

Crossing The Border with Hashtags: Twitter's Bridging The Gezi Park and The Yellow Vest Movements*

Hashtaglerle Sınırötesini Aşmak: Twitter'in Gezi Parkı ve Sarı Yelekliler Hareketleri'ne Köprü Kurması

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ABSTRACT

Social movements are a manifestation of societal unrest, from the past to the present. Thanks to the developing technologies over time, social movements, which are shaped by the penetration of the Internet and social media into lives, keep pace with the age and redefine the scope of the virtual public sphere under the umbrella of new social movements.

This article reveals that new social movements, shaped by the infiltration of social media, redefine the virtual public sphere. It analyses the effect of hashtags on the Yellow Vests Movement and the Gezi Park Protest through content analysis with the help of data collected using Twitter Python Library. As a sample, 52 thousand 651 tweets about the Yellow Vests Movement from 17 November 2018 to the end of 2022 are reached and 14 thousand 244 tweets are included in the study, while 13 thousand 003 tweets are included from 100 thousand 550 tweets between 27 May 2013 and 2 July 2013 about the Gezi Park Protest. As a result of the study, it is revealed that the key to new social movements is social media and the teeth of the key are hashtags. However, when the Twitter data set analysed in the study is taken into consideration, it is found that Twitter played an important role in the Yellow Vests and Gezi Park Protests, as well as drawing a route for activists and being one of the platforms used in the movements thanks to its immediacy feature.

Keywords: New Social Movements, Social Media, Digital Activism, Twitter, Hashtag Activism.

ÖZ

Geçmişten günümüze toplumsal hareketler bir toplumda var olan huzursuzluğun gün yüzüne çıkmasıdır. Zaman içerisinde gelişen teknolojiler, internet ve sosyal medyanın da hayatlara sızmasıyla şekil alan toplumsal hareketler çağa ayak uydurarak yeni toplumsal hareketler çatısı altında sanal kamusal alanın kapsamını yeniden belirlemektedir.

Bu makalede, sosyal medyanın hayatlara sızmasıyla şekil alan yeni toplumsal hareketlerin sanal kamusal alanı yeniden belirlediğini açığa çıkarılmaktadır. Sarı Yelekliler Hareketi ve Gezi Parkı Eylemi örnekleminde hashtaglerin etkisini Twitter Python Kütüphanesi kullanılarak toplanan veriler yardımıyla içerik çözümlemesi yöntemiyle incelenmektedir. Örneklem olarak, Sarı Yelekliler Hareketi'yle ilgili 17 Kasım 2018'den, 2022 yılının sonuna kadar 52 bin 651 tweete ulaşılmakta, çalışmaya ise 14 bin 244 tweet dâhil edilmekte olup, Gezi Parkı Eylemi ile ilgili 27 Mayıs- 2013 – 2 Temmuz 2013 tarihleri arasında çekilen 100 bin 550 tweetten 13 bin 003 tweet dâhil edilmektedir. Çalışma sonucunda, yeni toplumsal hareketlerin kilit, anahtarı sosyal medya, anahtarın dişleri ise hashtagler olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bununla birlikte çalışma incelenen Twitter veri seti gözönüne alındığında; Sarı Yelekliler ve Gezi Parkı Eylemi'nde Twitter'in önemli rol oynamakla birlikte aktivistlere rota çizdiği ve anımsal özellikleri sayesinde hareketlerde kullanılan platformlardan olduğu bulgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler, Sosyal Medya, Dijital Aktivizm, Twitter, Hashtag Aktivizmi.

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Introduction

Interest in social movement coalitions has significantly increased in recent years (Daphi et al., 2022). A social movement, in a general sense, entails conflict-laden behaviors where cultural orientations and historical context are transformed into a form of social organization (Touraine, 1999: 45). When a sense of discontent arises in an individual within society and spreads, if institutions remain silent and fail to respond, the seeds of a social movement begin to be sown (Della Porta & Diani, 2012: 18-19). When unconscious crowds in society lose their direction, spiritual and moral forces can pull the community in a particular direction (Le Bon, 1997: 14). The profound societal injustices and disappointments experienced heavily by classes drive them to action (Amin et al., 1993: 184). Social movements, by their general structure, have consistently organized themselves in a network format. Individuals engage in actions around a common goal, but these actions may conclude before reaching an appropriate level (Della Porta & Diani, 2012; Olson, 2002). Collective forms of behavior are a search for solutions in challenging conditions (Smelser, 1962). Social movements have come to be seen as a subset of collective behavior, alongside panic, mob mentality, and rumors (Buechler, 2004: 47-48). Not every crowd bears a specific purpose or character. The act of being in a crowd imparts a collective spirit and empowers individuals (Le Bon, 1997). Understanding the outcomes and legacies of social movements necessitates the passage of a certain period between critical protest events or intense mobilization periods for evaluating results (Fominaya & Feenstra, 2023: 273). Activists shape the changing texture of social movements through interactions regarding scope, goals, adversaries, and competitors (Tilly, 2004: 7).

Movement types observed in the 1970s originated from social conflicts that had not been previously addressed, such as age and gender differences, and in the 1980s, they began to shift from economic and political forms to cultural foundations. Individuals found new arenas for self-expression in movements where identity wars were experienced

(Melucci, 1999: 75). The emergence of new forms of collective movements in the late 1980s led to questioning the meaning of social movements. Movements such as peace movements, student movements, anti-nuclear energy protests, women's movements, animal rights, and ecology movements in Europe and North America began to occupy the minds of sociologists, political scientists, and historians (Johnston et al. 1999: 121). Activism as a social phenomenon often arises from efforts to address controversial issues, collective action, solidarity, or solving problems through communication (Chon & Park, 2019: 3). These collective actions and their sources also encompass identity factors such as race, gender, class, and sexuality (Kendall, 2012: 560). Examples of social movements include feminism, the labor movement, fascist movements, anti-racism movements, anti-psychiatry or problem-solving movements, nationalist movements, solidarity movements, environmental movements, abortion advocacy or opposition movements, animal rights, and peace movements (Crossley, 2002: 1). The policies of social movements are generally characterized as 'street politics' (Della Porta & Diani, 2012: 41). The logic of organization extends beyond the act of mobilizing people to take to the streets, encompassing the coordination of actions and the construction of solidarity (Edmund & Francis, 2023: 610). The uprisings that begin in the streets transform into protests, captivating the interest of everyone and spreading worldwide, evolving into global social movements.

Since 1989, there has been a fundamental trend of global digitization in civil societies. Digitization affects all kinds of social activities, especially human labor, leading to an increase in e-politics and e-participation. (Kyska, 2018: 2). Digital activism began with the events of September 11, 1994. Activism movements undergoing transformation reached their peak with the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings (Karatzogianni, 2015: 1). The protests in Seattle in 1999, the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States as a response to the global economic crisis, student demonstrations in London in 2011 against tuition fee increases, the

Arab Spring process, and the Gezi Park Protests in Istanbul in 2013 can be considered within the context of global social movements (Bayhan, 2014: 24). Communities that could once only make their voices heard by shouting in isolation are now using the power of social media to amplify their voices globally.

In both Türkiye and the world, there is a limited number of theoretical and empirical studies on hashtag activism hosted by Twitter. This article begins with a brief introduction, and after focusing on studies conducted over the years on new social movements, social media, and digital activism, it touches upon several methodological points. Selected movements, namely the Yellow Vests Movement, which started five years ago, and the Gezi Park Movement, which transpired a decade ago, still continue to impact their respective countries. Through the chosen examples in this study, we emphasize the extent of the space occupied by hashtag activism and underscore the effectiveness of tagging in amplifying the voice of movements during protests. This study demonstrates the prevalence of hashtag activism in the selected samples. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of hashtags in amplifying movements during protests.

