People, Flags, Bridges: Transformation through Resistance

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The public sphere has never been as densely and diversely occupied as it has been in Turkey’s recent history. The summer of 2013 was marked by Gezi Park protests and the undeniable presence of alternative lifestyles (apolitical youth) as well as by police brutality with their tear gas and water cannons. Three years later in the summer of 2016 the people of Turkey witnessed an intervention of crowds to a military coup on the night of July 15th. Hundreds of citizens were killed in clashes, the bombing of the Parliament, and the democracy watch rallies for the following 25 nights in response to the President’s call.

Gezi Park protests started as a bottom-up citizen initiative against the government’s plan to reconstruct the historic military barracks with a renewed commercial function in Taksim, Istanbul. The protests were sparked by the violent intervention of the security forces against a small group of activists occupying Gezi Park. This was rapidly transformed into nationwide anti-government protests backed by left-wing and Alevi groups as well as football fan groups and marginal communities including LGBT and anti-capitalist