Civil Protest, Urban Design, and the Transformation of Public Space in Istanbul, 1960-2013

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To Aysu, Ayşe, Yalçın Köseoğlu
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Abstract

This thesis examines a series of protests between 1960 and 2013 to investigate how the design and development of public spaces in Istanbul changed in relation to the alternative conceptions of urban life put forward by demonstrators, activists, and other socially engaged groups. Using four protest events in Istanbul as case studies, I build on two interconnected arguments: (1) the urban experience of the citizens can change how space is designed, perceived, and used; (2) civil protests have unique capacities in catalyzing these changes and, in return, being influenced by them.

The historiographies of the Ottoman and Turkish cities, for the most part, tend to reflect on the changes in the built environment entailed by top-down administrative programs and reforms. Thus, the role of the ordinary people in the making of cities—their material and imagined settings—remains missing from the existing narratives. By identifying civil protest as a medium that enhances citizens' participation in spatial production, I prioritize user-generated changes in public space that allow for a deeper understanding of how power relations and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion motivate the creation, use, and appropriation of urban settings. I present crucial links between various cases (and forms) of protest—social, cultural, political institutions, actors, agents, and processes that they introduced—to trace how these interlinkages generated spatial changes in the city. My research therefore offers an alternative architectural urban history of Istanbul, one from the perspective of ordinary (and at times marginalized) people.

Public space is central to our everyday lives. It is our connection to the world, and it is a medium that enables us to practice democracy. How we use, produce, and study it are issues too delicate to treat perfunctorily.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine une série de manifestations entre les années 1960 et 2013 pour étudier comment la conception et le développement des espaces publics à Istanbul ont changé au fil du temps en relation avec les conceptions alternatives de la vie urbaine proposées par des manifestant, activistes, et autres groupes engagés socialement. En utilisant quatre événements de manifestations à Istanbul comme études de cas, je m'appuie sur deux arguments interconnectés : (1) l'expérience urbaine des citoyens peut changer la façon dont l'espace est conçu, perçu, et utilisé, (2) les protestes civiles ont des capacités uniques pour catalyser ces changements et en retour être influencées par eux.

Pour la plupart, les historiographies des villes ottomanes et turques ont tendance à refléter les changements dans l'environnement bâti impliqués par des programmes et des réformes administratives descendantes. Par conséquent, le rôle des personnes ordinaires dans la fabrication des villes—leurs cadres matériels et imaginaires—reste absent des récits existants. En identifiant la protestation civile comme un moyen qui améliore la participation des citoyens à la production spatiale, je donne la priorise aux changements produits par l'utilisateur dans l'espace public, qui permettent une meilleure compréhension de comment les relations de pouvoir et les hiérarchies d'inclusion et d'exclusion motivent la création, l'utilisation et le détournement des milieux urbains. Je présente des liens essentiels entre plusieurs cas (et formes) de manifestation—institutions et acteurs sociaux, culturels, politiques, et les processus qu'ils ont introduits—afin de retracer comment ces interconnexions ont produit des changements spatiaux dans la ville. Ma recherche propose donc une histoire urbaine alternative d'Istanbul, une histoire du point de vue des personnes ordinaires (et parfois marginalisées).

L'espace public est central pour nos vies quotidiennes. C'est notre connexion au monde, et un medium qui nous permet de pratiquer la démocratie. Les manières dont on l'utilise, le produit, et l'étudie sont des questions très délicates pour être traitées superficiellement.

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Last but certainly not least, my most tremendous thanks go to my family, always there through every unexpected turn I took. My mom, dad, and sister became colossal sources of emotional and moral support from the start of my Ph.D. journey to the end. My ability to finish this study is the outcome of much love, support, and tolerance from them. No words can ever express the depth of my love, awe, and gratitude. I am what I am today because of them. To my family, I dedicate this work.

Introduction

> Urban design is essentially about placemaking, where places are not just a specific space, but all the activities and events which made it possible.[1]
>
> - Peter Buchanan
>
> Social movements are space producers: they manipulate places, producing new ones.[2]
>
> - Donatella Della Porta

Social movements have long informed spatial production in Istanbul in both subtle and conspicuous ways. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, citizens frequently took their demands for change to the streets. These instances of unrest are key moments that situate public space at the intersection of the physical environment, collective action, and political ideology. They offer new insights into how public articulations of political selves can shape material and imagined urban settings in the city. This thesis examines a series of protests between 1960 and 2013 to investigate how the design and development of public spaces in Istanbul changed in relation to the alternative conceptions of urban life put forward by demonstrators, activists, and other socially engaged groups. I start my research with the premise that civil protests are active agents in the shaping and design of public space. Using four protest events in Istanbul as case studies, I build on two interconnected arguments: (1) the urban experience of the citizens can change how space is designed, perceived, and used; (2) civil

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[1] Peter Buchanan, "What City? A Plea for Place in the Public Realm," *The Architectural Review* 184, no. 1101 (1988): 31–41.
[2] Donatella Della Porta, "Putting Protest in Place: Contested and Liberated Spaces in Three Campaigns," in *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements*, eds. Walter Nicholls, Justin Beaumont, and Byron A Miller (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 28.

protests have unique capacities in catalyzing these changes and, in return, being influenced by them.

Each case in this study incorporates various locations in Istanbul as a part of the spatial orchestration of dissent. Yet, the common thread in all is the connection to Taksim Square, the designated public space of the Turkish Republic in the city. Thus, the chapters build on the development of this very site as the primary public space in the city. I argue that mass mobilizations have a prominent role in the urban shift that moved the political centre to Taksim Square from Beyazıt Square, a public space with roots back to the Ottoman Empire. Rather than top-down administrative programs and political reforms, I prioritize user-generated changes in public space that allow for a deeper understanding of how power relations and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion motivate the creation, use, and appropriation of urban settings. Therefore, my research offers an alternative architectural urban history of Istanbul, one from the perspective of ordinary (and at times marginalized) people. The main objective of my work is twofold: (1) to reveal the role of collective action in transforming public space by making it come alive or changing its meaning, function, or form; and (2) to reveal the potential of public space as a medium for activism, rather than merely as a container for such political activity.

Contemporary historians of the built environment typically highlight how the physical form of public space is tightly coupled with the sociopolitical circumstances that informed its making, an orientation that reflects the spatial turn that gained momentum in the 1980s and continues to this day.[3] In dialogue with this stream of research, a focus on the relationship between activism

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[3] Yael Allweil, "Beyond the Spatial Turn: Architectural History at the Intersection of the Social Sciences and Built Form," *UC Berkeley: The Proceedings of Spaces of History / Histories of Space: Emerging Approaches to the Study of the Built Environment*, December 1, 2010, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9rt7c05f.

practices and public space has emerged following the protest movements of the past few

decades—including but not limited to Arab uprisings, Occupy, Umbrella Movement, Black

Lives Matter. Diverse theoretical and methodological analyses investigate the roles of social,

cultural, political institutions, actors, agents, and processes in protest movements, yielding a rich

interdisciplinary picture. Yet, the spatiality of dissent remains understudied. In the context of

Turkey, scholars began to investigate this aspect only after the eruption of the Gezi Park protests

in 2013.[4] The events received considerable academic and journalistic attention on national and

international platforms. Thus, Taksim Square and Gezi Park found their place in the "movements

of the squares"—along with the Zuccotti Park in the US, Syntagma Square in Greece, Puerta del

Sol in Spain, Tahrir Square in Egypt, Umbrella Square in Hong Kong, and others. These

dynamic squares inspire scholars to investigate transnational similarities, differences, and

dialogues in addressing the significance of public space in protest.[5]

The unrest in Gezi Park initially erupted in response to a profit-oriented urban design project. It

epitomized the research concerns of multiple disciplines, which underscore the effects of

neoliberalism on social movements and contemporary political struggles over urban space.[6] In

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[4] Exceptions are the works of Bülent Batuman (2003), Tali Hatuka and Ayşegül Baykan (2010).
See Bülent Batuman, "Imagination as Appropriation: Student Riots and the (Re)Claiming of Public Space," *Space and Culture* 6, no. 3 (2003): 261–75; Ayşegül Baykan and Tali Hatuka, "Politics and Culture in the Making of Public Space: Taksim Square, 1 May 1977, Istanbul," *Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 1 (2010): 49–68.
[5] Angelos Varvarousis, Viviana Asara, and Bengi Akbulut, "Commons: A Social Outcome of the Movement of the Squares," *Social Movement Studies* 20, no. 3 (2021): 292–311; Laura Galián, "Squares, Occupy Movements and the Arab Revolutions," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, eds. Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 715–32; Amador Fernández-Savater et al. eds., "Life after the Squares: Reflections on the Consequences of the Occupy Movements," *Social Movement Studies* 16, no. 1 (2017): 119–51; Stavros Stavrides, "Squares in Movement," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (2012): 585–96.
[6] Efe Can Gürcan, *Challenging Neoliberalism at Turkey's Gezi Park: From Private Discontent to Collective Class Action*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Sinan Erensü, "The Work of a Few Trees: Gezi, Politics and Space," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41, no. 1 (2017): 19–36; Onur Ekmekci, "Contesting Neo-Liberal Urbanism in Istanbul: The Case of Taksim Square and Beyond," in *Claiming the City: Civil Society Mobilisation by the Urban Poor*, eds. Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin (Uppsala: Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development, 2014); Mehmet Barış Kuymulu, "Reclaiming the Right to the City: Reflections on the Urban

architecture and urban planning research, scholars study the politics of space and the built

environment concerning Gezi Park and Taksim Square. For instance, Deniz Ay and Faranak

Miraftab analyze the creative urban interventions of citizens against "anti-democratic planning

processes" and their role in expanding the realms of possibility in urban development.[7] Esra

Akcan contextualizes the resistance within the urban design policies of the Adalet ve Kalkınma

Partisi (Justice and Development Party/AKP) shaped by "neoliberalism, top-down planning, lack

of commitment to public space, and Ottoman revivalist architectural symbolism."[8] In another

study prioritizing the relationship between public space and collective action, Bülent Batuman

portrays a comprehensive history of the politics of space in Taksim Square, referring to protests

from the early twentieth century right up to 2013.[9] Batuman also investigates the contradicting

roles of urban designers in public processes—both as the creators of the neoliberal renewal

projects and seekers of reasonable solutions for them.[10]

Foregrounding preservation as a significant aspect of resistance, Can Bilsel inquires about the

importance of public participation in architectural conservation, explaining the effects of an

authoritarian vision in heritage restoration and urban renovation in Istanbul.[11] Heghnar

Watenpaugh writes about the resurrection of past struggles in the Gezi Protest by reminding

Uprisings in Turkey," *City* 17, no. 3 (2013): 274–78; Cihan Tuğal, "Occupy Gezi: The Limits of Turkey's Neoliberal Success," *Jadaliyya*, June 4, 2013. Accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28725.

[7] Deniz Ay and Faranak Miraftab, "Invented Spaces of Activism: Gezi Park and Performative Practices of Citizenship," in *The Palgrave Handbook of International Development*, eds. Jean Grugel and Daniel Hammett (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 556.

[8] Esra Akcan, "The 'Occupy' Turn in the Global City Paradigm: The Architecture of AK Party's Istanbul and the Gezi Movement," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 2 (2015): 59.

[9] Bülent Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim': The Politics of Public Space from Nation-Building to Neoliberal Islamism and Beyond," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (2015): 881–907.

[10] Bülent Batuman, Deniz Altay Baykan, and Evin Deniz, "Encountering the Urban Crisis: The Gezi Event and the Politics of Urban Design," *Journal of Architectural Education* 70, no. 2 (2016): 189–202.

[11] Can Bilsel, "The Crisis in Conservation: Istanbul's Gezi Park between Restoration and Resistance," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 76, no. 2 (2017): 141–45.

readers of the demolition of an Armenian cemetery on the site, a critical step in executing the

Park's construction.[12] To study the interplay of identities at Gezi, sociology and anthropology

scholars focus on the participants from different social, political, cultural, and ethnic

backgrounds, including protestors, police, photographers, and journalists.[13]

The relationship between politics and aesthetics also inspires research on the artistic practices

that flourished during the occupation at Gezi.[14] The aspect of humour—manifested in slogans,

stencils, graffiti, and cartoons—was interrogated as a tool that opened up dialogue on the

freedom of political expression.[15] This vast array of interdisciplinary research on the Gezi Park

protests and Taksim Square contributes significantly to the contemporary urban histories of

Istanbul by addressing the role of demonstrations in the transformation of public space.

Nevertheless, the majority of this scholarship remains predominantly focused on this single case.

What is missing from the current debate is a comprehensive spatial analysis that provides an

interpretive framework for the topic more broadly. Both the transformation of Taksim Square

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[12] Heghnar Watenpaugh, "Learning from Taksim Square: Architecture, State Power, and Public Space in Istanbul," Web portal of the Society of Architectural Historians, June 11, 2013, http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/sah-blog/2013/06/11/learning-from-taksim-square-architecture-state-power-and-public-space-in-istanbul.

[13] Gülçin Erdi Lelandais, "Space and Identity in Resistance against Neoliberal Urban Planning in Turkey," *IJUR International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 5 (2014): 1785–1806; Özden Melis Uluğ, *Bir Olmadan Biz Olmak: Farklı Gruplardan Aktivistlerin Gözüyle Gezi Direnişi* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014); Müge İplikçi, *Biz Orada Mutluyduk: Gezi Parkı Direnişindeki Gençler Anlatıyor* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2013); Ayşe Deniz Ünan, "Gezi Protests and the LGBT Rights Movement: A Relation in Motion," in *Creativity and Humour in Occupy Movements: Intellectual Disobedience in Turkey and Beyond*, ed. Altuğ Yalçıntaş (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 75–94; Ayşe Parla and Ceren Özgül, "Property, Dispossession, and Citizenship in Turkey; Or, the History of the Gezi Uprising Starts in the Surp Hagop Armenian Cemetery," *Public Culture* 28, no. 3 (2016): 617–53; A. Erkan Koca, *Düzen ve Kargaşa Arasında: Toplumsal Eylem Polisliği Polis Açısından Gezi Olayları* (Ankara: Atıf Yayınları, 2015); Özcan Yurdalan, *Bir İsyanı Fotoğraflamak Gezi'nin Fotoğrafçıları Naklediyor* (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2014); Serkan Ocak, İdris Emen, and Coskun Aral, eds., *Gazeteci Gözüyle Direniş: 21 Foto Muhabirinden Gezi Fotoğrafları = Through the Eyes of Journalists: Resistance and Gezi Park Photographs* (Istanbul: Kırmızı Kedi, 2013).

[14] E. Attila Aytekin, "A 'Magic and Poetic' Moment of Dissensus: Aesthetics and Politics in the June 2013 (Gezi Park) Protests in Turkey," *Space and Culture* 20, no. 2 (2017): 191–2018.

[15] Mahiye Seçil Dağtaş, "'Down with Some Things!' The Politics of Humour and Humour as Politics in Turkey's Gezi Protests," *Etnofoor* 28, no. 1 (2016): 11–34; Can Yalçınkaya, *Dirençizgiroman: Gezi Direnişinden Çizgiler* (Istanbul: Esen Kitap, 2014).

over the years and the discourses of the Gezi protests are rooted in past events. Thus, my research presents crucial links between various cases (and forms) of protest—social, cultural, political institutions, actors, agents, and processes that they introduced—to trace how these interlinkages generated spatial changes in the city.

Urban space as a medium that catalyzes public opposition goes back to the student movements of the 1960s in Republican Istanbul. Activism in public space surged in the 1970s with the labour movement and continuing right-wing/left-wing polarization in the political spheres. Despite the suspension of public demonstrations following the military coup of 1980, identity politics accelerated from the 1990s onward. For example, LGBTQI+, feminist, and Kurdish movements, featuring a diversity of "protest repertoires,"[16] began to weigh heavily in public demonstrations.[17] These activist practices, which reflected wider social change, significantly shifted the traditional perceptions of public space from the 1960s onward; however, they remain notably absent from the existing discussions of the spatialization of social movements in Turkey.

My research investigates different forms of protest by first examining a march (Bloody Sunday, 1969), then a carnivalesque celebration (May Day, 1977), a sit-in ritual (Saturday Mothers/People/SMP, 1995), and finally an encampment (Gezi Park protests, 2013), each of which enacts a unique spatial appropriation. While some cases prioritize fleeting impact and grandeur, others rely on unobtrusiveness. Some benefit from expanding the space, whereas

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[16] Charles Tilly describes protest repertoire as the "whole set of means [a group] has for making claims of different types on different individuals." Charles Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1986), 2.
[17] See Özlem Atalay and Petra Doan, "Reading LGBT Movement through Its Spatiality in Istanbul, Turkey | Geography Research Forum," *Queer Urban Movements from the Margin(s): Activism, Politics, Space* 39 (2020): 106–26; Anna J. Secor, "Toward a Feminist Counter-Geopolitics: Gender, Space and Islamist Politics in Istanbul," *Space and Polity* 5, no. 3 (2001): 191–211; Anna Secor, "'There Is an Istanbul That Belongs to Me': Citizenship, Space, and Identity in the City," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 2 (2004): 352–68.

others take advantage of creating a boundary around a designated area. Despite formal differences, they all have substantial impacts on shaping the urban experience of particular public spaces. Bloody Sunday and May Day (the most crowded public demonstrations up to then) ended violently despite being organized as peaceful demonstrations. They created unique instances of remembrance for different social groups and added to the meanings of Taksim and Beyazıt Squares. SMP has been the longest-lasting protest practice in the history of Turkey. The ritual created a public space of its own through decades of repetitive performance. Notably, Gezi was the first large-scale civil disobedience act against an architectural project. It spatialized resistance in ways that not only invited academics to take up the concerns but also design professionals and citizens to rethink the uses of public space to instantiate and demonstrate democracy.

In this research, I aimed to focus on the events that would enable me to observe changes in the built environment and urban spaces of Istanbul. Even though my case studies seem to reflect predominantly left-wing politics, I justify their selection based on their unique spatial impacts and modes of practice, propelled by social, political, and cultural concerns rather than ideological inclinations. As such, my cases do not fit into an objectively provable set of criteria: the binding link is that they all have physical connections to Taksim Square. The choice of cases reflects my own perspective, judgment, and my own unique preferences. My discussion of emergent themes is, in turn, limited by these selected cases, sources, public spaces, and particular periods. Nonetheless, this study provides fertile and compelling terrain for future research.

Public space is central to our everyday lives. It is our connection to the world, and it is a medium that enables us to practice democracy. How we use, produce, and study it are issues too delicate to treat perfunctorily. Academics and architects have power in revealing and responding to the

processes that influence the design of buildings and the spaces around them. They can address spatial injustices not only in their research and practice but also by refining what they teach and how they teach to future architects. This research thus presents alternative perspectives to look at how buildings and spaces can be produced in light of social networks. It aims to provide a better understanding of the ways in which we shape our cities and to invite further analysis on the topic. While primarily appealing to scholars of spatial disciplines (such as architecture, urban design, and geography), this research will also be of interest to arts and humanities scholars who study Istanbul's visual and public culture, social movements, and social history. Further, by exhibiting the necessities and episodic spatial traditions of ordinary and marginalized people inhabiting the city, this research also provides insights for practising design disciplines oriented to user needs.

My thesis draws on multiple disciplinary perspectives about space, including architectural history, urban studies, geography, sociology, politics, and communication/visual studies. I group the relevant literature in these disciplines into three main categories and situate my study at their intersection: civil protest, social movements, and public space. In the first part of my review, "civil protests," I examine the characteristics and aesthetics of three forms of social unrest: marches, sit-ins, and protest camps, and consider how participants in these events frequently advance their agendas by appropriating different kinds of public space. Under the banner of "social movements," I then explore the sociopolitical environments and prevailing power relations that allow governments to characterize the actions of certain groups, individuals, and processes as civil disobedience. "Public space" is concerned with the design and development of physical urban environments constitutive of civil protests. In what follows, I present a brief review of these bodies of literature. Then, I discuss the development of Beyazıt and Taksim

Squares to delineate the sociopolitical and cultural processes in their formation prior to the

period in focus. Finally, I present the methods and organization of the study.