The Role of Hashtags in Social Media Activism

The need for communication on social media is perpetually driven by a community that engages in sharing and collaboration. Individuals spontaneously criticize, comment, write, and share their ideas (Coelho et al., 2017: 155). What distinguishes social media from traditional media in this regard is the feature of reciprocal exchange, or interactive capability (Dijk, 2012: 251). Many people, especially the youth, are addicted to tools like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Skype, etc., and users are in constant communication through these platforms (Baruah, 2012: 1). Activities through digital platforms facilitate democratic participation by the public (Mercea & Mosca, 2021:

1336) Facebook stands as the largest global social networking site, while Twitter is a widely used platform in the field of internet research (Casteel, 2016: 3; Taydaş & Karakoç, 2020: 271). Twitter is a microblogging tool that allows users to publish their posts in chronological order (Bozarth, 2010: 23). Twitter profiles are mostly public, which is why it has a higher user count compared to Facebook and other social media platforms. Users can both read tweets from accounts they follow and access general discussions through keyword searches known as hashtags, contributing to its widespread usage (Chaudhry, 2014: 944). Twitter users have naturally incorporated hashtag culture into their tweets (Otsuka et al. 2016: 1). In this sense, Twitter is intentionally used to disseminate information (Berridge & Portwood, 2015: 342). Individuals creating content on Twitter aim to expand their audience by sharing posts, engaging in comments, and participating in hashtags (Eyal & Hoover, 2015: 180). As data obtained from news media and organizational manifestos, along with digitized data, become increasingly available on Twitter, methods utilizing such data gain importance (Bosi & Uba, 2021: 992).

Digital activism is a term commonly used to describe various forms of activism utilizing digital technology. Digital technology has undergone transformation since its inception (Gerbaudo, 2017: 477). While some individuals readily adapt to new media, others are reluctant to relinquish their reliance on traditional tools. The convenience of instant access to information through new media platforms facilitates global connectivity and enables individuals to remain informed about current events. Those who do not utilise new media platforms tend to favour traditional media in order to avoid the digital world and the associated information overload and digital fatigue. Those who utilise new media can readily engage with like-minded individuals on social media and collectively take action to effect societal change and address societal issues (Chon & Park, 2019: 3). While the new media continues to be an

important part of modern society, some segments of society feel distant from this technology, while others keep up with it and seek solutions to their problems by integrating with people of their own opinion.

Twitter is one of the social media platforms where people from all walks of life find support for their views. The characteristic feature of hashtag activism on Twitter is the initiation of a movement. Users conduct searches through hashtagged words using the # symbol to establish connections and interactions (Yang, 2016: 14). Hashtags can be put forward by any user, leading to a broad and uncontrolled variety of hashtags (Schmidt, 2016: 50). Twitter's feature that sets it apart from other social media platforms is that hashtags are embedded, intentional, and can be discovered by users worldwide (Zgoda & Shane, 2018: 76). Hashtags used to mobilize people who share the same views on a particular issue can quickly resonate on social media, capturing attention and dominating the agenda (Paksoy & Özçelik, 2017: 173). On the 'social media echo chambers', which are also referred to as virtual spaces created on social media platforms where people with similar thoughts come together around a certain idea, opinion and belief, offer participants an environment where they share their thoughts and interact.

In recent times, especially on Twitter, hashtags have recently turned into concise expressions that serve as a communication, particularly when users are confronted with discussions, conflicts and crises (Giglietto & Lee, 2017: 12). Hashtag protests have become a feature of the contemporary political landscape (Jackson et al., 2020: 197). Hashtags can transform from individual tweets, independent messages, into contributions (Zgoda & Shane, 2018: 76). A hashtag establishes a framework and attempts to create a dispersed virtual public space under this framework.

Hashtag activism contributes to the development of a stronger public sphere (Daniels, 2016: 191). The initiation of actions highlighting the role of social

media in forming collective behavior, particularly in the context of new social movements, can be traced back to the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011, starting in Tunisia and spreading to Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Libya. This process, originating with the Arab Spring, has unfolded in subsequent movements, extending from the Occupy Wall Street movement to the Gezi Park Protests and, most recently, the Yellow Vests Movement. This sequence of events underscores the significance of social media in new social movements (Dolgun & Sütüoğlu, 2014: 8; Kırık & Toktay, 2020: 357-358). During the Occupy Wall Street events, protests with the hashtags #OWS and #Occupywallstreet were organized, drawing the participation of hundreds of individuals. The relationship between the incidents during the protest and the hashtags used allowed everyone to stay informed about the events in real-time (Caren & Gaby, 2011). On May 28, 2013, an unplanned occupation of Gezi Park in Istanbul transformed into a nationwide protest encompassing various forms of discontent against the government (Benevento & Okuyan, 2019). The Gezi Park protests stand as a milestone for collective action practices challenging the system in Türkiye (Acar & Uluğ, 2023). The reason for evaluating Gezi Park within the context of new social movements is the movement's communication through the internet network (Işık, 2013: 29). In France, protests emerged in response to various issues, including fuel tax reform, increasing the minimum wage and purchasing power, and the removal of gay marriage. These demonstrations led to around 300,000 French citizens wearing yellow vests to make their voices heard until November 17th (Grossman, 2019: 30). The widespread perspective among active participants in the Yellow Vests Movement includes a rebellion against capitalism, advocacy for a fair state and environmental action, and addressing the purchasing power of low-income individuals (Mehleb et al., 2021: 393). With the onset of actions under the umbrella of new social movements, the power of social media has once again come to the forefront. Activists, utilizing the culture of dissemination through hashtag activism, have caused a global ripple effect to make their voices heard. Due to this

feature of Twitter, activists consider it as a remedy, with hashtags acting as a bandage, in their quest to find solutions to their issues

Methodology

Research Problem

The concept of 'digital activism', which is the intersection of new social movements and social media, has recently gained prominence. To understand the differences between new and old social movements, including participant profiles, organizational structures, principles, tools, and methods used, it is important to acknowledge the significance of the internet and social media. This research examines the link between social media, digital activism, and hashtag culture, and their role in the Yellow Vests and Gezi Park protests. Specifically, it investigates the phenomenon of 'hashtag activism' on Twitter and its impact on amplifying the voice of these movements.

Importance and Purpose of the Research

The study seeks to determine how hashtag activism functions and its impact on amplifying the voices of movements. Significantly, the research addresses the hashtag activism phenomenon, which has been minimally explored in the literature, by focusing on Twitter, the most widely used microblogging platform on social media, and presenting current data from the Gezi Park Protests and the Yellow Vests Movement.

The aim of the research is to establish the concept of "digital activism" arising from the relationship between new media and new social movements. To achieve this goal, the study examines the extent to which hashtag activism is utilized in the social media environment in Türkiye through Twitter, a global microblogging platform. By exploring the cases of the Gezi Park Protests and the Yellow Vests Movement, the research seeks answers to the following questions:

RQ1: How do activists organize through social media in new social movements?

RQ2: Which media tools were predominantly used in the Yellow Vests Movement and the Gezi Park Protests?

RQ3: How frequently is hashtag activism used in the Yellow Vests Movement and the Gezi Park Protests?

RQ4: What are the similarities and differences between the Yellow Vests Movement and the Gezi Park Protests?

RQ5: How is the usage of positive/negative comments and retweets on Twitter in the Yellow Vests Movement and the Gezi Park Protests?

