At the same time, there was a great deal of musical diversity. One reason for this is the wide variety of people present. Unlike the ideological conflict or the right-left conflict of the 1970s, there was more of a general "demand for freedom." Therefore, people from much more diverse backgrounds and different age groups were gathered there. There were songs used in the past, newly composed ones, and there were also people making noise with just drums or pots and pans. Especially within the park, there was a "carnival" atmosphere, that could align with Bakhtin's (1984) definition.

Participant M12 also defined Gezi as a “musical carnival”, because of the involvement of different instruments, such as “tulum, clarinet, darbuka and zurna.”

The diversity between people, including the age groups and background of the people, was also manifested in the music played at the park, helping to form a bridge between new and old social movements. Participant M2, who was active in the student protests of the 1970s also participated in the Gezi protests and reflected his observations,

“In the front of the park, our generation was singing "Dinle Paşa Dinle Bey" while doing the halay, while in the back, the kids were listening to Pink Floyd.” (M2)

Participant F6 also reflected the diverse demography within the park.

“The crowd with tents within the park and the “revolutionary” crowd outside were different; it was like there were two separate groups. In the streets, there were people who were listening to Grup Yorum, still moving with that revolutionary, old 90s style, but inside, there were people who listened to metal, rock, and everything in between. It was really a softer, more diverse crowd coming together. There was music everywhere, and it was truly incredible. They were all together. There was a person playing the kemenche, I saw, there was someone playing the guitar. There was someone playing the saz. There was a drummer too. They were all together, and it was an incredible impact.” (F6)

The diversity of people and their political views was clearly reflected in the music as well. Unlike the 1970s, there was no armed conflict during this period. Especially within the park, people created a peaceful environment and practiced various forms of art. As a result, the songs produced at that time were more focused on making people happy, entertaining them, and expressing demands in a peaceful way. And of course, unlike the 1970s, we are not talking about a movement that spanned decades, but rather about a process that lasted only three months. Therefore, although many songs were produced, no particular song or artist became strongly associated with the

movement, at least none that participants could recall. Also, since there was no collective activity of singing a march together, and because different sounds were heard throughout the park, participants perhaps couldn't recall specific examples as clearly as those who had participated in protests during the 1970s or 1990s.

Participant M20 specifically pointed out this difference:

“Although a lot of music was produced during and after Gezi, by Kardeş Türküler, Bandista, Kaan Tangöze, and others, these were songs about Gezi, not songs of Gezi. What I mean is, they didn't emerge organically within the protests themselves, in the way, for example, it's not like Grup Ekin singing a march during a demonstration back in 1989. The songs created during Gezi were not the kind of music you could easily sing together in a crowd. You could listen, maybe hum along, but they weren't collective chants. That's the difference, I think. For example, how can I sing with Boğaziçi Choir?” (M20)

As a result, although the songs produced for Gezi were musically much richer and more diverse, they did not leave the same impact on people, as they were not as easily singable and memorable as a march.

According to the answers and recollections of the participants, a comparison between the types of music used within the protests can be made, which are influenced by the temporal and contextual differences between the 1970s and the Gezi Park protests.

Table 4: Differences of Musical Styles in Two Periods

1970s	Gezi Park
Intense, serious protest atmosphere, based on ideological clashes, right-left conflicts	A carnivalesque atmosphere within the park, a general opposition from the public with a wide range of political backgrounds, instead of polarization
Ideologically rigid, organized	Spontaneous, emotionally expressive
Highly agitational songs, mostly marches and folk songs	Musical diversity with different genres
Didactic lyrics designed for mobilization and ideological messaging	Less didactic, more humorous and uplifting songs, musically richer

4.5 The Function of Music During Protests

When the songs used and sung in protests in two different periods are examined, it is clear that there are differences. These differences stem from both the conditions of the era and the spirit and subject matter of the protests. The 1970s saw music deeply embedded within specific political ideologies and organizations, with debates around musical "correctness." For example, popular songs that are outside the march or folk song format were not used in protests. Participant M3 stated that if they sang any pop song, people would get angry.

After the 1990s, with the diversification of protest topics, musical diversity progressed in parallel. Particularly Gezi, reflecting its broader, more spontaneous, and diverse participant base, utilized a wider variety of music and slogans, adorned with humorous elements. Participant M16 criticized this humorous aspect of Gezi, comparing it to the past protests that he was involved in, supporting Bogad's (2006) argument that highlights the dangers of overusing "carnavalesque" and humorous elements that would endanger a protest's cause to lose its clarity.

"For a long time, I've thought that protests have leaned somewhat towards a populist approach, and social media has had a big influence on this. It's become a way to mock and turn it into a humorous, enjoyable, and witty thing. I mean, it's okay to laugh, but a struggle cannot always be about laughing and making jokes. It feels like we're heading in the wrong direction, and I think we're not fulfilling some of the things we should be doing."
(M16)

Although Participant M16 criticized the overuse of humor elements, sometimes causing the main issue of protest to be diverted from its purpose, most of the interviewees stated their admiration for these joyful elements in Gezi, compared to the protests they have participated in the past. Participant, F8 expressed that "humor was a very marginalized concept for them and they felt like they had to be more

serious,” F6 supporting her argument by saying “We were serious, there was no fun for us. We were there to make a revolution, how are we going to make a revolution by having fun?”, also included that the “serious” protest culture was inherited to them “from our sisters and brothers of the '70s”. Both of them stated that they appreciated the humorous elements of Gezi.

“I wish we had known how to have fun. I mean, aside from dancing the halay, we were all very serious. But the kids now, they’re having fun, it’s more enjoyable. Imagine a revolution where you don’t have fun, how ridiculous is that?” (F6)

“Humor angers and drives the other side crazy. Humor is actually a sign of intelligence. Now, they realize they can’t easily handle young people. I think it’s more effective. I wish it had always been this way; we saw it in Gezi.” (F8)

These quotes and the longing for the humorous aspects in protests support Bakhtin’s description of carnival, where humor, laughing and celebrating serve as a form of resistance against authorities. Participant F5, who sang at the Boğaziçi Jazz Choir during the Gezi protests also emphasized humor’s role in increasing people’s hope, she said that they chose to sing cheerful songs, not laments etc., “to give people the feeling that ‘we will get through this too’.”

But no matter how different the types of music used are, the purposes for which music is used in protests are similar in every period. Music consistently served as a vital force for mobilization, unity, and emotional expression in Turkish protests across both the 1970s and Gezi. In order to determine the function of music in protests, the following questions were asked to participants: “How would you describe the role of music in the protests you participated in?”, “Did music play a significant role in mobilizing or unifying people?”, “How were songs typically used during protests?”, “Were they sung collectively, played over loudspeakers, or adapted

with new lyrics?”, “How did music help in articulating the ideas or values of the movement?”, and “Did music make it easier to communicate complex or emotional messages?”

According to the answers of the participants, the functions of music in protests can be classified into several key areas. These functions can also be named as “tactics” (De Certeau, 1984; Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004) that are used in order to maintain a protest.

4.5.1 Unification and Solidarity

Music is consistently described as a powerful force for bringing people together and fostering a sense of unity and solidarity. When people feel that they belong to a crowd, a group, it motivates them. Here, the participants emphasized the power of singing together, the collective action. Therefore, actually, at one point, what matters more than which song is sung is how it is sung. Participants M7 and M4 stated that when they sung the songs and anthems together as a group, they felt strong, emphasizing once again Eyerman (2002), Bennett (2001) and Frith’s (2007) arguments on the importance of the political participatory aspect of music, where people feel connected to each other because of the bodily and spiritual contact caused.

“Now, when the songs are sung individually, children don’t experience the same effect. Doing things together makes everything more valuable, and music, too, becomes more precious in that sense.” (M7)

“Even though it was difficult, we would also sing Internationale. It wasn’t easy to sing, but everyone would shout it out loud. At that time, it really felt like a mass movement. We felt like we were part of a crowd.” (M4)

Participant M6 drew attention to the “sparkling of a shared emotion” among participants, which leads to solidarity, as Durkheim (1995) highlights the necessity of intense emotions during a social gathering.

“When someone started singing, people would inevitably come together and start singing along. It would become something like a slogan. In the end, people were expressing a reaction, and in a way, it created unity, sparking a shared emotion among the people.” (M6)

Just as people inevitably prefer to listen to songs that align with their political identity, they also use music as a communication tool to express their political affiliation and come together with others who share the same views. This creates a "musical connection" among them. Participant F8 stated that this musical connection sometimes motivated her to join in a protest, as through the songs they sang, she could understand their political views.

“In my time, especially in the post-1980s era, it was a bit more complicated to join a protest. To participate in or support that protest, you first had to understand that it truly resonated with you. How would you know? If the songs, folk songs, or music being sung drew you in, if it was something you knew, something that spoke to your identity and personality, then you’d be inclined to join.” (F8)

Participant M9 also shared a memory in which they could understand the ones who shared a similar political view. He refers to the lyric “Yüreğim, yıldızlaşan yumruğum benim” ("My heart, my fist that turns into a star") from Ali Asker’s song “Eylem Güzeli”, which is a homage to the symbol of the Devrimci Yol movement, which features a star and a clenched fist.

“Ali Asker has a song called Eylem Güzeli. Towards the end of the song, there’s a part that says, "Yüreğim yıldızlaşan yumruğum benim," and I, along with maybe 100-200 others, would wait for that part of the song. When the song reaches that point, everyone raises their fist. At that moment, if you look around, you can tell who supports which political view. We wait to raise our fists to show ourselves and our political identity.” (M9)

Although different bands generally were identified with specific political movements, musicality and the emotions associated with the songs allowed people from different political backgrounds to listen to these groups, independent of their political implications or lyrics. Yet, of course, while it may emotionally affect people, it does not necessarily lead to influencing them enough to shape their political view.

