

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEKEL RESISTANCE AT TURKEY IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the Tekel Resistance during December, 2009-March, 2010 in Ankara-Turkey through social movements theory. This opposition action has a unique meaning across Turkish social struggle because of its distinction in structural and cultural bases. While it had mobilized the workers and their families as an organizational opposition, it turned into a grass-root resistance against government and the union leadership. This study focuses on the collective action of Tekel workers in terms of social movements literature and whether this action has a social movement character. The Tekel resistance as a grass-root movement against both the government and the union is discussed in the context of “contentious politics” and “new social movements” and the events of the 78-days resistance are matched with the concepts of these two approaches. I would argue that while it as an unusual experiment creates a social movement base and ensures new networks, it is not exactly a social movement according to the two different approaches of social movements.

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**Keywords:** Social Movements in Turkey, Contentious Politics, New Social Movements, Turkish Politics, Grass-root Struggles

## Introduction

Tekel (meaning Monopoly) was a public factory that was responsible for the production of alcohol and smoke products. It had lots of factories which were located in areas with properties of high value in different cities around the country. During the last ten years in the framework of privatization process, Tekel factories had been moved by international companies. At 2009, the dismissal policies are also practiced over the workers. During this process, the “Tekel resistance”, which included demonstrations and sit-ins against dismissals and lasted for 78 days in Ankara starting from December 15, 2009, is an important moment in the

history of Turkish social struggles. After 1980 military coup, such a well-attended and long-term protest movement had not occurred in Turkey. Especially during the 2000s –democratization has relatively raised on this period- other than a few exceptional little small-scale strike and anti-war meeting there was no massive protest mobilization around the country. So the Tekel resistance has a different and unique position compared to previous actions and resistance of Turkish working-class struggles from various aspects. Hence, the Tekel resistance had the potential to influence social and political processes of Turkey because it had mobilized a different kind of the mass than had previously been mobilized. The mobilized mass was not only comprised of individual workers, but also included their families and other opposition groups. However, the basic point is the failure of the potential of the resistance to turn an effective movement. The Tekel resistance created a remarkable grassroot activity but it failed to have an influence as a social movement.

The analysis on whether the Tekel resistance is a “social movement” will be based on certain concepts in the literature. It occurred after some sequential or isolated small-scale protests and then mobilized grass-root units of the union. So it turned from an institutional protest that the union organize to a grass-root resistance that the components progressed. So the resistance was opposition to both the government and their own union. It is argued that as a collective grass-root action Tekel workers’ resistance has created a social movement potential and common ground against privatization policies but it could not make a prevailing movement in terms of the different approaches of this literature. In this context, the aim of this study is to analyze what was the wrong in the Tekel resistance within social movement literature and establish it as a position in Turkish struggles.

Analysis of social movements in Turkey is generally bounded in institutional or organizational struggle but not in a grass-root activity. In other words there is a tendency of ignoring the movement against institutions in Turkish analyzes. To analyze the movement itself without an institutional relation does not used in widely Turkish studies. So the context of social movements theory is referred rarely when the opposition actions and resistance in Turkey were analyzing. Due to the same deficiency, there is only a limited amount of academic works to guide this study. Hence, analysis of the Tekel resistance through social movement theory constitutes the most distinctive aspect of this study. Actually, the rising importance of movement dynamics against institutional boundaries in the global perspective during 2000s –especially in the context of counter-globalization movements- has also affected the Turkish movements. The Tekel resistance made a difference to create opposition to the union leaders and their approach to the movement. So it tried to change the union-based struggle tradition as a vertical process

to horizontal one as a movement but it did not achieved this attempt successfully with all dimensions.

This analysis will be based on two different approaches. The first one is the way of interpreting social movements with “contentious politics” which developed within the “political opportunity structure” approach widely used by American scholars. The second one is the approach of “new social movements”, which is one of the interpretation types of post-1968 Europe-wide struggles. As we will explain later, the studies of Charles Tilly and his followers, the developers of the concept of contentious politics, concentrated on long-term development in the social and political structure and particularly on its effects on political decision-making processes within coordinated actions. The new social movements literature, on the other hand, which questions Marxism and the revolutionist perspective, gives prominence to the partial structure of movements and gives priority to the formation of the actor and accompanying problems on the basis of their foundations. Although the two approaches have converged in recent years (Della Porta, 2009), the difference in perspective on the quality of a movement still continues. These two approaches were selected to analyze the Tekel resistance because of their concepts are applicable for this case study. The article will concentrate whether the events of resistance match with the concepts.