Methodology of the Research

The study population comprises Twitter, a social media sharing platform. The sample for the study consists of tweets from the Gezi Park Protest and the Yellow Vests Movement. In this context, content analysis is employed as the research method. Content analysis is a research method that can be utilized for various purposes in different fields such as psychology, sociology, journalism, and is based on the analysis of communication materials (Öğülmüş, 1991: 213). In today's context, the increase in the volume of texts, images, and videos in digital spaces due to users beginning to intervene in the content of new media has further heightened the need for computer software. Due to the quantitative density, research often resorts to content analysis. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc., enable the categorization and analysis of qualitative data by using software like Nvivo, Maxqda, Atlas.Ti, and Python to read and analyze content (Doğan, 2017: 355). In the study, the Twitter Python Library, one of the qualitative data analysis software, is used. Python is just one of many programming languages. It is an easy-to-read, powerful, and elegant programming language. It exhibits many of the features common to many other languages and is therefore practical and widely used worldwide (Yuill & Halpin, 2006). In the programming language consisting of codes, data is classified, analyzed, and interpreted.

When examining studies, the topic of how collective behaviors manifested during the Covid-19 quarantine period is evident (Benoso & Ramos, 2021), engagement with promotional tweets involves interacting with the official Twitter account of the advertiser (Noh, et al., 2021), emotion analysis on how group leaders utilize Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic (Wang, et al., 2021), examination of official Twitter accounts during the elections in Latin America in the period 2015-2017 for a 28-day analysis (Lopez-Lopez & Vásquez-González, 2018), measuring partisanship using social media content (Hemphill et al., 2016), creating an updated map of the Chilean press on the web and social networks (Rodriguez-Urra et al., 2023) The Twitter Python Library is used.

Research Design

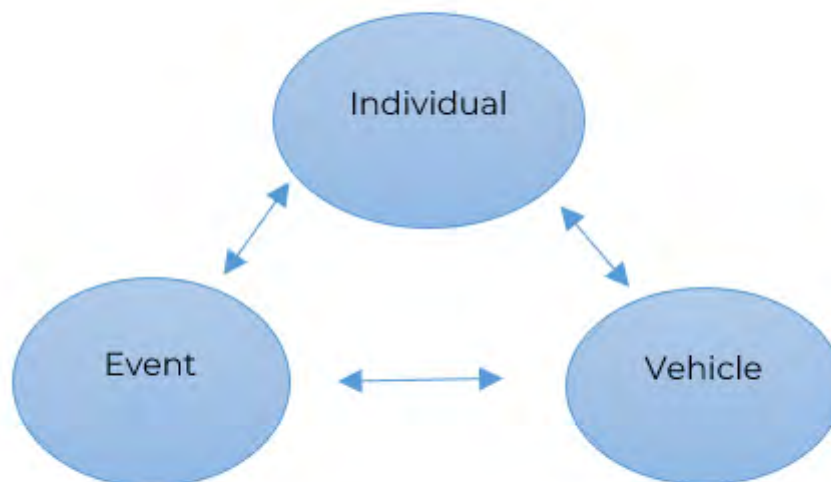
The main purpose of content analysis is to convert verbal, written, and other materials into numerical data. Content analysis has three different research models that are differentiated based on the type of question they aim to answer, the communication dimension analyzed, and the research plan (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001: 33-36). The study aims to infer the effects of messages on their recipients by answering the question 'What was the effect?'. The

research analyses hashtag activism and culture on Twitter in the context of digital activism in social media by categorising the data with qualitative content analysis. In this context, the media (tool) is used by individuals affected by social events to bring attention to the event. Media tools have a mutual effect on events and individuals. The research model is based on the design that the individual-event-vehicle affects and is affected by each other. The model was formed as follows.

Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis

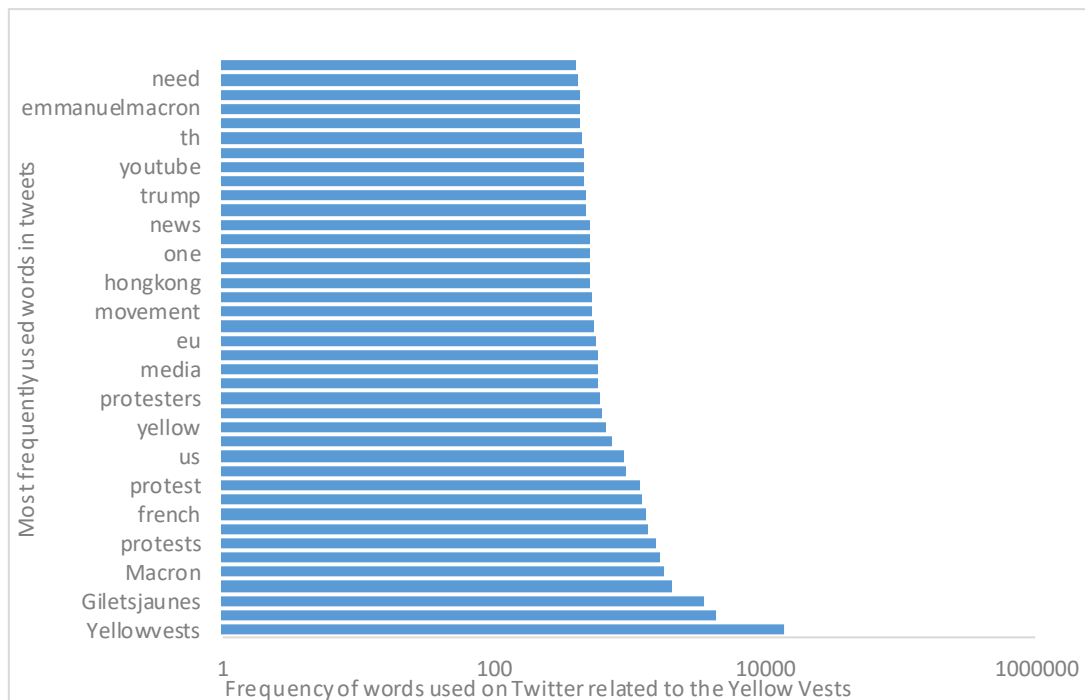
The data set obtained from the Twitter Python Library is utilized as the data collection tool to analyze the tweets related to the Yellow Vests and Gezi Park protests. The most frequently used words, the accounts with the highest tweet counts, tweet locations, time series, the number of negative and positive comments/like ratios/retweet ratios, and the most commonly used words and hashtags are examined. In the data analysis, qualitative systematic content analysis is employed by categorizing the data sets obtained from the Twitter Python Library.

Figure 1
Research Model



Graphic 1

Frequency of the 40 Most Frequently Used Words Related to the Yellow Vests Movement in Tweets



Findings and Interpretation

Analysis of Tweets of the Yellow Vests Movement with Twitter Python Library Dataset

In the study, a total of 52.651 tweets related to the Yellow Vests movement were obtained through the Twitter Python Library. The study includes 14.244 tweets in the analysis. When examining the reflection of the Yellow Vests Movement on Twitter, the most frequently used term is 'yellowvests' with 13.079 occurrences. Other frequently used terms include 'france' (4135), 'giletsjaunes' (3412), 'paris'

(1961), 'macron' (1744), 'police' (1618), 'protests' (1507), 'amp' (1326), 'french' (1253), 'people' (1175), 'protest' (1151), 'acte' (910), 'us' (856), 'like' (707), 'yellow' (635), 'brexit' (599), 'protesters' (574), 'time' (561), 'media' (559), 'dont' (556), 'eu' (545), 'get' (522), 'movement' (513), 'via' (500), 'hongkong' (496), 'world' (496), 'one' (491), 'live' (484), 'news' (482), 'year' (463), 'trump' (462), 'qanon' (443), 'youtube' (441), 'streets' (436), 'th' (429), 'going' (417), 'emmanuelmacron' (414), 'see' (408), 'need' (394), and 'Bernie' (389). When looking at the ratio of words related to the Yellow Vests Movement, the term 'yellowvest' is used in

Table 1

Profile Information of the Accounts that Tweeted the Most About the Yellow Vests Movement

User Name	Tweets	Followers	Followed
@DrTurleyTalks	34,2B	42,4B	640
@OpEndCurrency	2429	37	5
@gerrty	184,8B	7490	3988
@BeabwBoop	32,6B	355	186
@wlctv_ca	61,4B	2170	66
@chipmcdonald	35B	1216	1090
@freedomgirl2011	146,6B	2331	3409
@PelinoreGeryon	50,4B	794	206
@nativeveteran	9354	486	700
@RT_com	431,2B	3MN	681
@twittposter	35,6B	467	101
@Ruptly	122B	115,4B	502
@Zox613	10,4B	668	302
@RaminMazaheri2	975	444	197
@RudyjtLovePirat	6499	57	10
@cnd_global	844	950	74
@FOLLOW_DA_BUCKS	130,9B	2157	2772

Resource: Twitter

28% of the tweets, while 'france' and 'giletsjaunes' are used in 9%, and 'paris' and 'macron' are used in 3%. Examining the frequency of words related to the movement, 'giletsjaunes' has the highest frequency, while 'France,' 'Paris,' and 'Macron' are among the most frequently used words on Twitter during the movement.