Civil Protest

My study aligns with the literature that regards civil protest as "the act of challenging, resisting,

or making demands upon authorities, power holders and/or cultural beliefs and practices by

collectivities."[18] I also eschew events that may fit this definition but evidence any kind of riot or

terrorist actions. Instead, I privilege civil protests that adhere to several common characteristics

of peaceful demonstrations, including communication with the society and engagement of the

media; in some cases, court decisions have also validated a group's oppositional activities.[19] How

dissent originates and proceeds and how it connects to public space are crucial to differentiate

between a protest and a riot. Drawing from Bruce D'Arcus' definition, a riot is an attempt to

change the "state-imposed order either by directly defying state authority or by providing

alternative normative orders […] and often serving as a vigilante sort of justice."[20] The events

selected for this research are distinguished from the riots, which might nevertheless also be

relevant to the public spaces or social movements in focus. Three of my case studies are

examples of peaceful opposition to a specific mode of political operation in the country and thus

fit into the definition of protest. On the other hand, one of them is an annual celebration that can

be more suitably identified as a demonstration.

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[18] Jeff Goodwin and James M Jasper, *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003), 4.
[19] It is also possible to encounter cases that intentionally avoid receiving legal permissions to engage in acts of civil disobedience.
[20] Bruce D'Arcus, *Boundaries of Dissent: Protest and State Power in the Media Age* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 30.

My case studies consist of three forms of protest: marching, sitting, and camping. I pay particular attention to how each protest type uses and manipulates the city. In the context of this research, I engage Matthias Reiss' definition of marching as "organized and choreographed processions of groups in the public sphere with the aim of making a statement."[21] Significantly, large-scale protest marches create breaks in the everyday flow of cities. They block or decelerate the movement of traffic by occupying designated vehicle lanes while also slowing the pace of pedestrians. The effect of marching then originates from the disturbance of an existing rhythm stemming from the bluntness of the movement—in contrast to some other forms of protest that take advantage of subtle means of occupation. According to Reiss, street protestors place particular importance on the aspects of "discipline, organization and respectability" in their activities to differentiate themselves from mobs and other disorganized formations.[22] The implied aim is to present alternative possibilities for society rather than emulating a military order or discipline.[23] Several movements, including suffragette marches and May Day celebrations, fashioned this form of resistance in accordance with their specific needs.[24]

Several benefits arise from marching because this activity both expands and enriches spatial appropriation.[25] One primary strength is its flexibility to strategically include certain parts of the city in the protest route to enhance the action's impact. Residential and commercial

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[21] Matthias Reiss, *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.
[22] Matthias Reiss, "Street Protest," in *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, eds. Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 353.
[23] Ibid., 354.
[24] For insights on the spatiality of suffragette marches, see Katherine E. Kelly, "Seeing Through Spectacles: The Woman Suffrage Movement and London Newspapers, 1906–13," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 11, no. 3 (2004): 327–53; Barbara Green, "From Visible Flaneuse to Spectacular Suffragette? The Prison, the Street, and the Sites of Suffrage," *Discourse: Berkeley Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 17, no. 2 (1995): 67.
[25] Tali Hatuka, *The Design of Protest: Choreographing Political Demonstrations in Public Space*, (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2018), 105–23.

neighbourhoods contribute to increasing the number of participants. It is common to see people taking part in a public protest, not even necessarily by being on the streets, but by shouting or banging pots and pans, leaning out of their windows or balconies.[26] Passing by business and governmental precincts, protestors can simultaneously open dialogue with government authorities and other decision-makers.[27] In this sense, the navigation of crowds through particular locations has critical importance in maximizing channels of communication. Protest marches of the 1960s and 1970s in Istanbul, which will be examined in detail in Chapters I and II, specifically relied on this strategy.

A sit-in is the occupation of a particular space by people as a form of protest. As a means to disobey the law and thereby protest against injustice in a nonviolent way, it is considered an act of civil disobedience by many states.[28] Gene Sharp categorizes "sit-ins, walk-ins, pray-ins, and occupations as varieties of intervention characterized by the interference created by people's physical bodies."[29] The act of sitting gains its power from the ephemeral bodily intervention in space. Sit-ins can transform the most basic everyday spaces (streets, squares, restaurants, public transport) into contested political sites. They flourished during the Civil Rights Movement in the USA in the 1960s and the protests against enforced disappearances in Latin America between

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[26] Banging pots and pans as resistance, known as *cacerolazo,* became internationally known in the 1970s in Latin America. It emerged as a popular form of protest in Chile during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). This specific form benefits from the potential of the sound to encourage public participation, not necessarily by taking to the streets but by also leaning out of windows or balconies. It was a common protest repertoire during the Quebec student strike (2012) and the Gezi Park protests (2013).

[27] For a case study discussing the importance of the route in negotiations, see Tali Hatuka, "Negotiating Space Analyzing Jaffa Protest Form, Intention and Violence, October 27th 1933," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 35 (2008): 93–105.

[28] The modern concept of civil disobedience was introduced by Henry David Thoreau in the nineteenth century. See Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media, 2015).

[29] Gene Sharp, Marina S Finkelstein, and Thomas C Schelling, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, (Boston: P. Sargent Publisher, 1973), 371.

1960 and 1980.[30] The focus of Chapter III, Saturday Mothers/People, is one such sit-in ritual inspired by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, a reaction against the civilian disappearances in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Resistance against enforced disappearances was a common practice in the countries that suffered from successive military interventions. Argentina is a case in point. Ruled by a junta government from 1976 to 1983, following President Juan Peron's death, the Argentinian government was notorious for suppressing civil unrest using clandestine and oppressive tactics of social control.[31] Throughout the Dirty War period, for example, government agencies declared approximately 30,000 people lost.[32] However, violent disappearances by government forces did not succeed in stifling all forms of protest. At the height of this violence, a group of mothers whose children had "disappeared" at the hands of the military regime started meeting at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires on April 30, 1977.[33] Their initial purpose was to communicate and keep each other updated about any developments concerning the whereabouts of their relatives. Every Thursday between 3.30 to 4.00 p.m., the mothers returned to the plaza to converse and exchange knowledge. They

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[30] Mahatma Gandhi set a precedent for such protests by supporting such nonviolent and obstructive forms of civil disobedience during the nationalist Indian mass movement against British rule. See S. R Bakshi, *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience Movement* (New Delhi: Gitanjali Pub. House, 1985). See also Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," in *Civil Disobedience in Focus*, ed. Hugo Adam Bedau (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), 68–84.

[31] For example, in Guatemala, systematic disappearances lasted more than thirty years, from 1961 onward. In Chile, disappearances were used by the junta government as an oppression policy between 1976 and 1980. Citizens in El Salvador, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia had developed various forms of resistance against disappearances under the Human Rights Movement. For further information, see Jennifer G. Schirmer, "'Those Who Die for Life Cannot Be Called Dead:' Women and Human Rights Protest in Latin America," *Feminist Review* 32, no. 1 (1989): 3–29.

[32] In the entirety of Latin America, the number went up to ninety thousand. Ibid.

[33] Susana Torre, "Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo," in *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden (London; New York: E & FN Spon, 2000), 140–45.

wore white kerchiefs made from children's diapers to recognize each other. In time, the gatherings expanded and transformed into a silent ritual.

Plaza de Mayo was a well-defined rectangular urban square surrounded by the City Council (Colonial Cabildo), the Catholic cathedral, and the presiding government (Casa Rosada). Given its national significance and symbolism, the plaza offered an advantageous position for opening conversations with political authorities by closing the physical distance.[34] However, under strict military control and restrictions over the use of public space, any act that implied opposition, including speeches, carrying banners or placards, was prohibited by law. Armed Forces Police would disband any group of more than two people. Interestingly enough, the police officers' order to "circulate" commenced the mothers' movement around the centrally located obelisk (May Pyramid).[35] They exchanged notes to organize future actions while silently strolling in pairs. The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo showed how the design of urban space could inform a protest. Many aspects of the weekly gatherings, such as the location, form, and aesthetic components, evolved according to the design and politics of the plaza. Collective action not only challenged the politically charged identity of this public space for long years to come. In her analysis of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, Tali Hatuka suggests that the repetition of the act "provides a sense of emotional support and refuge."[36] While persistence communicates the message of strength, spatial occupation through identified behavioural codes produces meaning both for the participants and viewers. Furthermore, performing an agreed-upon act consolidates the sense of solidarity and encourages ensuing practices at the same location.[37]

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[34] Tali Hatuka, "Ritual | Buenos Aires, Plaza de Mayo," in *The Design of Protest: Choreographing Political Demonstrations in Public Space*. (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2018), 139–50.
[35] Torre, "Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo," 143.
[36] Hatuka, *The Design of Protest*, 139–40.
[37] Torre, "Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo," 143.

Anna Feigenbaum, Fabian Frenzel, and Patrick McCurdy define a protest camp as "a place-based social movement strategy that involves both acts of ongoing protests and acts of social reproduction to sustain daily life."[38] Unlike many other protest forms, whose strengths lie in temporary but impactful action, protest camps require a certain degree of permanence and self-sustainability. Many demonstrations of the twenty-first century prioritized meeting the daily needs of participants, such as eating, sleeping, and going to the bathroom.[39] They featured makeshift kitchens, libraries, clinics, educational quarters, assembly areas for collective discussions, and media centres for the continuity of encampments.

An early example of a protest camp was "Resurrection City," which lasted between May and June 1968, on the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument grounds in Washington, DC.[40] The organization was a part of the "Poor People's Campaign," initiated by Martin Luther King Jr., to create encounters between the poor and the US government. Also dubbed a city-within-a-city, the setting consisted of many facilities, including healthcare and dental care centres, kitchens, cultural spaces, workshops, daycare, and auxiliary infrastructures, doing justice to the organization's slogan. A more recent case appeared in Cairo in 2011 during the protests against the corruption and poverty in Mubarak's regime. The encampment in Tahrir Square transformed a traffic hub into a self-sustaining site of collective resistance with infirmaries, daycare,

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[38] Anna Feigenbaum, Fabian Frenzel, and Patrick McCurdy, *Protest Camps* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2013), 12; see also Charlie Hailey, *Camps: A Guide to 21st Century Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009).

[39] Gavin Brown et al., *Protest Camps in International Context: Spaces, Infrastructures and Media of Resistance*. (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017), 41.

[40] Lawrence J Vale and Tunney Lee, "Resurrection City: Washington DC, 1968," *Thresholds: Journal of the MIT School of Architecture*, Revolution!, no. 41 (2013): 112–21; Tali Hatuka, "The Challenge of Distance in Designing Civil Protest: The Case of Resurrection City in the Washington Mall and the Occupy Movement in Zuccotti Park," *Planning Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (2016): 253–82.

recycling bases, food and drink booths, sleeping quarters, and security points.[41] Batuman

contends that protest camps do not only occupy public space but also "reconstruct it within the

urban public."[42] This is expressed through citizens finding alternative ways to reproduce their

own public space, one that internally monitors itself and maintains control, when public access is

banned or restricted by the governments. The case study under examination in Chapter IV, Gezi

protests, provides ample opportunities to observe this reproduction, with its spatial appropriation

and public engagement strategies.

The potential of new forms of participatory democracy to encourage social change became a

popular topic for academic analysis in the twentieth century. The emergence of modern mass

media and the design of new platforms and technologies diversified the course of public protests

by offering new channels for social actors to speak up and convey ideas.[43] Movements of the past

few decades have strategically utilized the capacity of internet activism to effectively engage the

public. Hence, these protestors often use adaptable and temporary digital media networks as new

agents of protest. The Zapatista movement, World Trade Organization protests in 1999 in

Seattle, Occupy Wall Street Protests (OWSs), and Arab uprisings testified to how new means of

communication can expand public space.[44] Extensive use of social media, such as Facebook and

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[41] For the case of Tahrir Square see, for example, Nasser Rabbat, "The Arab Revolution Takes Back the Public Space," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (2012): 198–208; Zeinab Abul-Magd, "Occupying Tahrir Square: The Myths and the Realities of the Egyptian Revolution," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (2012): 565–72; Said, "We Ought to Be Here."

[42] Bülent Batuman, "Political Encampment and the Architecture of Public Space: TEKEL Resistance in Ankara," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2, no. 1 (2013): 79.

[43] David Fasenfest, *Engaging Social Justice: Critical Studies of 21st Century Social Transformation* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009); Mahmood Monshipouri, *Information Politics, Protests, and Human Rights in the Digital Age*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Reza Jamali, *Online Arab Spring: Social Media and Fundamental Change*, (Waltham, MA: Chandos Publishing, 2015).

[44] See for example Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner, "New Media and Internet Activism: From the 'Battle of Seattle' to Blogging," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 87–95; Kevin M DeLuca, Sean Lawson, and Ye Sun, "Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5, no. 4 (2012): 483–509; Brian G Smith, Rita Linjuan Men, and

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Twitter, during the OWSs, Tahrir Square protests, and Gezi protests aided in raising awareness, increasing the numbers of supporters, and enabling interaction among participants. Even during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, a comparatively earlier case, televising activities and protests were crucial, a way to virtually occupy visual media and inform the public about the strife between the protestors and police.[45] Many scholars corroborate the agency of social media in bolstering civil protests and opening up new avenues to express discontent over the last few decades. In contrast, those critical of social media activism base their arguments on the downplaying of the importance of place-based public space.[46] They overlook the powerful impact that virtual activities can have on how people engage in physical public space. Thus, while this perspective grants due attention to the physicality of public space, it obfuscates the interplay among multiple arenas in the evolution of public processes.

In addition to facilitating the advent of alternative communication pathways, activism in public spaces also inspires creative forms of design. Thomas Markussen highlights that design activism plays a vital role in "promoting social change, raising awareness about values and beliefs or questioning the constraints that mass production, and consumerism place on people's everyday life."[47] Such activity is developed in the course of civil protests. For example, using urban surfaces to exhibit visual components—such as graffiti, posters, banners, flags—presents a new form of spatial appropriation different from the mobilization of bodies.[48] Roman Stadnicki, Leila

Reham Al-Sinan, "Tweeting Taksim Communication Power and Social Media Advocacy in the Taksim Square Protests," *Computers in Human Behavior* 50 (2015): 499–507.

[45] D'Arcus, *Boundaries of Dissent*, 2.

[46] Jeffrey Hou, *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 7.

[47] Thomas Markussen, "The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics," *Design Issues* 29, no. 1 (2013): 38.

[48] See Enrique Klaus, "Graffiti and Urban Revolt in Cairo," *Built Environment* 40, no. 1 (2014): 14–33; Yılmaz Aysan, *"68 Afişleri": ODTÜ Devrimci Afiş Atölyesinin Öyküsü* (Istanbul: Metis, 2008); Andrew Feenberg, *When*

Vignal, and Pierre Arnaud-Barthel suggest that "graffiti is part of a new claim coming from stakeholders previously excluded from the urban public space."[49] From this perspective, spatial appropriation occurs as these visual components expand to encompass public space, a process that recursively enriches the performance of spatial appropriation by design actors.

Cartographic mappings and visual documentation projects, too, are popular forms contributing to this expansion into the public space. For instance, during the Occupy protests, Jonathan Massey and Brett Schneider produced illustrations of the spatial and social organization in the Liberty Plaza (Zuccotti Park) in Manhattan, New York, to investigate the opportunities that the park's design held for collective action.[50] Their graphics identify functional zones (such as medical, sleeping, sanitation, media outreach), barricades, and police-patrolled areas. According to Reinhold Martin, design thinking can make "tangible models of possible worlds, possible forms of shelter, and possible ways of living together visible" by sharing these possibilities with the public to be discussed in real and virtual assemblies.[51] In other words, in digital, paper, or built forms, creative design projects can open up new avenues to address social and political issues. Furthermore, these projects encourage architects to engage in activism.

Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968 (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 2001); Hakkı Taş, "Street Arts of Resistance in Tahrir and Gezi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 5 (2017): 802–19.

[49] Roman Stadnicki, Leïla Vignal, and Pierre-Arnaud Barthel, "Assessing Urban Development after the 'Arab Spring': Illusions and Evidence of Change," *Built Environment* 40, no. 1 (2014): 9.

[50] Jonathan Massey and Brett Snyder, "Occupying Wall Street: Spaces of Political Action," *Places Journal*, September 17, 2012, https://placesjournal.org/article/occupying-wall-street-places-and-spaces-of-political-action/; Jonathan Massey and Brett Snyder, "Mapping Occupy Wall Street: Zuccotti Park to Liberty Plaza," *Places Journal* (blog), accessed August 17, 2015, https://placesjournal.org/article/mapping-liberty-plaza/.

[51] Reinhold Martin, "Occupy: What Architecture Can Do," *Places Journal*, November 7, 2011, https://placesjournal.org/article/occupy-what-architecture-can-do/.

Design activism is a growing topic of interest that offers insights into supporting social change through design.[52] A special issue in the *Journal of Islamic Architecture*, edited by Ipek Türeli, "Streets of Protest: Politics of Space," is a key secondary source that makes crucial connections between design activism and civil protest. In her own piece, "Small Architectures," Türeli proposes two main categories—walking and camping—to analyze six articles, each of which discusses case studies from different Islamic geographies. The category of walking focuses on the "transformative effects of mass protests" on public space, while camping turns to the "agency of protest occupations."[53] Beyond articulating the politics of public space and protest, Türeli's paper also provides an overview of architectural engagement in sociopolitical conflicts through practices of Humanitarian Design (such as refugee camps or post-disaster shelters) and Activism by Design (as in community-built makeshift structures that sustain occupations). Other articles in the issue highlight various protest encampments and the spatiality of mass demonstrations— some of which I will individually refer to in the following sections.

Social Movements

Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper define a social movement as a "collective, organized, sustained, and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and social practices."[54] Social movements have long been seen as "agents of protest," even though civil

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[52] See, for example, Sibel Bozdoğan, "A Case for Spatial Agency and Social Engagement in the Middle East," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture,* no. 1 (2015): 31–36; Alastair. Fuad-Luke, *Design Activism: Beautiful Strangeness for a Sustainable World* (London: Earthscan, 2009); Ann. Thorpe, *Architecture and Design versus Consumerism: How Design Activism Confronts Growth* (Abingdon, Oxon: Earthscan, 2012); Bryan Bell, *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2008).
[53] Ipek Türeli, "'Small'Architectures, Walking and Camping in Middle Eastern Cities," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2, no. 1 (2013): 5.
[54] Goodwin and Jasper, *The Social Movements Reader*, 4.

protests are not only affiliated with social movements anymore.[55] It is noteworthy that academic

approaches to the subject dramatically shifted during the 1960s. Pre-1960 sociologists regarded

social movements as dangerous, purposeless, and irrational acts that aim to collapse the existing

order. Among them, William Kornhauser argued that social movements spring up when other

intermediary organizations, such as NGOs, trade unions, or community groups, lose their

function.[56] In a similar vein, social philosopher Eric Hoffer asserted that protestors are alienated

from the world around them, overlooking the interaction between like-minded groups during

mobilizations.[57]

Post-1960s scholars of sociology and political science, on the other hand, such as Charles Tilly,

Sidney Tarrow, Alain Touraine, and Manuel Castells, mainly see social movements as a part of

democratic political action.[58] The Marxist perspective seems to have shaped the majority of these

scholars' early analyses; however, they later embraced the presence and importance of multiple

actors rather than adopting a purely class-based approach. Hence, various identity formations,

such as ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, are considered significant concepts that

influence contemporary forms of collective action.[59] Following this school of thought, sociologist

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[55] For various perspectives on the intricate relationships among social movements, protests, and cultural practices, see Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *Protest Cultures: A Companion* (Berghahn Books, 2016).

[56] William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society.* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), 33.

[57] Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 23–25.

[58] Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768-2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004); Sidney G Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Alain Touraine, *The May Movement; Revolt and Reform: May 1968--the Student Rebellion and Workers' Strikes--the Birth of a Social Movement.* (New York: Random House, 1971); Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[59] See Steven M Buechler, "New Social Movement Theories," *TSQ Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1995): 441–64.

