

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# Resistance from generation to generation: The Saturday Mothers in Istanbul

Orhan Kaya<sup>1</sup>  | Yasemin Gülsüm Acar<sup>2</sup> | Celal Cahit Agar<sup>3</sup> | Fergus Neville<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>School of Social Work, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Bern, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>School of Psychology & Neuroscience, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK

<sup>3</sup>Business School, Department of Management, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK

## Correspondence

Orhan Kaya, Schermenweg 188, 3072 Bern, Switzerland.

Email: [orhan.kaya@bfh.ch](mailto:orhan.kaya@bfh.ch)

## Abstract

The Saturday Mothers (*Cumartesi Anneleri*) are a group that has gathered in Istanbul for a 30-min sit-in every Saturday since 1995 seeking justice for forced disappearances and political murders in Turkey. What started with a group of approximately 30 mainly family and close relatives of those who disappeared has grown to include thousands of participants. The initial protests were composed predominantly of mothers of victims, but over the past 28 years other relatives, including children, have joined the vigils. In many cases, those children then continue to participate and join the social movement. We are particularly interested in the Saturday Mothers' ability to sustain participation in weekly collective action, including the ways in which inter-generational transmission shapes and encourages this action. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 members of the Saturday Mothers. Analysis of participants' narratives and experiences included three main themes: family as a model, shared experiences, and functions of the movement. Findings highlight the complex

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interplay between familial influences, collective memory, and the formation of the Saturday Mothers' identity.

#### KEYWORDS

collective action, intergenerationality, Saturday Mothers, social identity, Turkey

Movements such as Black Lives Matter or Fridays for Future demonstrate the power of sustained collective action (SCA; Cohen-Eick, Shuman, van Zomeren, & Halperin, 2023) to bring about lasting social change. Rather than fleeting outbursts of emotion, which might motivate one-off protest participation, these movements require long-term efforts to achieve their goals.

The Saturday Mothers, also known as the Saturday People, are a collective in Istanbul that has been convening for a 30-min sit-in every Saturday since 1995. Their objective is to demand justice for cases of enforced disappearances and politically motivated killings in Turkey. Initially comprised of about 30 individuals, primarily consisting of family members and close relatives of the disappeared, this group has since expanded to encompass thousands of participants (Şanlı, 2020). Their objectives include raising awareness of state-sponsored violence and militarism in Turkey, the release of state document archives so that political murders can be brought to light, changes to the Turkish penal code to remove the statute of limitation on political murders and forced disappearances, and for Turkey to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Amnesty International, 1998; Şanlı, 2020).

While the initial protests were composed predominantly of mothers of victims, over the past 28 years other relatives, including children, have joined the vigils. In many cases, those children continue to participate and essentially grow up and into a social movement. The intergenerational nature of their participation, then, is of interest as a means to understand SCA participation. Previous work in social psychology has recognised the motivational factors of identity, injustice, contempt, moral obligations and efficacy in collective action participation (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; Sabucedo, Dono, Alzate, & Seoane, 2018; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008); this work, however, rarely discusses collective action beyond one-time participation. SCA has been discussed much less often, but is arguably just as important if not more, in understanding what *keeps* people participating in protest, especially for aims that do not have easy solutions (Cohen-Eick et al., 2023). To add to the discussion around SCA, we explore the issue of intergenerational transmission of collective action, which has been relatively neglected within our field as a motivator.

In this paper, we will explore the Saturday Mothers' long-term motivations for participating in weekly collective action, including the ways in which intergenerational transmission shapes and sustains this action. Below, we discuss intergenerationality in political behaviour and its potential relationship to collective action, as well as how it fits into the structure and actions of the Saturday Mothers.

## 1 | SUSTAINED COLLECTIVE ACTION

Oftentimes, the biggest predictor of future protest participation is past participation (Burrows, Uluğ, Khudoyan, & Leidner, 2023; Fendrich & Lovoy, 1988). But what is it about the experience of collective action that motivates repeated involvement? Past research has suggested that participation may politicise participants (Vestergren, Drury, & Chiriac, 2017). Politicisation functions as a means for CA to become more central to a person's identity, making participation more likely as well as expected. At the same time, the social experiences and connections during collective action can lead people to want to engage further (Uluğ & Acar, 2018), and experiences of empowerment

during collective action can make people feel that further collective action participation will be meaningful (Acar, 2018; Drury & Reicher, 2005).