The Twitter accounts that tweeted the most about the Yellow Vests Movement are @eustache_luigy with 259 tweets, @brucekenneway with 185 tweets, @DrTurleyTalks with 175 tweets, @OpEndCurrency with 154 tweets, @Gerrrry with 136 tweets, @BeabwBoop with 131 tweets, @wlctv_ca with 124 tweets, @chipmcdonald with 109 tweets, @freedomgirl2011 with 107 tweets, @nativeveteran with 91 tweets, @RT_com with 85 tweets, @landoFree with 85 tweets, @twitttposter with 83 tweets, @Ruptly with 80 tweets, @Zox613 with 74 tweets, @RaminMazaheri2 with 63 tweets, @RudyjrLovePirat with 60 tweets, @cnd_global with 60 tweets, @FOLLOW_DA_BUCKS with 58 tweets. The accounts @eustache_luigy and @brucekenneway have been suspended. Out of 20 accounts, 17 have been reached, and @LandoFree account could not be reached. In the movement that lacks a central leader, embracing anyone willing to join, and symbolizing their actions with the yellow vest, social media, particularly Facebook

and Twitter, holds significant importance.

When examining the locations of tweets related to the Yellow Vests Movement, it is observed that the majority of tweets originate from the United States. Looking at the intensity by country, it is evident that the focal point of the events is the central European region. Participation in the movement is also noted from the regions of Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, and Australia. During that period, the various tweets from U.S. President Trump on Twitter about the Yellow Vests Movement influenced the increase in the number of tweets from the United States.

The regions with high tweet activity related to the Yellow Vests Movement include France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Spain, Portugal, and Belarus. Countries contributing to the movement through tweets are the USA, Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, the Caribbean, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Malta, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Eritrea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Libya, Nigeria, Cameroon, Burundi, South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Antarctica, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles, India, Bangladesh, China, Korea, the Philippines, Guam, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

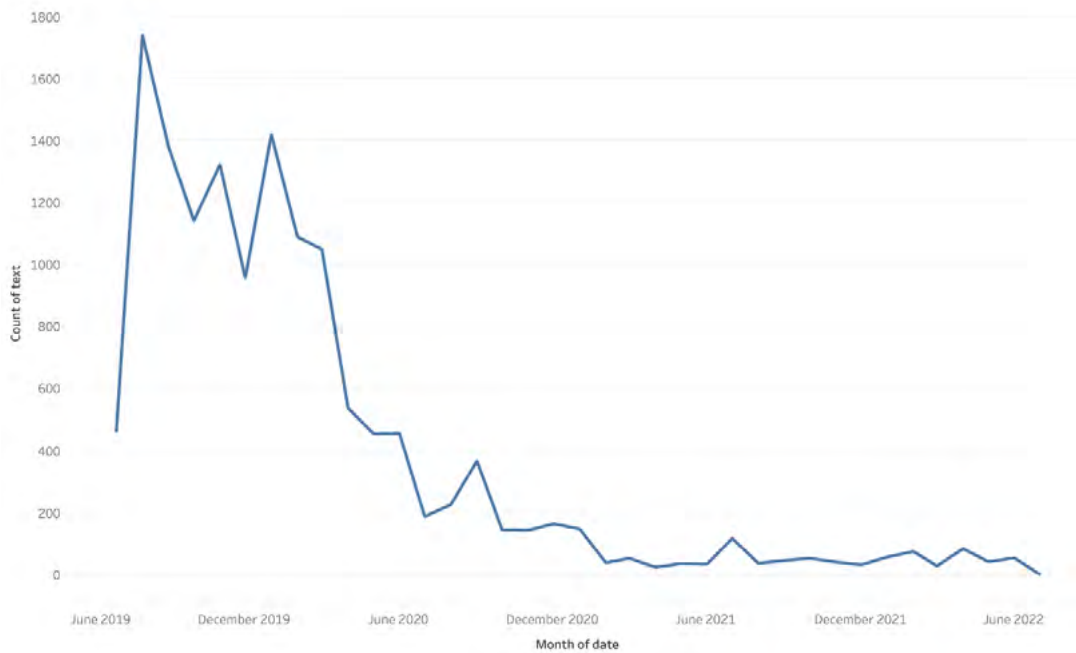
Figure 2

Location of the Most Tweeted Locations Related to the Yellow Vests Movement on the World Map



Graph 2

Time Series Graph of Tweets Related to the Yellow Vests Movement



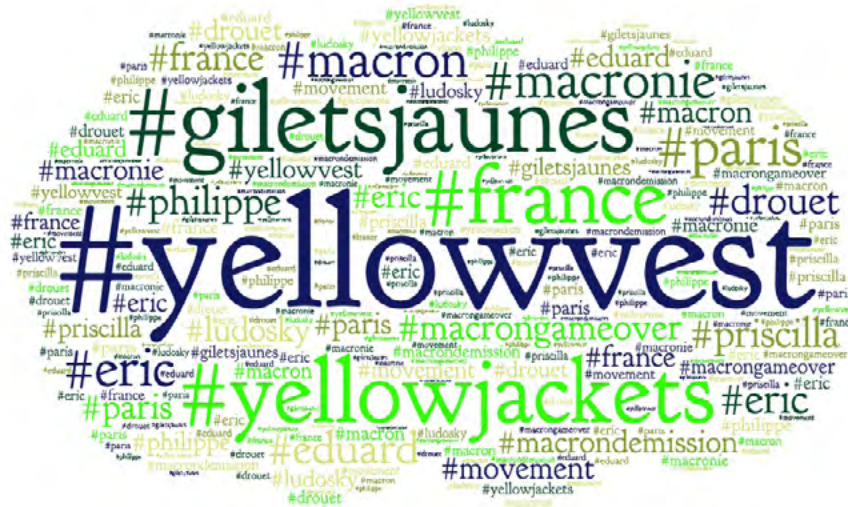
On December 1, 2018, it was revealed that the protest movement known as the third action of the Yellow Vests protest movement was one of the most intense. On that day alone, a total of 263 people were injured, 412 were detained, and the urban warfare scenes in Paris did not cease (Mahfud & Adam Troian, 2021, p. 108). The years 2018 at the end and the beginning of 2019 were intense periods for the movement, resulting in a significant number of tweets. In 2019, the world experienced the most intense tweet traffic due to hashtag activism, while there was a slight decrease in participation in 2020. In 2021, there was engagement in the center of the movement, surrounding countries, and the USA, where the most tweets were posted. In 2022, tweets related to the Yellow Vests were observed from the USA, Europe, Africa, and Asia regions. Arzu Morin explains the declining tweet activity, stating, 'they potentially exist when there is an action or criticism against the government, etc. But currently, there are not many. We cannot talk about a strong Yellow Vests Movement. The war has particularly made this a bit challenging (Morin, personal communication, June 14, 2023):

While there are numerous material and ideological factors contributing to the rise of the movement,

the primary focus should be on the negative impact of increasing economic and inequality levels (Jetten et al., 2020, p. 1). The Yellow Vests Movement is documented in the literature as a movement hosted by Twitter. In the analysis of Python-extracted tweets related to the Yellow Vests Movement in 2022, the sentiment is examined. Out of the 14,244 tweets obtained through the Twitter Python Library, 8,785 are identified as negative comments, while 4,316 are positive. It is observed that negative comments constitute 67%, while positive comments make up 33% of the total. The majority of tweets carry negative elements, especially reflecting the movement's impact on destruction, death, and violence, aligning with the higher prevalence of negative comments.