In this context, firstly, basic concepts of social movement approaches will be explained and then the development process of the Tekel resistance will be summarized. At the third and fourth parts, Tekel resistance will be matched and critically analyzed in the terms of social movement concepts.

### **Different approaches on social movements**

There are different approaches to interpret a protest or struggle in social movement theory. It is possible to make a distinction between the approaches of American and European scholars although the gap between the two has been closing over the last decades (Della Porta, 2009). Following the comments that movements were a consequence of rational processes, after the 1968 events like student riots, civil rights struggles, and feminist, anti-nuclear and peace movements, the approach of “resource mobilization” and its following “political opportunity” and “political process” approaches appeared predominantly in the USA. These approaches generally question “how” a movement appears. It focuses on institutional relationships and elements in the system which leads to a collective action. In short, resource mobilization focuses on the significance of recourses such as time, money, and human in emergence of movement and agitation power of social movement organization that will manage them (Scott, 1990: 110; Crossley, 2002:77). The image of the angry and disappointed crowd or the irrational mob that forms the origins of social movements turned into a deliberate

formal organization profile and rational behavior by mobilization tradition (Jasper, 2002:67). As a result, this approach aims to place social movements in industrial society with well-established institutions as an organization and to contribute to the strengthening of the system. Political opportunity and process approaches arising from the evaluation to this approach, concentrate on points such as the position of the actors in the system, democracy degrees of states, harmonization or conflict of the elite and the alliances between them and gives importance to the power of change created by movements in public policies. In other words, based on the opinion that the change of opportunities and restrictions also affect the emergence process of movements includes external dimensions of movements within the analysis (Tarrow, 2006:24-25).

On the European side, social movement analyses focus on the causes and “why” it has occurred. Collective action is mostly regarded with the phenomena of revolution of working-class and is based on different dimensions of class analysis. In this approach, social movements, which are considered within the framework of different interpretations of Marxism, are regarded as an element forming on the ground of organized structures such as parties and unions and are not considered as a political power on their own. However, after the 1960s, in parallel to the strengthening of the New Left tendency, the approach of “new social movements” (NSMs) gained strength. NSM is the general name of the struggles within a partial structure based on a certain agenda such as environment, women, peace, homosexuality and civil rights. In its broadest sense, NSMs refer to a form of movement, which is based on voluntarism rather than membership and vertical hierarchy instead of a vertical one. NSMs are in doubt about unchangeable pioneering principles or ideological references but they focus on the direct actions. They also have a flexible structure and focus on a certain agenda, which does not follow the leadership of any class (Buechler, 1995; Oloffson, 1988)

In other words, NSMs put emphasis on actors and social interactions before the structure (Touraine, 1985). In this context, NSMs have post-structural characteristics. As a result, general characteristics of NSMs concern, individual motivation, identity demands, cultural codes and daily-life relationships –in other word the symbolic side of the social- before the systemic or institutional disruptions (Melucci, 1994). The aim of these movements is to create a lifestyle change beyond a political revolution rather than to take control of the state. As the formation of the types of movements and areas of focus broadened, it was observed that NSMs’ analyses chose to make a distinction between of political and cultural or ideological and non-ideological movements or contrast between the continuity or break about “old” and “new” movements (Buechler, 1995:457; Scott, 1995:133-134;

Tormey, 2005:220-225). In fact, it is more accurate to interpret the change created by NSMs as a reconsideration of class rather than as “an escape from class” or as a rejection of class. It can be stated that the most basic characteristic of NSMs is to consider the political area with a broader approach and to expand discussion areas. NSMs approach emerged from an area with dominant cultural experiences in the 2000s and tended to show a more explicit class-culture conflict.

This theoretical framework will be used to interpret the Tekel resistance below. Contentious politics (to analyze the structure of the resistance) and NSM (to focus on social and horizontal relations of the resistance) approaches help to make clear the aspects of resistance., But before the matching the concepts with the case, the graduation of the resistance will be summarized and important dates and event of the process will be underlined.