“For example, Grup Munzur has concerts in Dersim. It's very motivating. Even though I'm not politically close to them, I love it, but I can't feel that excitement, yet that audience can. It's their band, they can make their followers do whatever they want with that motivation. It affects me. I really enjoy it, but I wonder how it affects them, where it takes them (that political group/audience)” (M9)

Participants M6, M9, M15, and M20 gave the example of Grup Yorum. They told that even though they do not ideologically feel close to the band's views, they emphasized that it is a band above the ideological differences within the left-wing groups. Participant M6 also gives the example of the song “Dağlara Gel (Come to the Mountains)”, how they would sing it, although its lyrics seem contradictory to them now. As Participant M15 describes, “All left-wing factions came together and converged at a common point.”, which articulates the formation of a collective identity during times of solidarity, as Durkheim (1995) describes as transferring individual identities to a greater identity. And in this process, Grup Yorum being just an example, artists and music in general played a great role.

4.5.2 Formation of a Collective Identity

The statements above by the participants raise the question of whether songs help to bridge the social, political, or cultural differences among protesters and to form a

shared identity through songs. Although in the protests that participants attended, people came together for a specific purpose and had similar political views, especially in environments where there was a great deal of human diversity, such as the Gezi Park protests, music served as a bridge to bring together people from different political organizations or parties and from different sociocultural or ethnic backgrounds.

Participants mentioned that singing the same anthem or song together, even if they had different political views or came from diverse backgrounds, created a feeling of togetherness and helped bridge differences. Participant M8 describes: “When we feel we belong within a crowd, we start to become ‘one body’ with people we couldn’t normally touch, talk to, or sit next to in everyday life, especially when we sing a folk song together during a protest.”

However, what is being referred to here is, of course, not completely opposing views or entirely different ideological poles, but rather different factions of similar, closely related viewpoints. Considering that all the participants hold left-wing views and have participated in actions involving left-wing individuals, it is not possible to say that music plays a role in bringing together ideologically completely opposing views, such as those of the right and left. However, it can be argued that music has a supportive role in uniting different factions under the same umbrella. Participant M8 continues to describe the heterogeneous structure in his university and the political movement he belonged to:

“In our student movement, there were wealthy kids, people from the most marginalized neighborhoods, and those from middle-class families, etc. One of the things that helped bring them together was music, of course. It was an amazing thing to see people who were considered to have ideological differences so irreconcilable that they would almost strangle each other, sing the same folk song together at the same time.” (M8)

In this process, Bourdieu's notion of taste as a social differentiator (1984) is temporarily destabilized; while musical preferences often reflect cultural and class capital, collective singing and protest music function as bridges that collapse these distinctions, enabling people to articulate a shared belonging.

Participants F4 and M1 also stated that music becomes a way to temporarily suspend ideological boundaries, and singing the same song would form a sort of reconciliation with those who would normally argue.

“For example, when we came together to protest the rector, everyone sang the same march, but their ideas were different. Back then, there was the Aydınlık Grubu, Halkın Kurtuluşu, Dev-Yol, and then Dev-Sol, they would try to counter each other's ideas by presenting their own.” (M1)

Participant M2 highlights a crucial point on the unifying power of music, despite the ideological differences;

“You can't make everyone a Marxist, you can't make everyone a socialist, and you don't have the time or means to open a school and explain socialism to them. Those people have to believe in you. They have to find a common ground with you somewhere. The most basic thing they can unite on is actually music.” (M2)

Here, it can be discussed that music serves as a “meta-political medium”, which enables emotional resonance before ideological conversion. It is the strategic and emotional utility of music, not to indoctrinate, but to build trust, create emotional affiliation, and forge solidarity among those who may normally not share a unified point of view.

Participants F1 and M13 used the terms “emotional solidarity” (duygudaşlık), “emotional organization” (duygu örgütlülüğü), and “a meeting of feelings” (duygu

buluşması) in order to define music's unifying role in protests, similar to Durkheim's (1995) "collective effervescence" term that leads to solidarity among people in a collective setting. This emotional connection can then form an organization of a shared cognitive space, which supports Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) approach to social movements as a "cognitive praxis".

During the Gezi Park protests, it is possible to talk about a much more diverse crowd. In fact, the songs used were also more universal and unifying, with a variety of languages, reflecting this diversity. Participant M11 narrates how he came across songs who were sung in various languages, other than Turkish and English, such as Kurdish, Laz and Armenian.

A European director and musician who has been to İstanbul during the Gezi events expressed how fascinating the environment was for him, especially when comparing it to other European cities. He highlighted Istanbul's cosmopolitan structure and its crowded nature, and despite this, the fact that so many people could come together at a common point made the atmosphere particularly intriguing for him.

"That was an amazing scene from my side because, I was always ending by comparing this with my country. I was wondering if we could culturally do something like that. It was a big experience for me to see how many different parts of the society could get united around the same music. Because it's something that belongs to the people. If you can bring people together from all the neighborhoods of Istanbul, you can make a protest with more people than the people who live in Rome, Madrid, Berlin, or other capital of Europe. This means something. And of course, the music was an important of this common ground, of this common culture. Common feeling." (M10)

Participant M19 pointed out the polarizing language that was used against the protesters during Gezi Park, with the term "çapulcu" (looter). Embracing the term "looter", integrating it into the songs helped to build a collective identity, regardless

of the different ethnicities or political views of the participants, and also define the other party, who did not support the movement (Mattern, 1998; Bianchi, 2018).

"Because at that time, polarization was very easy, because the language of the ruling side was already very polarizing. The reason they sang 'Çapulcu musun vay vay' was because of that 'çapulcu' label. I mean, we didn't even have to create something new. The environment was so polarizing that, honestly, there were a lot of people there from the current ruling partner MHP. And nationalists, ultra-nationalists, Turkish nationalists, Kurdish nationalists, everyone, I mean, everyone was there. And we were singing just one thing." (M19)

Along with political and ethnical differences, Participants F7 and M18 also drew attention to the gender inclusivity of the protest spaces through songs. For example, Participant F7 described Grup Yorum as having a conservative stance on LGBT rights, but she witnessed that the embodied experience of their concerts temporarily suspends exclusionary views. Participant M18 had a similar experience, describing it as "When a march is sung, like when the "Internationale" is read, or "Bella Ciao" is sung, or "Venceremos" is sung, we can multiply these songs. With the same anger, we clench our fists. Therefore, music is an equalizing force; it makes us equal." He describes songs as "things we have created with our own subjective will, removing the artificial barriers created between us", which supports, once again, the idea that collective identities are not fixed, they can be reshaped through collective actions and social interactions (Melucci, 1995; Tilly, 1999; Frith, 2007).

4.5.3 Motivation, Activation, and Mobilization

Music serves to energize, excite, and motivate people in protests, sometimes described by the participants with terms like "agitating" or "pump up/uplift".

Anthems and songs were particularly effective in raising excitement and preparation before a protest, especially for a possible difficulty or confrontation. Participants F6 and M20 reflect on their memories how they used to motivate themselves before the demonstrations they have participated during the 1990s:

“Before going to all our demonstrations, for example, we would always listen to Grup Yorum's songs 5-6 times before every protest. I think it gave us... It was incredible. Motivation.” (F6)

"Listening to anthems and going to a protest, like 'There's a protest tomorrow morning.' Listening to those anthems the night before, to lift my mood, those were the things we did. It's kind of like being in the stands in a football game, it's a similar atmosphere.” (M20)

Participant M14 drew a similar scene for the Gezi Park protests, where police tried to enter the barricades outside the park, “songs would be sung in a group, and then they would start spreading out in waves from that group.”

When reflecting on their past actions, Participant M1 mentioned that some of them now seem very childish to him, and that they acted exaggeratedly and made mistakes due to being overly excited.

“People, with anthems, with Ruhi Su's folk songs, and so on, could easily raise their excitement and even end up doing wrong things.” (M1)

This dynamic, where collective engagement fosters an immediate emotional response, often pushes individuals to act in ways they wouldn't typically consider, especially when the energy of the group amplifies their feelings and excitement (Street, 2012).

It's not just about getting the crowd excited as a collective; for some, certain songs still serve as a personal motivator in their daily lives. Participant M8 indicated that when he wants to get energized, he would play “Oğullara Ölen Analara Türkü”, by

Grup Ekin, or “El Aparecido” by Inti Illimani, which used to be his telephone ringtone, and he would answer the calls “with a revolutionary attitude” due to its motivating nature.