Recent research has suggested that motivations for SCA may differ from one-off collective action (Cohen-Eick et al., 2023). The extended social identity model of collective action (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2008) suggests identity, efficacy, perceived injustice, anger, and moral convictions can help explain participation in collective action. Cohen-Eick et al. (2023) suggest that while these variables are useful predictors of participation, they do not necessarily address the different factors at play with SCA. SCA, for example, may not rely as heavily on emotions such as anger, which could lead to burnout and prevent people's longer-term engagement. Instead, they suggest that collective instrumental and socio-emotional variables ought to be considered. Instrumental variables refer to the costs and benefits of repetitive and long-term engagement, such as shorter time frames, momentum, and invested effort. Socio-emotional variables refer to the possible emotional effects of repeatedly and continuously sharing experiences, and include emotional synchrony, emotional fit, and emotional exhaustion. It was found that stronger perception of a shorter time frame and less emotional exhaustion were positive predictors of SCA (Cohen-Eick et al., 2023).

We feel this work takes collective action research in the right direction, but believe that further exploratory research is warranted. In particular, Cohen-Eick et al.'s (2023) research looks at continuous participation over 6 weeks in Israelis' year-long protest calling for Prime Minister Netanyahu's resignation. This is undoubtedly SCA, but is not nearly as long as social movements, which have a driving force that can keep them going for decades, requiring the participation of multiple generations to continue the movement, and in most cases, with little chance of a shorter time frame. Below, we discuss how intergenerationality may be a factor in SCA.

## 2 | INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Saturday Mothers are characterised by political, social and economic diversity. However, possibly the most striking factor in this diversity is the age range of the participants; people aged 5–85 can be seen at each event, pointing to the intergenerational nature of the vigils. Considering that these vigils have been going on for 28 years, the original protesters have of course aged; it is important, however, to also consider the reasons why some members of younger generations are now taking part. The research literature across a broad range of attitudes and behaviours shows the impact of family. For example, anti-social behaviour (Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, Lizotte, Krohn, & Smith, 2003), violence and abuse (Sweet & Resick, 1979), resilience in the face of political violence (Denov, Fennig, Rabiau, & Shevell, 2020; Kazlauskas, Gailiene, Vaskeliene, & Skeryte-Kazlauskiene, 2017), healthy eating (Sumodhee & Payne, 2016), and pro-environmental behaviour (Collado, Staats, & Sancho, 2019) can all be related to the influence of family. In addition, findings from political science also show that parents' views, attitudes and actions have a strong impact on children's political development, perspectives and behaviour (see Sears & Levy, 2003; Tedin, 1974).

There is also incipient evidence for the importance of intergenerational transmission of participation in collective action as a motivating factor for taking part in protests. Most research on the transmission of collective action suggests that political views are shared through family conversations (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008; Dinas, 2014; Hooghe & Boonen, 2015; Quintelier, Hooghe, & Badescu, 2007). For example, research has been conducted with the children of student activists who protested in the United States in the 1960s. This work found that the political attitudes of the parents were reflected in their children (Flacks, 1967), and that the children's political attitudes could be affected through the sharing of experience between generations (Esler, 1971). Whether family members include children in political discussions has significant effects on children's political development, such that children of more politically engaged families tend to be more interested in politics (Dinas, 2014; Hooghe & Boonen, 2015; Quintelier et al., 2007).

Recent research has suggested that family environment or family background has an important influence on participation in collective action (Chui, Khatani, & Ip, 2022; González et al., 2021; Schwarz, 2022). Cornejo et al. (2021) conducted interviews with parents and children in Chile, where parents had previously participated in anti-Pinochet protests. They found that conversations about politics and children's participation in collective action were significant predictors of children's later participation in both conventional and radical forms of collective action. Importantly, interviews with parents and children also noted the influence of other factors, including joint political participation. Cornejo et al. (2021) therefore conclude that the family is a critical area of socialisation that enables the intergenerational transmission of protests.