### **The background of the resistance**

Privatization of Tekel and the changes in the tobacco market spread for a period of nearly 10 years and reached a clarity following the closure or transfer of factories one by one until the end of 2009 (Aysu, 2009: 189-199; Özerman, 2009). However, these gradual practices failed to gain the attention of the public until the harsh intervention of police in Ankara. In fact, certain resistance and actions on a factory basis did not evolve into a more general struggle with other privatization practices. Resistance against privatization of large corporations such as SEKA (Turkish Cellulose and Paper Factories) through certain actions and demonstrations in the early 1990s only remained as individual actions. In the Tekel case, there was no wide-range network to connect with other anti-privatization movements in Turkey. Except for “informal networks” established between the workers who were appointed to different cities because of the closing of the factories in which they worked, Tekel workers could not create a network against the dismissal process. In this process, a collective action could not be created apart from local actions in closed factories. For this reason, an agenda or a public support could not be established to include other aggrieved workers.

At the end of 2009, the actions gained impetus after it became clear that factories and warehouses of Tekel would be closed and the workers who losing their rights would be employed under the status of 4-C which would make them unsecured. During the process some actions were held in various cities in early December. For example, Tek-Gıda İş Union (the union that Tekel workers belong to) Aegean Regional Administration located in İzmir was occupied by the workers; demonstrations were conducted front of the AKP (the ruler party of Turkey – Justice and Development Party) Provincial Office. In Diyarbakır, demonstrations were held in front of the governorship. In İstanbul, banners and posters were raised during a speech of the Prime

Minister. The response of the Prime Minister to the activists at this moment brought this issue to the agenda. In Ankara, a highway was closed to the traffic and conflicts happened with the police. Following these local actions, Tek-Gıda İş Union announced that they would hold a collective action in front of AKP Headquarters in Ankara, however the governorship of Ankara declared that this action would not be allowed and that the buses carrying the workers would not be allowed to enter the city.

The Tekel resistance symbolically started on December 15, 2009 with the arrival of workers from various cities to Ankara. On the morning of December 15, the workers who arrived in Ankara with 106 buses (approximately 5,000 workers) got off their buses, which were stopped by the police and gendarmerie at different points of the city and walked to AKP headquarters. However, the police did not allow the workers to reach the party building. Instead, the police took some of the workers to closed sports centers. When the negotiations between Türk-İş authorities and AKP headquarters became disputed, the workers spent the night in sports centers and Abdi İpekçi Park since they were not given a satisfying explanation. On December 16, 2009 the workers remained waiting in the park and around the party building; in the meantime, the number of supporting visitors of the workers increased. On December 17, 2009 the action suddenly gained importance on the agenda of the country due to the harsh intervention of the police (used tear gas and cosh against the workers) upon the instruction of the government. The intervention drew public interest since deputies and senior union administrators were also affected from the gas bombs. Workers' refusal to disperse and their determination to continue their actions became the main critical threshold. The next day, workers from other cities continued to come to Ankara and the action was held in front of Türk-İş (the confederation that Tek-Gıda İş belongs to) building. Through the declarations against police intervention, public support to the workers gained more impetus.

It can be comfortably stated that the mentioned police intervention played a significant role turning the action into a “movement”. Here, the activists arriving from different cities who lacked a strong network except union membership, established a common identity against the ruler party. In other words, the phenomena of “we” was emphasized around the workers who came from different cities and it helped the action to gain the character of a “resistance”. The fact that the movement was encountered by an intervention made the “us-them” boundary obvious. The clearing boundaries helped to express of demands of the action. In addition the framework of the movement became prominent with the effect of the external supporting action. The “us” is also shaped by the supporters of the workers. In other words, police intervention formed an “identification framework” for the

action along with the problem which is defined as a “struggle for rights against injustice” (Snow-Benford, 1988:200) and gave rise to “scandalisation of patterns” ((Rucht-Neidhart, 2002:11) by making the problem dramatic.

Sit-in action, which began in front of Türk-İş office, gained a kind of official status upon the decision of “continuous action” taken by the Türk-İş Council of Executives and following the support of the other unions. It can be stated that this network constituted an important step in terms of giving the movement a social character. The network helped the diffusion of the contentious and to make establishment of new connections. Indeed it is needed to this kind of network before the resistance begins. But it is not used in an adequate and effective manner to turn the resistance a movement as we would see later.