Alain Touraine, for example, focuses on the cultural identity dynamics at play in protests.[60] He

investigates the drives of individuals who protest, exploring what enables them to collaborate

with like-minded people and react against discrimination, injustice, or other forms of cultural or

political repression. This is in opposition to earlier perspectives, such as Hoffer's view cited

above, that regard social movements as a sign of alienation. Post-1960 approach to protests,

which takes culture, behaviour, and reasoning as a basis for these actions, directs attention to the

implications for spatial environments of sociopolitical inequities. Student movements of the

second half of the twentieth century, such as the Free Speech Movement (1964) and the student

protests of 1968 in many countries worldwide, cultivate this viewpoint. They ratify the agency of

youth in challenging sociopolitical doctrines and resisting the tools of repression and

surveillance.[61]

Since the middle of the last century, the relationship between social movements and urban

structures has inspired discussions that link urban studies, social theory, and analysis. In the

1960s, Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre's groundbreaking body of work emphasized the

social production of space and its importance for democracy through the concept of "the right to

the city."[62] Since then, the "demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life" has

been a popular topic for analysis among multiple disciplines.[63] Drawing from Lefebvre, Manuel

Castells interprets the city as a social product of conflicting social interests and values. Castells

analyzes how capitalist dynamics form urban space; he locates social movements within this

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[60] See Alain Touraine, "Beyond Social Movements?" *Theory, Culture & Society Theory, Culture & Society* 9, no. 1 (1992): 125–45.

[61] See Don Mitchell, "From Free Speech Movement to People's Park: Locational Conflict and the Right to the City," in *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 81–117; Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988).

[62] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1991).

[63] Ibid., 158; see also Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

urban formation process, extending our understanding of the relationship between the two.[64]

David Harvey, masterfully bringing together sources from multiple disciplines, also shows that

conflicting social, political, and economic forces can produce any spatial formation on an urban

scale—either a monument, a building or a plan.[65] In *The Rebel Cities,* Harvey argues that

ordinary urban dwellers have the power to contest and use public spaces to resist oppression by

collectively shaping urban environments in accordance with their everyday needs as citizens.[66]

The ways marginalized populations demand citizenship rights on an everyday level have inspired

several studies focusing on urban injustice.[67] Asef Bayat's *Street Politics: Poor People's*

Movement in Iran is concerned with the economic and political strategies of the squatter

movement, which grew out of the mushrooming illegal settlements in Tehran's peripheries.[68]

Bayat investigates how the poor construct communities and infrastructures through their own

efforts and resist government attempts to evict settlements. James Holston conducted a similar

study of a different geography on insurgent citizenship in Brazil.[69] Also drawing from Lefebvre,

Holston identifies the term insurgent citizenship as the "right to have a daily life in the city

worthy of a citizen's dignity."[70] He examines urban peripheries of poverty, such as the struggles

of the citizens in accessing basic life needs and how they democratized urban space from within

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[64] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements.*

[65] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2013); David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

[66] Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, xvii.

[67] See Robert Fisher and Joseph M Kling, *Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City* (Newbury Park; London: Sage, 1993) for a broad spectrum of dissident practices, including grassroots mobilizations and everyday forms of resistance and their reflections on urban structure.

[68] Asef Bayat, *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); see also Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[69] James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[70] James Holston, "Insurgent Citizenship in an Era of Global Urban Peripheries," *City & Society* 21, no. 2 (2009): 246.

historical sites of differentiation. Both Bayat's and Holston's work highlight the potential of insurgent citizenship in triggering social change by appropriating cities' peripheries on an everyday level; it is a meaningful alternative to types of urban dissent that claim central parts of the city, such as streets, squares, and plazas. In his review of Hatuka's Harvard University exhibition, "Urban Design and Civil Protest," Max Page quotes Holston's opening lecture, complicating the protests in civic centres.[71] In Holston's own words, "Insurgencies begin in the realm of everyday and domestic life taking shape in the remote urban peripheries […]. Insurgent citizenships may utilize central civic space and even overrun the center […], but they are fundamentally manifestations of peripheries."[72] While my approach to protest and public space emulates Hatuka's, in terms of zooming in on civic centres, my selected case studies feature ideological and identity struggles that manifest as offshoots of everyday conditions. Nevertheless, even with the focus here on central urban spaces, my analyses do not entirely exclude insurgent citizenships.

Urban dissent has a significant role in advancing democracy by emphasizing conflict, an essential component in participatory politics in that it gives birth to new democratic possibilities.[73] The 1960s generated a global breakthrough, one marked by the search for human rights, equality, and freedom; this shift provided opportunities for outstanding developments in the realms of sociopolitical and critical spatial practice.[74] In the wake of the May 1968 student

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[71] Max Page, "Dispatch--Urban Design and Civil Protest," *Places Journal* 20, no. 1 (June 15, 2008), https://placesjournal.org/article/urban-design-and-civil-protest/.
[72] James Holston quoted in Ibid.
[73] See, for example, Lynn Staeheli, "Political Geography: Democracy and the Disorderly Public," *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 1 (2010): 67–78.
[74] Jeremi Suri argues that social movements and diplomacy during this period interacted with one another across a broad international terrain. His discusses explains these interactions between peoples, cultures, and governments in Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

protests in France, Guy Debord and the Situationist International (SI) studied current

oppositional politics and their reflection on space by putting some of Lefebvre's ideas into

action.[75] According to sociologist Judith Bodnar, people put central concepts of the Situationist

critique—such as *dérive* (drifting through the urban environments), *détournement*

("rearrangement of pre-existing elements"),[76] and spectacle ("capital accumulated to image")[77]—

into practice to disrupt the prescribed operation of the urban life. By doing so, they altered

people's everyday life and experience of the city. For instance, in Prague, SI's ideas manifested

in the form of a *détournement* of repressive urbanism, as Bodnar describes:

> Following the calls for action, which were aired first through the state
> radio and then through clandestine stations, people pulled down street
> signs, changed street names, took down house numbers, and made the
> city their own, that is, accessible to those who knew it and lived it,
> excluding those who did not belong, such as the occupying Soviet
> Army.[78]

These disruptive strategies challenged the "extreme functionality of the modern city" in

"instrumental, imaginative, and appealing" ways.[79] In other words, citizens spontaneously

revealed the street's potential to become an arena for counter-spectacles against a society of the

spectacle. Similar practices emerged in developing countries, too; however, the reactions in these

contexts featured decolonization calls (as in Algeria) and non-alliance movements (such as in

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[75] The Situationist movement's critical spatial thinking gave birth to creative design projects. The Psycho-geographic Map of Paris (1955), for example, has set a precedent for mapping practices in various disciplines. See, Tom McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

[76] Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley, C.A: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1958), 45.

[77] Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 24.

[78] Judit Bodnar, "What's Left of the Right to the City?," in *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, edited by Daniel J. Sherman et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 77.

[79] Ibid., 76.

Turkey, against NATO) rather than "commodity fetishism" and its impacts in everyday practices, as Debord articulates.[80]

The series of protests initially led by students and workers in the 1960s have generated broad academic interest in public space as a political platform. Articulating the cultural and political meaning of the May 1968 protests in France and their relationship to public space, Michael Hirsch states that "contestation and resistance against power" and "community" creates a free public arena open to the use of everybody (in the case of May 1968, this was "the street").[81] This point of view encapsulates a growing interest in how the design and development of public spaces change in relation to socially engaged groups' collective conceptions of urban life.

Public Space

Protesting is a part of public discourse. Moreover, the relationship between protest and public space is crucial to understanding the constitutive potentials of space. From the 1960s onwards, its potential in enabling democracy inspired research in anthropology, sociology, social geography, and urbanism, as well as in architecture and architectural history. The work of Hannah Arendt, Henri Lefebvre, Jane Jacobs, and Richard Sennett, to name but a few, laid the foundations for many later studies on public space.[82] The sort of public space this research focuses on aligns with Don Mitchell's definition of this domain: "Public space is a place within which a political

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[80] Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 28.
[81] Michael Hirsch, "The Space of Community: Between Time and Politics," in *Did Someone Say Participate?: An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, eds.Markus Miessen and Shumon Basar (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 291.
[82] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961); Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

movement can stake out the space that it allows it to be seen […]. By claiming space in public, by creating spaces, social groups themselves become public."[83] According to Mitchell, the presence of bodies in public space is necessary to create a space for discussion. This viewpoint parallels the Habermasian sense of the public sphere, which enables the exchange of views and practising democratic citizenship.[84] What makes physical space public is the "intellectual and political consequences of […] encounters" that occur within.[85] In *The Human Condition,* Arendt asserts that power emerges from people in public spaces. She identifies the "spaces of appearance," identifying physical presence as an essential aspect of the public realm.[86] Consequently, when certain bodies disappear from physical space, their power also disappears. The presence of political selves is thus the most powerful statement that can be made in public space.[87]

Jeffrey Hou defines two strands of public space: institutional and insurgent.[88] The former refers to public spaces produced, regulated, and maintained by institutions, governments, and corporations, such as plazas, squares, streets, privately owned public spaces, and civic buildings. The latter identifies the kind that citizens and collectives create by challenging pre-determined uses—examples here include protests, street theatre, guerilla gardens, flash mobs of sorts. Such

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[83] Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* 85, no. 1 (1995): 115.

[84] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

[85] Clara Irazábal, *Ordinary Places, Extraordinary Events: Citizenship, Democracy and Public Space in Latin America* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 37.

[86] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 199.

[87] For insight into the politics of body and presentation of selves in space, in the context of revolutionary movements, see "Reactivating the Social Body in Insurrectionary Times: A Dialogue with Franco 'Bifo' Berardi," *The Urban Fringe*, September 13, 2012, in *Berkeley Planning Journal* 25 no.1 (2012): 210-220. See also Zeynep Gambetti, "Occupy Gezi as Politics of the Body," in *The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey: #occupygezi*, ed. Umut Özkırımlı (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 89–102 and Tali Hatuka, "Civilian Consciousness of the Mutable Nature of Borders: The Power of Appearance along a Fragmented Border in Israel/Palestine," *Political Geography* 31, no. 6 (2012): 347–57.

[88] Hou, *Insurgent Public Space*, 1–11.

insurgent public space suggests that public space is not exclusive to the institutional domain; instead, it includes a broader set of actors.[89] Hou identifies Zuccotti Park in Manhattan, New York, as an insurgent public space due to the OWS protests, which transformed a privately owned zone into a "site of active political expressions and collective actions."[90] Commenting on the same case, architecture critic Michael Kimmelman notes:

> Now it's Zuccotti Park, until four weeks ago an utterly obscure city-block-size downtown plaza with a few trees and concrete benches, around the corner from ground zero and two blocks north of Wall Street on Broadway. A few hundred people with ponchos and sleeping bags have put it on the map.[91]

The authorities described the occupation as a violation of property rights; however, it was a claim to public space put forward by citizens who demanded to engage in decision-making processes. Streets, squares, plazas, parks, and most mundane urban spaces have the potential to effectively become "the protestors' home, their operation room and the face of the movement."[92] This type of spatial production has prevailed in many protest movements since the turn of the twenty-first century. In light of this, public space has become "a chief locus of politics for ordinary people, those who are structurally absent from positions of power."[93]

Controlling space is fundamental to maintaining a movement since it is where the activist action becomes visible. Given this, the domain of public space is continuously contested by those who hold power and those who challenge it. The role of power relations in spatial formation has a

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ron Shiffman, *Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space* (Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2012), 92.

[91] Michael Kimmelman, "Wall Street Protest Shows Power of Place," *The New York Times*, October 15, 2011. Accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/sunday-review/wall-street-protest-shows-power-of-place.html.

[92] Nasser Rabbat, "Circling the Square: Architecture and Revolution in Cairo," *Artforum* 49, no. 8 (2011): 184.

[93] Bayat, "The 'Street' and the Politics of Dissent in the Arab World," 15.

long history. Michel Foucault's biopolitics, dealing with the control mechanisms over physical and political bodies, has been a powerful concept in understanding the relationship between power and space.[94] This early theoretical work has inspired many later works.

The dialectic between political power and physical space has also led to research on the expressions of memory and identity through the built environment and urban landscape.[95] To this end, some scholars have explored the power of architecture and urban design in nation-building processes as vehicles to spread the state's agenda and forge model citizens.[96] Space is also a realm for sociopolitical encounters, one in which opposition against the state reveals itself. From this perspective, public space is where discord between the state and the society is negotiated on both sides. Design elements, such as buildings, monuments, artworks, and urban planning, can become means of communication in this negotiation process. In 1989, the student-led protests reclaimed Tiananmen Square in Beijing, a public space representative of the Chinese state, with monumental structures such as the tomb of Mao Zedong and the Monument to the People's Heroes.[97] The opposition movement's deliberate appropriation of this site was to transform "the space of the other" to imbue it with new political meanings.[98] The protestors erected a new statue, "The Goddess of Democracy," facing Mao's portrait across the square, to symbolically challenge the state's authority; however, the government later removed this statue.[99] Along

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[94] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[95] See, for example, Amy Mills, *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).
[96] For the nation-building processes in Republican Turkey, see Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); for a revisionist urban history see Zeynep Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey: State, Space, and Ideology in the Early Republic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).
[97] See Linda Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," *Political Geography*, no. 5 (1993): 395–420.
[98] Ibid., 395.
[99] Ibid., 410.

similar lines, following the 1960 military coup in Turkey, the new government inscribed its presence onto public space through spatial interventions across the country. The installation of a monument in Beyazıt Square to commemorate the student Turan Emeksiz, who died during the pro-coup clashes, served to find common ground between the new rule and Turkish society after a period of strong opposition. To the same end, the junta administration also erected a monument in Taksim Square to manifest the political changeover. The bayonet bundled by olive leaves, symbolizing the peace ensured by the military intervention, was removed after another coup to again appropriate the space for the new political agenda in 1980 (see Figure 9).[100] These cases demonstrate that promoting physical changes in the civic landscape has been a popular course of action to challenge embodied political meanings in public space.

Public squares have the potential to become protest sites due to their historically and symbolically charged identity, which presents in "spatial relations, furnishings, and architecture of the place."[101] Taksim Square, for example, has been the primary political space in Istanbul since the mid-twentieth century. Several past events mark it as a place for remembrance and protest—which I discuss in the following chapters. Thus, this location's historical resonance motivated both the urban renewal plans and the protests against it in 2013.[102] Similarly, there has been a "pre-existing understanding of Tahrir Square as a politicized space of protest" going back to the early twentieth century, which Atef Said argues provoked the 2011 mobilizations.[103] Historical processes are crucial in understanding the spatial development of urban spaces;

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[100] Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim,'" 11.
[101] Setha M Low, *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 184.
[102] Heghnar Watenpaugh, "Learning from Taksim Square: Architecture, State Power, and Public Space in Istanbul," June 11, 2013. Accessed June 8, 2017, http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/sah-blog/2013/06/11/learning-from-taksim-square-architecture-state-power-and-public-space-in-istanbul.
[103] Said, "We Ought to Be Here," 348.

nevertheless, these spaces do not necessarily develop in parallel with the ideals with which they were charged. Civil protests can disturb and even dissolve pre-assigned meanings and produce new ones.

Growing scholarly work shows how civil protests influence the meaning, function, and form of public squares. Kristin Monroe argues that the Cedar Revolution against the Syrian military occupation in Lebanon, which lasted about thirty years, transformed Beirut's war-torn Martyrs' Square of national significance to a contested public space through embodied and spatial practices, including demonstrations and appropriations.[104] Kishwar Habib and Bruno de Moulder discuss how demonstrations affected the design of Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a monument of historical and cultural significance, as a public space enabling people to achieve representation.[105] Ahmed Khan examines the spatiality of long marches in Pakistan and how these events transform the image and publicness of the Jinnah Mausoleum Square and park in Karachi, the Minar-e-Pakistan Square and Park in Lahore, and Parliament Square in the capital city of Islamabad. Khan argues that the former two have been affiliated with history and national pride, while the latter is "devoid of any meaning."[106] His analyses demonstrate that with the popularization of the long marches, Parliament Square built up an identity as the culminating point of processions. A similar identity formation is observable in Taksim Square, which became the culminating point for the protest marches throughout the 1960s.

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[104] See Kristin V Monroe, *The Insecure City: Space, Power, and Mobility in Beirut*, 2016.
[105] Kishwar Habib and Bruno De Meulder, "The Representative Space: Shaheed Minar - the Martyrs Monument Plaza in Dhaka," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2, no. 1 (2013): 181–200.
[106] Ahmed Z Khan, "On Design and Politics of Co-Producing Public Space: The Long Marches and the Reincarnation of the 'Forecourt' of the Pakistani Nation," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2, no. 1 (2013): 143.

In like fashion, Hatuka analyzes Rabin Square's spatial composition, whose centrality, order, and scale contributed to its urban development as a protest space in Tel Aviv, Israel.[107] She argues that the architecture around the square, which defines its boundaries, had a role in shaping the demonstrations because the design "transform[s] how the gaze of the crowd is controlled."[108] In another study, within a North American context, Joanna Merwood-Salisbury traces the history of New York City's Union Square through the contested claims that transformed the physicality of this urban landmark.[109] Her spatial analysis highlights how Union Square "continues to bear a social and political meaning that is constantly being enacted, through both daily activity and the processes of design and construction."[110] Many more cases exist (beyond the scope of this review), but in sum, these various scholarly works from different geographies indicate that public dissent has a transformative effect on the design, use, and meaning or non-meaning of public spaces. The design of public space also reflexively shapes the form of protest.

Political scientist William Sewell asserts that protests have the potential to transform social structures by "empowering new groups of actors or re-empowering existing groups in new ways; some protest events put in motion social processes that are inherently contingent, discontinuous, and open-ended."[111] I, too, regard forms of civil protest as a catalyst to propel urban change; thus, I address public space as a component where this change is born and evolves. Additionally, I

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[107] Tali Hatuka and Rachel Kallus, "The Architecture of Repeated Rituals: Tel Aviv's Rabin Square," *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)* 61, no. 4 (2008): 85–94.
[108] Ibid., 92.
[109] Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, *Design for the Crowd: Patriotism and Protest in Union Square* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).
[110] Ibid., 3.
[111] William H Sewell, "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, ed. Terrence J McDonald (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 271–72.

draw upon research that conceives public space not only as a vessel for activism but as something that also mutually constitutes it.

Public Space in Turkey: *Meydan*

The word for a public square in the Turkish language is *meydan*. The term derives from *midyân* and *maydân,* the former meaning middle place in Persian and the latter wide open area in Arabic.[112] Unlike the square, the expression does not suggest a geometrical form etymologically. Along similar lines, the physical form of *meydan* is not as precisely determined as the square.[113] The *meydan* operates intrinsically on a community level.[114] Stefanos Yerasimos describes it as an equivalent of the Italian *campo,* an open space rather than a *piazza*, surrounded by edifices.[115] This analogy highlights that the *meydan* differs from the designated public spaces of the nineteenth century, which Michael Hazerfeld defines as "large open spaces, over which government buildings could achieve a commanding presence and in which harmonious design would triumph over the messiness of markets and alleyways."[116] According to Zeynep Çelik, the formation of these "European-style" public squares in "Islamic" cities started with the French occupation of Algeria.[117] Geometric monumental squares surrounded by public (governmental) buildings and adorned with civic statues symbolizing imperial values triggered significant

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[112] Sevan Nişanyan, *Nişanyan Sözlük: Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojisi* (Istanbul: Liber, 2018).
[113] Uğur Tanyeli, *Anadolu-Türk Kentinde Fiziksel Yapının Evrim Süreci* (Istanbul: İTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi Baskı Atölyesi, 1987), xxi; Burak Boysan and İhsan Bilgin, "Meydanların Varoluş ve Yokoluş Nedenleri," in *İnsan, Çevre, Kent*, ed. Ferzan Bayramoğlu Yıldırım (Istanbul: Wald Akademi Yayınları, 1996), 71–84.
[114] Doğan Kuban, *Istanbul Yazıları* (Istanbul: YEM Yayınları, 1998), 223.
[115] Stefanos Yerasimos, "Sınır, Uç ve Duvar," *Fol* 7 (1997): 34–38.
[116] Michael Herzfeld, "Spatial Cleansing: Monumental Vacuity and the Idea of the West," *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 1–2 (2006): 131.
[117] Zeynep. Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914*, Studies in Modernity and National Identity (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 116.

transformations in the public spaces of the Middle East and North Africa.[118] Çelik identifies the

earliest of these examples as the Place d'Armes in Algiers, opened in 1830 to practically

accommodate the French army, which was unable to mobilize in the narrow and winding streets

of precolonial Algiers.