Participant M9 says that he listens to the past protest songs and marches when he goes to the gym, specifically:

"For example, if you asked me to do 30 push-ups here, I could do them normally, with or without music. But if you played one of our revolutionary songs from the past and asked me to do 30 push-ups, I would probably do 35 or 40." (M9)

Participant M15, who works as a member for a political party, describes music as a preparatory stimulant for a political performance, which helps in producing charisma and stage presence due to its motivating nature:

“Zülfü Livaneli's ‘Merhaba’ has always affected me, and it still does. Because I’m also a politician, there are times when I listen to ‘Merhaba’ before getting up on stage and giving a speech, I get energized. For instance, last year, before I was going to give a speech at the congress, I was preparing my speech, and I was thinking about going up to the stage in my car, around my house. I listened to it for about 30-45 minutes, got fired up, and became the speaker who received the most applause in the hall. ‘Merhaba’ holds a place in the hearts of all CHP members, almost like a national anthem.” (M15)

Just as music plays a significant role in protests, the visibility of musicians is also a source of motivation. When musicians and other popular figures support a social movement, it not only increases the visibility of the protest, leading to higher participation, but also serves as a motivational tool for participants, helping them feel less alone (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Participant M14 stated that the observed involvement of Duman with his song during the Gezi Park protests increased participation. Participant F7 witnessed firsthand the importance of the involvement

of musicians and music in a demonstration she had organized herself, in terms of motivating her and drawing the attention of other people to the cause:

“We were singing songs, we were singing folk songs. Those who could play the guitar were playing guitar. Some music groups came to support, they had small performances and it motivated us. It was very nice. We danced halay. Of course, could it be without music? I don't think any resistance would be complete without halay or music, it would feel very bland. Having an elderly man come up to you and ask what you're doing there while you sing the song, it was enjoyable for us, it was affecting us" (F7)

As described by Edwards and McCarthy (2004), involvement of musicians into social movements also acts as a “resource” for the movement, which not only provides moral and motivation, but also gives them access to reaching policymakers or source providers through the great media coverage and attraction received from the public. This involvement also “legitimizes” the movement in a way (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004), with the “psychological effect” as described by Participant M16, “The involvement of artists, seeing the people they watch on TV suddenly supporting Gezi, was a significant step towards collectivism in the face of the isolation people felt.” (M14)

4.5.4 Expression and Communication

Music is a means to express the messages and demands of the protest and for participants to express themselves and their political views. To the question of “Did the songs or anthems used play a facilitating role in conveying the messages that the protests aimed to deliver?”, Participants M1 and M7 gave the following answers:

“Well, of course it did. For example, when we were singing Internationale, we were trying to spread our ideas to the base, to the masses.” (M1)

"It definitely made it easier. It was a way to make our actions understood and to give them meaning. We were doing an action, but there were passersby, or there was the gendarme standing at your head, the police. In a way, it was

also used as a tool for self-expression, to explain why we were doing this."
(M7)

The function of music as a tool for expression and communication, of course, is not limited to protests; it also appears in everyday life. As discussed regarding the role of music in shaping identity, music becomes a means of expression. Sometimes, when people struggle to express their thoughts with their own words, the songs become their voice.

"The things you listened to helped express your thoughts, allowing you to voice what you couldn't say, helping you make your voice heard, and making you feel that your thoughts and opinions were valuable during those times."
(F8)

Songs may provide a sense of validation and recognition for people, particularly in politically alienating environments. Lately, sharing a song on social media has even become a tool for political expression, especially highlighting social media's role in Gezi Park protests:

"Let me tell you something that happened to me during the Gezi events. I was sharing songs on my Facebook page at that time, and someone wrote to me saying, "Why aren't you posting anything? What kind of person are you?" I replied, "Look at the lyrics and the songs I'm sharing, my response is in there, and then you'll understand my perspective." There's no need to write, "So and so did this, and this happened in this protest." Can a song change the world? Yes, it can. That was my goal, the reason I created that page, to continue political activism with songs or with the stories behind the songs." (M5)

Based on his experience in the Boğaziçi Jazz Choir during the Gezi Park protests, Participant M19 described songs as "peaceful manners" to articulate demands and oppositions.

While song lyrics are the first thing that comes to mind when defining music as a means of communication and expression, music can sometimes become a

communication tool that transcends language, even through the rhythm alone (Bennett, 2001; Frith, 2007; Byeryl, 2013; Umunç & Ulusal, 2020). Participants M7, M18, and F7 emphasized the universal aspect of the songs. Participant M7 talked about how the songs from the 1950s and 1960s that were produced during the worker strikes and labor movements in America motivated him, even though he doesn't understand the lyrics. He also recalled specifically Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and "Atom Heart Mother" albums, which influenced him the most, regardless of their English lyrics. Participant M18 recalled when he had listened to the "Internationale" firstly the version recorded by the East German opera in German lyrics, but it highly influenced and motivated him through its melody. Participant F7 also emphasized the importance of rhythm:

"I don't know, but I really enjoy that Inca music. I love Irish music. I like the rhythm, where the bass of the drum is emphasized a bit more. Sometimes there are hymns, like foreign Egyptian hymns, where the bendir is very dominant. It creates excitement in me, that kind of energy. It's more the music than the lyrics that affects me. Yes, the rhythm affects me." (F7)

4.5.5 Atmosphere and Experience

Music contributes significantly to the overall atmosphere and experience of a protest event, making it more engaging, enjoyable, or memorable. It is a tool, tactical musical repertoire as described by Taylor and Van Dyke (2004), to keep people's attention alive and to ensure that people stay together without getting bored. Here, Participants M2, M3, and M18 talked about how songs can fill temporal gaps between speeches or actions, or can gather people back together if there is a disorganization within a crowd, and keep the rhythm of a protest going. Participant M2 specified that to fill the gaps between the speeches during their student

demonstrations, people would come out and recite poems. When they discovered that when a folk song was sung, people started to sing along out loud, they continued to sing songs instead of reciting poems, as they would bring the crowd together more effectively.

Participants M18, M12 and M3 gave examples from the protests organized by workers' unions and 1 May events. Participant M12, as a musician, composed an anthem for DİSK's (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey) 50th year anniversary, "It starts with DİSK slogans, then there's a folk song riff, then it transitions into rap music, followed by a strong rock rhythm... and then it starts playing the halay." The broad mix of different genres in the composition can enhance the inclusivity in the protest environment, and through the different rhythmic structures of these different musical sounds, the energy can be revived again in the protest site, because, "waiting at a protest site is very exhausting, and someone needs to keep the rhythm going." (M12)

Participant M3 recalled the 1977 1 May protests in Taksim, which is also called "Bloody May Day", because of the attack on the demonstrators.

"For example, in the '77 Taksim march, there were union and student groups, and everyone would walk in a procession. Everyone would sing a march or a folk song as they walked. Because the front part would sometimes get congested, people would wait, stop, because hundreds of thousands were walking there, and you'd wait for 5 or 10 minutes for the front to settle and organize. During that time, a march would be sung." (M3)

As a poet, participant M18 narrated that he would frequently recite poems with music playing in the background in the demonstrations organized by the workers' associations.

"The more we can integrate songs, poems, and music into the lives of workers, the poor, and the marginalized, the better. Because music is not just

something that gives us strength. It is something that humanizes us; it is a form of emotion that softens the human inside us. Therefore, music is not just a way to express anger, but also a way to connect with passion, love, and other emotions.” (M18)

In this quote, music’s function goes beyond from acting merely as a “tactical repertoire” to form an emotional bond in the communities. While protest music is often framed in terms of mobilization, empowerment, or anger, this statement broadens the emotional spectrum. As DeNora (2000) describes music as a “technology of the self”, music helps people to regulate themselves emotionally and feel more “human” even in the dehumanizing contexts and hardships.

It is observed by the participants that the usage of music makes the environment less stressful by adding an element of joy and liveliness; thus, acting as a conciliator to sustain the demonstration (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). An environment where people feel comfortable and joyful is important for the sustainability of the movement, which was particularly noted in the context of the Gezi protests.

"They were singing Duman’s song 'Eyvallah.' People would walk around with speakers, played music and inevitably, it would affect their mood, their psychology, and it would increase the amount of time they spent at the protests." (M6)

"There was a more peaceful atmosphere inside the park after clashing with the police. The continuous music inside the park had a meaning in that sense as well." (M19)

Participant M16, comparing their role in the Boğaziçi Jazz Choir to morale-boosting practices, such as the involvement of storytellers or comedians in ancient armies:

“Of course, it's not easy, sitting in the park every day, eating simit, wondering when the police will arrive, and so on. There has to be some kind of entertainment. Music is also an entertainment tool, and we had to provide it there.” (M16)

He also noted that "the more creative a slogan or song, the more effective the opposition," highlighting how artistic expression became a powerful form of resistance and engagement.

Participant M14, as a politician, drew inspiration in his party politics from the environment he encountered in the Gezi protests. People who could be described as both political and apolitical, those who had never before been involved in politics or activism, as well as those who had been active in political parties or groups for years, came together to sing the same songs and enjoy themselves. They were happy, and this naturally created an attractive atmosphere that allowed a much broader range of people to connect.

“As a result, it allowed a much wider range of people to come together. Music played a huge role there. Because people go to places where they feel happy. This is the basic nature of politics. People stay away from places where there are cold faces, constant criticism, and negative feelings. People want to be in places where they are happy, where they sing songs they enjoy, and where they share the same emotions with others. That’s why music is such a fundamental part of organizing.” (M14)

After witnessing the contribution of music during the Gezi process, as a result, they established a music choir at the party’s district headquarters, composed of 60 members, of whom only about 4 or 5 had any prior political connections. They joined because of the call for music, but over time, they became members of the party.

“When they come to practice, a completely different atmosphere is created in our building. Everyone is happy, everyone is having fun, everyone is singing songs. This is the atmosphere that music brings. I saw this during the Gezi process, I tested it in my own life, and I thought, "We need to hold onto this in our field," and we came to the conclusion that we should establish a music choir in our district headquarters.” (M14)

Participant M12 once again reflects on the collective spirit created during the demonstrations,

“In a demonstration, people smile at each other, as if saying, 'I'm glad you're here too.' One of the features that can replace this is being able to sing the same song together. People want to have fun while creating the moment, meaning within the action itself. They want to smile because their presence is also a source of joy. I think this is one of the reasons, as we discussed earlier, why so many different musical layers emerged at Gezi and why people accepted it. I realize this while talking with you now.” (M12)

4.5.6 Resistance and Resilience

In addition to creating a joyful atmosphere and an emotional bond between participants, music is also used as an act of defiance against authority and censorship, helping participants maintain their spirit in challenging or oppressive situations.