### 3 | INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE SATURDAY MOTHERS

One of the main features that distinguish Saturday Mothers from other studies and groups in the literature is that the initial protest that the parent participates in continues and persists for decades. If we take the work in Chile, for example, the Pinochet protests of the previous generation finished in the 1980s. Parents then speak with their children about their own protest experience years later, with a different aim and a different method. However, the Saturday Mother's action remains ongoing. While their actions have evolved with the times to include more online activism and their focus has broadened from only finding relatives (though this is still central) to seeking justice and pursuing policy change, their core action remains the same, as the phenomenon of disappearance still continues. This existing situation brings with it feelings such as hope, anger, and injustice, as well as keeping memories of the lost alive.

Moreover, much of the research on motivators for participation in collective action has been conducted in relatively low-risk contexts. High-risk activism refers to contexts where engagement is associated with severe anticipated legal, financial, or physical risk (Ayanian et al., 2021). Collective action research in risky contexts suggest that additional factors, including a desire to build the movement and outrage at the actions of an oppressive authority, are required to explain participation and experience (Acar & Uluğ, 2022; Ayanian et al., 2021).

#### 3.1 | Current study and context

Bearing all this in mind, our study addresses the issue of intergenerational collective action as it relates to the Saturday Mothers. We were interested in exploring two research questions:

1. What are the factors that motivate participation in collective action for members of the Saturday Mothers initiative?
2. What is the process of intergenerational collective action transmission within the Saturday Mothers network? What factors affect the transfer process?

## 4 | METHODS

### 4.1 | Participants and procedure

Interviews were conducted with 19 participants from the Saturday Mothers. Four participants were men and the rest were women. Ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 68 ( $M = 44$ ). Participants were first- ( $N = 5$ ), second- ( $N = 5$ ), or third-generation participants ( $N = 5$ ) as well as occasional participants not directly related to the disappearance ( $N = 4$ ) of the protests.

Ethical approval was received from the University of St Andrews. Before we began the research, the first author contacted the Saturday Mothers to discuss the research. They agreed to meet with our research team via Zoom, and the four researchers as well as representatives of the Saturday Mothers spoke about our goals (see Kaya & Acar, 2023; Kaya, Acar, Agar, & Neville, 2022 for more). While the representatives of the group were enthusiastic about the research, they explained that many members were not comfortable speaking intimately about their disappeared family members and that they would like to determine with whom we could meet. With their agreement and cooperation, we were able to reach participants from different backgrounds and generations.

Participants were asked to reflect on how they first learned about the Saturday Mothers, how the movement has changed and adapted over the years, and what pressures, if any, they experienced from their family, social circles, or the state due to their participation (full list of interview questions included in Appendix A). All participants were interviewed individually online via Skype or Zoom and all interviews were conducted in Turkish or Kurdish; no compensation was received by participants. In some cases, interviews were very brief, lasting just a few minutes, but in others, the interview went on for as long as 3 hours. All interviews were transcribed verbatim into Turkish and then translated into English.

## 4.2 | Positionality

It is important for us to reflect on our motivations for conducting this research. The project idea was proposed by the first author, who was particularly interested in conducting research about the Saturday Mothers. He had two primary sources of motivation. First, he felt that for a group that had been actively engaged in collective action for so long, the Saturday Mothers had received relatively little attention by academia in Turkey. While this could possibly be due to the increased risk of conducting research with the Saturday Mothers, it nonetheless leaves a significant gap in the literature that he felt ought to be addressed. Second, he personally embraces the demands made by the Saturday Mothers and has a vested interest in wanting to end human rights violations and enforced disappearances, and believes these demands are necessary for peace and reconciliation in Turkey.

The second author was contacted for collaboration, and the topic was further developed to include a focus on the intergenerational aspect of collective action. The first two authors met through common contacts in the Academics for Peace, who at the time had recently been targeted by the Turkish government (see Acar & Coşkan, 2020 for further discussion). The second author had occasionally attended Saturday Mothers vigils and was interested in pursuing research to better understand their sustained participation. She also felt it was valuable to make new connections with other targeted academics.

The third author was invited to take part in the project due to his familiarity and experience with the Saturday Mothers arising from his activist background. He welcomed the invitation and joined the research team since the project is aligned with his academic interest in the role social movements' play in the production of space. Besides, making the movement's voice heard in academia and collaborating with other critical scholars having similar viewpoints were the other two factors that informed his participation.

The fourth author was a member of the International Society for Political Psychology's 'Twinning Program' for Scholars Under Threat. He was twinned with the first author, and through conversations with him became interested in the Saturday Mothers group and was invited to participate in the project. He also has a longstanding academic interest in crowd behaviour, collective action, and social influence.