Prior to the strike action, which was announced to be applied on January 15, 2010, due to a 3-day sit-in and the arrival of workers’ families to Ankara for the January 17 meeting, the action began to “spill over” to nearby streets from the Türk-İş building. The fact that the workers, who began to build shelters to protect themselves from the cold and rain, began to “keep” nearby streets around the Türk-iş building as an action area, was a critical threshold. This attitude progressed into strengthening shelters and pitching tents and the tents gained a symbolic significance in terms of “welcoming” arriving guests and as a platform for delivering various speeches and discussions. As a result, this area, as an interaction space, provided the movement the opportunity to establish new networks. “Tent city” (workers handmade tents to spend their day and nights in) or “resistance street” which further strengthened the continuity of the movement and the contact between the public, became included in Turkish social movement literature as a new form of action.

The January 17 action can be shown as an important step in terms of challenging institutional boundaries. During the action, the workers forced Türk-İş to declare a general strike and occupied the chair and the platform. The Türk-İş office was also occupied by the workers for a short time. These steps were important in terms of showing the limitations of the union. The disappointment of the workers from the union gave rise the discussions among them. On the other hand public support increased and more radical actions like hunger strikes began. Furthermore, the comments of authorized people in the union about the issues were protested strongly and more often by the workers.

On February 4, 2010, a work stoppage decision of confederations was announced by Türk-İş- by carefully avoiding the use of the word “strike”- however, it was observed that connected unions did not show a clear compromise about this stoppage. Therefore, while work stoppage was applied in some sectors, it failed to receive enough support in others. In this

process, due to opposing declarations of the government, certain legal implementations about 4-C status, signing of documents to transit 4-C status by some workers with union disputes, molded a public opinion that the resistance should be stopped. Despite this, the resistance gained an international dimension. The foreign unions and some members of the European Parliament declared their support to Tekel workers. Later, a new general meeting was announced on February 20, 2010. This meeting which was held day 69 of the resistance was supported by unions, various political parties and NGOs. According to a document, a mass of approximately 30 thousand, or according to other, 20 thousand (Kaldıraç, 2010:66; Kaderoglu Bulut, 2010:338) gathered in Ankara Sakarya Square and spent the night in the square. This crowd, at a time when the resistance tended to decrease, showed a commitment to the movement.

The transition to 4-C status would come to an end at the end of February and the nervous waiting for a new police intervention after the Prime Minister's speech during these days turned into happiness on March 1 by the decision of the Council of State. In fact, the Council of State cancelled the duration for the transition of worker's to 4-C status instead of the transition itself. Despite this, the union decided to call off the action for 15-20 days and promised to meet in Ankara on April 1. After this, despite certain reactions, the tents which were the symbols of the resistance were removed and the action ended on March 2, 2010.

To sum up, individual actions since Fall 2009 turned into a collective actions after the December 15 Ankara meeting and the boundary of "us-them" became clear, particularly after harsh police intervention. This boundary became visible with the new form included in action repertoire and the framework of resistance which was established. Common action networks during the resistance and support to the resistance gradually made institutional problems obvious. It can be comfortably stated that the resistance, which was continued as a grassroots activity, provided a significant interaction and created a common space among independent movements. The creation of this commonality can be interpreted in terms of social movements literature, which will be discussed in the following sections of this paper.

### **Contentious politics and the Tekel resistance**

Contentious politics, which was summarized above, is one of new era concepts of the political opportunity/process approach included in the structuralist side of approaches analyzing social movements. Contentious politics gives importance to long-term qualities of movements and specifies social movements as a situation of ongoing contentions. Although this concept was examined in various books, it was explained with a detailed conceptual framework in the book of Tilly and Tarrow (2007). They argue

that social movement is based on collective actions of groups in claim-making. The contentious situations caused by a “claim-making action” will significantly help to clarify the Tekel resistance through specific concepts.