"A social demonstration is not an easy thing, you get tired, you walk, you experience stress, there's chaos, there are anxieties, but musically, from somewhere in my mind, I always believe in that old childhood song." (M12)

These songs have sometimes served as a source of strength and support for people, even in moments of physical violence.

“For example, sometimes during a road trip, they play Yorum's songs, and all these incredible memories come to my mind, like the passionate protests we participated in. They beat us, there was torture, but we were still like that, you know? We were singing Group Yorum's songs while in custody.” (F6)

According to some participants' experiences, they worked effectively in the moment, but according to others, they led to a harsher reaction from the police. Singing loudly, even simple songs, could provoke reactions from police, especially in the past.

"In the 90s, for example, the number one song of the student movements was Fırtına, performed by Yeni Türkü. It wasn't made for this purpose, but suddenly it became the anthem of those movements, and we all drew strength

from Fırtına. While we were being beaten with the batons, we would sing Fırtına from within. I know I did that personally, and we even sang it loudly, which made the police really angry. But, you know, songs are also things that keep you energized, give you strength, and show that we are together, so this was the iconic song of that period." (M11)

The owners of the songs that gave strength to participants in protests were also facing similar violence and censorship. According to a quote from one of the members of the band Yeni Türkü:

"I attended 1st May events, workers' actions, resistances, all street movements. I was beaten by the police just for singing the song Leylim Ley. They took me off the stage. I was beaten by 4 or 5 police officers until I passed out. The only reason was that we sang Leylim Ley." (M17)

Thus, substituting censored words in songs was a form of resistance for musicians.

"Yeni Türkü has a song called Çember, which goes, "Either you're outside the circle, or you'll be part of it." The original lyrics of the song are, "Either you're outside the system, or you'll have to be part of it." This song did not pass the censorship with the word "system", so we changed the word "system" to "circle." After that, we started changing every problematic word to "circle." For example, when we sang a Bulgarian song, there was a word "faşisto" (fascist) in it. At concerts, the police would line up in front of us. How would we say fascist? We would say "çembersko". These were serious pressures. There was no opportunity to speak out." (M17)

These quotes provide examples of "tactical repertoires" used by both the protesters and the musicians, both to draw strength from songs in times of violence and oppression, and to escape it.

Beyond resistance, music provided strength, comfort, and a way to cope with hardship, loss, and difficult times. Folk songs and laments specifically helped people process pain and grief, especially after losing their friends.

"Our folk songs have a very empowering aspect. Especially our laments, in our pains. The things we sang during the loss of friends, at funerals, those things definitely helped us renew ourselves, over and over again. Did we sing

at funerals louder, shouting, expressing our protest? I suppose at funerals, it was a bit more... We were more emotional, let's say.” (M7)

Just like Street (2012) gave the example of the band “Infernal Noise Brigade” who emerged during the protests that took place in Washington in 1999, and defined themselves as “tactical advisors who provide strength for participants”, Sambistanbul played with the same aim during the Gezi Park protests. Both bands played percussions and drums, and provided moral support to the protestors with the rhythm only. Participant M10, who documented the role of Sambistanbul during Gezi protests shared a valuable memory that he encountered:

“(During Gezi protests) In the beginning, they told Sambistanbul team, ‘don't play, we've lost our friends here’, as they were grieving. But the next day, they said, we are so glad you played and they come and hugged and kissed group members and I think that's really inspiring.” (M10)

Music is described as something that can deeply affect emotions, bringing both immense sorrow and great happiness, and helps people to "hold onto life, resist death, find a way not to die, a magical thing” as described by Participant M18. It provides a psychological boost in the face of violence or difficulty and offers a sense of healing and renewal in challenging circumstances. In the context of Gezi, humor and playful music helped people endure and stay standing despite difficulties. Music continuing in the park even during police clashes provided a sense of peace, sometimes even served as a distraction for the police themselves.

“Still, all this brutality is not louder than the spirit. It was kind of ‘look, there are more interesting things in life than throwing tear gas, come with us and play some drums together.’ Sometimes, really, I saw some police officers losing their scary face or even their concentration. Once you hear this music, you cannot do anything but join the music because it is loud, and it is moving. This is exactly for this magic, Sambistanbul was created. The violence, the music can stop this, because it can wake you up. Like stop doing what you're doing and come here and take part in the rhythm. Because when you really

hear this music, you are obliged to follow, even the police, they were dancing at a certain point.” (M10)

4.6 Music and Collective Memory

To understand the connection between music and the memories of the individuals from the past protests, participants were asked if any songs from that period evoke strong memories or emotions for them, and what they feel or think about when they hear them today. If they have mentioned a specific song that is meaningful for them, that song were played to them as a part of song recall activity and they were asked to describe what memories these songs evoked in them, how they felt when they heard them now, the first time they heard the song and what this song meant to them now, compared to when they first heard it. All the participants started to sing along with the songs.

“Well, our revolutionary feelings are stirred again, we like it. We experience nostalgia, you know. We still say, 'Thank goodness those songs are by our side,' like Selda's and others.” (M5)

Music acts as a powerful trigger for recalling specific memories and feelings associated with past events. Hearing certain songs can transport listeners back to particular periods or protests, evoking a range of positive emotions from joy and excitement to more negative ones such as nostalgia, sadness, regret, and pain (DeNora, 2000; Connell & Gibson, 2013). Listening to songs from past protests can allow individuals to relive the moments or the feelings they experienced at the time, such as excitement, hope, and a desire to take action. Participant M8 stated that sometimes he feels like he wants to "rise up and take action" after listening to a series of anthems and folk songs. Similarly, Participant M9 describes himself as “a

sleeping cell ready to wake up,” and these songs have this power to motivate him in taking political action, like he did in the old days;

"For example, I still listen to things like İsyen Ateşi by Grup Munzur while exercising, or sometimes I listen to old songs by Grup Yorum. It's not so much about remembering the old days; it also motivates me now, and I listen to it with pleasure." (M9)

However, these feelings can also be complex; for instance, alongside the excitement of past political involvement, the experience of a physical violence can also be relived through a song, sometimes causing a traumatizing effect. Participant F7 said that among the songs used in protests, the ones that affected and motivated her the most were Grup Yorum songs. However, when asked if she still listens to these songs on her own, she replied:

"The songs I sing and listen to with the crowd are different, but when I'm alone, I don't listen to those kinds of songs. For example, I never play Grup Yorum at home. I listen to these songs with the group, with the crowd, in those energetic moments. But when I'm by myself, I don't prefer those kinds of things. I don't need them at home, there's no need for motivation."

She even said that she gets annoyed when people listen to these songs in places that are not suitable for them, and she answered in a critical tone:

"It's like, for example, at weddings, there are folk dance songs, right? Many people listen to folk dance music while driving. I am so surprised, I even get angry. I mean, why are you listening to folk dance music while driving? If you're not going to dance, why are you listening to folk dance music? Now, our political songs are like that too. I mean, okay, during a political action, fine, but when I get home, why should I listen to it? What are you going to do with it? What am I going to do with it by myself?"

Participant F7 emphasizes the contextual nature of music's meaning and its performative role. Her disapproval of listening to protest songs out of context highlights how strongly the songs are associated with the collective action in her

mind, they are inseparable from that social setting in her memory. However, follow-up from Participant F7 reveals the complex and potentially traumatizing aspect of music-evoked memories. After listening to Grup Yorum's "Sıyrılıp Gelen" song, and she was asked what this song reminded her of, she discovered another reason why she does not want to listen to these songs individually anymore.

"I think about a lot, related to protests. Maybe that's why I don't listen to them at home. I don't listen to them because they remind me of the beatings and the torture we went through. But when I hear them, whenever I listen to them somewhere, I go to a different protest in my mind each time." (F7)

For Participant F7, the songs are directly linked to episodic memories of "beatings and torture", leading to her avoidance of listening to them in personal settings. The fact that hearing them elsewhere still makes her "go to a different protest in her mind each time" demonstrates the powerful, involuntary, and sometimes painful nature of Music-Evoked Autobiographical Memories (MEAMs), that allow us to travel back in time to specific times and places (Ferbinteanu et al., 2006; Tulving, 2002).

While listening to the same song and asked what she felt, F6 answered:

"Sadness. I'm feeling sadness right now, I feel pain. The songs I felt excitement for when I listened to them back then, I guess it's related to what has been experienced, so many lives were sacrificed, now they evoke sadness. I think it's both the age and what has been experienced. I mean, I'm sad, we were defeated, we couldn't leave much for you, I'm sad."

F6 specifically recalls singing Grup Yorum while being detained. She contrasts this with the present, stating she cannot do that anymore. "Can I do it now? They took me in 2013 (into custody), I couldn't do it, I couldn't sing it."

F6 also mentions that while she used to sing Grup Yorum songs loudly, she hasn't been able to sing them loudly for years and finds this strange, possibly because of not feeling the same enthusiasm anymore, but instead it makes her feel sadness.

"I haven't sung a song in years. I used to sing Grup Yorum, and I used to sing it really well back then. I used to sing it loudly, but now, you know, I don't even do the chorus. I don't sing any song out loud anymore. It's strange. But if Grup Yorum plays, I can still remember the lyrics by heart, my memory is still fresh like that. I guess it must be coded or something. I mean, there's still something on the left side, it's probably still there." (F6)

The lyrics are coded in her memory, but the "enthusiasm" that once fueled her singing has waned; this may suggest a suppression of the full emotional re-experience for Participant F6.

Songs that used to motivate people when they listened to them now evoke a sense of sadness when they hear them. This is because these songs became associated with the movements of that period. The events that followed the movements, perhaps the friends or significant figures they lost during that time, create a sense of defeat, a feeling of 'we couldn't succeed' for many of them. Therefore, songs that motivated and energized them back then now evoke a deep sadness for some participants.