Aspirations to create public spaces to display state power and military strength were also popular

in nineteenth-century Istanbul. Following the declaration of the *Tanzimat* (Reform Program) in

1839, modernization efforts manifested in the city's urban form. After the Aksaray fire in 1856,

some crossroads were redesigned to define an octagonal open space.[119] According to Çelik,

"though by no means a public square in the Western sense of the word, the new intersection

[Aksaray Meydanı] was perceived as such, and, for example, was described by the *Journal de

Constantinople* as a 'belle place.'"[120] Cana Bilsel also describes the urban transformations in this

period as "the reorganization of the urban space in conformity with the image of the

contemporary European cities, by the opening of wide avenues, plazas, and squares but

especially by the regularization of the urban fabric according to the rules of geometry."[121]

The public display of clock towers in *meydan* of many cities across the Empire (including but not

limited to Istanbul, Izmir, Jerusalem, Beirut, and Damascus) in the second half of the decade

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[118] Ibid., 117.

[119] Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 53.

[120] Ibid., 54. Both Zeynep Celik and Doğan Kuban date the deliberate creation of squares in Istanbul to post-fire restructuring. Similarly, Maurice Cerasi interprets the physical changes before the fire as arbitrary interventions. Neşe Yeşilkaya Gürallar contrasts this perspective by dating the transformation of Beyazıt Square to the disbandment of the Janissary corps in 1826. Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*; Doğan Kuban, *Istanbul, an Urban History: Byzantion, Constantinopolis, Istanbul* (Istanbul: The Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey, 1996); Maurice M. Cerasi, *Osmanlı Kenti: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda 18.ve 19. Yüzyıllarda Kent Uygarlığı ve Mimarisi*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları Tarih (Istanbul: YKY, 2001); Neşe Yeşilkaya Gürallar, "From a Courtyard to a Square: Transformation of the Beyazıt Meydanı in Early Nineteenth Century Istanbul," *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 24, no. 1 (2007): 71–92.

[121] Cana Bilsel, "Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Republican Era: The Representation of History in Henri Prost's Planning of Istanbul," in *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation*, eds. Jonathan Osmond and Ausma Cimdiņa (Pisa: PLUS-Pisa University Press, 2007), 101.

bespeaks the modernization efforts in this period.[122] During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid (1876–1908), they became the symbols of cultural development (and of the Sultan himself) in public spaces.[123] In light of this brief discussion of the *meydan* and square, henceforth, I will refer to the public squares in focus as *meydans* to appropriately address the architectural form in the Turkish context.

With the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the nascent nation-state embraced an overtly secular, "Westernized," and ethnicized Turkish national identity that would shape social, political, and cultural practices. The vision was to create a homogenous population purified of linguistic, ethnic, and religious differences that had constituted the social structure of the Ottoman Empire.[124] Additionally, modernizing the architectural and urban environment would promote societal modernization; hence, infusing political representations into the everyday lives of citizens became a concern for the Republican authorities. New parks and meydans were designed to encourage secularization in the societal domain. Both women and men would socialize together in these public spaces by promenading and entertaining outdoors, divorced from religious restrictions.

The development of the Republic and its modern cities aligned with the general motto of Republican modernism: "reaching the level of contemporary civilization" (*muassır medeniyetler seviyesine ulaşma*). According to Bilsel, the ruling class prioritized urban planning projects as an

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[122] See Mehmet Bengü Uluengin, "Secularizing Anatolia Tick by Tick: Clock Towers in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 1 (2010): 17–36; see also Chapter III: Public Spaces in Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City*.

[123] Abdülhamid commissioned the erection of clock towers in the cities of the Ottoman provinces for the 25th anniversary of his rule. Ali Cengizkan, *Modernin Saati: 20. Yüzyılda Modernleşme ve Demokratikleşme Pratiğinde Mimarlar, Kamusal Mekan ve Konut Mimarlığı* (Istanbul: Mimarlar Derneği, 2002), 16.

[124] See Kezer, "*Building Modern Turkey*," 114–153.

effective tool to support modernization during the early years of the Republic.[125] For that reason, city planning visions emulated contemporary standards in certain aspects, such as transportation technologies and public hygiene.[126] In 1936, the government invited French urban planner Henri Prost who had previously worked in colonial Algeria and Morocco and served as the chief planner of Paris from 1928 to 1934, to lead the planning operations in Istanbul.[127] The goal of Prost's comprehensive reform program was to remake the former capital as a modern city while breaking ties with its imperial past.[128] According to Pierre Pinon, Prost's vision for the historic peninsula was an emulation of the "Haussmanization of Paris," with proposals to open new roads and public squares.[129]

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[125] Cana Bilsel, "Henri Prost's Planning Works in Istanbul, (1936-1951): Transforming the Structure of a City through Master Plans and Urban Operations," in *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet' in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un Istanbul Planlaması (1936- 1951)/From the Imperial Capital to theRepublican Modern City: Henry Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)*, eds. Cana Bilsel and Pierre Pinon (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 103.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Bilsel, "Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Republican Era," 98.

[128] To some architectural historians, urban operations in Istanbul were deliberately neglected during the early years of the Republic. See, for example, Çağlar Keyder, "A Brief History of Modern Turkey." In *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 505-523, Cana Bilsel, "Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Republican Era", Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul: Transformation and Modernisation of a City* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009).

[129] Pierre Pinon, "The Urbanism of Henri Prost and the Transformation of Istanbul," in *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet' in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un Istanbul Planlaması (1936- 1951) / From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henry Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)*, eds. Cana Bilsel and Pierre Pinon (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 75.

Figure 1 labels (right side): Park no.2, Taksim Meydanı, Istiklal Avenue, Beyoğlu, Golden Horn, Beyazıt Meydanı

Plan directeur d'Istanbul, par H. Prost, vers 1937.

Figure 1. Prost's 1937 masterplan of Istanbul. Source: Istanbul Urban Database, http://www.istanbulurbandatabase.com/. Edited by the author.

Prost designed Beyazıt and Taksim as the two ends of a spine, providing an urban circulation network between the old city and the newly developing settlement areas (see Figure 1). The concept for the historic peninsula—where Beyazıt Meydanı is located—was to acclaim its "incomparable landscape" and "glorious edifices" of the past.[130] Taksim area—across the Golden Horn—was designated as the main public space to function as a venue for large-scale military ceremonies and celebrations.[131] In this way, the modern setting of Republican Istanbul would align with the overall institutional and social modernization.

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[130] Bilsel, "Remodelling the Imperial Capital in the Republican Era," 95.

[131] Ipek Yada Akpınar, "Istanbul'u Yeniden İnşa Etmek: 1937 Henri Prost Planı," in *Cumhuriyet'in Mekanları Zamanları İnsanları*, eds. Elvan Altan and Bilge İmamoğlu (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010), 114; Cana Bilsel, "Espaces Libres: Parks, Promenades, Public Squares," in *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet' in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un Istanbul Planlaması (1936- 1951) / From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City : Henry Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)*, eds. Cana Bilsel and Pierre Pinon (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 354.

Beyazıt Meydanı

Occupying the heart of the historic peninsula, Beyazıt Meydanı is surrounded by the Istanbul

University gate in the north, Ordu Street in the south, Beyazıt Mosque in the east, and Madrasa

(today's Calligraphy Museum) in the west (see Figures 2 and 3). Due to its placement along the

city's long-established ceremonial axis (known as *mese* by the Byzantines and Divanyolu by the

Ottomans), the *meydan* has always been a venue for publicizing official and unofficial

information and for representational events.[132]
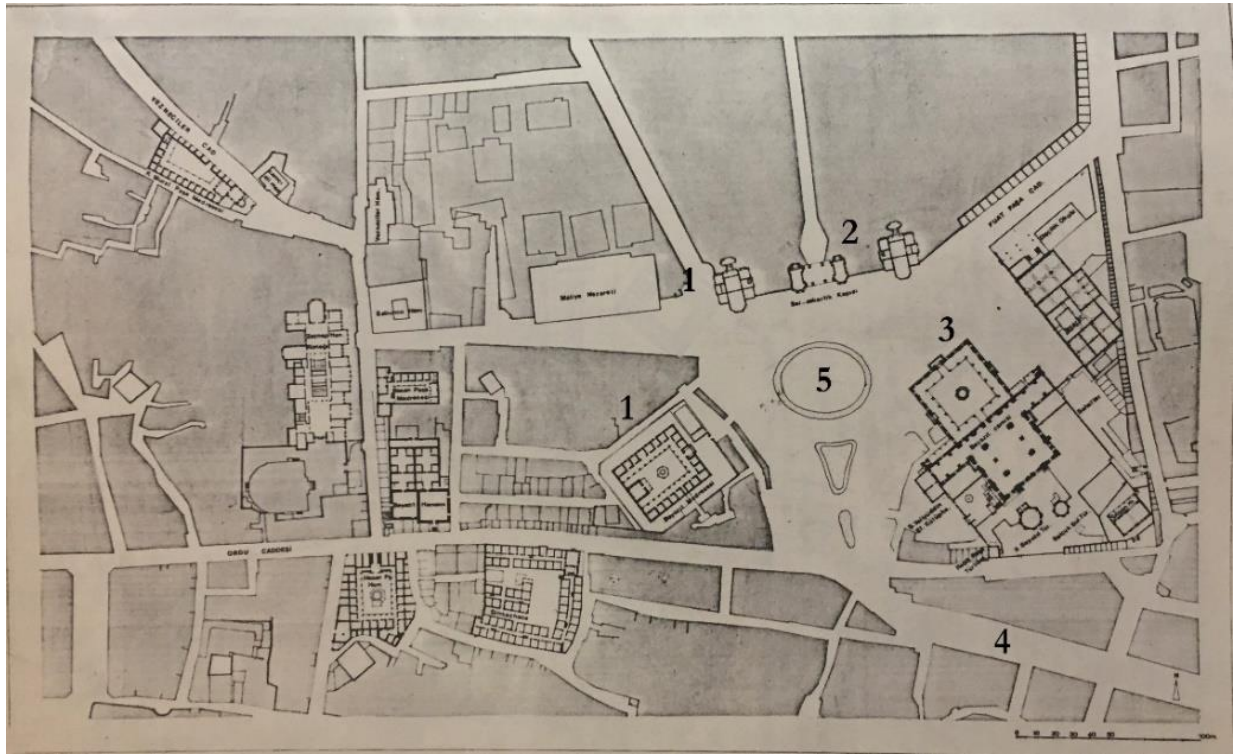
Figure 2. Beyazıt Meydanı site plan circa 1930s. 1. Madrasa, 2. Istanbul University Gate, 3. Beyazıt
Mosque, 4. Divanyolu/Mese, 5. Ali Haydar Bey Pool. Source: Erhan Işözen, *Beyazıt Meydanı Kentsel
Tasarım Proje Yarışması* (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı, 1987). Edited by the author.

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[132] For further information on the Divanyolu, see Maurice Cerasi, Emiliano Bugatti, and Sabrina D'Agostino, *The Istanbul Divanyolu: A Case Study in Ottoman Urbanity and Architecture*, Istanbuler Texte Und Studien; Bd. 3 (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2004).

This part of the city was the Forum Tauri during the Byzantine period. Following Istanbul's conquest in the fifteenth century, Sultan Mehmet II ordered a palace to be built north of the area, where Istanbul University sits today. In the sixteenth century, during the reign of Beyazıt II, the addition of new buildings, including a *külliye* (a building complex that includes a mosque, a theological school, a caravanserai, a public kitchen, a primary school, and a bath), barracks, the trade centre, and the mint cultivated the urban development around Beyazıt. Accessibility of the site also facilitated the *meydan*'s evolution into a centre for daily and commercial activities. After abolishing the Janissary corps in 1826, Sultan Mahmud II destroyed the barracks and designated the *meydan* as an open space for military ceremonies. According to Neşe Yeşilkaya Gürallar, this transformation came at the expense of the exterior courtyard around Beyazıt Mosque.[133] Following this intervention, Beyazıt Meydanı developed as the headquarters of the new army, which consolidated its identity as an urban space for political representations.[134] In the mid-nineteenth century, Sultan Abdülaziz commissioned the construction of the monumental gate as the main entrance to the war office (Seraskerlik), in which Istanbul University's Faculty of Law and Rectorate have been operating since the early twentieth century.

During the Republican period, administrators revitalized Beyazıt Meydanı to provide material representation for ideological change and societal modernization. In 1926, Governor Ali Haydar Bey constructed a pool circled by the tramway in the middle space to create a centre of interaction and a focal meeting point.[135] This operation, which remained the most extensive architectural change in the *meydan* until the late 1950s, minimized the ground for large-scale

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[133] Yeşilkaya Gürallar, "From a Courtyard to a Square," 87.
[134] For further information on the history of Beyazıt Meydanı see, for example, Sevince Bayrak Göktaş, "Meydan" PhD diss. (Istanbul Technical University, 2015); Strutz, "The Invisible Meydan. The Discourse on Public Space in Istanbul and Brussels, 1830-2000." PhD diss. (KU Leuven, 2014).
[135] "Beyazıt Havuzu Merasimle Açıldı," *Cumhuriyet*, March 28, 1926.

ceremonies (see Figure 3). Nevertheless, it created a public venue where social encounters could

occur among diverse social groups, as literature columns of daily newspapers narrate lovers

strolling around and mothers walking their kids.[136] From the 1930s to the 1950s, everyday

dynamics in the *meydan* engendered a vibrant atmosphere. Küllük Coffeehouse, for instance,

offered an intellectual setting, where many well-known Turkish authors, poets, artists, protégés,

academics, and students met to have conversations.[137] Nonetheless, the urban operations,

undertaken between 1950 and 1960 by the Democrat Party (DP) government, crippled the

meydan's long-standing social and physical character.

Figure 3. Postcard depicting Beyazıt Meydanı in the early 1950s before the construction works began. The frame offers a glimpse of the everyday flow in the meydan during the 1950s. Tramway and bus stops are visible on both sides. Istanbul University gate appears in the background behind the pool. Source: SALT Research, Online Archive. https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/126497.

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[136] See for example Peride Celal, "Kızıl Vazo," *Cumhuriyet*, January 7, 1941; Ahmet Hidayet Reel, "Hikayeler," *Cumhuriyet*, January 27, 1930.

[137] Tarık Buğra, Yahya Kemal, Fuat Köprülü, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Nurullah Ataç, Neyzen Tevfik were among those who frequented the Küllük Coffeehouse. See Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Dersaadet'in Kalbi Beyazıt* (Istanbul: Heyamola Yayınları, 2010), 131-141.

According to Murat Gül, Prost's plans continued to lead much of the urban planning operations through the 1950s.[138] However, the DP government's urban development policy followed the party's political vision rather than the Republican modernization program instituted by the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party/CHP). High-ranking DP officials were engaged primarily in commerce and landholding in opposition to the bureaucratic and military majority in the former CHP government. A close-knit relationship with the USA, along with the deployment of the Marshall Plan—an American initiative passed in 1948 to help European countries with unstable economies after World War II—entailed fast-paced progress in agricultural, industrial, military, and transportation development in Istanbul.[139] The ten-year DP rule pursued foreign investments instead of maintaining import substitution and state enterprises that bolstered a planned economy. In line with this, the architectural culture responded to the prevailing politics of industrialism and urbanism.[140]

Between 1951 and 1956, Prime Minister Menderes recruited Turkish architects and planners, formed committees to revise Prost's plans, and proceeded with the operations.[141] Towards "beautifying Istanbul and glorifying its Ottoman past," the city underwent radical urban

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[138] Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul Transformation and Modernisation of a City* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 141–71.

[139] See Meltem Ö Gürel, ed., *Mid-Century Modernism in Turkey: Architecture Across Cultures in the 1950s and 1960s* (London: Routledge, 2015).

[140] For example, on the one hand, the idealization of post-war American culture led to the rise of apartment buildings across the city. On the other hand, the mechanization of agriculture entailed mass migration from rural areas to city centres; this resulted in the proliferation of squatter settlements in various neighbourhoods.

[141] The first of the two established committees was to examine Prost's plans and assess rationality with respect to economics, planning, and urban pattern. The second committee was formed to organize the planning process. The members were affiliated with universities and state institutions. (Kemal Ahmet Aru, ITU, Cevat Erbel and Mithat Yenen, Bank of Provinces, Mukbil Gökdoğan, Turkish Union of Engineers, Muhittin Güven, Turkish Union of Architects, Mehmet Ali Handan, Academy of Fine Arts, Behçet Ünsal, Technical School, Faruk Akçer and Ertuğrul Menteşe, Directorate of Reconstruction, and architect Seyfi Arkan). Apart from Erbel, Aru, and Gökdoğan from the former committee, Emin Onat (ITU) participated in the second committee as a new member.

demolitions and public construction projects between 1950 and 1960.[142] Menderes himself took an active role in the process, to the extent of informally entitling himself as the "head architect of Istanbul."[143] Envisioning a new and modern image for the city, Menderes aspired to bring cars to the centre instead of promoting public transportation. To accommodate vehicular traffic, he thus opened arteries and enlarged small streets, sacrificing many historical buildings around Beyazıt in the process.[144]

Figure 4. The implementation of Sedad Hakkı Eldem's proposal, 1959. Source: Erhan Işözen, Beyazıt Meydanı Kentsel Tasarım Proje Yarışması (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı, 1987).

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[142] "Sayın Başbakan Basına Geniş İzahat Verdi ve Istanbul'un İmar ve Kalkınma Prensiplerini İzah Etti," *Belediyeler Dergisi* 132 (1956): 644–45.

[143] Ipek Yada Akpınar, "The Making of Modern Pay-i Taht in Istanbul: Menderes' Executions after Prost's Plan," in *Imparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet' in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un Istanbul Planlaması (1936- 1951) / From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henry Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)*, eds. Cana Bilsel and Pierre Pinon (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 172.

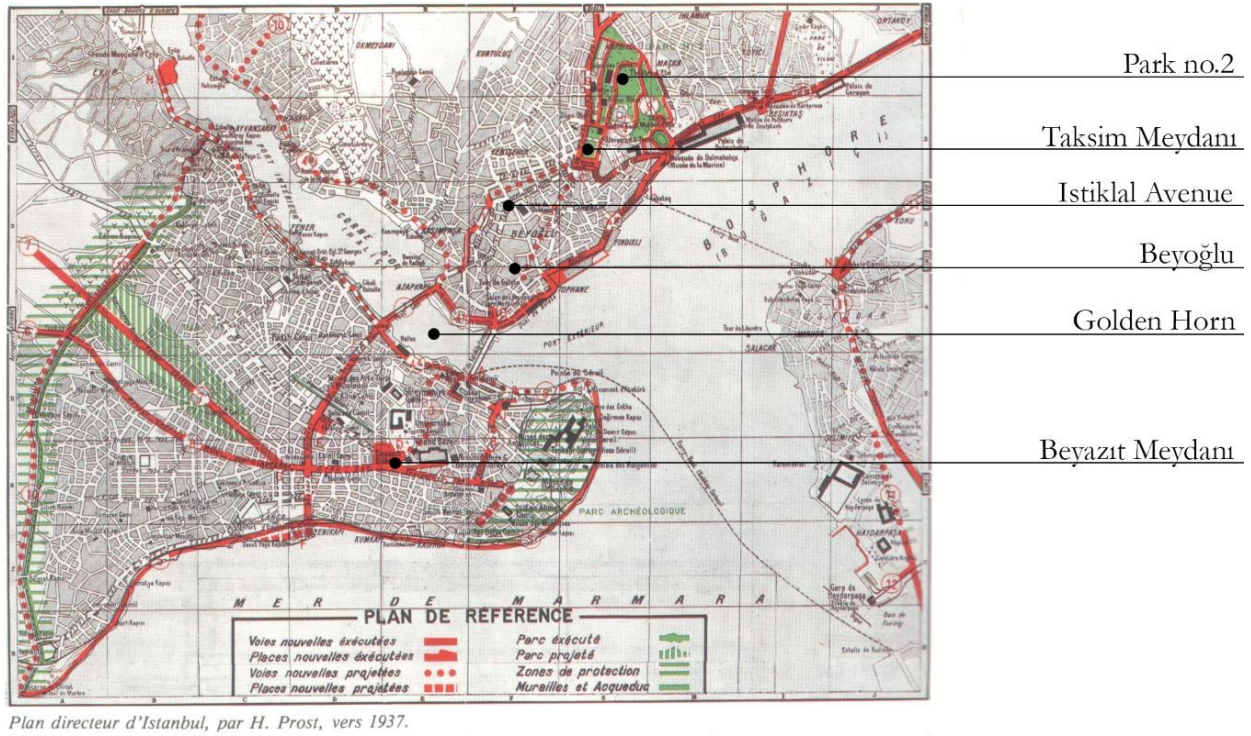[144] Vatan and Millet Avenues, among these arteries, were initially proposed in Prost's plans; however, their dimensions were doubled in size during the construction. This implementation created vast volumes increasing the extent of demolitions around the Beyazıt area. Ibid.