Tilly and Tarrow (2007:10) suggest that claim-making can be considered within the framework of descriptive and explanatory concepts. To sum up, descriptive concepts, such as “contentious politics”, refer to interaction of actors providing that the claims relate to the interests of other people. These are the interactions that address the governments, objects of claims or third parties and orientate the actors (claim-makers) to coordinated attempts on behalf of shared interests or programs. Contention brings the object, subject and claims together. “Social movements” are continuous claim-making campaigns, which use repeated performances that convey a certain claim and are based on the solidarity maintained in these activities which themselves are based on traditions, networks, and organizations. A social movement has two main elements. The first one is “social movement campaigns” which refer to constant opposition to people of power through the demonstrations of “worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment” (WUNC) of the population living under their decisions, on behalf of that population. “Social movement base”, which is the other element, is the social background of collective action, organizational resource and cultural framework of contention (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007:202).

In fact, the concept of contention, as the object of analysis of Tilly, who turned into a “relational realist” from a “previous structuralist” (Tarrow, 2008:226), developed by giving prominence to interaction of individuals rather than structures. In other words, Tilly and his followers began to give more importance to the role of the actor in the development of the movement. This situation is related with the approximation of structural and cultural analyses explained above. According to this, it acts on the behalf of “actor identities” in the area of contentious politics, which is an “intersection set of contention, collective action and politics”. Identities define their relationships with others and are political as much as they enter into a relationship with the government and movements are related with continuous interaction between challengers and power holders (Tilly, 1999; McAdam et. al., 2001).

Analysis of the Tekel event within the context of these concepts reveals the following: Political actors of contentious politics were Tekel workers, their supporting political parties, initiatives, unions, opposing organizations and the government who opposed them. Anti-privatization struggle can be marked as the space of contention. Although we cannot talk about an organized struggle prior to the resistance, the root of the Tekel problem is an anti-privatization issue. Tekel privatization constituted the first/pioneering situation of contention as an example event. Local claim-

making actions show how Tekel workers attempted to make the government step back against personal rights of Tekel workers and thus change and impoverishment in their life styles appeared as the consequences of this contentious situation. The beginning of collective actions by the workers in Ankara is a notable proceeding in contention waves. Thus, contentious politics appeared between the struggle of Tekel workers, their supporters and the government. The “tent city” corresponds to “contention performance” while hunger strikes, press releases and meetings during the action correspond to “contention repertoire”.

The previously mentioned contention became the ultimate issue on the agenda of different groups and struggles in Turkey during these days. Justice and development perspectives of the government against international powers were criticized through the Tekel issue. In this context, it became possible to review the socio-economic and political situation of Turkish history and the main debates in the last 30 years over Tekel privatization and the resistance of workers. The situation led to many actors rising against each other. The contention arising from the privatization struggle created an important “mechanism” which included the Tekel section and left-wing opposition within the waves it created. The actors who consequently came together also constituted the “basis of the social movement” of the Tekel resistance. This established movement failed to turn into a “social movement campaign” due to various problems experienced by the resistance – which, as we will discuss later, were caused by structure of the union. As a result, since the resistance failed to turn into a “process” as it failed to strengthen constantly repeated WUNC displayings and lost the power to make a greater impact. The fact that the Tekel resistance created a “social movement base” but could not turn into a “social movement campaign” caused the established mechanism (left-wing opposition and anti-privatization collaboration) to fail in becoming long-term. After the removal of the tents, the fact that no further actions were made was a clear indication of this situation.

The mechanism created by the Tekel resistance can be explored further through different concepts defining the mechanisms of contention politics. Firstly, this mechanism created “boundary activation” by bringing the problems experienced by the actors due to their worker and laborer qualities and clarification of an us-them distinction. The expressions “we, Tekel workers”, “other privatization sufferers” or “those who work with no social security” made the limits more clear. In addition, the long-term action consisting of social and political demands started by activist workers with their families created a “boundary shift”. This shifting symbolizes an experience the activist workers have never before shown in their lives and expresses challenging the boundaries of their personal experiences. Furthermore, the mentioned mechanism served as a brokerage since the

resistance interacted with the workers of other factories or with political actors with whom they had no or a weak communication previously. It can be stated that this brokerage was the most important gain of the resistance since it contributed to contentious politics in terms of diffusion of contentious politics by articulating with other privatization sufferers. Furthermore, the fact that the government resorted to various oppression mechanisms gave rise to discussion of the existing politics, the injustice created by the government and public opinion molded against this.

