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# THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN MAKING POLITICS

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The social movements have always a constitutional role in shaping politics since 19th century. As a historical aspect, social movements give a popular answer to crisis of the economical and political system, to replace or to reform it, people speak with the movements in the street directly. In the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, social movements once again playing a crucial role to shape political debates all around the world against the crisis of the liberal democracies. Liberal democracies and representative system, as the brilliant solution of the previous century to control the demands of the masses, are not enough to solve the problems of the new century. The crisis is about being heard in the decision making process. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the organized power of the people had constituted the nation-state and representative democracies but now after a century unorganized power of social movements are changing these organizational structure. The constitutions, assemblies, parties are losing their importance; instead of them the contingent power of social movements carries on the demands of people. Social movements in the last term appear much more in daily-life concerns and conflicts and so the streets, open and public spaces are used more frequently. These movements exposed the failure of making old-school politics that based on vertical hierarchy and given roles between people.

The point of the paper is that social movements emerge as a constitutive space to create common of the people who imagine a new life together. I would like to deduction from some latest movements in a conceptual framework. The study will underline the importance of the movements in doing political outside the institutional way. I follow the distinction of Jacques Ranciere (1995; 2006) who make a difference between political and politics. According to this line, social movements reflect the political aspect because they much more have anarchist attitude than the establishment of politics or order which make immobilize the debates under an institution. The important thing for the movements is to make alive the political one beyond the order of politics.

There are different approaches to analyze the movements, in general they can be titled as European and American approaches which the first one is developed in Marxist theory and revolutionary class struggle and the second one mostly analyzed the movements as rational-functionalist way (della Porta 2009). Both of them saw a linear way of social movements in this process. Movements are not conceptualized with their own area but most of time it can matched with other concepts or titles. They have seen as secondary or embedded to another big event. In the ebb and flow of movements, the social theory is not given enough importance to the movements as a generator to politics. Most of the grass-root actions turned a kind of institutional bodies to organize the demands from representatives and they lost their movements aspect. But after 1968 as a big break in social and political theories, the objects and subject of the political began to change more chaotic way. The big theories could not facilitate easily in the explanations about the social change nowadays. Especially in globalization era, in the situation of ineffectiveness of national and international bodies against economic crises, a democracy debate renewed. The role of social movements upraised in this process as the means of the people. So the main argument of this paper is that social movements constitute the new politics outside of well-known theories through their direct actions. New politics of the movements criticize the liberal-democracy concept and ask directly, what does the democracy mean in 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## *The Effects Of Alter Globalization Movement and Social Forums*

Social movements produce their own language in their own areas and it shapes the life of their attendant. In that process, daily life-oriented issues and the participation of ordinary people have become main points of the movements in order to renew political aspects. Because social movements are not just a machinery to reach an end for example Tilly and Tarrow's "contentious politics" (2007) analyses the movements in a mechanism-process way with public authorities. But this is very technical analyze and they undermine changing possibility of big framework. The potential of movements is based on making a new political framework through ordinary people's demands. Movements' constitutive role has a crucial aspect because of their radical challenges both to established subject and structure of social body. Their role in asking big questions in 21<sup>st</sup> century is related with the unwillingness to be matched with well-known concepts, ideologies or institutional parts of politics. They cannot be understood with Marxist revolutionary perspective or liberal civil society or identity politics of 90s because of the current dynamics of the mobilization. But more, they combine these concepts in a new ground. This ground is the constitution of new subject outside of class consciousness of Marxism or rational individual of liberalism or culturally determined ethnic identity. Economic, cultural and sociological aspects effect each other in the action of people. Social movements make a new space to synthesis different debates during mobilization of people. Because they make new spaces to encounter, discuss, create a new view.

Especially anti-globalization/alter-globalization/global justice movement (however you call) constituted a new look against the economically determined process of neoliberal globalization and opened the new era to the political debate.

Social forums are one of the typical examples of this process. World Social Forums and its continental parts, especially European and US Social Forums, were the turning point from “anti” to “alter” in globalization movement. While anti-globalization movements were rising all over the world, a new converging area emerged and the social forums converged these movements under a big title. European Social Forums, since 2002, also tried to make a new opposition against the neoliberal policies of EU. After a decade of Forums, the grass-root assemblies, coalitions and networks are still alive in search of another world and another Europe.

The most important aspect that Social Forum process gained the political debate is the importance of the horizontal hierarchy for the participation of ordinary people. This thought goes on in newest mobilizations. The 15M and Indignados Movement in Spain turned this thought a body called Podemos (means We Can) and have gained a big oppositional role in Spanish politics. Also Syriza in Greece gathered the movements in its roof and raised their effect on European Parliament elections. These examples underline the rising roles of movements in doing political from the bottom and they give a chance to reconsideration old political concepts in a new era. So social movement approaches also are needed to renew under the effect of new experiments. Because they are the new cycle of new social movements thinking of the 70s and this title is not necessary to understand the newness of 2010s.

The direct actions and demonstrations are gaining more importance against the institutional and formal politics. Because of the deficiency of liberal democracies and representative systems that limit the democracies with the regular elections, ordinary people try to create new spaces to speak and to intervene the decision-making process. We can see this situation in the different experiments around Europe and the rest of the world. Anti-globalization movement, to search for “another world” and another EU are the cases of this theory. It is argued that there are the convergences around the movements in global level, especially in searching of much more democracy. With Hardt and Negri’s (2004; 2012) word, social movements build “the common” to alternate the system, so the actions are headed to make the new common life with the knowledge of today. It was the class-struggle and revolution to hold together the movement in beginning of the century but nowadays the different demands and grievances are the topic of the political and struggles turned a kind of constellation.