The construction in the *meydan* was based on well-known Turkish architect Sedad Hakkı

Eldem's project. Eldem had designed numerous buildings and was an influential architect of the

Second National Architecture Movement in the 1940s.[145] Within the scope of his proposal, the

pool and the tramway were removed, age-old trees were uprooted, and small-scale shops,

buildings, bookstores, antiquaries, and coffeehouses were demolished to spotlight the Ottoman

edifices in the area. However, Eldem expressed dissatisfaction with the perfunctory

implementation of his vision and blamed this disappointing outcome on the lack of proper

communication and decision-making processes between the municipal authorities and himself.[146]

Certainly, cutting through the middle space with a vehicle lane neglected the historical, social,

and essential topographical characteristics of Beyazıt Meydanı. In 1958, Eldem came up with a

revised proposal that preserved the *meydan* and resurrected the pool, yet it remained on paper

only. The construction activity in Beyazıt stalled until an urban design competition launched in

1960—which I examine in detail in Chapter I.

Taksim Meydanı

The historical evolution of Taksim Meydanı can be traced back to the seventeenth century, but in

the twentieth century, it has developed as a representative public space for the secular state. The

word Taksim derives from *maksem*, referring to the water distribution chamber located on the

site since the eighteenth century. Until the early nineteenth century, this part of the city was

occupied by only the Halil Pasha Artillery Barracks and a few other military buildings—which I

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[145] See Sibel Bozdoğan, *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey* (Singapore; New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Concept Media; Aperture, 1987).
[146] Eldem's letter to the Chamber of Architects is quoted in Göktaş, "Meydan," 54–56.

will discuss in detail in Chapter IV.[147] However, During the Ottoman modernization, new

commercial and business centres were established; embassies, hospitals, banks, hotels, and

governmental buildings appeared in the *meydan*'s vicinity. New elites of the Empire, mostly

non-Muslim subjects and Levantines, settled through the historic city around Galata and Pera

(today's Beyoğlu). Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Avenue), leading up to Taksim Meydanı,

constituted the spine of urban life in this district (see Figure 1).

Figure 5. A wreath placing ceremony at the Republican monument, 1929. Source: Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Photography Collection, Istanbul Research Institute, Online Exhibit, https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/taksim/PAICzpgA-6ypJg
Figure 6. Giulio Mongeri's landscape design surrounding the monument, 1929/1930. Source: Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Photography Collection, Istanbul Research Institute, Online Exhibit, https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/taksim/PAICzpgA-6ypJg

Prost planned the Taksim area to generate the sociocultural context through which the

Republican ideology would cultivate its modernization project. One of the key elements, the

Republican monument, was designed by the Italian sculptor Pietro Canonica and unveiled in

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[147] See Çelik Gülersoy, *Taksim: Bir Meydanın Hikayesi* (Esentepe, Mecidiyeköy, Istanbul: Istanbul Kitaplığı, 1986).

1928 (see Figure 5). The encircling landscape was the work of Levantine architect Giulio Mongeri (see Figure 6). The eleven-metre high structure depicted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, other leading officers, soldiers, civilians, and Anatolian women who participated in the war.[148] Creating a secular state in the former Ottoman capital, the monument primarily served to construct a designated memory through its presence in everyday life. It was also the site of public ceremonies and periodic commemorations taking place in Taksim.
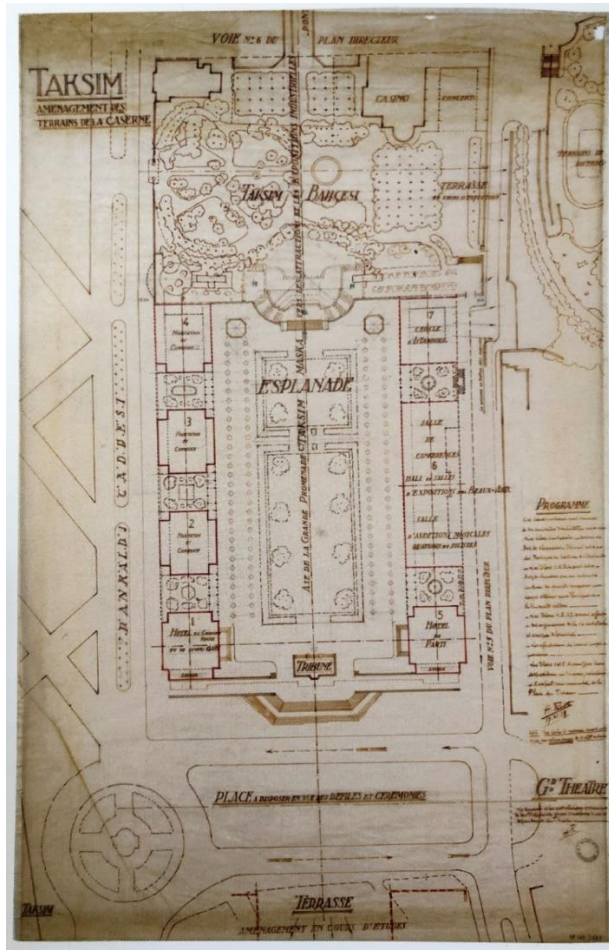
Figure 7. Prost's proposal for Gezi Park (İnönü Gezisi) and Taksim Meydanı, 1939. Source: Cana Bilsel and Pierre Pinon eds., *İmparatorluk Başkentinden Cumhuriyet' in Modern Kentine: Henri Prost'un Istanbul Planlaması (1936- 1951) / From the Imperial Capital to the Republican Modern City: Henry Prost's Planning of Istanbul (1936-1951)* (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010).

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[148] For the symbolism of the monument, see Birge Yıldırım and Arzu Erdem, "Taksim Meydanının İnşası," *tasarım + kuram dergisi* 11, no. 19 (2007): 95–106; Imren Arbac, "Taksim Cumhuriyet Aniti'nda Rus-Turk Yakınlaşmasının Sembol Figürü," *Yeditepe Universitesi Tarih Bölümü Araştırma Dergisi*, (2017): 138–61.

Figure 8. Taksim Meydanı circa 1940s. The image demonstrates Gezi Park with its freshly planted trees site in the middle. The Republican monument and its circular landscape are visible on the upper-right side of the frame. The historical peninsula also appears in the background. Source: SALT Research Online Archive, Hayati Tabanlıoğlu Collection, https://www.flickr.com/photos/saltonline/12966508105/in/album-72157642193440774/.

Taksim's designation as the main public space of the Republic, rather than Beyazıt, was a decision both ideological and practical. The historical peninsula had been through modernist urban operations in the previous century, yet some Republican intellectuals had doubts about this primarily imperial landscape.[149] The predominance of Ottoman heritage would overshadow any Republican monument intended to disseminate a Republican narrative. Taksim was therefore chosen as the location to be imbued with Republican symbolism. Prost formed the Taksim area to enable displays of modern life, such as promenading and entertaining outdoors, in parallel

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[149] Göktaş, "Meydan," 18–25.

with his concept of "*les espaces libres.*"[150] His proposal included creating an extensive green zone (Park no: 2) between Dolmabahçe, Maçka, and Harbiye (see Figure 1).[151] However, within the boundaries of the site, the sixteenth-century Surp Agop Armenian cemetery and the nineteenth-century Surp Kirkor Lusarovic Church were located. In 1931, the state appropriated these non-Muslim properties, despite objections from the Armenian community.[152] In 1939, they were entirely demolished for the completion of the project. Tombstones were used to build the steps of İnönü Esplanade (today's Gezi Park; see Figure 8).[153] This implementation would resurface as a strong statement in Gezi Park protests in 2013.

Figure 9. "The Performance of Modernity: Atatürk Cultural Centre, 1946-1977." Source: SALT Galata, Open Archive, https://www.flickr.com/photos/saltonline/12964525324/in/album-72157642193252764/
Figure 10. A view of Gezi Park and Taksim Belediye Gazinosu (Taksim Municipal Music Hall), 1940/1943. Source: Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Photography Collection, Istanbul Research Institute, Online Exhibit, https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/taksim/PAICzpgA-6

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[150] *Espaces libres* included parks, promenades, esplanades, panoramic terraces, boulevards as well as sports areas. Cana Bilsel, "Espaces Libres: Parks, Promenades, Public Squares,", 349.
[151] Ibid, 349–73.
[152] Parla and Özgül, "Property, Dispossession, and Citizenship in Turkey; Or, the History of the Gezi Uprising Starts in the Surp Hagop Armenian Cemetery," 618.
[153] See Tamar Nalcı and Emre Can Dağlıoğlu, "Bir Gasp Hikâyesi," *Agos*, August 26, 2011; Watenpaugh, "Learning from Taksim Square: Architecture, State Power, and Public Space in Istanbul."

The Park was constructed as a terrace facing Taksim, at the expense of the old Artillery

Barracks, located on the northern side of the *meydan*.[154] On the eastern side, Prost imagined an

opera house as another step towards reaffirming Republican power in the area (see Figure 7).

Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (Atatürk Cultural Centre/AKM, initially known as Istanbul Palace of

Culture; see Figure 9) would be an essential contribution for promoting the Republican

corporeality in the *meydan*. This monumental structure was to provide context for the

sociospatial practices of the new lifestyle with its grand hall, spacious entrance foyer, concert

hall, theatre, and a small cinema. Taksim Belediye Gazinosu (Taksim Municipal Music Hall; see

Figure 10), located on the northeast corner of Gezi Park, was another facility with a similar

purpose. The elegant reinforced concrete building, inaugurated in 1939, was designed by Turkish

architect Rüknettin Güney. With its double-height dining hall, a semicircular bay window facing

the park, and an open café terrace with a view of the Bosphorus, the venue hosted foreign

visitors, Republican balls, charity organizations, tea parties, concerts of national and

international musicians, and various other recreational activities for almost thirty years. It was

demolished in 1967, during the rule of liberal Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel and replaced by

the Sheraton Istanbul Hotel (today's InterContinental Hotel).

In parallel with the sociopolitical and economic shifts of the 1950s, Taksim Meydanı became a

multipurpose locus as a traffic node, a bus interchange point, a meeting place, and a site for

social interaction. In addition to its physical connection to Istiklal Avenue and Beyoğlu—active

locations both day and night due to the many activities offered by shops, cafes, bars, nightclubs,

cinemas, street vendors, art studios, and entertainment centres—the proximity of Maçka and

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[154] The steps were to form a monumental entrance to the park and serve as a stand to view the ceremonies taking place at the *meydan*. Bilsel, "Espaces Libres: Parks, Promenades, Public Squares," 357.

Taşkışla campuses of Istanbul Technical University granted Taksim a continuous human flow.

Being a significant component in the daily lives of urban dwellers, the ceremonial character of

the *meydan* gradually diminished. New social relations and values were created by the changing

"routines and rhythms through which social life is reproduced."[155] From the late 1960s onwards,

the activities that emerged in this particular place were those of opposition and demonstration,

which rendered Taksim a significant component of the ongoing conflicts—not only as a

"backdrop to political drama or a container of human actions," but on its own, as a "terrain of

political practice," a subject of contestation and constitutive of activism.[156]

The Methods and Organization of the Study

My study focuses on four civil protests that manifested the sociopolitical struggles of their time

in a public space. They fit a loose chronological timeline. Each case incorporates unique

repertoires that offer new uses to city spaces. The first case is a protest march from 1969; the

second, a carnivalesque demonstration from 1977; the third, a sit-in ritual from 1995; and finally,

an encampment from 2013.

Throughout this research, I explore how civil protests transform the meaning, function, and form

of public spaces. By incorporating the sociopolitical context that produces urban space and the

built environment—and thereby not just attending to the buildings— into my analysis, I aim to

instantiate a broad understanding of architecture, one based on how public space is occupied by

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[155] Sam Halvorsen, "Taking Space: Moments of Rupture and Everyday Life in Occupy London," *ANTI Antipode* 47, no. 2 (2015): 401.

[156] Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," 396. See also Deborah Martin and Byron Miller, "Space and Contentious Politics," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2003): 143–56. Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

local citizens. To observe this transformation, I pay specific attention to expressions of power relations, inclusions/exclusions, hierarchies, and appropriations in physical space, which are revealed through conversations, displays, performances, and design interventions. I gather evidence from photographic representations of protests, newspaper clippings, documentaries, and personal accounts to understand the movement of people in the city. I create maps that include protest locations, routes, architectural elements, and photographs to present the collected data in a visual form that provides spatial analysis.

Civil protests are not merely people occupying urban spaces; these events also have visual-spatial components that complement and expand spatial appropriation. Accordingly, I assess props used to reclaim public space, such as posters, banners, wall paintings, public performances, and makeshift structures. I also analyze the design, production, and display processes of these components to explore how they open up discussions and encourage public participation in sociopolitical matters. Additionally, to reveal how media representations influence the receptions of public space, I refer to personal accounts, photographs, cartoons, partial footage of the protests available online, and design interventions when applicable. In this way, my approach provides a visual language to understand the relationship between civil protest and architectural and urban design.

My primary sources include personal accounts, print publications, and visual representations of the protests in focus. I combed through various academic, journalistic, and biographic literary sources to gather individual and collective experiences of the agents who participated in the spatial transformations. I examined online archives of the popular newspapers *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, and *Cumhuriyet* from 1960 to 2015, and also *Günaydın* and *Akşam* where relevant. During my fieldwork and multiple short-term visits in Istanbul, I interviewed several actors involved in the

processes, including activists, journalists, authors, and architects. These conversations enabled me to reveal material that I could not have otherwise accessed just from reviewing the textual narrative in the secondary sources.

I structured each chapter around four latent sub-themes: agents, actions, publics, and aftermath. *Agents* look into the sociopolitical environments and prevailing power relations that feature certain groups as protest actors. *Actions* focus on the protest performances, their characteristics, aesthetics, and progression in space. *Publics* examine the physical urban environments constitutive of protests. Finally, in the *aftermath*, I look into the repercussions and representations of the events in public spheres to observe how peoples' reception and design of related public spaces responded to protests. I refer to urban design interventions and architectural design proposals and projects when applicable.

In the first chapter, I examine a protest march against the arrival of the 6th Fleet of the USA in 1969. I begin by delineating the spatial patterns that informed the interplay among political participation, artistic practices, and communication in the public space. Civil protests of the period used the potential of marching to expand the public reach by incorporating multiple locations and providing efficient communication across the city. This trend dominated the repertoires of action between the two coups of 1960 and 1980. Then, I discuss the history of previous marches, which identify Beyazıt and Taksim as the beginning and endpoints of many mobilizations. Bloody Sunday was specifically striking among many others since it turned into a violent street battle that led to casualties. I suggest that this demonstration granted Taksim Meydanı a privileged position as a contested political arena in the eyes of the citizens; this new status built on the *meydan*'s identification as a public space, where state power is challenged rather than displayed. Taksim's evolution into the favoured location for political activity

throughout the 1970s left Beyazıt Meydanı less active as an urban space in the following decades.

The second chapter focuses on an annual carnivalesque celebration, also planned as a protest march: May Day 1977. First, I discuss the sociopolitical forces at play in the urban mobilizations in the 1970s. I take a historical look into the politics of May Day celebrations and their relation to public space in the city. May Day 1977 was not an isolated incident; on the contrary, its connection to public space was the outcome of many years of struggle. Next, I investigate the spatialization of political art and how the display and production of it encouraged citizens to reproduce alternative public spaces in their city. Analyzing May Day 1977 (which also ended violently) and its aftermath, I observe that the social space built in Taksim Meydanı in the course of the event not only consolidated its association with public opposition but also called for future spatial practices that both sustained and contested this association.

My third chapter is concerned with the Saturday Mothers/People (SMP) sit-in ritual that has been taking place on Istiklal Avenue since 1995. I first examine the public space activism practices that serve the struggle for rights in the 1990s. In this decade, Istanbul witnessed many civil protest events that emerged in response to the post-coup violations of human rights and freedoms. The mobilizations empowered different social groups to discover the opportunities of urban space for practising democracy. The SMP stood out among others, with its repertoire that attracted both national and international participation. While the aesthetic components of the ritual consolidated the act of remembrance and marked the public space, the constant struggle between the police and the protestors created a contested site "and the multiplicity of relations between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic powers and discourses, between forces and relations

of domination, subjection, exploitation and resistance."[157] I suggest that the SMP's years-long

appropriation of this space and its representation in various forms of media assigned a new

meaning to the protest location; it produced a social space, an inevitable response to the

protestors' contemporary demands. Through the spatial appropriation of the sit-ins, Galatasaray

Meydanı came to life as a public space, marked by political visibility and memory, which

redefined its historical urban appearance and representation. This social production of

Galatasaray Meydanı created a new identity, which, in turn, informed subsequent architectural

design projects in the area.

My last chapter covers the Gezi protests of 2013, featuring a protest camp that lasted three weeks

to protect a central urban park from demolition. I start the chapter by discussing the city's

neoliberal development, dating back to the 1980s, which imposed a spatial organization guided

by privatization and commodification. The urban renewal of Taksim was one of the several

profit-driven transformation projects executed for financial gain at the expense of public benefit.

I analyze the political power relations behind the pedestrianization of Taksim Meydanı and the

resurrection of the historic Artillery Barracks over Gezi Park. Then, I examine the spatial

intervention strategies that emerged during the resistance, including tents, barricades, and

performances. I suggest that the sociomaterial relations established during the occupation

transformed both physical and social landscapes through collectively shared meanings, values,

and imaginative uses. I pay attention to the role of Architecture for All, a non-profit organization,

in bringing transparency to the Taksim Urban Transformation Project process, examining how

the collective documents the resistance by encouraging public participation. Then, I discuss how

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[157] Paul Routledge, "Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance," *JPGQ Political Geography* 15, no. 6 (1996): 516.

certain aspects of the Gezi Resistance reincarnated in different forms in subsequent activist practices. I argue that Gezi became instrumental in transforming many public spaces into sites of political expression, where the citizens could discuss and make decisions on the future of their cities. Finally, I discuss the AKM and Taksim Mosque projects as counter appropriation strategies of the government to change the social production around Taksim Meydanı.

Drawing from the work of scholars who study the relationships between civil protest and public space, such as Herskovitz, Hatuka, and Torre, I start this dissertation with the premise that civil protests change how public space is used, perceived, and designed by changing the human experience, just as the protests are reciprocally informed by the characteristics of place. Throughout the research, I demonstrate that protests can change the material and imagined settings of urban spaces. Therefore, my study highlights the interplay in placemaking processes among multiple social, cultural, and political institutions, actors, and agents.

Chapter I

A March against the 6th Fleet of the USA, 1969

Public articulations of political dissent overtly influenced how citizens experienced the urban

environment throughout the 1960s in Istanbul**.** Diverse and incessant activism practices

transformed public spaces—streets, squares, parks, throughways, building facades—into stages

where citizens fervently expressed political demands and messages. The series of protests against

the 6th Fleet of the USA (1967–1969) stood out as the most impactful since their visual

representations are still iconic images associated with the period. Bloody Sunday is the name

attributed by the press to the "Worker's March against Imperialism and Exploitation" that took

place on February 16, 1969. Organized collaboratively by university students and workers, this

procession spanned a lengthy trajectory between the two *meydans* of Istanbul: Beyazıt and

Taksim. People moving from one location to another created a spatial connection that identified

the former as a point of origin and the latter as a culminating point of the march. The event's

spatial orchestration and violent aftermath begot new spatial patterns, uses, and meanings for

both Beyazıt and Taksim's urban futures.

Bloody Sunday was not the first procession that oscillated between the two *meydans,* as many

earlier cases had followed the same route. To name but a few from the decade: in March 1964,

citizens marched to protest the Greek-Turkish border conflict on the island of Cyprus; in

December 1965, university students criticized the government policies on the same topic; in

March 1966, nationalist and conservative groups rallied against communism; in May 1967, an

anti-poverty procession took place; and in February 1968, the Worker's Party demanded changes

to the constitution.[1] Women protested water outages in June 1969, and factory workers on strike vocalized their demands by taking to the streets with their children again in June 1969.[2] The marches were abundant in number and wide-ranging in motive; however, Bloody Sunday differed from others because it featured a street battle that resulted in casualties. The case also played up the conflict between proponents and opponents of the USA's involvement in national politics. Marking the start of more severe episodes to come (that lasted until the coup d'état in September 1980), the case granted Taksim a privileged position in the eyes of the citizens as a contested political arena. As a result of ongoing protest activity, the *meydan* developed as a public space where state power is challenged rather than displayed.