Because of failing of “mechanism” to turn into a “process” can be measured by its failure to fulfill certain indications. Based on this view, a new and transformed political actor did not appear; “actor constitution” could not be realized. “Coalition formations” that can come together in different actions could not be formed and in this context, “collective actions” and “new coordinations” could not be realized. In addition, although the resistance resulted in boundary formation and a shift, it failed to create a prominent “identity evolution” and failed to produce a common response to the question: “who are we?”. The struggle for rights created a “framework” for this identity; however, it failed to establish a “broad framework” to include future struggles. In connection with this, the fact that the resistance received no support from other workers’ unions, for example from sugar workers who experienced and will experience the same process and similarly the fact that tobacco workers did not take an active role in the actions, also affected the change. Of course, the fact that the necessary cooperation was not built in previous stages of the privatization process which was marked as the place of contentious politics had an impact on this situation. During the process of enactment of the Tobacco Law or privatization of Tekel factories or sugar factories one by one, the fact that the mentioned mechanisms could not be created prevented the emergence of a social movement with all its aspects such as features of WUNC.

The fact that WUNC demonstrations remained inadequate during the resistance was an important factor in the change from being a mechanism to the process in Tilly’s terms. WUNC displays of the resistance could not be established on certain regularity and were subjected to various fluctuations during a 78-day period. Although the insistence of the workers shown after the December 15 events reached the peak after setting up the tents, some developments affected the expected regularity. Notable developments in this process were as follows: a) gradual decrease of the number of workers staying in tents in the following days and the attempt to revive the resistance by other actors; b) the disagreement on the role of the unions in the resistance after January, 17; c) the fact that work stoppage action or the strike to support February, 4 resistance did not create the expected impact;

d) the resistance was quickly ended following court decision at the beginning of March and then the fact that other planned actions could not be realized.

The biggest gain from the Tekel resistance in terms of contentious politics was that it developed a new action repertoire. Beyond previously used press releases, meetings and hunger strikes, setting up tents and keeping a certain place as action areas was a rarity in Turkish social struggle. “Tent city” or “resistance street” made a difference in terms of inspiring future actions. Furthermore, it was observed that, unlike others, this action style facilitated active participation of different political actors in this setting and establishment of an intense interaction among the activists and their supporters.

A limited change was created in terms of public politics which were the direct addresses of a social movement and the action had a limited impact on the government. A fast and constantly changing agenda of the country led to the Tekel resistance and anti-privatization struggle to no longer being on the agenda. However, the declarations of Prime Minister Erdoğan and AKP administrators during the resistance clarified the relationship of the government with laborers, the way their neoliberal connections perceived employment relationships, their indifferent stance towards the lack of social security and in general towards these types of opposing movements. In this context, it seems there is a clear need to revive the impact created by the resistance and new actions should be organized.

Understanding the basic path of the Tekel resistance as a transition movement from their previous (structural) characteristics to the new (grass-root or autonomous) ones will be beneficial for future movements in Turkey. Ending a grass-roots movement by an institutional hierarchy is like a summary of the course of resistance between the old and new. In fact it can be suggested that the Tekel resistance failed to give rise to desired consequences stemmed from insufficient interaction of the actors in the resistance about new social movements. The following section will try to analyze this insufficiency in terms of new social movements (NSMs).

### **Tekel resistance in terms of NSMs**

As mentioned above, NSMs approach is the product of the post-1968 period when social movements followed a event-based activities and were particularly developed under various discussions on Marxism which developed by the end of real socialism. Analysis of the movement is based on the discussion of values such as culture, identity-belonging, daily life, and individual experiences instead of key words such as pioneering party, conscious worker or revolution which will lead to a complete transformation. The most principle characteristic of NSMs is that it expands the matters discussed by politics. This expansion resulted in the change of class structure articulated to movements and by becoming a basis of mid-class movements

(Offe, 1985) New social movements that appeared as a reaction to the crisis became influential in terms of creating a new world of meaning (Crossley, 2002:160-163) The changing situations in the system turned into political debates through new social movements. The focus point of movement analyses shifted to transformation of subjects and social actors experiences while making their own social interactions (Touraine, 1985; 1995).