### *Renewal of “What is Politics” Question*

While the people mobilize to protest something, they indicate the new spaces of doing politics outside of the institutional bodies. It makes a political renewal against the narrow view of state-based politics. Their non-violent and civic character strengthens the link with the bottom. In this way they figure, or at least search for, new discourses, identity and solutions outside the ongoing democratic system. When we look at the latest movements in a few years we can see differences in the attendant profile. From different types of sociological and economic level attended these movements and there was not only one demand or requisition. So there was no one discourse or opposition wing which command the movement. Everyone have a potential to reproduce the movement in their own words. ‘In all cases the movements ignored the political parties, distrusted the media, did not recognize any leadership and rejected all formal organization, relying on the Internet and local assemblies for collective debate and decision-making’ (Castells 2012, 19). This situation is similar with alter globalization movement of a decade before. They did not follow a theoretical perspective. Rather they challenge to all old forms of politics and institutions. No one of old school traditions or ideologies have been grasped the movements. In Douzinas’ words (2014) they are ‘well ahead and an excellent corrective to both mainstream and radical political theory’. So this process can be seen as to constitute a new ‘common’ that constitute social life. These movements had also created a new way of opposition that mobilize the people at public spaces. They create their own language, mostly in an ironic manner, and make new networks that have not connected to each other before. So they do not use specific vocabulary of an organization and rank-file membership system to mobilize together. The given options to take political positions are rejected and they try to create a new one. Their plural and multi-cultural manner has a potential to create a newness to change the established system. They have ‘rhizomatic logic’ (Funke 2014) to develop ‘movement-building relays’ which generate new networks and investigate the connecting areas. So the latest movements which born in more complex bodies today require to reconsider the classical –European or American- approaches to the movements that appear in more structural and fixed situations of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Gezi Park resistance in Turkey, Occupy movements all around the world, Arab uprisings in Middle East and also the latest Ferguson events in USA have some similarities in this framework. They are the direct actions of the ordinary people who gather in a wide framework of the movement. They can be analyzed under the different titles but the most important points are the indignation to public authorities, a different democratic discourse, political debates in open space and the closure of economic and political demands. In Asaf Bayat’s terms (2010), it can be titled as “becoming political” and because of shifting of human relations from passive network to active network. An also these are “prefigurative” movements that imagine a new society and politics beyond liberal democratic system.

The latest movements create a “dissident knowledge” (Hosseini 2010) which bring together mobilizations in a wide-framework. It means that the network logic of alter-globalisation movement (Juris 2008) have taken forward “with a reconsideration of the multiple spatialities of activism” (Halvorsen 2012). It can be seen at rising number of movements all around the world. After 2010 the mobilizations around the world have become more spontaneous because of the raising the range against economic and political system. “Movement for justice consists of a rather

harmonious multitude of local and national oppositions that have taken part in a globalizing choir of unheard voices” (Hosseini 2013, 434). The latest social movements have a tendency to become more daily life oriented, it means that they inspire from everyday problems that affects the life of everyone, not just the affairs of specific class or groups. So grass-root movements do not resist just specific policies or units but in general they uncover the failure of the institutional politics and representative democracy. But the demand was not a reconsidering the liberal democracy but much more redefine or reconstruct it. So the democracy is needed a new adjective or descriptive title except liberal, deliberative or consensus.

Because of searching of new democratic practical, they have upraised their voices in open spaces. The concepts of space, street, city are reconsidered in the struggles of these movements. So the public space in general is tried to redefine outside the liberal theory. Because open spaces gather the differences and make a new whole beyond the legality. The open spaces of cities turned political places with debates, forums and critical voices. And also they became the symbols of the struggles like Gezi Park, Tahrir Square, Zucotti Park, Puerta Del Sol. “Open space” was one of the main keywords of the social Forum process, and also the importance of cities in terms of economic values and the streets as sociological interactions are underlined by the movements. In Bayat’s (2010) terms, the street politics is the place of “becoming political” of individuals with transformations of “passive network” to “active network”. This is about interaction in daily-life. The city is the area of the social problems that occur inter-relationships. The public concept is renewed by the mobilization of the crowds in movements beyond the elections or parliamentary buildings. By doing this, the movements changed the politics of the polis to the political of “disagreement” by Ranciere’s (1995) terms. Against the establishment and unchangeable role and state of the things, democratic politics is the “action to the monopoly of the public life” (Ranciere 2006, 93). To intervene in the pre-organized roles that distributed from the top is not accepted by the bottom anymore. These movements make “occupation of universalistic narratives within broader field of resistance” (Hosseini 2013). So the movements make broader the frontiers of political debates. The issues that were out of the discussion early, come into the agenda due the movements now. “The occupied squares create a constituent counter-power, which splits the social space between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Douzinas 2014). These spaces are the fields of learning and exploring the new one to go beyond the established borders.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that movements create a renewal in making politics through rethinking the daily-life oriented issues. Some aspects like the effective usage of open spaces, importance of direct action and participation of ordinary people are the main dimensions of the newest social movements. The changing point is the multidimensional view of the mobilizations. People may react the only one problem but it is growing, articulating and getting bigger in the reaction of the mobilizing process during actions. So the movements are not related with only one or specific demand but they combine different visions in a wide-framework. Thus the other related issues come into agenda when the people in the street. Shortly, the role of the movements in asking big questions is based on to make bigger a small question.

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