The existing scholarly work about the 1960s in history, sociology, and political science disciplines provides occasional spatial references to urban spaces, primarily in Istanbul and Ankara. Even so, these analyses overlook the relations between the design and development of public spaces and dissent. An exception is the work of architectural historian Bülent Batuman who studied the spatialization of student protests in Ankara in the early 1960s.[3] Identifying this gap in research, I address the role of civil protests in the transformation of public space in Istanbul by focusing on the case of Bloody Sunday. How did marching as a form of protest alter the locations it used within the city? What kind of displays and performances sustained activism in public spaces? How did urban design respond to the changing urban experience of the city? I argue that resistance practices of the 1960s, which headlined marching as a popular form of

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[1] Üniversite Gençliği ve Halk Dün Kıbrıs Için Büyük Bir Miting Yapmıştır," *Milliyet*, March 14, 1964; "Gençler Uyuşuk Politikayı Yerdiler," *Milliyet*, December 21, 1965; "Komünizmi ve Gafleti Tel'in Mitingi Yapıldı," March 21, 1966;"Açlığa Karşı Savaş Yürüyüşü Yapıldı," *Milliyet*, May 29, 1967; "Anayasa Mitingi Dün Olaysız Geçti," *Milliyet*, July 28, 1968.
[2] "Susuz Kadınlar Yürüdü," *Milliyet*, June 20, 1969; "Grevci İşciler Çocuklarıyla Yürüyüş Yaptı," *Milliyet*, June 21, 1969.
[3] Batuman, "Imagination as Appropriation."

protest, triggered an urban shift that characterized Taksim Meydanı as the primary protest space in the city, overtaking this function from Beyazıt Meydanı. My research identifies Bloody Sunday as a transformative event that contributed to Taksim's perception as a contested political space by publicly displaying political conflicts of interest. The march redefined the public perception of the *meydan* to the extent that occupying this particular location became a driving force behind later demonstrations. The new meaning that protestors attributed to Taksim influenced physical and social production in the area for decades.

Considering the lack of academic research on the spatiality of social movements in Turkey, this chapter also makes a significant contribution to the overarching urban studies literature of the country in terms of examining the bilateral negotiations of public space between the state and the citizens in the 1960s.

In the first section of this chapter, I examine the student protests and their spatial patterns to better understand how political participation, communication, and art intersected in public space throughout the decade. The second section focuses on marching as a spatial practice and discusses its correlation to urban transformations in Istanbul. I clarify how changing sociopolitical power relations influenced this form of resistance and how its operation incorporated the city's public spaces into collective action. The following section covers the controversies over the design of Beyazıt and unravels the actors having a role in its making. In light of these analyses, in the last section, I discuss Bloody Sunday and its aftermath to demonstrate how mobilization changed the historical and urban roles of Beyazıt and Taksim. I interpret the case as a symbolic event informed by the local sociopolitical dynamics of the decade, but I also address transnational dialogues where relevant.

Political Participation, Communication, and Art in Public Space

Throughout the 1960s, many countries saw persistent youth protests, some of which evolved into social movements. These movements emerged primarily as a reaction to conventional politics imposed by enactors of systematic repression such as the governments, institutions, and ways of thought. The resistance narratives differed depending upon the national cultural experience; regardless, the era was not confined to any national borders and was fairly transnational in character.[4] At the intersection of the events was the rise of a wide range of activist practices in universities, factories, and public spaces that foregrounded the notions of anti-authoritarianism, human rights, equality, and freedom of speech. Hence, the 1960s provided unique opportunities to study how people claim, appropriate, experiment with, and reproduce urban spaces for resistance purposes.

Mark Kurlansky presents a cultural and political history of the 1960s by examining various activist movements (mainly in the North American and European contexts), including the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Prague Spring, Anti-War Movement, Black Power, avant-garde theatre, and the upsurge of Feminism.[5] He gathers the stories of a wide range of activists by using oral history as a methodology to trace translational dialogues across Europe and devotes a chapter to the investigation of spaces as "laboratories of new kinds of politics" that "construct and communicate revolt." [6] Triggering sociospatial changes from within specific sites of appropriation, dissident practices of the time revealed the importance of public space in

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[4] Fink, Gassert, and Junker, *1968, The World Transformed,* 1.
[5] Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2005).
[6] Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 164.

facilitating participatory political processes. During the events, activists explored ways of manipulating space to serve their own agendas. They transformed urban routines in cities by introducing resistance as an ordinary component of the everyday. How this transformation played out in the case of Istanbul is a point of inquiry in this chapter.

The relationship between social movements and spatial production, especially before the Gezi Park protests, remains sorely understudied in the context of Turkey. Most of the sources covering public demonstrations in the 1960s are memoirs, biographies/autobiographies, testimonies of the activists in textual sources, and recently a few documentaries.[7] These pieces provide first-person narratives that reveal the actors' personal experiences and their relation to the street.[8] The scholarly work that originates in sociology and political science disciplines offers nuanced sociopolitical analyses of the period.[9] For instance, Emin Alper discusses the rise of student mobilizations from 1960 to 1971 by comparing the Turkish case to its global counterparts.[10] Other studies that approach the period from sociological viewpoints contribute to our

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[7] See, for example, Alev Er and Eray Özer, *Başkaldırı Elli Yaşında: Bir Uzun Yürüyüştü 68* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2018); Aydın Çubukçu, *Bizim '68* (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2004); Atilla Keskin, *Acılara Yenilmeyen Gülümseyişler* (Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 2005); Oral Çalışlar, *'68 Anılarım* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2008); Nadire Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de Ne Oldu?* (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Metis, 2009); Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Deniz: Bir İsyancının İzleri* (Istanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 2011); Harun Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik* (Istanbul: May Yayınları, 1977); Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yılların Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2003); Gün Zileli, *Yarılma, 1954-1972* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2000); Cüneyt Akalın, *Tanıklarıyla Dünya'da ve Türkiye'de 68: Düşler ve Gerçekler* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1995); Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002); Dilşat Zülkadiroğlu, *Güneşin Çocukları - İstanbul'un Üç Baharı*, Documentary, 2018.

[8] Here, I refer to the "street" as a generic term for all public spaces in the city, including streets, parks, plazas, and squares.

[9] Damla. Öz, *Gerçek, Yıkıcı ve Yaratıcı : Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Üniversite, Eğitim, Gençlik Mücadeleleri* (Çankaya, Ankara: Nota Bene, 2011); Fulya Gürses and Hasan Gürses, *Dünya'da ve Türkiye'de Gençlik* (Istanbul: Toplumsal, 1997); Turhan Feyizoğlu, *FKF: Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu: Demokrasi Mücadelesinde Sosyalist bir Öğrenci Hareketi* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2002); *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1988); Rıfat N. Bali, *Turkish Students' Movements and the Turkish Left in the 1950's-1960's* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2006).

[10] Emin Alper, "Student Movement in Turkey from a Global Perspective, 1960-1971" PhD diss. (Boğaziçi University, 2009).

understanding of identity formations during the decade.[11] Among them, Demet Lüküslü's work, revolving around the concepts of "youth" and "generation," gives insights into the social characteristics of "Turkey's 1968".[12] The only source that focuses narrowly on Bloody Sunday is Mustafa Eren's *Kanlı Pazar* (Bloody Sunday).[13] Eren covers the political circumstances leading up to the event through a comprehensive investigation of journalistic sources and personal accounts.

"Turkey's 1968" started as a student movement demanding university reforms at the four major universities of the two largest cities: Middle East Technical University (METU) and Ankara University (AU) in Ankara, Istanbul University (IU) and Istanbul Technical University (ITU) in Istanbul.[14] Concerns of the initial protests varied from tuition fees, bursaries, and curricula to insufficient technical equipment at schools.[15] The participant profile was diverse as many of the students moved to Istanbul for education from different parts of Anatolia.[16] Under the leadership of student organizations (such as Revolutionary Student Association/Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği and Federation of Idea Clubs/Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu), frequent university boycotts, occupations, demonstrations, and sit-ins became ever-present activities on the campuses.[17] During these organizations, many student leaders prioritized holding forums at the expense of attending classes.[18] They took control of university buildings for boycotts, escorted professors

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[11] See, for example, Erol Kılınç, *İhtilal, İhtiras ve İdeal: 68 Kuşağı Hakkında* (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Ötüken, 2008); Ömer Turan, ed., *1968: İsyan, Devrim, Özgürlük* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2019).

[12] Demet Lüküslü, *Türkiye'nin 68'i: Bir Kuşağın Sosyolojik Analizi* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2015).

[13] Mustafa Eren, *Kanlı Pazar: 1960'lar Türkiye'sinde Milliyetçiler, İslamcılar ve Sol* (Istanbul: Kalkedon, 2012).

[14] Lüküslü, *Türkiye'nin 68'i*, 46. The student movement essentially stretches back to the anti-government protests on the eve of the military coup of 1960.

[15] Alternatively, in AU, some protested the ban on wearing headscarves in educational institutions. Akalın, *Tanıklarıyla Dünya'da ve Türkiye'de 68*, 109.

[16] For numerous student accounts, see Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir*; Çubukçu, *Bizim '68*.

[17] "Türkiye 1968'i Başlıyor: Boykot, İşgal, Komiteler, Konseyler," *Gerçek Gazetesi*, June 6, 2018. Accessed September 6, 2019, https://gercekgazetesi.net/teori-tarih/turkiye-1968i-basliyor-boykot-isgal-komiteler-konseyler. See also Zülkadiroğlu, *Güneşin Çocukları - İstanbul'un Üç Baharı* for the testimonies of multiple student leaders.

[18] See, Çubukçu, *Bizim '68*.

out, and discussed administrative problems in a participatory environment. Meanwhile, the signs, banners, and placards around building entrances and campus gates publicly announced the occupations.[19] In this way, the institutionally regulated environments became contested sites of political expression and collective action.

The activism practices were equally influential in cultivating everyday dynamics in the nearby public spaces besides the university campuses. The proximity of the IU to Beyazıt and ITU to Taksim, going hand-in-hand with the frequency of student protests based in the educational institutions, transformed *meydans* into hotbeds of sometimes well-organized and choreographed, sometimes spontaneous public demonstrations.[20] The crowds usually gathered around university buildings, marched to the *meydans*, gave speeches, chanted slogans, and then peacefully dispersed. Small-scale clashes between opposing groups or with police were also a common sight, but these confrontations rarely caused severe casualties. Throughout 1968 and 1969, in particular, expressions of political opposition permeated the everyday lives and practices of Istabulites via public spaces. The expansion of protests into the city network gradually entailed more calculated and efficient spatial appropriations.

The last few years of the 1960s saw a shift in political consciousness to state politics from university politics. This transition meant that the attention diverted from educational reforms

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[19] For example, during a fifteen-day long boycott at Istanbul University in June 1968, the gates of Beyazıt campus buildings were locked down by a committee. The demands were exhibited on placards until the occupation ended. Zafer Toprak, "1968-1969 İstanbul Üniversitesi Boykot ve İşgalleri," *Toplumsal Tarih* 298 (2018): 72–82. For further information on Istanbul University occupations, see Kemal Bingöllü's testimonial in Nadire Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de Ne Oldu?* (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Metis, 2009): 31-40, 31–32. See also Oya Baydar, *Savaş Çağı Umut Çağı* (Istanbul: Habora Kitabevi, 1966).

[20] See, for example, "Üniversiteliler Dün de Bir Yürüyüş Yaptılar," *Milliyet*, May 11, 1961; "Gençler Uyuşuk Politikayı Yerdiler," *Milliyet*, December 21, 1965; "Komunizmi ve Gafleti Tel'in Mitingi Yapıldı," March 21, 1966; "Teknik Üniversiteliler Basılma Olayına Karşı Boykot Yaptı," *Milliyet*, January 1, 1967; "Özel Hukuk Eğitimi Protesto Edildi," *Milliyet*, December 4, 1968.

towards the more significant concern of American interference in domestic affairs.[21] In this period, activist students built alliances with workers and unions, participated in factory occupations, formed picket lines, and organized collaborative marches across the city. One of the student leaders of the time, Aydın Çubukçu, explains that many students who took active roles in the university organizations were also members of the Worker's Party of Turkey and had a strong presence in labour demonstrations.[22]

The political atmosphere following the military coup on May 27th, 1960 enabled various social movements to blossom in Turkey.[23] The 1961 constitution had provided room for the development of class consciousness and unionization, reflections of which became visible in public spaces from the early decade onwards.[24] The intermingling of student and labour movements prompted the expansion of organized street activity and gradually extended the spheres of influence for the demonstrations. Now that the movements' concerns shifted from university politics to state politics, mass mobilizations targeted wider portions of the city to convey the messages to higher authorities and invite the participation of larger crowds.

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[21] For a comprehensive sociopolitical analysis of the student movement between 1960-1971, see Emin Alper, "Student Movement in Turkey from a Global Perspective, 1960-1971" PhD diss. (Boğaziçi University, 2009).
[22] Çubukçu, *Bizim '68*; for the progression of the labour movement see, for example, Turhan Feyizoğlu, *15/16 Haziran: Türkiye'yi Sarsan İşçi Direnişi* (Istanbul: Çıngı Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2012).
[23] The coup toppled the ten-year-old DP government and shut down the parliament on May 27, 1960. In the aftermath, Adnan Menderes, the first Prime Minister of the multi-party period, was executed together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Minister of Finance Hasan Polatkan. President Celal Bayar and fifteen other politicians were sentenced to death. For a journalistic analysis of the DP rule, see Mehmet Ali Birand, Can Dündar, and Bülent Çaplı, *Demirkırat: Bir Demokrasinin Doğuşu* (Istanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 2016).
[24] The1961 Constitution, put into operation following the coup, introduced new bureaucratic institutions that changed the country's political structure. Comparatively libertarian and democratic, the constitution enabled improvements in human rights, freedoms, and the social character of the government. Thus, both the coup and the constitution were endorsed by a range of left-wing groups and celebrated publicly. For a political history of the coup, see Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İhtilalin Mantığı ve 27 Mayıs İhtilali* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1993). For the details of the constitutional changes entailed by the coup, see Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2014).

Consequently, the mediums for the protests went beyond the limits of university campuses and nearby public spaces.

Throughout the sociopolitical and cultural expansion of the 1960s, multiple avenues of propaganda became tools to disseminate emerging ideas. In addition to the activists' bodily presence in the streets, graphic design took on a great deal of significance in conveying political messages. The power of visual imagery became an asset in communicating with the public. Most of the material that appeared in political journals, such as *Sosyal Adalet* (Social Justice), *Yön* (Direction), *Ant* (Oath), were created by professional graphic artists. Well-known Turkish artist and painter Abidin Dino, who resided in Paris around the time, designed original visual content for the covers and interior pages of *Sosyal Adalet*, the Worker's Party's journal.[25]

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[25] *Social Justice* started publishing in 1963 and was one of first publications which displayed leftist/socialist graphic content. Yılmaz Aysan, *Afîşe Çıkmak: 1963-1980: Solun Görsel Serüveni* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013), 11.
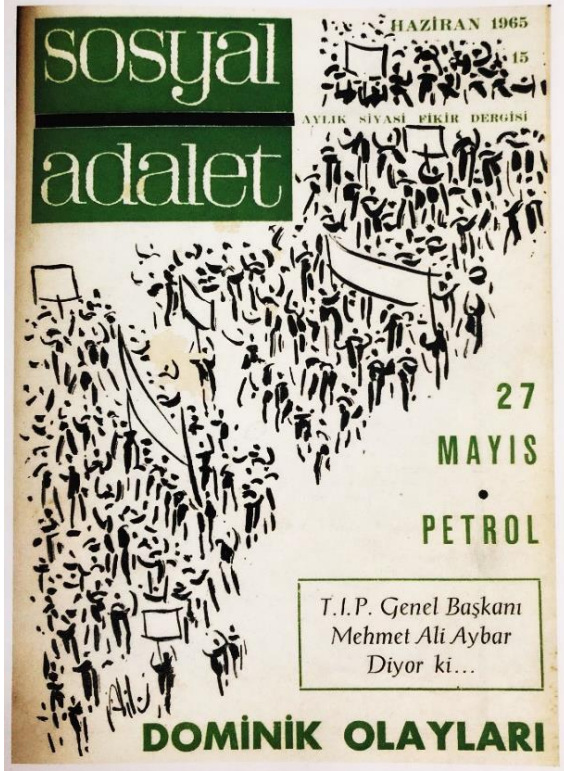
Figure 11. The cover of Social Justice (June 1965) and voting human figures featured in the same volume, designed by Abidin Dino. Source: Yılmaz Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak: 1963-1980: Solun Görsel Serüveni* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013).

The Algerian independence protests in Paris inspired many of Dino's figures. His tantalizing compositions fashioned for the Turkish context invited the audience to take an interest in international developments. Adapting his patterns to local affairs, the artist designed voting, striking, protesting human figures to inspirit citizens to participate in the struggles of democratic rights and freedoms.[26] As such, the clear illustration of an undulating protest march in Figure 11 depicts marching as a protest repertoire. Many of Dino's drawings in *Sosyal Adalet* relied on the visual contrast created by the use of black ink on white paper. The minimalist design of illustrations thus conveyed intended political content to the audience in a simple and digestible

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[26] Ibid., 21.

manner. Similarly, the design and display of protest posters also assumed agency in spreading

ideas in an understandable format.

The primary purpose of protest posters is to inform people on current issues and announce

relevant happenings to attract the masses. For that reason, their visual attributes are vital to

fostering public interaction. Communication Studies scholar Sascha Demarmels asserts that

protest posters become tools of aesthetic change by taking artistic pieces from museums and

galleries to streets and facilitating ordinary people's access to art.[27] In addition, as counter spatial

interventions, they challenge the dominant order of urban public space. As Lefebvre contends:

> The urban space of the street is a place for talk, given over as much to
> the exchange of words and signs as it is to the exchange of things. A
> place where speech becomes writing. A place where speech can become
> 'savage' and, by escaping rules and institutions, inscribe itself on
> walls.[28]

In Turkey, student protestors of the 1960s relied increasingly on posters to communicate their

political opinions on walls. In the Middle East Technical University Faculty of Architecture,

students established Devrimci Afiş Atölyesi (Revolutionary Poster Atelier) to design, print,

reproduce, and display posters for various causes.[29] The organization operated exclusively for the

in-campus activities at the beginning. However, in time, the students responded to a broader set

of political affairs, which entailed countrywide dissemination of the material. The design and

production process of Revolutionary Poster Atelier is an earlier example that underscores

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[27] Sacha Demarmels, "Posters and Placards," in *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, eds. Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 233–42.
[28] Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 19.
[29] For further information on the atelier, see Yılmaz Aysan, "68 Afişleri: Paris, Istanbul, Ankara," *Arredamento Mimarlık* 323 (2018): 82–94.

architects' contribution to critical spatial practice by creating mediums of public discussion and debate.

> During those years, walls were just blank surfaces. Only a few posters of movies and theatre plays would be on display. The urbanites were not yet familiar with the billboards […]. In those days, this blankness was an ideal means of communication among students. Plain surfaces directed all the attention to the posters. In this way, the messages were conveyed to millions of people. Also, the visuals got imprinted in the minds of urban dwellers who were not familiar with such representations. The day after the hanging, people would wake up to a city enriched with posters as well as ideas.[30]

As architect and graphic designer Yılmaz Aysan describes, the urban spaces where visual-political materials were displayed acted as equivalents of today's mass media outlets, such as newspapers, radio, and television. This form of representation aided public communication and presented an alternative to print publications by increasing the reach of political messages with little to no cost. While journals were accessible to a small-scale readership with a higher disposable income, the posters targeted a broader public. Since the displayed content was not born from mayoral decision-making, it brought a city full of blank walls, facades, streets, drab neighbourhoods alive in a new way, based on the activists' needs, that was to engage citizens in political discussions.