This principle reason which triggers the emergence of new movements, went through significant transformations in approximately 40 years and moved into a different point where there were dilemmas such as culture-politics and continuance–break debates. Hence, the movements converged together. In particular, the phenomena of globalization became influential in terms of connections between the movements. The movements analyzed within the scope of NSMs began to focus on what can be done within cooperation and coordination. The case of the World Social Forum, which developed in the early 2000s, is a typical indication of the attempts of NSMs to create a network by articulating publicity and different movements based on new action types, identity formation and contentious relationships. With these characteristics, the movements analyzed within the scope of NSMs express a tendency to revive a 1968 spirit at the end of the century.

It is important to interpret new generation struggles in Turkey in terms of NSMs that not used to use to understand this kind of events. In this context, it can be stated that the most important characteristic of the Tekel resistance in terms of NSMs was that the workers reached a collective power based on their insistence, which evolved to a point that pushed institutional boundaries of their unions. They created their own struggle spaces both political and psychically. The determination of the actors in the struggle which refused to disperse after police intervention at the beginning of the resistance and their waiting in front of the Türk-İş building compelled the confederations to announce “continuous action”. The beginning of the resistance was a result of grass-root activities of the workers. Similarly, occupation of the platform and forcing the union to take a strike decision after the January 17 action became the indication of the fact that a new generation movement cannot be managed with the old institutional framework.

The most important characteristic of NSMs is that they develop within “fluidity” and have the power to establish new networks (connections) based on the principle of fast diffusion of information. In other words, interaction and experience sharing paves the way for progress through learning and rise of resistance. The Tekel resistance turned into a complete communication focus as the circles which never came together before spoke and interacted with each other, spent time together and decided on new strategies. In this manner, the resistance laid the base of alternative learning

instead of learning a certain data set like ideological patterns or manifests. The “common sense” (in Gramscian meaning) of resistance occurred during this learning and relational process. The fact that decisions were taken by discussion and the diffusion of participation to the grassroots signaled that democracy is not a sequence of organizations or preferences and that it can progress as an area of articulation of differences.

On the other hand, autonomous power could not overcome the problem, which contentious politics define as a boundary shift, and failed to challenge the boundaries of union. Mustafa Türkel, Chairman of Tek Gıda İş Union, implied that discussions during resistance and demands of the workers were always under their control. According to Türkel (2010:240), without the union “Tekel workers could not have started a strike by putting two chairs together, and they still cannot”. Türkel stated that demands of the hunger strike or march to the National Assembly was rejected by himself because these demands were not sincere. “They attempt to make a move but then they give up. Psychology of the society is very different; particularly the psychology of the workers should be well understood. I was afraid that the process could not be completed” (Türkel, 2010:242). He also remarked that the struggle had a leader and that crises of confidence against union leadership should be overcome.

In this context, it can suggest that although the Tekel resistance developed a strong will to go beyond institutionalism, it was beaten by the “old” belief observed in Türkel’s statements that a movement “without a leader” would fail. Therefore it remained as half institutional and half autonomous. The “tendency of no single determinant” in new generation movements could not overcome the barrier of the union, and finally vertical hierarchy became determinant. As a result it can be underlined that when compared to old movements in Turkey, the Tekel resistance showed a continuity instead of a break in terms of NSMs analysis. However it can be stated that it will serve as an example in the context of pushing the limits of the power from the base in future movements and will provide the roots of a break.

The unions did not want to give up their leadership, so the resistance remained inadequate during communications with different groups. A “resistance network” which is of great importance in terms of NSMs could not be formed. The mentioned network could not go beyond coordinated attempts of some political parties in certain actions apart from institutional cooperation of the confederations. In other words, activism of actors, which is important for the NSMs, could not overcome institutional barriers.

An important discussion in terms of NSMs is that the issues handled by the movement can spread to daily lives of actors and can make a change in their life styles. The Tekel resistance brought the resistance and demands

through a “tent city”, however in daily life, it failed to make these demands come true. The most important reason for this was that the workers who met in this area the first time failed to build enough cooperation. They saw each other as strangers in the early days of resistance rather than feeling solidarity in the same struggle. The contact could not be established between the workers in different cities- based on the thesis that class developed within cultural relationships- and adequate partnerships could not be built among different cultural patterns.