Analyzing the sentiment of 14,244 tweets extracted through the Twitter Python Library, it is found that 8,785 are negative comments, and 4,316 are positive. The sentiment of comments related to the Yellow Vests Movement is proportional to the number of likes, and negative comments receive more likes than positive ones. The ratio of likes for negative comments is 58%, while for positive comments, it is 42%. Due to the movement's

Figure 3
 Cloud Visualisation of the Most Frequently Used Hashtags Related to the Yellow Vests Movement



association with negative actions, negative comments tend to receive more likes. Moreover, negative comments receive a retweet rate of 65%, whereas positive comments have a retweet rate of 35%. Tweets containing negative emotions are shared and liked more frequently.

On Twitter, the most frequently used hashtags for the Yellow Vests include #yellowvest, #yellowjackets, #giletsjaunes, #paris, #macron, and #france. Analyzing the words extracted from Twitter using Python, it is evident that words associated with the movement, such as yellowvests, giletsjaunes, macron, and france, are prominent.

The Yellow Vests have besieged the streets with the storm they unleashed. Some perceive this movement as the ‘European Spring,’ while others liken it to the ‘Gezi Resistance,’ portraying it as a popular movement and an expression of public demand and anger that turned squares into a battleground, engulfing the entire world (Özbudan & Demirer, 2019).

Analysis of Tweets of Gezi Park Protests with Twitter Python Library Dataset

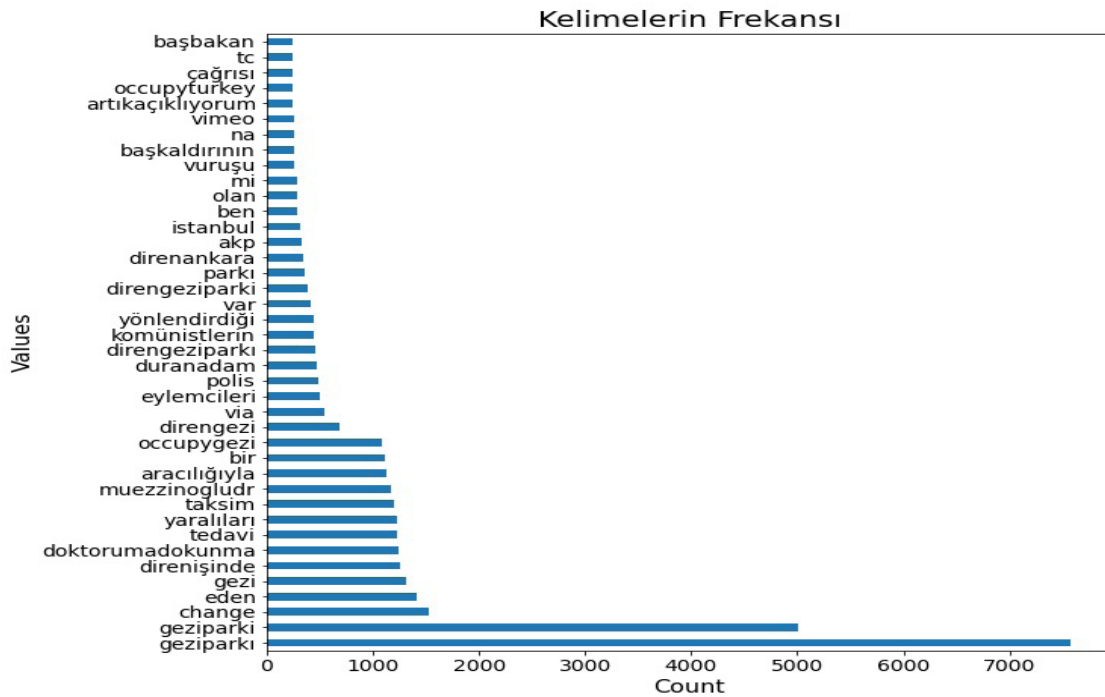
In the study, when tweets related to the Gezi Park Protests were scanned, a total of 100.550 tweets were reached, and 13.003 tweets were included in the research. Analyzing the tweets from Twitter in 2022 about the Gezi Park incidents, the most

frequently used words include “geziparki” used 7.581 times, “geziparki” 5.005 times, “change” 1.523 times, “eden” 1.408 times, “gezi” 1.319 times, “direnışinde” 1.249 times, “doktoromadokunma” 1.234 times, “tedavi” 1.227 times, “yaralıları” 1.227 times, “taksim” 1.197 times, “muezzinogluđr” 1.169 times, “aracılıđıyla” 1.128 times, “bir” 1.113 times, “occupygezi” 1.091 times, “direngezi” 679 times, “via” 538 times, “eylemcileri” 503 times, “polis” 490 times, “duranadam” 466 times, “direngeziparki” 385 times, “parkı” 352 times, “direnankara” 341 times, “akp” 328 times, “istanbul” 315 times, “ben” 284 times, “olan” 280 times, “mi” 280 times, “vuruđu” 256 times, “bařkaldırının” 254 times, “na” 252 times, “vimeo” 252 times, “artıkacıklıyorum” 250 times, “occupyturkey” 250 times, “çađırısı” 241 times, “tc” 240 times, and “bařbakan” 238 times. When looking at the tweets related to the Gezi Park Protests, the word “geziparki” is associated with the movement in 21% of the tweets, “geziparki” in 14%, “change,” “gezi,” and “eden” in 4% of the tweets are the most frequently used words.

For Gezi Park on Twitter, the usernames of the accounts that tweeted the most and the number of tweets they posted are as follows: @geziparkicom with 840 tweets, @anadolujansi with 171 tweets, @MujdatGOKCE_ with 96 tweets, @SinanTurker with 96 tweets, @sercanbicer361 with 84 tweets, @YeniEksen with 83 tweets, @WhiteMintyCandy with 76 tweets, @umitbektař with 60 tweets, @BalcBal with 59 tweets, and @HusamettinAkky

Graph 3

Frequency of the Most Frequently Used Words in Tweets Related to the Gezi Park Protests



with 58 tweets. While @geziparkicom and @anadolujansi are the accounts that tweeted the most, it is observed that many accounts have deleted their tweets related to the protests.

During the Gezi Park Protests, activists gathered via social media in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, and Mersin, taking to the streets, and experiencing protests. (Babaoğlu & Banko, 2013, p. 30). The data obtained in the study reveals that the cities with the highest number of tweets are Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. When looking at the locations of tweets related to the Gezi Park Movement, it is observed that the highest number

of tweets, 2050 tweets or 84%, originated from Istanbul. In the central city of the movement, Ankara, 106 tweets or 4% of the total tweets were posted.