Participant F8 mentioned Ruhi Su's "Şişli Meydanında Üç Kız" and stated that she hadn't listened to it for a very long time.

"Yes, I can feel the same anger right now. The police committed a huge massacre during the May Day protests. You remember the same anger, the anger against injustice. But there's also an anger that comes from not being able to do anything. Because the song you listened to in your youth, which motivated you to take action, shows you that nothing has changed by the time you reach this age, and that makes you angry. For example, here, the song says 'they'll ask one day.' How many years have passed, but could we demand an explanation? We couldn't. So, of course, it creates anger, sadness, and also hopelessness." (F8)

Participant M2 mentioned the Timur Selçuk concert he has participated with his friends that took place in METU in 1978. When he was shown a live recording from the concert, it evoked very strong feelings in him, causing the memory to come alive as described by DeNora (1999), and he started to cry.

"Look, I'm getting emotional even while talking about this, do you realize? (Crying) This is how it feels. Of course, back then, it meant so much to us. I mean, you put your life on the line. You leave your family, you leave school. And throughout this process, you're in a struggle, along with these songs, and today those songs remind you of that struggle. There's also some sadness, of course. Oh, we couldn't succeed. Look at where we've ended up." (Crying and taking a tissue) (M6)

(On the lyrics "Revolutionaries die, but revolutions continue")

"It didn't turn out that way. Revolutionaries died, but revolutions didn't continue."

Participant F2 also got emotional and started to sing along while listening to

"Gündoğdu March" "performed by Grup Yorum:

"The unjust execution of those 3 children, it's such a sad event. It reminds me of those days. This song always reminds me of those three children. The revolution behind it. I could say these children did this, they threw themselves into the fire. Exactly, yes. This song reminds me of those years, the unjust execution of those 3 children."

The current reality, where goals haven't been achieved, can also bring sadness and frustration when recalling these songs. The perceived "defeat" of the movement and the cultural trauma associated to it reshapes the collective memory and, consequently, the individual's emotional response to the associated music (Eyerman, 2004). This is also relevant for a more recent period, like Gezi protests. Participant F3 mentioned "Tencere Tava Havası" by Kardeş Türküler as the song that stood out to her the most during the Gezi Park period. Even though it is a very playful and humorous song, and she sang along when she listened to it, the song doesn't have good connotations for her now compared to when she first heard it.

"Well, the difference is obvious. The loss of lives. If the situation hadn't escalated to this point, if we had gotten out of here without anyone getting hurt, we could have remembered it beautifully today. But now, with Berkin, Ethem, and many other children whose names I can't even count, it's impossible to remember it any other way. That's why, in a way, even if it makes you smile, it's still something that hurts inside." (F3)

Participant M7, who also attended Timur Selçuk's 1978 concert in METU, listened to the same recording, also singing along, with recalling more positive associations in him:

"One of those voices is also my voice. This is valuable to me."

Q: What does this remind you of?

"That crowd. Of course, we participated in many things at the ODTÜ Devrim Stadium. Forums, protests, concerts, of course, those days are remembered. It was an exciting thing, how amazing it was for everyone in the crowd to sing a song together."

Not only experiencing being a part of a crowd, but also its memory still creates a strong emotion for Participant M7. This is an example of how communal listening and singing act as a formative force in shaping the emotional character of moments and create a strong sense of solidarity and belonging among people (Bennett, 2001; Eyerman, 2002; Frith, 2007).

Although for most participants these songs don't motivate them enough to take an action as much as before, when they think about those days, they feel pleasant emotions mixed with a sense of nostalgia. Participant M8 talks about Ezginin Günlüğü song "Seni Düşünmek" and how it moved him when he was 16 years old; "Now, when I listen to it, I feel extremely happy, but not in the same way. Not with the same intensity. But I do remember that feeling. I feel the longing for the emotion I felt in the past." Similarly, when listening to Grup Yorum, Participant M20 made the following comment: "When I hear it, that melody takes me back to 1993, to Kadıköy Square. But it doesn't take me back with a sense of pain. It takes me back with a pleasant feeling."

These quotes capture the essence of nostalgia triggered by music, where there is a "longing for the emotions felt in the past". While the current experience might not have the "same intensity," the music still evokes "fragments of memories" and the feeling of those moments, with the pleasant feeling associated with the nostalgia, which may be triggered by the role of dopamine release in the memory consolidation process (Jancke, 2018).

Participant M20 continues,

"It takes me to my personal history, to a life well-lived. And it carries me into the future as well. The place I stand today and the place I will be tomorrow are supported by these songs. I carry them with me. Grup Yorum has been with me for 30 years, Grup Ekin is with me. They will be with me today and tomorrow, we are walking together with all those songs." (M20)

When listening to a song, we are transported back in time and recall our memories, but at the same time, we realize that these songs, and the memories we associate with them, have shaped us into the person we are today, and also guide us in the future (DeNora, 1999). Songs become a part of our identities over time.

Participants M19 and F5, who sang with the Boğaziçi Caz Korosu during the Gezi Park protests, listened to their rendition of "Çapulcu Musun Vay Vay" again:

"It makes me feel very innocent, because we were really young people with simple problems. We were saying, 'Don't do it, we can solve this.'" (M19)

"I remember certain scenes, and it feels like in some periods in life, life is more beautiful, the air is cleaner. You get more taste and pleasure from it. That's the kind of freedom I remember when I hear these songs." (F5)

Although they get excited when they remember what they achieved in those days through these songs, the fact that they won't be able to feel the same excitement or take the same actions under the same conditions today sometimes makes people feel sad.

When the song “Eyvallah” by Duman was played in relation to Gezi, “I think I couldn’t do something like that now. I think we were crazy. It was like something wild that we did.” (M6)

F4 was a member of Bandista and performed during the Gezi Park protests:

“I get very emotional, I say, 'It was beautiful, I like the idea that it was possible to do that, but I also feel that, in this stage of my life, maybe because my life has changed, and the political environment in Turkey has changed, the feeling of not being able to do it today is unpleasant. I mean, right now, I can’t go out and sing those songs again. I can’t find the energy, time, or courage for it. The fact that it’s no longer possible is a bit emotional. And also, we did beautiful things, I feel like, 'What a beautiful period we lived through.' I get excited.”

Participants were asked, “Do you think the current young generation attaches the same meanings to these songs and can feel similar emotions when they listen to them?” Most of the answers to this question were “no”. They believe that someone who hasn’t directly witnessed an event cannot feel the same emotions through the songs. This is also often attributed to a different social reality, lack of direct participation, and changed societal conditions. However, some participants also provided examples suggesting that they felt significant emotions and connection from songs about periods or events they did not directly witness or were too young to fully comprehend at the time. These were sometimes due to “cascading reminiscence bumps” (Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013) or “prosthetic memories” (Landsberg, 2004) that were transferred through collective consciousness.

Participant M8, recalling his childhood at 9-10 years old, was "incredibly impressed" when his father's friends told him the story of "Ciao Bella".

“I knew almost all the stories of those songs or the stories of the anthems. Again, at the very beginning, when I was 11-12 years old, there was a period when we faced economic difficulties, etc. We were living in poverty, for example, we couldn’t pay the electricity bill. And to motivate us for action,

let's say, my mom and dad would sing songs and anthems. Even before I listened to Zülfü, for example, I learned songs like 'Şarkışla' from my mom and dad." (M8)

Similarly, when his parents told him a story about thousands of people singing a march in a commemoration together, he got "goosebumps" and expected to live a similar experience in an organization that he would participate.

"I'll even say this: when stories like these are told, like '5,000 people are singing the Bursa anthem,' I always thought I would also encounter something like that. I went to my first 1st of May protest with that expectation, and for me, it was a huge disappointment. Because everyone was chanting their own slogans in their own groups. No one was singing the 1st of May anthem together, and I was honestly very upset." (M8)

Just like seen in the examples given by Participant M8, musical memories are ways of passing down both personal and collective heritage across generations, and this happens not only through songs themselves but also the stories, narratives that accompany them (Van Dijck, 2006).

Participant M12, who grew up hearing folk and political music from his parents, felt a sadness that he couldn't fully define at that time but also a sense of joy from Zülfü Livaneli's songs in childhood, even when he didn't fully grasp the context of figures like Deniz Gezmiş mentioned in the lyrics. He felt that the music created an "atmosphere" that him process information he didn't fully understand, and Livaneli's songs about these figures provided a feeling of "safety" and "trust".

"Zülfü Livaneli's songs, as a child, they gave me a strange sadness. Of course, my family's daily discussions, which were naturally on the left side, were also influential. For instance, the names of Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan, and Ulaş Bardakçı were discussed, but I couldn't really understand them at the time. Music created an atmosphere. I realize now that I processed all the vague information I received from the outside, the things I couldn't define, through Livaneli's songs as a child. There was even a moment where I thought that Deniz Gezmiş and his companions lived behind a mountain in a typical Mediterranean village, as we were driving by and seeing the slogans

on the wall. The music gave me a sense of security, as if they were there and I was here, safe. I know it sounds silly and meaningless when I think about it now, but for me, it was never like that.” (M12)

Participant F8, who also mentioned Zülfü Livaneli’s “Hoş Geldin Bebek” song, in which she first encountered the word "socialism" during middle school, and it was after hearing that term that she began identifying herself as a "socialist”, stated that she can feel emotional and can understand songs deeply, despite having no direct experience.