In Bayat’s terms, Tekel workers became political to change their “passive network” to an “active network”. The biggest motive in taking the mentioned step was a “common threat”. When atomized individuals face a threat towards their gains, “passive networks” automatically turn into “active networks” and collective action (Bayat, 2008: 46-47). Although the transformation analyzed by Bayat mainly emphasizes disorganized circles, it should be underlined that the workers who had no strong connections with unions apart from only being a member, turned into independent actors, however their acting capacity was restricted by the boundary of the union. So they started to “become political” actors within their ordinary life struggles (Bayat, 2010: 61-63).

In spite of its discontinuous character, the “tent city” laid basis for the formation of an active network. On the other hand, it can be stated that it was the chance of a “discontinuous intervention” goes on. As Ardit (2010:151) identified, these interventions are a kind of infraction which created polemics over the boundaries of the political one and questioned the existing reconciliation. The common thing that held the workers together started to change during the resistance movement. The infractions have the potential to develop a new “common” and multi-centered struggle strength against the institutions and actors. If the politics can be defined as an “intervention to what is visible” (Ranciere, 2007: 150), it can be stated that Tekel workers created a political area with the movement they started.

In this context, although the Tekel resistance did not show an NSM quality with the connections it established, the boundaries it challenged and with the indication of the limitations of hierarchy, it indicated that the change can be created by an attempt that comes from the base. The resistance invaded the given situation and tried to turn it into a different system. With a perspective for the future, the Tekel resistance will be a symbol that the next Turkish movements will take as an example.

### **Conclusion**

To analyze the Tekel resistance within the context of social movements is important because of drawing its framework. In this study, it is argued that the Tekel resistance does not reflect the characteristics of a complete social movement in structuralist and post-structuralist terms. In

both terms, the Tekel resistance achieved a certain level as grass-root actions, however it also failed to reach the quality of establishing a transformative quality of social movement.

In terms of contentious politics, the resistance laid the basis of a social movement and could not create a mechanism. However since it failed to provide worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (WUNC) displays constantly and regularly, it could not turn into a social movement campaign and thus could not develop a process. As for NSMs, although the resistance challenged institutional boundaries, it failed to make its initial autonomy constant and could not go beyond union connections. Horizontal hierarchy became influential in formation of the movement; however, it failed to challenge the boundaries of vertical hierarchy. It established its own publicity area however failed to turn this into a new identity and recognition policy. Although the experiences and interaction of the actors in the resistance laid the basis for the formation of a new network, it should be stated that this failed to evolve a culture to form a life style.

Although development of a new action repertoire does not mean that the movements are new, the wide-range of the actors in the resistance can be considered as a next step according to NSMs perspective. In this context, although the Tekel resistance was in continuity with previous movements in Turkey, the new discourse that it developed will have a potential for future movements. Although this potential will particularly support the resistance, it will be stronger by the articulation of the middle classes in the process. As a result, cultural and political regeneration of social movements as mentioned above will manifest itself with the effect of the Tekel resistance. The Tekel resistance clearly showed the effect that will be created by the circles that react to deterioration of life styles and that are direct interveners to the problems related to it. New Social Movements were realized in this context and produced the perception of a new democracy.

If we agree that class awareness will develop in such a cultural basis and this is a relational process (Özügür, 2010: 56), we can suggest that the fight for rights which constituted the framework of the resistance failed to turn into a bigger framework like a social movement. The connection between class and culture are getting important in social movement analyses (Rose, 1997; Hechter, 2004, Weakliem-Adams, 2011). So one dimensional approach does not help to understand clearly the movements. Thus, although it can be stated that the habitus experienced in the “tent city” failed to create a sub-culture; they were effective in forming a counterculture. In any event, the primary aim of new movements concerns life standards rather than a change in the political platform or institutional politics. New social movements have underlined the life-world aspects and the individual autonomy against the established system. This horizontal dimension of

movements is closely related with the development of the new political subject who has a word and takes part in action about his/her own life. The new politics born in this daily life struggle and social movements has a power to create the new politics. The Tekel resistance is a kind of social movement in Turkey even if it has lots of deficiency. As a result, based on the view of convergence of class and culture analyses and transition from a hierarchical class perception to a relational one, it can be stated that although the Tekel resistance failed to create a social movement, it reflected the first examples of a new kind of class struggle understanding in Turkey.

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