The footsteps in Türkiye, which started to echo and had a global impact, found expression through Twitter. Examining the countries participating in the Gezi Park Protests worldwide through hashtags, Saudi Arabia takes the lead with 70 tweets, followed by France with 13, the United States with 8, and Switzerland with 7. Additionally, participation through tweets is observed from countries such as Korea, Canada, Kiribati, Bermuda,

Table 2

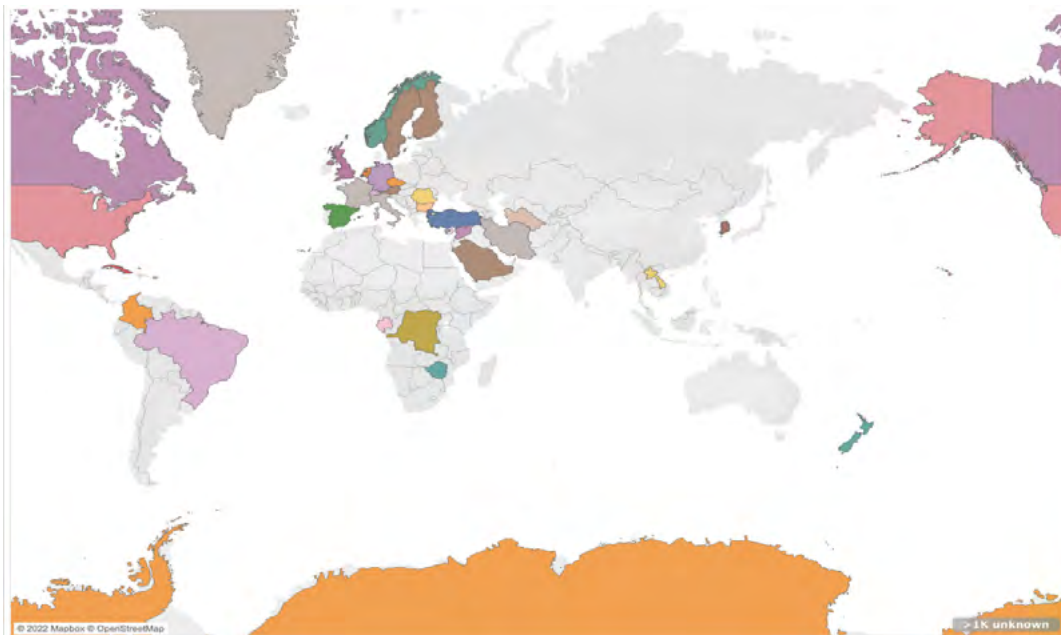
User Information of the 10 Accounts that Tweeted the Most During the Gezi Park Protests

User Name	Tweets	Followers	Followed
@geziparkicom	1934	0	2
@anadolujansi	461,8B	34	3,4Mn
@MujdatGOKCE	175,6B	1542	8501
@SinanTurker	6718	577	261
@sercanbicer361	8868	1452	659
@YeniEksen	72,4B	347	278
@WhiteMintyCandy	4068	30	38
@umitbektaş	5105	615	905
@BalcBal	82,2B	1043	13,4B
@HusamettinAkky	144,6B	4997	2419

Resource: Twitter

Figure 4

Location Map of the Countries Tweeting during the Gezi Park Movement



Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Antarctica, Greenland, Sweden, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain, Syria, Cyprus, Turkmenistan, Iran, New Zealand, and others.

billion. The primary reason for this phenomenon is the headlines related to the Gezi events that entered the most talked-about lists globally, either simultaneously or individually (Babaoğlan & Banko, 2013, pp. 22-23). Globally, it is observed that everyone actively participated in tweeting at the beginning of the movement, but as events unfolded, the initial excitement was replaced by new ones, as is common in such occurrences.

A surprising data point related to Gezi Park is the generation of 23.99 million Twitter messages that collectively reached an impact of more than 7

Graph 4

Timeline of Tweets-Like-Retweets about the Gezi Park Movement between 13 June 2013 and 30 June 2013

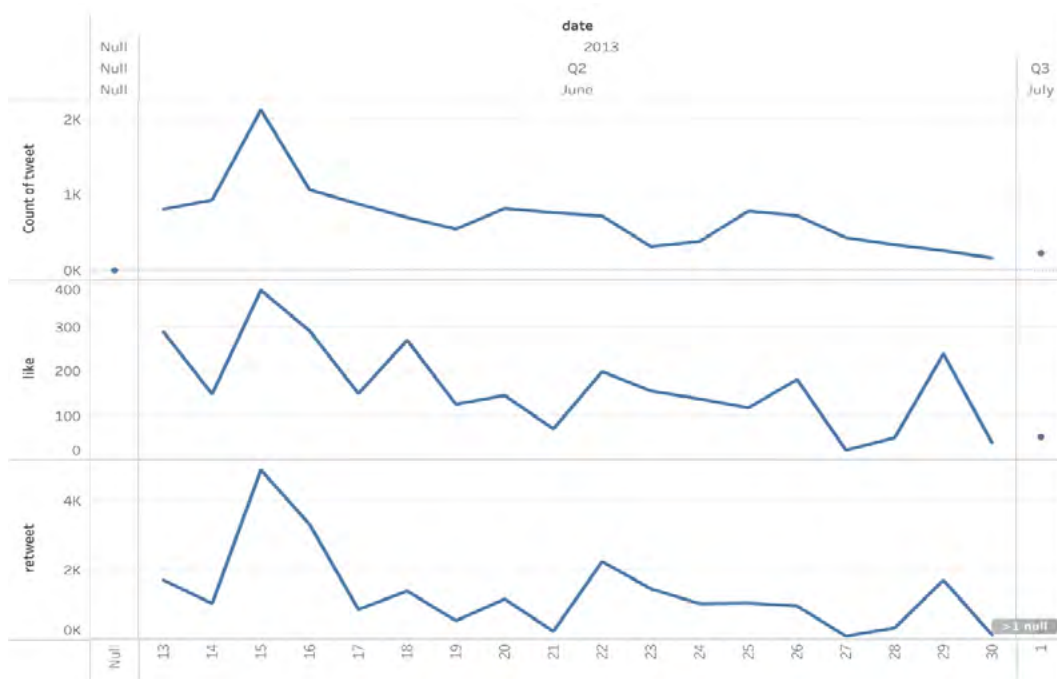


Figure 5

Cloud Visualisation of Frequently Used Hashtags Related to Gezi Park Protests



Concerning the Gezi Park Protests, the data obtained within the scope of the study limitations indicate that the most intense period for tweets and retweets occurred between June 14 and June 30, 2013. The increase that began on June 14 reached its peak on June 15-16. Although the number of tweets declined between June 20 and June 25, it rose again during this period. The retweet count, which reached around 5.300 on June 15-16, experienced peaks on June 22 and June 29, but remained at a normal level on other days.

The probability of tweets from the period between May 27 and June 13, 2013, when the movement began, being deleted is high (Yerlikaya, 2018, p. 289). In this regard, a participant in the movement stated, “I was particularly careful about using quotes while using social media because there was a possibility of profiling or judgment through social media accounts. I tried to summarize what was happening in the places I was in through Twitter.” (Male, 27, single, university graduate, employed) (Çötelî, 2015, p. 115) he mentions that due to the sanctions imposed on accounts where sharing is done on Twitter, he prefers to use retweets rather than tweeting.

Regarding the Gezi Park Protests, when examining the data of 13.003 tweets obtained with the Twitter Python Library in 2022 and included in the study, it is found that 12.280 contain negative comments, while 163 received positive

comments. The negative comments constitute 99%, whereas the positive comments account for 1% of the total. When looking at the like rate of comments related to the Gezi Park Protests, it is inversely proportional to the number of negative and positive comments. The like rate of positive comments is 77%, while the like rate of negative comments is 23%. Analyzing the retweet rate of negative and positive comments obtained about the Gezi Park Movement, it is observed that positive comments have a higher retweet rate. While positive comments receive a retweet rate of 82%, negative comments receive a retweet rate of 18%. The abundance of positive comments and retweets may be due to some activists perceiving the movement as a festival or entertainment and tweeting in that direction.

In 2013, within a one-week period, 91 million data points were reached (Somemto, 2013), while in 2018, 47 million data points were reached within one month (Yerlikaya, 2018). As time passes since the Gezi Park events, data tends to get lost and deleted. The study's data shows that the hashtags #direngezi, #direngezipark, #occupygezi, #gezipark, #taksim, #direnizmir, and #durankadın are commonly used in relation to this situation.