"For example, 'Mamak Türküsü.' Now, that is a collective consciousness, perhaps even though I haven't had the experience of prison or being detained, that song makes me feel as if I've lived those experiences. I get emotional when I listen to it, and I can really understand it. It expresses the feelings I can relate to. I was deeply affected by the 'Şişli Meydanında Üç Kız' song, from those events. Ruhi Su’s song is truly impactful, especially because of the massacre that took place on May Day, which was truly a horrifying event. Even though I was a child at the time, those songs convey the emotions of the young people who lived through those times.” (F8)

“As my political awareness grew, as I read about those periods and learned history, it certainly influenced me. I was born in '69. How can I know what happened in the '68 period? But if the music of that time influences me now, if it affected me in my youth, then I think it would affect those children now as well.” (F7)

Participant M15 remembered the first time he heard Grup Kızılırmak’s “Pir Sultan Abdal” album, and it made him feel like “transforming into a political fireball”, implying that songs that were produced long before one person was even born and under different political conditions can still generate motivation and energy for political action.

"One of my professors, whom I really admire, once told me: 'The most important thing that influenced me in the '90s was Grup Kızılırmak's Pir Sultan Abdal album.' I became curious and listened to it. I listened to it for days and I thought, 'Wow, how could such an album exist? I mean, under those political conditions, it could take someone, organize them and turn them into a political thing. It turns into a political fireball; it has such an impactful aspect.'"

Participant F5 mentioned that she grew up listening to artists such as Zülfü Livaneli and Edip Akbayram because of her family, and she still occasionally listens to such political and protest songs. However, F5 describes a history of finding these songs difficult to listen to, particularly in childhood. F5 says that when she was a child, listening to songs like "Metris Türküsü" or "Mamak Türküsü" felt "a bit too much". This feeling stemmed from sensing the conflict and difficulties of related periods in a "very gloomy way".

"I do listen to them occasionally, but the conflict and resistance felt so bleak that it would be a bit too much for me when I was a child. Like Metris Türküsü, Mamak Türküsü, why am I learning about these troubles at the age of 5? I mean, really, many horrific things have happened in the country, for example, I can't listen to the songs written about the Madımak incident. It feels too harsh for me, it feels way too harsh. That's why." (F5)

Here in these examples, songs act as "textually mediated" memories that are passed down to generations by "media entrepreneurs" who own these songs, which can be exemplified as names such as Zülfü Livaneli, Ruhi Su or Grup Kızılırmak in the participants experiences, which left important impressions on them even though they did not directly experience the events they have in their memories (Kubal & Becerra, 2014).

Songs can also be reinterpreted over time and can gain a shared meaning as they are associated with new events. Participant F3 mentioned that recently, while watching the musical "Les Misérables" with her children, she heard the song "Do You Hear The People Sing" and it immediately reminded her of the Gezi version of the song, which was covered in 2013, and paused the film to listen to that version.

“Well, you know, we’ve kind of pinned it in our heads. It doesn't fit as well in *Les Misérables*, but it suits Taksim much more, in my opinion. We also want to pass on our emotions to the kids.” (F3)

This is a deliberate act of transmitting a specific memory and the associated ties to Gezi through the medium of the song. While some participants express pessimism about whether the younger generations can feel the same way about older political songs, F3's action shows an attempt to actively facilitate this connection for a more recent shared experience.

Participant M11 provides another example of adaptation, noting how the song “Ellerinde Pankartlar,” written for earlier events, was later used and tragically linked to the 10 October Ankara bombing because people were singing it when the bomb exploded. It has a traumatic effect on people when he plays the song during his DJ performances.

“When I play this song, it can trigger the trauma of some people. For me, yes, the song was written for Bloody May Day, it was used in May Day 77, but it also became the unforgettable song of the October 10 attack, and in our memory, there is always the explosion in the background of that song, and that will stay with us.”

This quote is a striking example of how songs can acquire multiple layers of meaning and become linked to new events through their context of use, and “cultural trauma” can trigger emotional responses for people, even for those who did not experience it directly (Eyerman, 2004).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between music and protest participation in Turkey across two important historical moments: the student movements of the 1970s and the Gezi Park protests in 2013. Through in-depth interviews with participants from both eras, it is observed that songs do not function only as a background music for the protests, but they actively act as a mechanism for emotional expression, collective identity formation, mobilization, and memory-making.

Participants have a wide range of musical preferences, but their most preferred songs generally align with protest songs associated with left-wing views. However, they do not always consciously choose to listen to these songs. Although their personal tastes may differ at times, the communities they belong to and the collective activities they participate in, such as forums and protests, have shaped their music listening habits as well. Although songs do not directly shape people's political views, they rather reflect the existing views. There is still a reciprocal relationship between musical tastes and political identities, where music can strengthen existing political

views and identities, which can serve as a source of motivation for people to participate in politics and a connection to other people. Especially in the younger ages, these songs can also act as an educational tool for people, when complex political concepts are not fully grasped. As Frith (2007) suggests, music is embedded in identity formation, not in a deterministic but in an expressive and performative way.

Interviewing participants who participated in protests in different time periods enabled the study to see the evolution of the role of music in different protests and make a comparison among them. During the 1970s and early 1980s, music was deeply integrated into specific political ideologies and organizations. This was also true for the 1990s. Participants described this situation as "every political movement and formation had to have a music band." During the interviews, participants were able to recall specific artists and songs that were closely associated with these political movements, and they provided common examples.

Although the function of music was similar in different periods, the genres were different. During the 1970s, marches were the most dominant formats during protests. Popular songs outside of march or folk songs were generally not used in protests, and those who listened to the songs that were not affiliated with leftist ideologies, such as pop songs, were criticized for being "apolitical". In the 1990s, protest songs evolved to a richer musical sound, going beyond the march format. Music was still considered as an integral part of political practice, almost as a requirement.

The Gezi Park protests period featured a highly diverse musical landscape. The main reason behind this was the broad composition of protesters from varied political,

ideological, and ethnic backgrounds, different from the protests from the earlier periods, especially in the 1970s. Because different from the ideological clashes in the 1970s, the demonstrations related to Gezi Park had a more inclusive nature. Music was still present but less organized than in previous decades, often described by the participants as “more spontaneous”. They talked about how, rather than an organized environment where people gathered and sang anthems and songs together, music played throughout the park. Therefore, unlike the 1970s, participants found it difficult to recall artists and songs specifically associated with the movement from that time. This may, of course, also be due to the shorter duration of that period. Another difference was the “carnival” atmosphere that prevailed within the park, and humor was widely embraced as a form of resistance, unlike the strict nature of the past protests.

Despite the variations in musical styles and protest cultures across different periods, the functions of music were similar and classified into key themes according to the answers given by the participants. Drawing from Taylor and Van Dyke (2004), songs can be seen as tactical repertoires used for unification, expression, motivation, resistance and maintaining the atmosphere.

Firstly, music acts as a powerful force for bringing people together and fostering a sense of unity. As suggested by Eyerman (2002), especially collective singing makes individuals feel strong and part of a mass movement, it allows them to look back and say "I was there too" when they remember those memories. While they feel like they are a part of a collective, this effect can bridge social, cultural, or even ideological differences, at least those with broadly similar viewpoints. Thus, a new collective identity is formed in a social movement because they are there for a common cause. This finding supports Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) conception of social

movements as “cognitive praxis,” as well as Tilly’s (1995), Melucci’s (1995), and Tajfel’s (1974) emphasis on identity construction through shared performances and the feeling of belonging to a social group. And music acts as a catalyst in this formation. The musical connection that is formed there can act as a meta-political medium for emotional resonance.

Songs energize, excite, and motivate participants, both in their individual daily lives and collectively in a protest setting. It can serve as a stimulant in while preparing for action and also helps to maintain that spirit and motivation during a protest, even in challenging situations. Only the rhythm alone can boost the morale of the participants, transcending the language barriers.

Music can also act as a political communication and expression tool, because it facilitates the articulation of protest messages and demands. The songs they sang provided a space for them to express themselves to a wider audience, to ordinary citizens, and even to the police, gendarmerie, and state authorities who were waiting to intervene. Through these songs, they were able to explain “why they were doing this”, what is their aim. In addition, their music taste also allows some participants to express themselves and their political views, the songs they listen to can speak for them.

Music significantly contributes to the overall atmosphere of a protest in order to make the setting more engaging, enjoyable, and memorable. Songs can act as strategic tools to fill temporal gaps during a protest or a meeting, re-gather crowds, and maintain the rhythm in difficult contexts. To be able to sustain the movement, the environment should not be so stressful for the participants and it has to be more attractive, so songs can play an important part here.

Music also functions as a tool to provide strength, comfort, and a way to cope with hardship, even with violence and loss. This concept of "resistance" sometimes emerges when they sing mournful songs to remember their lost friends, using it as a way to heal from the pain. At times, they draw strength from these songs during moments of violence. Other times, rather than engaging in direct political action, they use songs as a method to avoid censorship.

One of the main goals of this research was to understand the relationship between music and memory, and it was observed firsthand that music has a big mnemonic power on participants. Through the songs they listened to, they remembered memories related to the past movements they took part in, and discovered new connections between their memories and emotions that they may not have explored before, as suggested by DeNora (1999). Songs from both the 1970s and the Gezi protests continue to serve as sonic markers of political memory. They both archive and activate certain emotions, such as hope, motivation, pride; or rage, loss, and mostly melancholy and nostalgia, even sometimes evoked very strong responses in them, such as crying while listening to certain songs. These songs often remain deeply coded in their memory, as participants could not help but sing along to the songs they listened to during the interviews, and these songs continue to shape their identity throughout their lifetime.