## 4.3 | Analysis

Transcribed audio recordings were analysed using thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data were approached deductively based on our research questions and understanding of the collective action literature. Data

familiarisation was done through reading and rereading transcripts. The three Turkish-speaking authors read the original transcripts, highlighted relevant extracts, and then translated those abstracts into English, at which point the fourth, non-Turkish-speaking author became involved in the analysis. Data were coded based on the research questions and relevant concepts in the collective action literature (e.g., social identity, efficacy, moral obligation, and sense of injustice). Codes were discussed by the authors and organised by shared patterns of meanings into themes. The authors revisited the themes, and they were refined to ensure their suitability.

## 5 | RESULTS

Three key themes were developed in analysis. The first theme points to family as a model for participation. It consists of two subthemes: (i) early exposure, and (ii) responsibility to legacy. The second theme is shared experiences, and is made up of (i) shared trauma, (ii) shared memory, and (iii) shared identity. The final theme is purpose of the movement, and is made up of (i) expressing demands, (ii) preventing further loss, and (iii) encouraging solidarity. Below, we present the themes along with relevant quotes from participant interviews (participant numbers denoted by PX after each extract).

### 5.1 | Family as a model

This theme illustrates how being part of a family that participates in the Saturday Mothers movement means that participants are exposed to politics and collective action from a young age (Subtheme 1). It shows how these experiences at a young age affect how participants view themselves and their families in the wider societal context. It also created a later sense of responsibility to continue participation, as this was not just a social movement, but a core part of what it means to be part of their family (Subtheme 2).

#### 5.1.1 | Early exposure

Several participants stated that they were 'natural activists'. They explained that their family members had strong political attitudes and were involved in collective action, and that the parents themselves had also grown up in such a political environment. Participants stated that their activism was constantly discussed and debated within the family, and for some that family members had been under surveillance or tortured when the participants were young.

Of course, it wasn't a conscious start, it's sort of because our family is just like that, but ours is a family that almost every member has been tortured on a torture bench, or under surveillance on the street, so my family was already very much [aware] before 1995.<sup>1</sup> From my paternal uncles to my maternal aunts and maternal uncles, we were already a political family, all of them experienced torture, so my family was already political, and when the family is political, we naturally started going back and forth [to the vigils]. (P.18)

In addition to growing up in a family where politics was just a natural presence, participants stated that they were aware from a young age of their participation in the Saturday Mothers as they would accompany them to the vigils. As they became more aware of their participation, they would ask questions, and families actively educated and guided their participation. Their participation has now begun to pass to their own children, who have been exposed to the Saturday Mothers from a young age.

I was also exposed to the protests. In time, I found myself in it and participated in the protests quickly and actively, and now our children are experiencing the same situation. There is a photo of my missing brother Ferhat in my house, these events are in the press, I go to the press. I participate in press organisations' events. I attend some meetings and TV programs online at home. I read online press releases. My eldest son's interest in [these cases] is especially developing. My daughter has started to ask more questions. Because they are exposed too often to our collective action. In other words, the fact that I go to Galatasaray Square every Saturday, or I go to the Human Rights Association, or I tell my son that I'm going there and I'll be there because the child is exposed to this intense period, he inevitably has to grow up in such an environment. (P.2)

### 5.1.2 | Responsibility to legacy

In the second subtheme, participants discuss the responsibility they feel to continue the work that their families began, and to even pass it on to their own children. 'Sometimes I take my daughter and son to Galatasaray Square. The legacy I inherited from my mother is also the legacy I will leave to my children. That collective action was inherited by my children' (P.2).

Participating in the vigils has, for these participants, become key to who they are. They feel a sense of connection to other protesters and continue to participate because of the legacy their parents left them. One participant noted the different relationships that various generations have to the movement, including the hope that the younger generation can bring something new, such as evolving the struggle through the use of modern technology.

Certainly, our mothers led the way. We lost my mother in 2019, but considering the period about 5–6 years before then, she was already quite elderly and unwell, unable to actively participate. Thus, the responsibility of carrying on the cause fell to us, the next generation, including my siblings and myself. Initially, there seemed to be some chaos in our efforts, perhaps due to a lack of control or heightened emotions. However, as time passed, a more structured system began to take shape.