In the 2013 data, the hashtags #direngeziparkı with 2.043.158 tweets, #direngeziparki with 1.493.136 tweets, #direnankara with 849.295 tweets, #occupygezi with 755.767

tweets, #direngaziparki with 615.434 tweets, #sesverturkiyebuülkesahipsizdeğil with 588.818 tweets, and #direnizmir with 419.237 tweets are among the most tweeted hashtags (Somemto, 2013). During the Gezi Park process, the words geziparki, gezi, change, occupygezi, doktorumadokunma, yaralıları, direnişinde, direngezi, tedavi, polis, taksim, direnankara were among the most frequently used words. 'I think the organization became Twitter. Twitter, and everyone, gathered thanks to Twitter.' (Interviewee, 7, Male, 20, High School) (Yarci, 2017, pp. 81-82). The activist affirming that the most frequently used hashtags and words in the protests are associated with the movement when compared to the words used in exchanging news among activists. In the interviews, it was stated, 'Without Twitter, we don't have a single news source!!' (Çöteli, 2015, p. 115). The responses of the activists who say that also confirm this claim.

Conclusions and Discussions

The study examines the Yellow Vests and Gezi Park Protests at the intersection of new social movements and digital activism, focusing on the axis of social media. It analyzes the Twitter dataset to understand the relationship between social media and digital activism, particularly hashtag activism, using current data. With the Twitter Python Library, 52.651 tweets were collected for the Yellow Vests movement from November 17, 2018, to the end of 2022, and 14.244 tweets were included in the study. For the Gezi Park Protests, 13.003 tweets were collected and analyzed from 100,550 tweets taken between May 27, 2013, and July 2, 2013.

The movement brings together people from different identities under a single umbrella, as individuals strive towards a common goal through social media (Işık, 2013, p.29). Hashtags, particularly on Twitter, have emerged as an effective means of sharing content (Smith- Alexander, 2013). This study (RQ4) reveals similarities and differences between the Yellow Vest Movement and the Gezi Park Protests in selected word groups on Twitter during the dates of the most intense events. The

Gezi Park Protests and the Yellow Vest Movement share similarities in terms of organization and preparation processes on social media before taking to the streets. In the Yellow Vest Movement, groups were formed on Facebook under the name GiletsJaunes, focusing on taxes, price hikes, and the demands of retirees. Similarly, the Gezi Park Protests utilized social media, particularly Twitter, to organize and take to the streets, with the spread of images depicting the removal of trees in Taksim.

(RQ4) Unlike the Yellow Vest Movement, the Gezi Park Protests spread rapidly, slowing down and ending within 21 days. In contrast, the Yellow Vest Movement, active in 2018-2019, expressed its demands intensively and organized, but later transitioned to a slower phase. Looking at the age groups of participants, the majority of protesters are in the 50-59 age range. (Rawelli, 2021, p. 23). In the interviews conducted by the KONDA research company during the Gezi Park protests, it was determined that the majority of the activists were between the ages of 20-23, and those residing in Istanbul were in the 28-30 age range (Konda, 2014, p. 4)

(RQ4) In surveys conducted with activists from the Yellow Vests and Gezi Park movements, there is a prevailing sense of distrust towards the president and political parties (Colin, 2019, p. 21; Advan, 2015, p. 246). The Yellow Vest protesters consist of 33% individuals without any affiliation, while 19% align themselves with the national front (Rawelli, 2021, p. 7). In the Gezi Park Protests, 79% of the participants have no membership, while 21% are members of a political party or NGO (Konda, 2014, p. 15). The absence of party or organizational affiliations among the majority of activists in both movements is noteworthy. Despite organizing through social media, participants in both movements gather without knowing each other, coming together to voice their grievances. Had these movements been planned months in advance and mobilized with a pre-established structure, it would have been normal for participants to have high rates of party/NGO memberships. Therefore, both movements lack a clear leader or organizer, and

they do not rely on the government, opposition, or leftist parties. They create their own rebellions. Among them are individuals with right-wing, left-wing, anarchist ideologies, as well as those who have never participated in any activism. In this regard, the Yellow Vest Movement and the Gezi Park Protests exhibit similarities.

(RQ5) In the Yellow Vest Movement, the number of negative comments (8.785) and the like rate (average=6.83) surpass that of positive comments (4.316) and the like rate (average=4.86). In contrast, in the Twitter dataset obtained for the Gezi Park Protests, the number of negative comments (12.840) and the like rate (average=0.23) are higher than the positive comments (163) and the like rate (average=0.76). This discrepancy leads to a higher proportion of positive comments in the latter case. The ratio of positive retweets in the Yellow Vest Movement (average=2.57) is lower than that of negative retweets (average=4.79). Although the occurrence of violence, police intervention, and casualties tends to increase the number of negative comments and retweets, in the case of the Gezi Park Protests, the ratio of positive comments and positive retweets (average=8.16) is higher than that of negative retweets (average=1.80). While this may be attributed to the size of the dataset, interviews with activists suggest that their perception of the protests as a 'festivity' and their tendency to like and share tweets in this direction may also contribute to this outcome.

(RQ2) In both movements, the most commonly used social media platforms are Facebook and Twitter (Advan, 2015; Çöteli, 2015; Kurt, 2016; Yarı, 2017). The Yellow Vest Movement predominantly utilizes Twitter. The movement continues its activities and protests, opting for Twitter as a primary tool. (Rawelli, 2021; Bergem, 2022; Morin, 2023).

The research findings (RQ3) reveal that the social media platform Twitter is extensively utilized through hashtags in activist movements. The study highlights the importance of social media platforms that have played a role in shaping

new social movements and facilitating their achievement of goals throughout history. The results of the study (RQ1) indicate that hashtags contribute to movements that lack a clear leader or organizer. Movements have the power to gather the global community under a single hashtag on Twitter. It can be anticipated that Twitter will continue to host numerous struggles and solidarity efforts in the future.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Sosyal medya platformları toplumsal değişim ve aktivizm için önemli bir araçtır. Özellikle Twitter, toplumsal olayların hızla yayıldığı ve hashtag aktivizminin sıklıkla kullanıldığı bir alan haline gelmiştir. Hashtagler ise kullanıcıların belirli bir konu hakkında kolayca iletişim kurmasını kolaylaştırarak toplulukların sosyal medya platformlarında belirli bir konu veya hareket etrafında birleşmesini sağlamaktadır. Bu özellik, sosyal olayların ve hareketlerin hızla yayılmasını ve daha fazla görünür olmasını kolaylaştırmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, sosyal medyanın kolektif davranışlara sebep olduğu varsayımıyla, sosyal medyada hashtag aktivizminin önemi ve Twitter üzerinde etkileri Gezi Parkı ve Sarı Yelekliler hareketleri üzerinden incelenmektedir. Araştırma, literatürde son zamanlarda araştırmacıların dikkatini çeken hashtag aktivizmine odaklanmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı, yeni toplumsal hareketler ve yeni medya arasındaki ilişkiden doğan 'dijital aktivizm' kavramını keşfetmektir. Araştırmanın evrenini bir sosyal medya platformu olan Twitter, örneklemini ise Gezi Parkı ve Sarı Yelekliler hareketlerine ait tweetler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma, sosyal medyada dijital aktivizm bağlamında Twitter'daki hashtag aktivizmini ve kültürünü ortaya çıkarmak için içerik analizini bir yöntem olarak kullanmaktadır. Veriler nitel içerik

analizi kullanılarak kategorize edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak Twitter Python Kütüphanesini kullanarak Sarı Yekekliler ve Gezi Parkı protestolarına ilişkin tweetleri analiz edilmektedir. Analizler, tweetlerde en sık kullanılan kelimeleri, en aktif hesapları, tweet konularını, zaman serilerini ve negatif ve pozitif yorum sayılarını, beğenme oranlarını, retweet oranlarını ve en çok kullanılan hashtagleri, kelimeleri içermektedir. Twitter Python kütüphanesinden elde edilen veri setlerini sınıflandırmak için veri analizinde ise nitel sistematik içerik analizi kullanılmaktadır.

