

The Gezi Park Protests in the Columns

Authors : Süleyman Hakan Yılmaz, Yasemin Gülsen Yılmaz

Abstract : The Gezi Park protests of 2013 have significantly changed the Turkish agenda and its effects have been felt historically. The protests, which rapidly spread throughout the country, were triggered by the proposal to recreate the Ottoman Army Barracks to function as a shopping mall on Gezi Park located in Istanbul's Taksim neighbourhood despite the oppositions of several NGOs and when trees were cut in the park for this purpose. Once the news that construction vehicles entered the park on May 27 spread on social media, activists moved into the park to stop the demolition, against whom the police used disproportioned force. With this police intervention and the then prime-minister Tayyip Erdoğan's insistent statements about the construction plans, the protests turned into anti-government demonstrations, which then spread to the rest of the country, mainly in big cities like Ankara and Izmir. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs' June 23rd reports, 2.5 million people joined the demonstrations in 79 provinces, that is all of them, except for the provinces of Bayburt and Bingöl, while even more people shared their opinions via social networks. As a result of these events, 8 civilians and 2 security personnel lost their lives, namely police chief Mustafa Sarı, police officer Ahmet Küçükdağ, citizens Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Abdullah Cömert, Ethem Sarısülük, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, Ahmet Atakan, Berkin Elvan, Burak Can Karamanoğlu, Mehmet İstif, and Elif Çermik, and 8163 more were injured. Besides being a turning point in Turkish history, the Gezi Park protests also had broad repercussions in both in Turkish and in global media, which focused on Turkey throughout the events. Our study conducts content analysis of three Turkish reporting newspapers with varying ideological standpoints, Hürriyet, Cumhuriyet ve Yeni Şafak, in order to reveal their basic approach to columns casting in context of the Gezi Park protests. Columns content relating to the Gezi protests were treated and analysed for this purpose. The aim of this study is to understand the social effects of the Gezi Park protests through media samples with varying political attitudes towards news casting.

Keywords : Gezi Park, media, news casting, columns

Conference Title : ICMD 2015 : International Conference on Media and Democracy

Conference Location : Athens, Greece

Conference Dates : July 20-21, 2015