As suggested in the theoretical framework of this study, through various media forms, such as songs, people can still be affected emotionally from certain periods of time and historical events, even they did not experience them directly, because they are embedded in a society's collective memory (Van Dijck, 2006; Kubal & Becerra, 2014). However, most of the participants were skeptical about this issue, as they thought that younger generations cannot fully understand or cannot be affected in the

same way by the older protest songs due to a lack of direct experience. However, the findings suggest that emotions and certain connections can be transferred across generations. Because songs are passed down from generation to generation, according to the responses of the participants, for example, during the Gezi Park protests, not only new and more current songs were sung, but also anthems from the '70s were still used. Additionally, the old songs they learned from their families were influential for the participants who experienced their student years in the '90s and participated in the Gezi Park protests in developing their political identities and shaping their protest practices. Shared stories, family influence, and the powerful evocative nature of songs about past events can create “prosthetic memories” that trigger “intergenerational reminiscence bumps” (Landsberg, 2004; Kubal & Becerra, 2014). Songs can also be reinterpreted and acquire new meanings when linked to contemporary events. This also demonstrates their ongoing relevance through different time periods and their capacity to trigger emotional responses in people from different age groups.

The interview sample of the thesis was limited in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, and educational background. The participant pool included a greater number of male interviewees compared to female participants. Although the questions asked were not intended to elicit answers that were intended to vary depending on gender, the gender imbalance may have shaped the perspectives gathered. It would have been more interesting to hear the perspectives of more women who participated in protests within a more male-dominated political movement, especially in the 1970s.

All participants in the study had completed at least a university-level education, as this research mainly focused on the student movements. This homogeneity in educational background may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader

protest populations. Individuals with lower or more diverse educational experiences might have engaged with music differently in the protests that they have participated in.

In addition, the majority of participants were based in urban settings (primarily Ankara and İstanbul) and identified with leftist political ideologies. In other geographical areas, such as rural settings, the relationship people form between music and their political identity may differ. Also, for example, in different political movements, such as in more conservative or nationalist protest cultures, music might play different roles or hold different meanings. Future studies could benefit from a more ideologically and geographically diverse sample.

This research mainly focuses on the student movements of the 1970s and the Gezi Park protests of 2013, also touching on the experiences of participants who participated in the demonstrations that took place in the 1980s and 90s. However, for future studies, the scope can be on the more recent protest events in Turkey, especially those that began on March 19th and lasted until May 2025.

While this study focused on participants aged 30 and above, future research can explore how younger generations relate to the protest songs from earlier generations. For example, do these younger audiences, such as current university students, listen to songs associated with the 1970s or Gezi Park, and do these songs carry any emotional or political meanings for them today? This study can give a better idea of whether the collective memory is really transmitted through music, and whether the aspect of “cascading reminiscence bumps” is really relevant for younger generations (Kubal & Becerra, 2014).

Future research could also investigate the digital mediation of protest music. How do people transmit their political messages through different social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, or Spotify, and how do these platforms act as digital settings of activism and protest, instead of physical spaces where people gather? These issues may provide new research questions for the future studies.

Due to the spirit of the times and changing trends, music styles changed, tastes evolved, and even the concept of protest aesthetics changed. Throughout the interviews, older generations sometimes criticized the new generations for their activism practices. Participants who were involved in the protests of the 1970s criticized the Gezi protests for not being successful due to their more spontaneous and less organized nature. Similarly, those who participated in the Gezi Park protests criticized the new generations, current youth in Turkey for not having similar forms of political activism. However, during this research, after the interviews were completed, in an unexpected turn of events, new protests were emerged in Turkey, especially organized by students, in March 2025, following the detention and arrest of İstanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. Just like in the 1970s, student boycotts were held at universities. It was observed in these new protests that one thing remained constant, music. Just like in Gezi, joyful scenes emerged during these protests, students danced and sung cheerful songs. But at the same time, young students, around 18-19 years old, still sang anthems which had been sung almost 50 years earlier, by the '78 generation in their demonstrations. Thus, songs are timeless; they still unify, mobilize, educate, empower, and heal.

Music is one of the bridges between social movements and collective memory, acting as a historical reminder, an emotional unifier, an ideological transmitter, and a powerful symbol of resistance. This role of music makes movements and struggles

more powerful and enduring. Songs can never be banned or destroyed. Everything else can be, every copy of a book can be collected, every copy of a film can be burned, a photograph can be erased. A painting, being a singular object, is gone once it's destroyed. But it is impossible to destroy a song. A song is something that spreads from mouth to mouth, so from memory to memory. That's why songs are powerful, and in a way, frightening for the oppressive governments. They always resurface, even in small-scale social movements.



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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM



Bilkent Üniversitesi

AKADEMİK İŞLER REKTÖR YARDIMCILIĞI

İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU KARARLARI

Toplantı Tarihi : 06/01/2025
Toplantı No : İAEK_2025_01_06_02
Saat : 17:00

Üyeler: Prof. Dr. Halil Altay Güvenir (Başkan), Bilgisayar Mühendisliği
Doç. Dr. Işık Yuluğ, Moleküler Biyoloji ve Genetik
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Burcu Ayşen Ürgen, Psikoloji
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şemsi Barış Özçelik, Hukuk
Uzman Öğretim Görevlisi Dr. Emine Öncüler Yayalar, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi
Prof. Dr. Özgür Ulusoy (Yedek Üye), Bilgisayar Mühendisliği
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar Altınok Ormancı (Yedek Üye), Hukuk

Gündem: 637 no.lu "Echoes of Resistance: ..." adlı çalışma için etik kurul onay başvurusu.

Karar: Üniversitemiz Güzel Sanatlar, Tasarım ve Mimarlık Fakültesi öğretim üyesi Doç. Dr. Emel Özdora danışmanlığında, Ekonomi ve Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar Ana Sanat Dalı yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Zeren İldoğan'ın 637 no.lu "Echoes of Resistance: Music, Memory and Protest in Turkey" adlı çalışma kapsamında yapmayı önerdikleri etkinliğin genel bilim etiği açısından uygun olduğuna, uygunluk verilen çalışma önerisinin karar ekinde yer alan çalışma önerisi, çalışma yürütücüler ve bilgilendirme formu için geçerli olduğuna, toplantıya katılan üyelerin oy birliği ile karar verildi.

Prof. Dr. Halil Altay GÜVENİR
Başkan
Katıldı

Doç. Dr. Işık YULUĞ
Üye
Katıldı

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Burcu Ayşen ÜRGEN
Üye
Toplantıya Katılmadı

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şemsi Barış ÖZÇELİK
Üye
Katıldı

Dr. Emine ÖNCÜLER YAYALAR
Üye
Katıldı

Prof. Dr. Özgür ULUSOY
Yedek Üye
Katıldı

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APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

KATILIMCI ONAM FORMU

ÇALIŞMANIN BAŞLIĞI: ECHOES OF RESISTANCE: MUSIC, MEMORY AND PROTEST IN TURKEY

Araştırmacı: Zeren İldoğan

Proje Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Emel Özdora

Bilkent University, Department of Communication and Design

[REDACTED]

Türkiye'deki toplumsal hareketlerde müziğin rolünü ve protestolarda kullanılan şarkıların kolektif hafıza ve kimlik oluşumuna nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu inceleyen bu araştırmaya katılmaya davet edildiniz. Katılımcılar, protestolarda yaşadıkları deneyimleri ve bu protestolarda kullanılan müziklerle ilgili yaşadıkları deneyimleri paylaşacakları 40-60 dakikalık bir görüşmeye katılacaklardır. Görüşmede bahsedilen şarkılardan birini dinleyeceğiniz ve bu şarkının anımsattığı duygular veya anılar hakkında yorum yapacağınız bir şarkı hatırlama etkinliği de gerçekleştirilecektir.

Prosedürler:

Bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz aşağıdaki etkinliklerde bulunmanız istenecektir:

1. **40-60 dakikalık bir görüşmeye** katılmak. Görüşme sırasında toplumsal hareketlerdeki deneyimlerinizi ve müziğin size göre bu protestolardaki rolünü tartışacaksınız.

2. **Şarkı hatırlama etkinliğine** katılmak. Bu etkinlikte görüşmede bahsettiğiniz bir şarkıyı dinleyecek ve bu şarkının size hatırlattığı anıları veya duyguları paylaşacaksınız.
3. Görüşme, doğru veri toplamak amacıyla **ses kaydı** ile kayıt altına alınacaktır.

Riskler ve Faydalar:

- **Riskler:** Bazı konular, geçmiş protestolar veya siyasi olaylarla ilgili duygusal anılarınızı canlandırabilir. Böyle bir durumda, mola verebilir, soruları atlayabilir veya görüşmeyi istediğiniz zaman sonlandırabilirsiniz.
- **Faydalar:** Çalışmaya katılmanın doğrudan bir faydası yoktur, ancak katılımınız Türkiye'deki toplumsal hareketlerde müziğin rolü ve kolektif hafızaya etkisi konusunda daha derin bir anlayışa sahip olmaya katkı sağlayacaktır.

Gizlilik:

Bu çalışmaya ait kayıtlar kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Yanıtlarınız anonimleştirilecek ve nihai araştırmada adınız veya iletişim bilgileriniz kullanılmayacaktır. Ses kayıtları ve transkriptler, şifre korumalı bir cihazda saklanacak ve araştırma tamamlandıktan sonra silinecektir. Yalnızca araştırmacı ve tez danışmanı verilere erişebilecektir.

Çalışmaya Katılımın Gönüllü Olması:

Bu çalışmaya katılım **tamamen gönüllüdür**. İstediğiniz zaman çalışmadan ayrılabilir ve verilerinizin silinmesini talep edebilirsiniz. Bu kararınız, herhangi bir olumsuz sonuca yol açmayacaktır.