The younger members of the second generation, including myself, played a role in organising and stabilising our actions. Now, we're witnessing the emergence of the third generation, our grandchildren. Especially since March 2020, for approximately a year and a half, we've been utilising social media platforms for our advocacy efforts, unable to take to the streets due to the pandemic.

What's important to note is that the determination to fight for our cause persists across generations, albeit in evolving forms. The younger generations, adept at leveraging technology, ensure that the struggle continues even in challenging circumstances. The adaptability to utilise different platforms and methods, particularly facilitated by technology, is crucial for our movement's resilience and progression.

Although we've experienced losses, such as the passing of our mothers and siblings, the movement is far from over. Its continuity fills us with hope, assuring us that it can endure until our objectives are achieved. In essence, as long as there's continuity, the movement remains alive and capable of advancing towards our goals. (P.6)

## 5.2 | Shared experiences

The second theme shows how participation in the vigils has fostered shared experiences between the participants. Three subthemes are noted here: (i) shared trauma, (ii) shared memory, and (iii) shared identity.

### 5.2.1 | Shared trauma

Participants responded with a wide range of perspectives on shared trauma. First, the topic of learning about the death/being informed about the death of a family member comes to the forefront in the transmission of trauma. Participants associated their reasons for participating in the protests with learning about the loss of their relatives. At this point, we can talk about the transfer of trauma with the loss of a relative and the transfer of resistance with the transformation of this situation into action. Some participants stated that they never talked in detail about their lost relatives and did not discuss them. It was stated that the missing person was only talked about during the SM protests; his/her belongings were exhibited in the action area, but at home this issue was completely buried in silence, and it was sometimes only through participation that they learned about the loss. Participants stated that one of the reasons for going to the action site was to share the pain. They stated that they shared something in common with everyone there and that fellow protests became very close.

When they handed me the photograph of my father, I realised that all the people in the photographs were lost and everyone was looking for their relatives, just like me. It also meant that the pain was alleviated a little more, so I remember it, so OK, yes, it didn't just happen to me, there were a lot of kids there. It happened to them, too. We were together. (P.11)

It is the shared nature of the trauma that many participants pointed to. They did not feel alone because they knew that others were sharing their pain that they were together in sharing this experience. Many participants emphasised that they could not keep their children away from these traumatic processes, and that this traumatic event, which was at the centre of their lives, spread to their children over time. Many participants argued that having a shared trauma also spread and shared resistance. In this case, it is possible to see a shared remembrance of trauma as a means of collective resilience.

You know, I think this is the most important feature of the Saturday Mothers; those who work in your field say that traumas spread in waves like water. This is true, but I think the most important feature of the Saturday Mothers is that they spread this trauma; of course they also spread trauma. It is not possible to deny this. But they also created a way of coping with trauma and turning it into resistance. In other words, they did not spread only trauma, they also passed on resistance as a way of coping with this trauma to their children. And they also showed it to the society. (P.8)

### 5.2.2 | Shared memory

Participants often described the Saturday Mothers as a big family. They stated that their pain, past, and experiences united them. Some mentioned that this had been the case from the beginning; that the first relatives of the disappeared to come together established very warm relations. Likewise being arrested together, put on trial together, as well as taking continued action for years together established a common memory for them. Some participants stated that their common past brought them together, and that no existing differences could keep them apart.

The closest feeling is, of course, there are those who have lost their father, who are younger than me at my age, and have never seen their father. There are even those who were not born and lost. Of course, when I talked to them, with much more intense emotions, because we went through the same thing, when I sat down and chatted, for example, we had a conversation with someone else who lost their father. So that moment was very different. It was beautiful, too. So they said they felt the same. So it's a very different feeling. You know, they experienced the same feelings and the same things.



Sitting down and talking as two people is really incredibly relaxing or very relaxing, I can't describe it. It is very relaxing, so it makes you feel good psychologically. Because you have experienced the same thing. The same thing happened to you. Of course, in other situations, we talk in common. Emotions are ultimately concerned because of the loss. The loss by the state, but of course, people feel a little closer to those who experience the same situation. (P.14)

### 5.2.3 | Shared identities

As participants spoke about learning about their lost loved ones and the experience of sharing these losses and traumas in the square, they found that they had developed a shared social identity with others who participated in the vigils. For some participants, the participation, especially from a young age, made them feel less alone in their loss, and made them realise that there were many other people who had lost loved ones as well.