Throughout the decade, cinema and theatre also came to the fore as alternative media to express opposition.[31] Devrim İçin Hareket Tiyatrosu (Movement for Revolution Theatre/DIHT) pioneered the use of street theatre as an activist practice. The group promoted public

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[30] Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak*, 104.
[31] See for example Enis Rıza, "'68 ve Sinema," *Ayrıntı Dergi*, May 15, 2018. Accessed June 20, 2018, http://ayrintidergi.com.tr/68-ve-sinema/; Eren Buğlalılar, "1968'in Türkiye Kolu Olarak Devrim için Hareket Tiyatrosu," *Ayrıntı Dergi*, May 15, 2018, http://ayrintidergi.com.tr/1968in-turkiye-kolu-olarak-devrim-icin-hareket-tiyatrosu/.

participation by narrating contemporary sociopolitical problems in their plays. By transforming casual urban spaces into theatrical stages, the plays revealed the potential of public performance as a didactic medium. Overall, the proliferation of dissent through multiple mediums offered a new sense of vibrant, restless, and forward-moving urban life informed by the struggles of citizens.

Despite an upsurge of left-wing politics throughout the 1960s, neither activism practices nor the institutionalization of student organizations was exclusive to left-wing supporters. Right-wing organizations, such as the Society for Struggle against Communism (Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği) and the National Turkish Students Union (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği), also held demonstrations promoting "anti-communism."[32] The inevitable polarization between left-wing and right-wing ideologies manifested in the form of large-scale public organizations on contending discourses. For instance, two days before the Worker's March, a gathering entitled "Respect for the Flag" (Bayrağa Saygı) took place in Beyazıt Meydanı against the upcoming anti-6th Fleet protest. The participants occupied the *meydan* with Turkish flags, placards against socialism, and visual references to Ottoman culture, including an Ottoman military band (*mehter takımı*) in costumes.[33] The expansion of this binary ideological formation into the streets exemplifies a public space that enables expressions of opposing political views. In this way, multi-lateral imaginations, experienced through correlated imagery and symbolism, adds to a place's meaning.

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[32] See İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye'de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri* (Istanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1977).
[33] "40 Yıl Önce 'Kanlı Pazar'Da Ne Oldu?," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, February 16, 2009. Accessed March 31, 2019, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/112604-40-yil-once-kanli-pazar-da-ne-oldu.

Throughout the 1960s, ordinary citizens actively pursued their "right to the city" by claiming access to, occupying, using, and remaking urban spaces. Their activities showed that public spaces could be defined, produced, and reproduced outside the limits of top-down decision-making processes. The social movements of this period contributed to the spatial production in Istanbul in two significant ways: (1) by bringing up opportunities to rehearse, improve, and introduce resistance patterns that enable protestors to appropriate space strategically and creatively; people experimented with the street by occupying, blocking, transgressing, disturbing, putting up posters, painting the walls, and altering soundscapes, (2) by intermingling the political and everyday in public spaces and conducing the creation of new social relations.

Beyazıt and Taksim were close to university campuses, making them preferable locations for student-led collective action. They were also central *meydan*s with continuous daily hum stemming from the commercial, touristic, and transportation activities appealing to both locals and visitors. In the case of demonstrations, everyday users became components of the performances as observers, sometimes as participants. This aspect was especially manifest during the marches—rather than static occupations, sit-ins, or speeches—as this type of mobilization infiltrated the city network by navigating multiple locations. Therefore, marching choreographies present ample opportunities to study how occupying space in different ways can change prescribed meanings and functions of urban spaces in the city.

Marching and Urban Transformations

The popularization of organized marches in Turkey coincides with the rising labour and student movements of the 1960s; nonetheless, Istanbul has a long history of protests and public

demonstrations going back to Ottoman times. Political upheavals and demonstrations were commonplace in the Empire. Administrative attempts to modernize the army and economic strain sparked severe uprisings that applied pressure to the sultans' regime.[34] To protest, crowds often gathered around the army barracks and the mosques that constituted the central public spaces in the Ottoman urban structure. After the suppression of the events, the Sultans, in turn, proceeded with public executions to consolidate their authority and domination over urban space. A well-known case for this scenario was the abolishment of the Janissary corps in 1826. During the Ottoman modernization, the Janissaries started a series of rebellions to denounce the empire's military reforms. In response to the public challenge presented against his authority, Sultan Mahmud II suppressed the rebellion through violent force and bureaucratically dismantled the entire Janissary institution. Beyazıt Meydanı became the stage for both the uprisings and the execution of the rebels.[35] After this event, the Sultan destroyed the Janissary barracks (Old Quarters and New Quarters) to reinforce his rule, replaced them with residential structures, and reconfigured Beyazıt Meydanı as an open space, Seraskerlik Meydanı, for the modern army as a stage for military ceremonies. Neşe Yeşilkaya notes that the sultan also likely levelled Beyazıt Mosque's exterior courtyard in order to open space for the new urban restructuring.[36]

A similar display of power occurred after the reactionary uprisings against the constitutional monarchy, known as 31 Mart Vakası (March 31st Incident), which started in Taksim Artillery Barracks in 1908.[37] The Young Turks, a political reform movement comprised of liberal

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[34] See, for example, Hüseyin Perviz Pur, *Osmanlı'da Vergi İsyanları: 1730 Patrona Halil İsyanı ve Diğer İsyan Hareketleri* (Istanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2015); Sam White and Nurettin Elhüseyni, *Osmanlı'da İsyan İklimi: Erken Modern Dönemde Celali İsyanları* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2013).
[35] Yeşilkaya Gürallar, "From a Courtyard to a Square" 73.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Sina Akşin, *Şeriatçı Bir Ayaklanma: 31 Mart Olayı* (Kızılay, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1994); Noémı Lévy, *The Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman Empire: The Aftermath of 1908* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017).

intellectuals, revolutionaries, and military officers, quelled the uprisings and executed the rebels in Beyazıt Meydanı.[38] The events that transpired at the *meydan* contributed to its public association with reform and constitutional movement. In 1909, the municipality of Istanbul appealed to the Dahiliye Nezareti (Ministry of Domestic Affairs) for the erection of a statue of Mithad Pasha, a leading figure of the constitutional movement, in Beyazıt Meydanı.[39] In 1911, Sultan Mehmed V commissioned the erection of a monument in Şişli, Abide-i Hürriyet (Monument of Liberty), as a memorial for the soldiers killed during the March 31st Incident.

During the single-party rule (1923-1945), authoritarian re-structuring efforts and strict military control rarified public expressions of political dissent. Thus, demonstrations were in resonance with the Republican nationalist discourse by a majority—the exception being the Kurdish riots in the eastern provinces.[40] For example, in 1933, students protested the French railway company Wagon-Lits for dismissing a Turkish employee for allegedly speaking Turkish.[41] After gathering around Taksim, the crowd marched towards the Istiklal Avenue and raided the company's office. Batuman argues that the nationalist rallies of the period targeting the Beyoğlu-Taksim area, inhabited predominantly by a diversity of non-Muslim citizens, had a subtext of dominating the site in compliance with the nationalist imagination.[42] This same mentality was also present in the nationalist rallies of the 1950s.

The rise of the liberal-conservative DP to power in 1950 resulted in ideological change, but nationalist currents kept informing public demonstrations. As such, many of the protests in the

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[38] Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, 24.
[39] Strutz, "The Invisible Meydan." 46.
[40] For a comprehensive historical analysis of the Kurdish Riots, see Aytekin Gezici, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kürt İsyanları* (Istanbul: Tutku Yayınevi, 2015).
[41] Ertan Ünal, "Yarım Kalmış Bir Simge," *Popüler Tarih*, (2002): 66.
[42] Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim,'" 10.

1950s were state-sponsored and nationalistic in nature. In 1955, mobs, provoked by the false news that the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki was bombed, targeted the Greek minority in Istanbul. Smashing and looting that lasted two days resulted in severe damage to Greek properties around Beyoğlu.[43] The Anti-Greek Pogrom caused many Greek inhabitants to depart from the neighbourhood. The buildings they left behind fell into disrepair in the years to come.[44] From the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, the tension between Turkish and Greek governments about demarcating boundaries on the island of Cyprus triggered several large-scale demonstrations in Beyazıt Meydanı, known as the "Division or Death" (Ya Taksim Ya Ölüm) protests. One such rally, in 1964, saw a massive mobilization that started in Beyazıt and ended in Taksim. According to Batuman, the route taken throughout this march generated a new scale of protest that interrupted everyday urban life and contributed to the perception of Taksim as a political space.[45]

Beyazıt Meydanı witnessed subsequent demonstrations against the DP government in the early months of 1960. The crowds gathered on April 28th to protest the Commission of Inquiry, a government establishment that controlled the operation of the press. This demonstration ended with a police crackdown; Istanbul University student Turan Emeksiz was shot and killed during the clashes. In the following years, the erection of a memorial dedicated to Emeksiz became a concern for the rehabilitation of Beyazıt Meydanı.[46] Sculptor Semahat Acuner won the design competition for the monument in 1961; her work, entitled the Monument of Freedom, was

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[43] Speros Jr. Vryonis, *The Mechanism of Catastrophe: The Turkish Pogrom Of September 6-7, 1955, and the Destruction Of The Greek Community Of Istanbul* (New York, N.Y: Greekworks.Com Inc, 2005).
[44] İlhan Tekeli, *The Development of the Istanbul Metropolitan Area: Urban Administration and Planning* (Ankara: Kent Press, 1994), 139–142.
[45] Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim,'" 12.
[46] See Asım Mutlu, *Cumhuriyet*, March 17, 1961.Yekta Ragıp Önen, "Mimarlar Odasında Hürriyet Meydanı Projesi Tartışıldı," *Milliyet*, February 27, 1961.

erected on May 27th, 1963, on the very spot where Emeksiz died. Students unofficially replaced the name Monument of Freedom with the Turan Emeksiz monument. In 1985, the artwork was moved to an isolated corner of the *meydan*, falling victim to a different government's aspiration to negotiate power through urban interventions.[47] The examples briefly discussed here demonstrate that sociopolitical conflicts and power struggles overtly informed the social and physical formation of public space in both Imperial and Republican Istanbul.

Controversies over the Design of Beyazıt Meydanı in the 1960s

Following the military coup in 1960, the new rule attempted to inscribe its presence onto public space through immediate urban operations. On the historic peninsula, the endeavours began with place-name changes and Beyazıt Meydanı became Hürriyet (Liberty) Meydanı.[48] Assigning specific names—such as nation, liberation, independence, and freedom—to the national or public interest was a common strategy used by the early Republican administration. According to Zeynep Kezer, these toponyms aided the construction of a designated social memory that legitimized the regime and promoted its achievements.[49] Nevertheless, in practice, individuals' perceptions of space shape the urban experience and symbolism of the built environment. When a civil government replaced the junta government, "Hürriyet" gradually faded from use, regardless of the top-down efforts to change the *meydan*'s name.[50]

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[47] See Turgay Gülpınar, "Şehitliğin İnşası ve İmhası: Turan Emeksiz Örneği," Master's thesis (Ankara University, 2012).

[48] In 1933, Beyazıt was renamed as Cumhuriyet (Republic) Meydanı for the 10th anniversary of the Republic. Yet, the new name did not gain popularity among citizens.

[49] Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey*, 193–94.

[50] Göktaş, "*Meydan*," 27.

The design competition launched a few months before the coup, in March 1960, was to

ameliorate Beyazıt Meydanı, having been in disrepair from previous perfunctory project

implementations. Internationally accomplished planners Hans Högg and Luigi Piccinato were

among the famous invitees to participate. The organization committee, which included

representatives from Istanbul Municipality, Istanbul Technical University Faculty of

Architecture and Bank of Provinces (İller Bankası), elected Turkish architect Turgut Cansever's

project based on its potential to solve the traffic problem, revive everyday life in the area, restore

historical heritage buildings, and create human-scale volumes.[51] Another motive behind this

decision was to employ a Turkish architect to challenge the foreign dominance in the field and

consolidate the Turkish nationalist discourse.[52]

The priority of Cansever's winning proposal was pedestrian accessibility; consequently, his

design eliminated the street by the university gate to create a vehicle-free zone. The vehicle

traffic between Beyazıt and Eminönü was redirected to an underground level. Cansever

introduced three different ground levels to deal with the topographic differences between Ordu

Street (parallel to mosque medrese axis) and the university entrance: (1) the level of the gate and

the campus, (2) the level of the mosque and the medrese, and (3) the *meydan* and lower part of it

adjacent to Ordu Street (see Figure 12).[53] In this way, he accentuated the mosque-medrese axis

and kept the university portal in the background rather than glorify its presence.[54] Further,

Cansever intended to dispose of that which remained from previous partially implemented

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[51] Turgut Cansever, *Istanbul'u Anlamak* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2008), 285–86.

[52] See, for example, Çetin Altan, "Şundan Bundan," *Milliyet*, April 12, 1962.

[53] For detailed information about the project, see Uğur Tanyeli and Atilla Yücel, *Turgut Cansever Düşünce Adamı ve Mimar* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası, 2007).

[54] To Cansever, Istanbul University gate was out of scale, overbearing, and rough. In his elevation drawings, he downplayed the portal's existence by depicting it as a simple block devoid of structural details. Turgut Cansever, "Beyazıd Meydanı Yayalaştırma Projesi," *Arredamento Dekorasyon* 29 (1991): 114–20.

projects.[55] To him, earlier demolitions had left the *meydan* as a large empty space, a missed

opportunity to instill a sense of social dynamism within the environment.[56] Accordingly, the new

design aimed to create a centre of attraction where people could socialize.[57] The proposal

included several spatial components, such as assorted types of greenery, merchant booths,

second-hand booksellers, and small handicraft ateliers, to revive everyday life and encourage

social interaction in the *meydan*.[58] The construction started in 1961, yet the criticism directed at

it, both from architectural and public media, was unignorably loud.

Governments tend to use architecture and urban design to represent and reinforce political

ideologies. It is common to see radical changes in project executions related to the shifts in larger

structures of general order. Unusually, in this case, the junta government decided to continue

with Cansever's proposal that won the competition prior to the coup. This decision was

exceptional given that it was far more common for incumbent political parties to scrap the older

architectural and cultural projects of their predecessors upon taking office. Hence, the project's

approval aroused heated debates among design professionals. Aydın Boysan, the director of the

Chamber of Architects Istanbul Branch, was among the most vocal opponents.[59] His concern

was the reciprocal approval of the project both by the DP government toppled by the coup and

the junta government. He attributed this treatment to the "fickle" attitude of the architect.[60]

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[55] Turgut Cansever, "Beyazıt Meydanı Meselesinin İçyüzü," *Milliyet*, March 22, 1964.
[56] See Turgut Cansever, "Beynelmilel UNESCO Kampanyası Dolayısiyle Türkiye'de Eski Eserlerin Korunması İle İlgili Çalışmalar Hakkında Rapor," *Arkitekt* 4 (1962); Ugur Tanyeli, *Turgut Cansever* (Istanbul: Boyut Yayın Grubu, 2001).
[57] Cansever, "Beyazıt Meydanı Meselesinin İçyüzü."
[58] "Beyazıt Meydanından Vasıta Geçmeyecek," *Milliyet*, January 5, 1961; Neşe Gürallar, "Bir Cumhuriyet Dönemi Tartışması, Meydan Ya Da Park? Kamusal Mekânın Dönüşümü Beyazıt Meydanı," in *Cumhuriyet'in Mekanları Zamanları İnsanları* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010), 60.
[59] See Barbaros Sağdıç, "Aydın Boysan ile 'Sansürsüz'," *Mimarlık Dekorasyon* 11 (1991): 24–27.
[60] Ibid.

Cansever's conservative inclinations probably biased the criticism directed towards his proposal

for Beyazıt Meydanı. Nonetheless, the chamber insisted on prioritizing Istanbul's master plan

rather than focusing on a small segment of the historical peninsula. On the other hand, the editors

of *Mimarlık ve Sanat* castigated the chamber by addressing their incoherence on the grounds that

the design of Beyazıt Meydanı should not have interfered with the master plan discussions.[61] The

editor of *Arkitekt* criticized Cansever's approach, lacking an "architectural character," for failing

to solve traffic and parking problems.[62] According to Sedad Hakkı Eldem, who was also

Cansever's professor from his student years, the project was indifferent toward the portal, a

significant component of the *meydan*.[63] He further addressed the lack of enough open space for

movement, a quality that "the most important public space" of the city should have possessed.[64]

The expectation from the new layout for Beyazıt Meydanı back then was adaptability to

"modernization," which can be better understood by looking at Turkish historian Reşat Ekrem

Koçu's entry of Beyazıt in *Istanbul Encyclopedia*:

> It should not be forgotten that a *meydan* is a defect-free blank in the city
> where the peoples of that city could gather… *Meydans* are non-walled
> non-roofed halls that accumulate tens of thousands of people for rallies,
> big political demonstrations, and revolutions. This is the reason why
> autocratic governments never like public spaces. They try to infect the
> *meydans* in the guise of beautification by building pools, flower beds,
> trees thus minimizing the ground people would set foot on.[65]

Koçu's critique of Beyazıt targets the design elements that, according to him, minimize the open

space where mass gatherings can freely occur. He portrays public demonstrations as practices of

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[61] "Yankılar: Beyazıt Meydanı," *Mimarlık ve Sanat* 2 (1961): 55–56.
[62] Zeki Sayar, "Beyazıt (Hürriyet) Meydanı," *Arkitekt* 302, no. 3–5 (1961): 1.
[63] Eldem's dissatisfaction with the project was so strong that he sent a letter to Istanbul Municipality about Cansever's proposal to be read at the meeting instead of attending in person.
[64] Sedat Hakkı Eldem, "Bayezit-Hürriyet Meydanına Ait Y. Mimar Turgut Cansever İmzalı 1:500 Ölçekli Proje Hakkında Görüşlerim," February 7, 1961, Salt Research, Edhem Eldem Collection.
[65] Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Istanbul Yayınevi, 1960), 2252.

democracy that autocratic governments seek to restrain. Public demonstrations may or may not have been a factor in Cansever's proposal or previous implementations. However, Koçu's interpretation is still relevant today, as governments attempt to control the use of public spaces for protests either by proposing renewal projects or simply imposing security measures or regulations that influence which activities can or cannot take place in specific locations.