Bu çalışma için Twitter Python Kütüphanesi aracılığıyla Sarı Yekekliler hareketiyle ilgili 52.651 tweete erişilmiş ve 14.244 tweet analize dâhil edilmektedir. Twitter'da hareketle ilgili olarak en sık kullanılan terim 13.079 mention ile 'yellowvests' olduğu görülmektedir. Hareket sırasında en çok @eustache_luigy hesabının tweet attığı ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin en çok tweet atılan ülke olduğu görülmüştür. Sarı Yekekliler hareketinin yoğun olduğu dönem, en yüksek tweet trafiğinin yaşandığı 2018 sonu ve 2019 başıdır. Bu çalışma, 2022 yılında Twitter'daki Python programından Sarı Yekekliler Hareketi ile ilgili toplanan tweetlerin duyarlılığında incelemektedir. Sonuçlar, tweetlerin %67'sinin olumsuz, %33'ünün ise olumlu bir duyguya sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Tweetlerin çoğunluğu olumsuz unsurlar içerse de, bunun hareketin yıkım, ölüm ve şiddet içeren ciddiyetinden kaynaklandığını belirtmek önemlidir. Bu nedenle %58 olan olumsuz yorum oranı şaşırtıcı değildir. Olumlu yorumların oranı ise %42'dir. Hareket ile ilişkilendirilen olumsuz eylemler göz önüne alındığında, tarafsızlığı korumak ve olumsuz yorumları beğenmekten kaçınmak önem taşımaktadır. Twitter verilerine göre, Sarı Yekekliler hareketiyle ilgili olumsuz yorumların %65'i retweet edilirken, olumlu yorumların yalnızca %35'i aynı muameleyi görmektedir. Ayrıca, olumsuz duyguları ifade eden tweetlerin paylaşılma ve beğenilme olasılığı daha yüksektir. Twitter'da Sarı Yekekliler ile ilgili en sık kullanılan hashtag'ler ise #yellowvest, #yellowjackets, #giletsjaunes, #paris, #macron ve #france'dir. Python programı kullanılarak Twitter'dan çıkarılan kelimeler analiz

edildiğinde, 'sarı yekekliler', 'gilets jaunes', 'macron' ve 'fransa' terimlerinin hareketle belirgin bir şekilde ilişkilendirildiği görülmektedir.

2013 yılında başlayan Gezi Parkı protestoları da Sarı Yekekliler hareketi gibi Twitter üzerinde önemli bir etki yaratmaktadır. Hashtagler protestocuların taleplerini koordine etmelerini ve dünya çapında destek kazanmalarını sağlamaktadır. Twitter müdahaleleri, taleplerin yayılmasını ve hükümetten gelen taleplere anında destek verilmesini kolaylaştırmaktadır. Gezi Parkı protestolarıyla ilgili tweetlerin taranması sonucunda toplam 100.550 tweete ulaşılmakta olup ve bunların 13.003'ü çalışmaya dâhil edilmektedir. Twitter'da 2022 yılında Gezi Parkı protestolarıyla ilgili atılan tweetler incelendiğinde, en sık kullanılan kelime 7581 kez geçen 'gezipark' olmuştur. Gezi Parkı hakkında en çok tweet atan Twitter hesabı @geziparkicom olurken, en çok tweet atılan şehir İstanbul, en çok tweet atılan ülke ise Suudi Arabistan olmaktadır. Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları dâhilinde elde edilen verilere göre Gezi Parkı Protestoları ile ilgili tweet ve retweetlerin en yoğun olduğu dönem 14-30 Haziran 2013 tarihleri arasındadır. En yüksek artış, 14 Haziran'da başlayan yükselişin ardından 15-16 Haziran tarihlerinde gerçekleşmiştir. Ardından tweet sayısında bir düşüş yaşanmış, 20-25 Haziran tarihleri arasında ise kısa süreli bir artış görülmüştür. 15-16 Haziran'da 5300 retweet'e ulaştıktan sonra, tweet sayısı 22 Haziran ve 29 Haziran'da tekrar artmış, ancak diğer günlerde sabit kalmıştır. 2022'de Twitter Python Kütüphanesi kullanılarak toplanan ve çalışmaya dâhil edilen Gezi Parkı Protestoları ile ilgili 13.003 tweetin verileri incelendiğinde, 12.280'inin olumsuz yorum içerdiği, sadece 163'ünün olumlu yorum aldığı görülmüştür. Bu da olumsuz yorumların oranının %99, olumlu yorumların oranının ise sadece %1 olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca, Gezi Parkı protestoları ile ilgili yorumların beğenilme oranının olumsuz ve olumlu yorum sayısı ile ters orantılı olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Analize göre, olumlu yorumların beğenilme oranı %77 iken, olumsuz yorumların beğenilme oranı %23'tür. Gezi Parkı Hareketi hakkındaki olumlu yorumların retweet oranı olumsuz yorumlardan

daha yüksektir. Özellikle, olumlu yorumların %82'si retweet edilirken, olumsuz yorumların yalnızca %18'i retweet edilmiştir. Olumlu yorum ve retweet oranının yüksek olması, bazı aktivistlerin hareketi bir festival ya da eğlence olarak algılayıp bu yönde tweet atmalarından kaynaklanabilmektedir. Gezi Parkı protestoları sürecinde en çok #direngezi, #direngeziparki, #occupygezi, #geziparki, #taksim, direnizmir, #duranadam etiketleri kullanılmaktadır. Çalışma verileri gözönüne alındığında en çok kullanılan kelimelerin ise, geziparki, gezi, change, occupygezi, doktorumadokunma, yaralıları, direnişinde, direngezi, tedavi, polis, taksim, direnankara olduğu bulgulanmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, geleneksel medyanın etki altına alınabildiği bir dönemde, sosyal medya platformları aracılığıyla örgütlenmenin aktivizmde etkisini ortaya koymaktadır. Hashtag aktivizmi, toplumsal değişim ve aktivizmin önemli bir gücü haline gelmektedir. Aktivistler seslerini duyurmak için yayılım kültüründen faydalanmakta ve hashtag aktivizmi yoluyla küresel bir etki yaratmaktadırlar. Özellikle Twitter, aktivistlerin hashtag'leri farkındalık yaratma aracı olarak kullanmasıyla sorunlara çözüm aramak için bir platform haline gelmektedir. Twitter gibi mikrobloglar, toplulukların bir araya gelmesini hızlandırarak seslerini duyurmalarını ve sosyal olayları yaymalarını sağlamaktadır. Gezi Parkı ve Sarı Yelekliler hareketleri, sosyal medyanın aktivizm üzerindeki etkisini gösteren önemli örneklerdir. Twitter, Gezi Parkı ve Sarı Yelekliler Hareketi'ndeki örgütlenmelerde öncelikli olarak kullanılmaktadır. Sarı Yelekliler Hareketi protestolarına devam etmekte ve Twitter'ı hala bir araç olarak kullanmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda,

sosyal medya platformlarından Twitter'ın aktivist eylemlerde hashtagler yardımıyla yoğun olarak kullanıldığı bulgulanmaktadır. Bulgular yeni toplumsal hareketleri ortaya çıkarmakta ve sosyal medya platformlarının bu hareketlerin amaçlarına ulaşmasındaki önemini vurgulamaktadır. Hashtag'lerin lidersiz ve örgütsüz hareketlere yardımcı olduğu sonucu ortaya koymaktadır.

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