But let me tell you this, for example, it is there in those families. They are also Saturday People, and they also impose a responsibility on themselves. I am part of Saturday Mothers. I have to be careful with my behaviour and my actions. This is not only for families, but also for participants. It's a beautiful thing, an identity has emerged. You know, from a place that advocates this, or I shouldn't do it. I am known as a Saturday Person. A common identity is an expression of a common belonging. (P.2)

This shared identity is rooted in the commonality of having a lost loved one, and while in other circumstances or contexts, other identities may get in the way of finding commonality, here in the case of the Saturday Mothers, the shared trauma, and the experience of sharing the collective action, brings them together despite many other differences.

That means being together in values. And here is every one of our friends, because you may not think the same about everything. But here you are together with people you think in common at some point. He may be from the A Party, he may be from this organisation, he may be in this union. If you bring up other issues, maybe you won't get along at all. But we have such a common ground on the subject we have in common that we cannot give up on each other. That's why I care so much about Saturday Mothers. Why? Because it is really important to put aside our other affiliations and come together around feelings such as human rights, democracy, justice, and to continue this for 26 years without any problems...Not everyone is of the same nationality, for example, not everyone votes for the same party. Families have differences in faith, but they meet in common action. (P.11)

## 5.3 | Purpose of the movement

The third theme focuses on participants' discussions about why the movement exists. This theme consisted of three subthemes: (i) expressing demands, (ii) preventing further loss, and (iii) encouraging solidarity.

### 5.3.1 | Expressing demands

Participants describe the Saturday Mothers as a means to express their frustration with injustice and to take a position against the political violence of the government.

Injustice, the feeling of injustice, the feeling of not reaching the truth in any way, the deprivation of the most basic right to mourn. These are the strongest motivations. So what happened to my son, what happened to my brother, what happened to my father, what happened to my grandfather, these are the motivations. (P.17)

They described the importance of showing their resistance to their loss, rather than just accepting it. They expressed the need to share their experiences so that others know about them, and reference the inspiration for their own resistance, the mothers of Plaza de Mayo.<sup>2</sup>

This was how the families felt: we should be able to talk about what we are going through, but no one hears us, no one sees us. We can't get results from anywhere we apply. But we must share this pain, we have to pass it on to others. We have to find a way around this. So the Mothers from Plaza de Mayo expressed this in a very similar way. Why did they go out to Plaza De Mayo, that is, to be visible. In other words, let the society see, know, understand our pain and learn what you are going through. (P.19)

### 5.3.2 | Preventing further loss

Through the Saturday vigils, participants felt they could shine a light on the state's repressive tactics, and in doing so possibly prevent further loss. They pointed to the increased awareness that their resistance brought about, which in turn had an impact on the state's policies and prevented loss.

At that time [the first years of the Saturday Mothers protests], for example, some mothers come and say what? They conveyed their gratitude. I am speaking for Istanbul, with many incidents like this, where they [police] say to my son, 'We would have destroyed you too, but your mother would go and sit next to their mother on Saturday' at the branch, and today, most importantly, no one, including the person at the top of the state, said, 'No, there were no enforced disappearances, no disappearances in custody'. It got to the point where he couldn't say. When we started this action, no, there is no such thing as disappearance in custody. No one was detained. These are the pawns of organisations that want to implicate the state's security forces. But today, those who run the top state, who are against us, and those who are against us ideologically, have never been able to say that no one has been lost in custody in this country? (P.12)

### 5.3.3 | Encouraging solidarity

Finally, participants noted that solidarity was a by-product of their experience, that the people who had gone through painful experiences came together and built an environment of solidarity. Participants also noted that they were able to experience solidarity through the growth of their movement and through the internationalisation of their impact.

In the early days, we were only protesting as Kurds. Then, over time, everyone who experienced injustice and persecution began to join us. For example, families of disappeared soldiers and village guards came to join us. Recently, different groups that have been oppressed by the state have joined us and supported us. On the other hand, mothers whose children have been imprisoned, journalists detained, students and political parties under pressure are in solidarity with us. (P.9)

'Many movies, documentaries, news and songs have been written about Saturday Mothers. The president of Uruguay joined our action. The world famous music group U2 [dedicated] a song to my father'. (P.14).

Through their persistence, the movement has grown to include more people and has attracted the press and politicians, and has allowed for a wider and louder expression of demands.