- Ben, ..., bu araştırma çalışmasına gönüllü olarak katılmayı kabul ediyorum.
- Şu anda katılmayı kabul etmiş olsam bile, istediğim zaman çalışmadan ayrılabilceğimi veya herhangi bir soruyu cevaplamayı reddedebileceğimi ve bunun hiçbir şekilde bir sonucu olmayacağını anlıyorum.
- Görüşmemden elde edilen verilerin kullanılmasına yönelik iznimi, görüşmeden sonraki iki hafta içinde geri çekebileceğimi ve bu durumda materyalin silineceğini anlıyorum.
- Çalışmanın amacı ve doğası bana yazılı olarak açıklandı ve çalışma hakkında sorular sorma fırsatı buldum.
- Katılımın, siyasi ve ideolojik görüşlerim ve geçmişe dair anılarım gibi kişisel bilgiler hakkında sorular içereceğini anlıyorum.
- Bu araştırmaya katılmaktan doğrudan bir fayda elde etmeyeceğimi anlıyorum.
- Görüşmemin ses kaydının alınmasını kabul ediyorum.
- Bu çalışma için sağladığım tüm bilgilerin gizli tutulacağını anlıyorum.
- Bu araştırmanın sonuçlarına dair herhangi bir raporda kimliğimin anonim kalacağını anlıyorum. Bu, adımın değiştirilmesi ve kimliğimi veya bahsettiğim kişilerin kimliğini açığa çıkarabilecek ayrıntıların gizlenmesi yoluyla sağlanacaktır.
- Görüşmemden alınan gizlenmiş alıntıların, araştırma makalelerinde veya konferans sunumlarında kullanılabileceğini anlıyorum.
- İmzalı onay formlarının ve orijinal ses kayıtlarının şifre korumalı bir cihazda saklanacağını ve tez tamamlandıktan sonra silineceğini anlıyorum.
- Bilgi edinme yasası kapsamında, yukarıda belirtildiği şekilde saklandığı sürece sağladığım bilgilere erişme hakkım olduğunu anlıyorum.

- Araştırmaya dahil olan kişilerle iletişime geçerek daha fazla açıklama ve bilgi alabileceğimi anlıyorum.

Katılımcı

Araştırmacı

Adı Soyadı:

Adı Soyadı:

İmza:

İmza:

Tarih:

Tarih:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Zeren İldoğan

Echoes of Resistance: Music, Memory and Protest in Turkey

Sample Questionnaire

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself?

- Age, educational background and current occupation.
- What period did you live your youth in?
- In which city or cities did you live in during your youth?

Section 2: Political Background and Views

2. Can you briefly describe your political background?

- How would you define your political views or ideologies? Which political party/parties do you support?
- Have your political beliefs changed or evolved over time? If so, how?
- Were you a member of any political groups or organizations?
- How did these affiliations shape your actions and perspectives?

3. How would you describe the political atmosphere in Turkey during the period that you participated in protests?

- What were the main political challenges or issues facing society at that time?
- How did these conditions impact your daily life and worldview?

4. Can you talk about your participation in social or political movements/protests during your youth?

- Did you participate in protests during your youth/student years?
- What were these protests about, and what views were you advocating for?
- What did '78/Gezi mean to you, and why was it important? What did it symbolize?
- What roles did you take on in these protests (participant, organizer, supporter, etc.)?

5. What motivated you to become involved in protests or social movements?

- Were there specific events or personal experiences that influenced your political activism?
- What causes or issues were most important to you during that period?

6. How do you feel about the current political situation in Turkey?

- Are there similarities or differences compared to the period that you have participated in protests?
- Do you still engage in political or social activism today?

Section 3: Music Preferences and Consumption

7. What are your current musical preferences?

- What genres or artists do you enjoy listening to today?
- How have your musical tastes evolved over the years?

8. How would you describe your relationship with music?

- Is music an important part of your daily life?
- Do you see it more as entertainment, a source of comfort, or a tool for social connection?

9. Can you describe your music preferences during your youth?

- What genres or specific artists were you drawn to back then?
- Were your musical choices influenced by the social or political environment at the time?

10. How do you usually consume music today?

- What platforms or methods do you use (e.g., streaming services, radio, vinyl, CDs)?
- Do you attend live concerts or music festivals?

11. How did you listen to music in the past?

- What were the primary ways you accessed music during your youth (e.g., cassette tapes, radio, concerts)?
- Did you share or exchange music with friends or within activist groups?

Section 4: The Relationship Between Music and Participation in Protests

12. What role did you believe music played in the political landscape of that time?

- Did music influence or reinforce your political beliefs?

- Were there any songs or musicians that you associated with particular political ideologies or movements?

13. How did your political views affect your musical preferences?

- Did you seek out music that aligned with your beliefs, or did you use music as a form of resistance?
- Were there any artists or genres that you avoided due to their political associations?

14. Did your musical preferences influence your involvement in protests or social movements?

- Were there particular songs or artists that shaped your political views or inspired you?

15. Do you think your musical taste reflects your personal or political identity? If so, how?

- Has this connection between music and identity changed over time?

16. How would you describe the role of music in the protests you participated in?

- Did music play a significant role in mobilizing or unifying people?
- What types of music or specific songs were popular during those protests?

17. Were there any particular songs or artists that symbolized the movement?

- What messages or themes did these songs convey?
- How did these songs relate to the social or political context of the time?

18. How were songs typically used during protests?

- Were they sung collectively, played over loudspeakers, or adapted with new lyrics?
- Can you recall any specific moments when a song had a powerful impact on the crowd?

19. How do you view the relationship between music and politics today?

- Do you think music still has the power to influence political change?
- Are there contemporary political issues that you believe are effectively addressed through music?

Section 5: Music and Collective Memory

20. Do any songs from that period evoke strong memories or emotions for you?

- What do you feel or think about when you hear them today?

21. How did music help in articulating the ideas or values of the movement?

- Did music make it easier to communicate complex or emotional messages?
- Did certain songs become symbols or anthems of resistance and solidarity?

22. How do you think the meaning of these songs has changed over time?

- Are they still relevant today?
- Do younger generations associate the same meanings with these songs?

Section 6: Song Recall Activity

23. (One of the popular protest songs of the period or one of the songs mentioned by the participant in previous questions is played)

- Does this song bring back any specific memories or feelings?
- Can you describe the significance of this song during the protests you experienced?
- Do you remember the first time you heard this song?
- What does this song mean to you now, compared to when you first heard it?

24. Were there any songs that created a sense of unity among different groups within the movement?

- How did music help bridge differences (political, social, or cultural) among protestors?

Section 7: Reflection and Current Perspectives

25. Looking back, what role do you think music played in sustaining the movement's spirit and identity?

- Do you believe music can still play a similar role in today's social movements?

26. How would you compare the use of music in protests during your youth to protests today?

- Do you think music has lost or gained significance in contemporary movements?

APPENDIX D: SONG LIST

Ahmet Kaya – Deli Kuşun Öttüğü
Ali Asker – Eylem Güzeli
Alpay – Fabrika Kızı
Alpay – Güven Parkı
Anonymous – Bella Ciao
Anonymous – Gündoğdu Marşı
Antonio Vivaldi – The Four Seasons
Aşık Mahzuni Şerif – Katil Amerika
Boğaziçi Caz Korosu – Çapulcu Musun Vay Vay
Boğaziçi Caz Korosu – Çapulcular Oldu Mu
Boğaziçi Caz Korosu – Gaz Maskesi Ala Benziyor
Bruce Springsteen – Born In The U.S.A.
Carlos Puebla – Hasta Siempre
Cem Karaca – Dadaloğlu
Cem Karaca – Parka
Cem Karaca – Tamirci Çırağı
Cem Karaca – Yoksulluk Kader Olamaz
Claude-Michel Schönberg – Do You Hear The People Sing
Duman – Eyvallah
Edip Akbayram – Metrisin Önü
Erdi Uçar – Chapulling in Peace
Ezginin Günlüğü – Seni Düşünmek
Fritz Brügel - Die Arbeiter von Wien
Grup Ekin – Oğulları Ölen Analara Türkü
Grup Munzur – İsyen Ateşi
Grup Yorum – Dağlara Gel

Grup Yorum – Sıyrılıp Gelen
Grup Yorum – Şarkışla
Hadise – Nerdesin Aşkım
Hakan Vreskala – Dağılın Lan
Inti-Illimani – El Aparecido
Inti-Illimani – Venceremos
Iron Maiden – Fear of the Dark
Joan Baez – We Shall Overcome
John Lennon – Imagine
Kardeş Türküler – Tencere Tava Havası
Kerem Güney – Aldırma Gönül
Levent Yüksel – Tuana
Martha and the Vandellas – Dancing In The Street
Melike Demirağ – Makine Yiyor Beni
Michael Jackson – They Don’t Care About Us
Michelle Gurevich – Kiss in the Taksim Square
Pierre de Geyter – The Internationale
Rahmi Saltuk – Jandarma
Ruhi Su – Ellerinde Pankartlar
Ruhi Su – Şişli Meydanında Üç Kız
Sam Cooke – A Change Is Gonna Come
Selda Bağcan – Maden İşçileri
Sezen Aksu – Karşıyım
The Beatles – Penny Lane
Timur Selçuk – 1 Mayıs
Timur Selçuk – Hürriyet Marşı
Timur Selçuk – Türkiye İşçi Sınıfına Selam

Tülay German – Burçak Tarlası
Tülay German – Yarının Şarkısı
Yeni Türkü – Çember
Yeni Türkü – Fırtına
Yeni Türkü – Mamak Türküsü
Zülfü Livaneli – Hoş Geldin Bebek
Zülfü Livaneli – Karlı Kayın Ormanı
Zülfü Livaneli – Leylim Ley
Zülfü Livaneli – Merhaba
Zülfü Livaneli – Yiğidim Aslanım