## 6 | DISCUSSION

This study explores the concept of intergenerational resistance in the context of the Saturday Mothers movement, focusing on the role of the family as a model, the importance of shared experiences that encompass shared memory, shared trauma and shared identities. Our findings highlight the complex interplay between familial influences, collective memory, and the formation of the Saturday Mothers' identity and in their SCA.

Our findings are in line with previous research, which emphasises the importance of family in children's orientation towards collective action (Cornejo et al., 2021; González et al., 2021). Most research on the transmission of collective action suggests that political views are shared through family conversations (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008; Dinas, 2014; Hooghe & Boonen, 2015; Quintelier et al., 2007). Consistent with the literature; in this study, early exposure to the Saturday Mothers movement through family members actively participating in its activities seems to have played a crucial role in shaping individuals' perspectives and beliefs. Participants who grew up witnessing the involvement of their parents or grandparents mentioned an internalised sense of responsibility to perpetuate the movement's legacy. This demonstrates the powerful influence of familial influence in instilling a commitment to resistance and collective action across generations.

Consistent with the relevant literature (Chui et al., 2022; Cornejo et al., 2021; González et al., 2021; Schwarz, 2022), the importance of shared experiences within the family emerged as a central theme in understanding the continuity of the Saturday Mothers movement. The collective memory of historical events, shared traumas from enforced disappearances, and a sense of shared identity as grieving mothers and relatives came together to form a resilient foundation for the movement's permanence. Shared memory served as a unifying force, connecting individuals through a shared historical narrative that reinforced their determination to seek justice and accountability. Likewise, the shared trauma of loss has bound society together, transforming personal grief into collective strength.

Our findings also illuminate the multifunctional nature of the Saturday Mothers movement. Participants outlined the three main functions of the movement: first, as a platform for victims of enforced disappearance to articulate their demands for truth, justice and accountability; second, as a mechanism to prevent further losses by advocating against human rights abuses; and third, as a catalyst for solidarity and social cohesion within the affected community.

The findings highlighted the integral role of Saturday Mothers' identity in sustaining the movement across generations. Consistent with the collective action literature, the identity of being 'Saturday Mothers' was not only rooted in grief and loss, but also encompassed a sense of purpose, empowerment, and agency (Drury & Reicher, 2005). This identity provided a collective framework in which members could channel their feelings and activism, facilitating a sense of belonging and a shared mission. The identity of the movement was both a product of shared experiences and the driving force behind continued collective action.

We see the reflection of various motivators, such as identity, efficacy, and responsibility or morality as added value to the findings in our study. The ability to link our qualitative themes to motivators examined quantitatively elsewhere, albeit in a more nuanced and arguably deeper way, allows us to see that our work is in line with and further extends previous research on CA (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021) and SCA (Cohen-Eick et al., 2023).

Within the scope of the study, people who do not have a missing family member but regularly or occasionally participated in the protests were also interviewed. It can be said that the resistance environment created by the Saturday Mothers found resonance with others who opposed the government for various reasons (e.g., environmental concerns, workers' rights, and anti-capitalist sentiments) who then offered their support to these

actions. In this context, one might say that Saturday Mothers have transitioned from being a group that were only focused on their losses, to a movement that includes those affected by various state-inflicted traumas and functions as a structure through which multiple generations fight for rights and justice.

## 7 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research was conducted with the cooperation of the Saturday Mothers to better understand the way that intergenerational participation in collective action impacts individuals' motivations for continued participation. This is a group who, while in the public eye through their vigils and activism, have often been difficult to access for research. A series of meetings were held with organisers within the Saturday Mothers in order to discuss our plans for research and our interest in working collaboratively. They worked with us to find participants based on our criteria (i.e., participants from different generations, people who regularly attended, and people who occasionally attended) as well as their thoughts on how comfortable certain individuals would be speaking with us about difficult subjects. Therefore, our participants were not random or snowball, but rather chosen by the group itself. It is possible that gatekeepers introduced forms of bias (e.g., we were not given access to more vulnerable group members, and potentially also members who would express negative attitudes towards the movement). This limitation is an inevitable compromise of the negotiated access to such an at-risk group who are motivated to protect their members and organisational reputation. At the same time, it is good to note that working collaboratively with the Saturday Mothers means we have the opportunity to meet with the most knowledgeable and active agents within the group. We do not know how different our study would be if we had access to participants without gatekeepers, though we believe it is important to highlight both the positive and negative aspects that come with working in this way.

Relatedly, it is important to note that we only interviewed people who had chosen to take part in the vigils. There are many families who gave up looking for their loved ones, or members of newer generations who have chosen not to participate in the Saturday Mothers actions. Future research should include a wider array of engaged and disengaged participants to consider not only what factors contribute to participation, but also the predictors of non-participation in intergenerational collective action.

While this work contributes significantly to our understanding of intergenerational resistance in the context of the Saturday Mothers movement, some avenues for future research merit exploration. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the long-term impact of early exposure and family influences on sustained activism. Comparative analyses between different resistance movements can offer a broader perspective on the role of family and shared experiences in fostering intergenerational activism and identity formation.

In conclusion, this study highlights the complex interplay between family dynamics, shared experiences and identity formation within the Saturday Mothers movement. Recognising the role of the family as a model, the power of shared experiences, and the multifunctional nature of the movement, we more deeply appreciate the movement's enduring resilience and ability to progress through generations. The findings resonate beyond the specific context of Saturday Mothers and offer insights into the broader dynamics of intergenerational resistance and collective identity within movements for social justice and change.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

## ORCID

Orhan Kaya  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4999-382X>

Fergus Neville  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7377-4507>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Before the Saturday Mothers began.

<sup>2</sup> The families of people who disappeared under the dictatorship in Argentina between 1976 and 1983.

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## APPENDIX A

### Demographic Information

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Political, social, demographic identities:

### General Questions

1. What does the Saturday Mothers movement mean to you? Why do you participate in Saturday Mothers protests?
  - a. What is your story of encountering the Saturday Mothers? What is your relationship with the missing individual: Mother/Father/Sibling/Second-degree relative/Friendship/Comradeship/Social-political connections and/or solidarity—involvement of other family members in the protests.
  - b. Do you remember the first time you participated in Saturday Mothers protests?
  - c. How long have you been involved in the Saturday Mothers movement?
  - d. How frequently do you participate in Saturday Mothers protests?
2. How does a typical Saturday Mothers protest unfold step by step? (If you are an organiser).
  - a. What do you pay attention to when organising your protests?
  - b. Are there specific objects or symbols used in the protests? If so, what are the purposes of using these symbols?

### Inter-Generational Dynamics

1. How does the Saturday Mothers movement adapt to intergenerational differences? What changes have occurred in the participant profile, purpose, scope, and content of the movement over the past 25 years?
  - a. What differences do you observe between first- and second-generation participants/activists?
  - b. Did you research the history of the Saturday Mothers movement or were you provided with any information before joining the movement?
2. What are the key motivational sources that sustain the continuity of the Saturday Mothers movement?
3. Due to your participation in the Saturday Mothers movement, what kind of familial, social, state-originated pressures have you faced? How did you cope with these pressures?

### Common Ground

1. What do you think is the common sentiment shared among participants during Saturday Mothers protests?
  - a. Can you describe your feelings during the protests?
  - b. Do you share commonalities with other participants?
  - c. Do you have a specific feeling that defines what you and other participants feel?
2. Which social circles/identities do you think support the Saturday Mothers movement? Do you think the Saturday Mothers movement is solely undertaken by families who have lost members? If yes, why?
  - a. What are the reasons for people outside of the families of the missing individuals to participate in Saturday Mothers protests?
  - b. What are the common and different points you observe between families of the missing individuals and other individuals/groups participating in Saturday Mothers protests?
3. Are there common principles that all participants in Saturday Mothers protests must adhere to?
  - a. What kind of disagreements occurs among different participant groups within the movement? How do you typically resolve them?

4. Is your relationship with the participants limited to Saturday Mothers protests, or do you have other political or social relationships?
  - a. Do you have solidarity or communication with other political dissident groups in Turkey?

#### **Spatiality**

1. What is the significance of Galatasaray High School for the Saturday Mothers movement? How does holding protests in Taksim-Galatasaray High School contribute to the Saturday Mothers movement?
  - a. How would you feel about organising Saturday Mothers protests in a location other than your preferred one? (if you are the organiser).
  - b. Why do you think the Turkish Government prevents Saturday Mothers protests from being held in the designated location (Galatasaray High School)?