Despite differences in their reasoning, many other intellectuals also agreed that Beyazıt needed to transform into a vast and clean open field. In her dissertation, architect Sevince Bayrak Göktaş reminds us of the vision of novelist and columnist Peyami Safa, who deemed French models appropriate for an ideal *meydan* in Istanbul based on their capacity to provide a sense of order and discipline and to enable social interactions on an everyday level.[66] Ironically, the motive behind France's implementation of spacious squares in the motherland and the colonies was neither to facilitate demonstrations nor to encourage socialization. On the contrary, Haussmann's urban operations in Paris, for example, and other large-scale design implementations in colonial contexts, such as Algeria and Morocco, primarily intended to mobilize the military, as I discussed in the Introduction.[67]

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[66] Göktaş, "Meydan," 10–14, 47–49.
[67] See, Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City*.
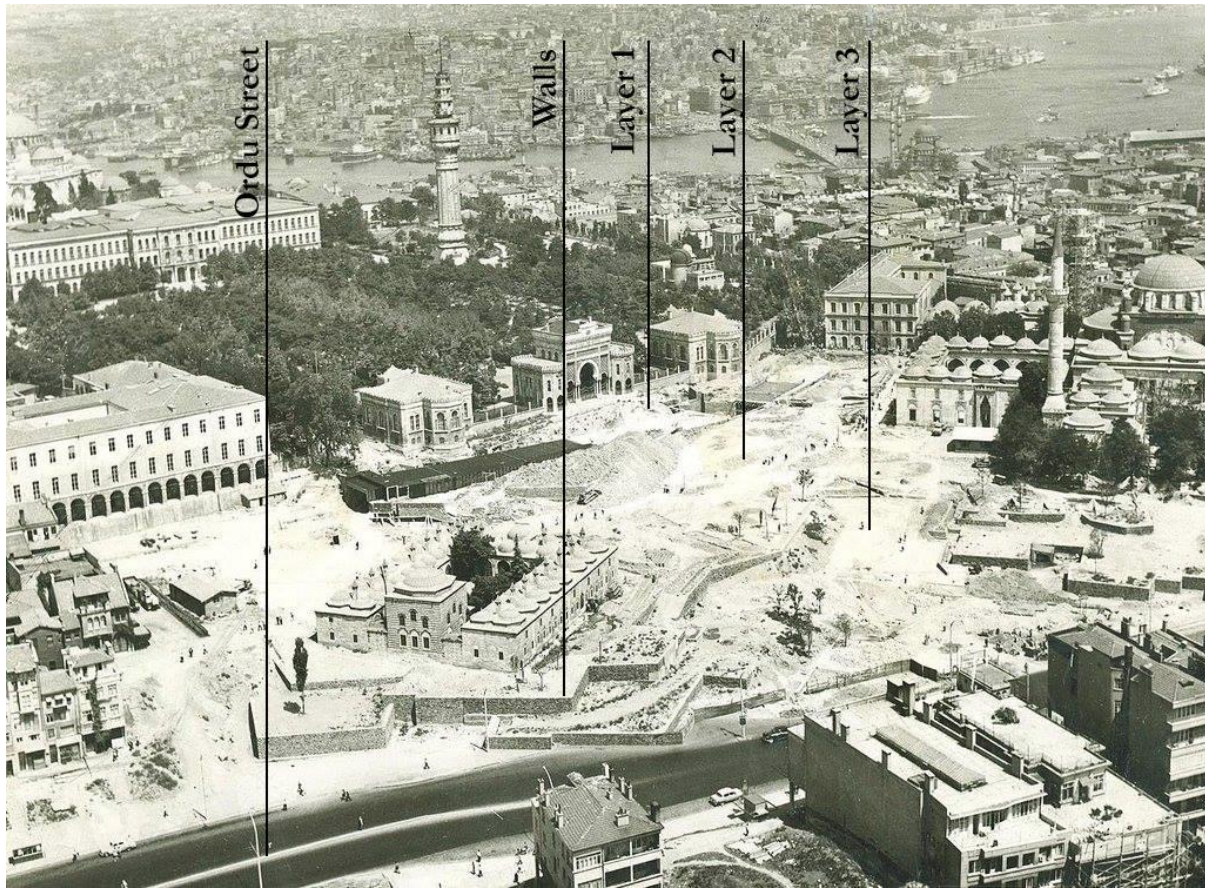
Figure 12. The implementation of Turgut Cansever's project. The domed structure in the foreground behind the walls is the madrasa. On the right-hand side, the mosque is also visible with its minaret. Istanbul University gate occupies the middle portion of the frame with its green campus behind. Source: Memory of Istanbul in Individual Archives, Şehir University e-Archive. Edited by the author.

Beyond all criticism, the most salient aspect of Cansever's project was the "walls" that linked

multiple ground levels to each other. Critics interpreted his rationale for taming the topography

without further excavations as "a love for walls intertwined with a hate for *meydans*."[68] Even

though the architect expressed his goal to create a living public space ideal for demonstrations,

ceremonies, even revolutions as an alternative for the quiet, strict, and systematically functioning

examples, his proposal was not applauded by many, including the protestors who frequented

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[68] Hamdi Varoğlu, "Kümbet," *Cumhuriyet*, September 7, 1964, 4.

Beyazıt Meydanı.[69] Students perceived the construction of the walls as a measure to prevent

future collective practices in the *meydan*.[70] Furthermore, it was not the students alone who

imagined the new project as an obstacle; academics and journalists also agreed with this

conviction.[71] For example, Turhan Selçuk's cartoon published in Milliyet implies that the walls

proposed by Cansever hinder the perceptibility of the *meydan* and the built environment around

it. In his drawing, Selçuk compares the walls to the Great Wall of China by depicting them

visibly outsized in an exaggerated manner.
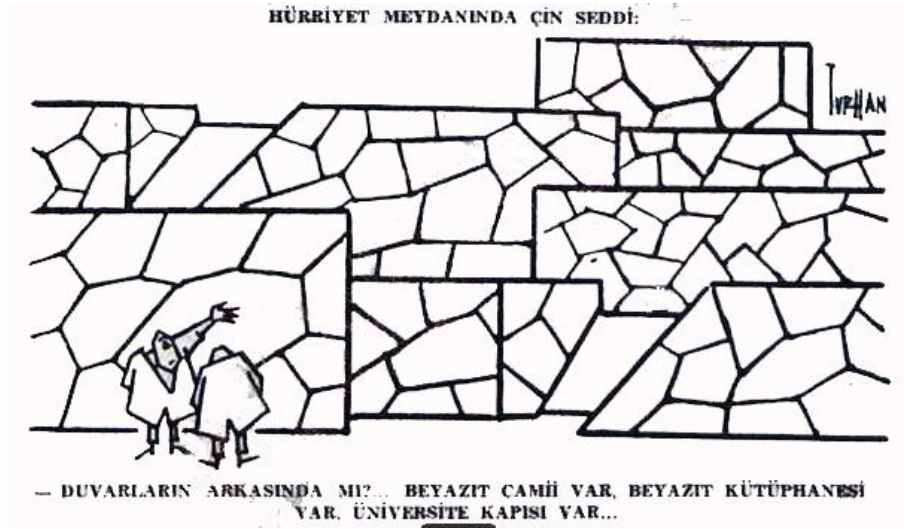
Figure 13. A cartoon by Turhan Selçuk. The artist illustrates two citizens standing nearby layers of stone walls, which seem exaggerated in scale. The dialogue at the bottom reads "Behind the walls?... There is Beyazıt Mosque, Beyazıt Library and the University Portal…" The caption above translated "A Great Wall of China for Hürriyet (Liberty) *Meydanı*." Source: "Hürriyet Meydanı'nda Çin Seddi," *Milliyet*, December 14, 1961.

The architectural design of a given city space has a crucial role in facilitating a protest. Its

physical attributes, such as accessibility, availability, and scale, are significant components that

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[69] Cansever, "Beyazıd Meydanı Yayalaştırma Projesi."
[70] Gökalp Eren (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.; Namık Mustafa Kemal Boya (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.
[71] Aydın Engin (journalist) in discussion with the author, December 14, 2017.; See also "Kim Yaptı Bu Çin Seddi'ni," *Hürriyet*, September 6, 1963.

enable public participation.[72] Accordingly, the rationale for the protestors' choice of location

stems from a pragmatic perspective—even though the place's symbolic associations become a

contributing factor during the organization process.[73] Cansever's project factored in the decline

of Beyazıt's popularity as a protest space. Still, it was not the only reason because the *meydan*

facilitated several large-scale demonstrations from 1964 (when the project implementation

stopped due to the architect's resignation from his position) to the late 1960s (when the political

activity started to gravitate towards Taksim). Nonetheless, students' perception of the project as

a state strategy—aiming to control public space rather than responding to users' needs—possibly

motivated the decision to occupy another location more adaptable to activism practices. Counter

interventions, confirming the shift toward Taksim Meydanı, started as of 1964 when the mayor's

office deployed permanent police security in this area.[74]

Whether the walls became an obstacle for citizens or not, from the early years of the Republic to

the 1960s onwards, countless demonstrations that started in Beyazıt Meydanı continued with

processions to Taksim. Even when the mobilizations were not necessarily in the form of rallies,

initiating an event in Beyazıt and ending in Taksim was a typical course of action.[75] However,

the adoption of marching from Beyazıt to Taksim as a practical strategy coincides with the

1960s' mass mobilization patterns.

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[72] Hatuka, *The Design of Protest,* 1-8.
[73] See, for example, Hatuka, "Negotiating Space Analyzing Jaffa Protest Form, Intention and Violence, October 27th 1933."
[74] *Milliyet*, August 16, 1964.
[75] For example, women's suffrage was celebrated with two public demonstrations on the same day. The crowds first gathered in Beyazıt for the speeches and then drove to Taksim for a second public celebration. See "Kadınlığın Kutlu Sesi," *Cumhuriyet*, December 8, 1934. Similarly, the protests against the deployment of Turkish troops for the Korean War, between 1950 and 1953, were in the form of Beyazıt-Taksim marches. See Gürkan Öztan and Tebessüm Öztan, "Militarizm ve Anti-Komünizmin Kesiştiği Nokta: Kore Savaşı," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 123 (2012): 1–28.

Resistance against the 6th Fleet

Bloody Sunday was the final stage of a chain of events against the 6th Fleet, a marine force that had been patrolling Mediterranean waters since 1946, following tension between the US and Soviet Russia.[76] The 6th Fleet's activity in Istanbul and Izmir between 1967 and 1969 led to multiple demonstrations motivated by the growing sentiments of anti-Americanism. The appearance of a US marine force—interpreted by many as a symbol of Cold War interventionalist policies—in national waters provoked youth-led protests whose core ideas were centred around human rights, freedoms, and equality. Critically responding to state politics via street activity, students organized many public protests driven by the desire to prevent the US influence in the country. Protest activities ranged from simple intimidating gestures, such as throwing paint at the soldiers promenading in Beyoğlu, to more pronounced sit-ins in Dolmabahçe (a district by the Bosporus strait nearby an Imperial palace).[77] For the organization in October 1967, students pitched tents and remained stationary to obstruct the landing of the US Navy.[78] Photographs of these demonstrations became iconic symbols representing the political climate of the1960s and were widely reproduced in print media over the years.[79]

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[76] For further information on the activity of the 6th Fleet see, Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir*, 293.

[77] On July 18, 1968, a few thousand protestors, mostly university students, marched down to Dolmabahçe to prevent the crew from debarking. After that attempt failed, they threw some of the landed soldiers back to the sea. See for example Kenan Behzat Sharpe, "Trapped In Between: 1968 in Greece and Turkey," versobooks.com, May 18, 2018. Accessed October 11, 2018. https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3829-trapped-in-between-1968-in-greece-and-turkey.

[78] Akalın, *Tanıklarıyla Dünya'da ve Türkiye'de 68*, 106.

[79] For a black and white visual narrative of the period between 1968 and 1972, see Halil Koyutürk, and Ertuğrul Kürkçü, *A Cloud of Black Smoke: Photographs from Turkey 1968-72* (Stockholm: Focuskop, 2007).

Figure 14. An American naval officer being pulled out of the water, July 1968. Source: Halil Koyutürk, and Ertuğrul Kürkçü, *A Cloud of Black Smoke: Photographs from Turkey 1968-72* (Stockholm: Focuskop, 2007).
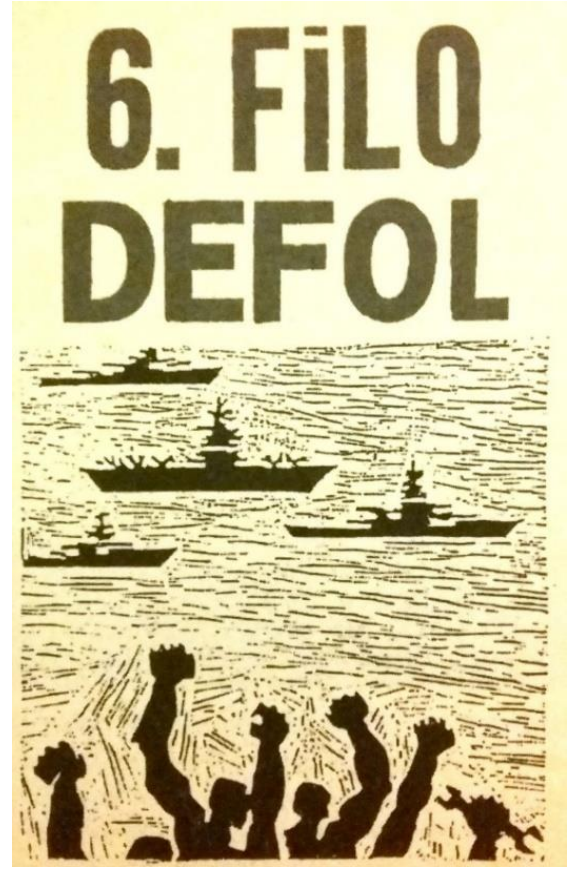
Figure 15. The poster designed by ITU student organizations for the 6th Fleet protests. The caption reads "6th Fleet Go Away." The fists raising up on the bottom of the composition is a universal gesture of solidarity. This image represents the protestors' position on the land facing against the navy. Source: Nadire Mater Collection.

The incidents in Dolmabahçe imply a symbolic territorialization of the national land by claiming the docks and forestalling the American naval officers to land ashore. This symbolism is present in the visual representations of the protests as well. Figure 14 is one of the most famous images from the earlier protests in July 1968. The frame captures an American naval officer being pulled out of the water by the police. Protestors had pushed him back to the sea after the embarkment like many others. Several mainstream newspapers, such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, also reproduced similar images. Figure 15 is a poster designed by Istanbul Technical University

(ITU) student organizations for the protests. The caption that reads "6th Fleet Go Away" was one of the key slogans for the demonstrations. The poster is essentially a visual call to direct action against the arrival, yet it also directly instructs the way to do so. The composition illustrates the navy away in the sea, while the protestors seem to be occupying the land despite the bodies being partially visible. The raised fists on the bottom of the composition are a universal gesture of solidarity. One of the hands holds a wrench, likely symbolizing solidarity with workers. Therefore, the poster serves a dual purpose: (1) didactically informing the public about the purpose and the form of the protest, (2) carrying the resistance into an alternative medium by visually representing the action itself.

After the demonstrations in July 1968, the 6th Fleet left Dolmabahçe only to return in 1969. The Worker's March, the first massive anti-US demonstration in the country, gathered approximately thirty thousand people against this return.[80] The organization consisted of three major segments: (1) a public theatre play performed in Beyazıt Meydanı by the members of the DIHT, (2) a march from Beyazıt Meydanı to Taksim Meydanı to cross the Golden Horn over Galata Bridge, (3) the occupation of Taksim Meydanı and delivering speeches. Each segment portrayed a different form of spatial appropriation through which urban space was creatively reclaimed.

The first stage of the Worker's March was a street theatre production about the US occupation in Vietnam performed by the DIHT, an activist organization that operated between 1968 and 1971. DIHT was established by a handful of actors/actresses and artists who aspired to raise awareness for the sociopolitical problems of the period—mainly economic inequality and poverty—by

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[80] Namık Mustafa Kemal Boya (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.

using theatrical performance as a medium.[81] The organization was in conversation with street

theatres that emerged during the 1960s civil unrest in France and the USA, where spontaneous

public plays were designed to inform the crowds, support the acts of resistance, and invite

participation.[82] The primary goal of the DIHT was to perform for the urban poor instead of

practising theatre as an "object of consumption for the bourgeois audience" in splendid venues.[83]

The locales for the plays were everyday urban spaces such as student occupations at university

campuses, strikes at factories, coffeehouses, town squares, villages—in short, wherever the

performers could find an audience. An expert in the politicization of theatre and theatrical

performances, Dorothea Krauss states that:

> Theatricality can enhance the cohesion within the protest movement as
> well as between the actors and the audience, attracts public attention,
> and helps communicate and explain central ideas.[84]

Krauss' remarks accurately pinpoint how the DIHT operated during its short run. The group used

the potential of streets to communicate with citizens, spread ideas, and raise awareness of

sociopolitical conflicts while transforming everyday public spaces into theatrical stages. Among

their plays, "Köprü" (The Bridge), for example, was a critique of the bridge to be built on

Bosporus and its possible impacts on the designated project sites and their inhabitants.[85] Before

writing the play, the members conducted preliminary research in the form of interviews with

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[81] Among the founders were Işıl Özgentürk, Ali Özgentürk, Sadık Karamustafa, Doğan Soyuev, Mehmet Ulusoy, Sabahattin Şenyüz and Kuzgun Acar. For further information on the DIHT, see Eren Buğlalılar, *Kadife Koltuktan Amele Pazarına: Türkiye'de Politik Tiyatro 1960-1972* (Istanbul: Tavır Yayınları, 2014), 142–45.
[82] See, for example, Henry Lesnick, *Guerilla Street Theater* (New York: Bard Books, 1973); Bradford D Martin, *The Theater Is in the Street: Politics and Performance in Sixties America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).
[83] Burak Üzumkesici, "Köksüz Bir Estetiğe Karşı: Devrim İçin Hareket Tiyatrosu," E-Skop: Sanat Tarihi Eleştiri, accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/koksuz-bir-estetige-karsi-devrim-icin-hareket-tiyatrosu/2931.
[84] Dorothea Krauss, "Theatrical Protest," in *Protest Cultures: A Companion*, eds. Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 383.
[85] Üzumkesici, "Köksüz Bir Estetiğe Karşı."

scholars, experts, and the residents of Ortaköy and Beylerbeyi neighbourhoods, where the bridge's pillars were to stand. The aim was to prepare the script in conversation with those who would be directly affected by the construction.[86] This approach would enable the performers to reflect on the residents' experiences.[87] Another play, Grev (The Strike), was created based on the Magirus Assembly Factory workers' strike stories.[88]

The performances usually started at coffeehouses and expanded to other available locations where citizens could gather. Most of them were social engagement initiatives that encouraged public discussions on contemporary political issues. Despite its fleeting existence, the DIHT brought a new approach to critical spatial practice by integrating artistic expression into the politics of space. The conversation between the plays and the audience provided opportunities to investigate the potential of mundane urban sites in interacting with the public. The Bloody Sunday performance was an artistic-didactic means to convey criticism against the international policies of the USA.

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[86] "*Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi,*" 2074.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Üzumkesici, "Köksüz Bir Estetiğe Karşı."

Figure 16. Istanbul University gate and the protestors occupying Beyazıt Meydanı on the day of the march. Source: *Bir Avuçtular Deniz Oldular. Üç Fidanın Anısına, 1968-1972* (Istanbul: Kadıköy Belediyesi, 2013).

Figure 16 captures the gathering in Beyazıt Meydanı right after the theatrical play. The crowd faces the Istanbul University gate, where student leaders and DIHT members stand in the middle holding flags and placards. The gate acts like a background due to its monumental scale. Some of the placards read "Independent Turkey," "Yankee Go Home," "Movement for Revolution Theatre," and the title of the march itself. Besides those captured in this image, marchers carried several other placards and canvas banners, some of which satirically addressed the politicians, to communicate various demands. The female participants are not visible in the photograph, as the crowds in the frame seem to be composed solely of men. Despite their absence in this image, women ardently participated in demonstrations, organized protests, wrote and distributed

manifestos and leaflets, and delivered speeches throughout the decade.[89] Three days before the

Worker's March, female students at Cemberlitaş Girls Dormitory (Cemberlitaş Kız Yurdu)

organized a "Women's March" from Beyazıt Meydanı to Sultanahmet Meydanı, as a preliminary

performance. Both women and men populated the protest, but women occupied the front lines

and remained at the forefront throughout the event. Evidently, the liberating environment of the

1960s granted women visibility in public space to some extent, yet demonstrations were still

male-dominated.

Julide Aral, a student activist, identifies women's contribution to the student movement in the

1960s primarily as "logistical support," which includes disseminating leaflets, producing and

hanging posters, yet not preparing content.[90] Nevertheless, gender roles changed more explicitly

in favour of women in the following decade. In addition to participating in protests in larger

numbers, women undertook active roles as collective members and event organizers throughout

the 1970s. For example, Aral was affiliated with İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Association of

Progressive Women), founded in 1975 and remained active until the coup d'état in 1980.[91]

Another student activist Esra Koç worked for the Human Rights Association that supported the

Saturday Mothers/People from the beginning. According to Aral, women of the 1960s were also

vanguards in the rise of the feminist movement from the 1980s onward.[92] That is, the activist

participation of women in the 1960s bolstered the use of public spaces for democracy;

furthermore, it contributed to the evolution of the woman figure in public space in the following

decades.

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[89] See the interviews with Çimen Keskin, Julide Aral and Esra Koç in Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir*, 75–84, 115–26, 157–68.
[90] Ibid., 157.
[91] Association of Progressive Women had thirty-three branches and fifteen thousand members. Ibid., 117.
[92] Ibid., 118.

Figure 17. The front end of the procession and its general order. The title and the pictures of Vedat Demircioğlu are at the forefront. Source: Halil Koyutürk and Ertuğrul Kürkçü, *A Cloud of Black Smoke: Photographs from Turkey 1968-72* (Stockholm: Focuskop, 2007).

After the DIHT's play, protestors initiated the march towards Taksim Meydanı around 2.00 pm.

An orderly crowd of approximately thirty thousand people carried banners and shouted slogans

against the arrival of the 6th Fleet. Figure 17 demonstrates the general order of the march and

how the crowd occupies space. A leading line of protestors in the front carry the images of their late friend Vedat Demircioğlu. A student in Istanbul University Law School, Demircioğlu died after a police raid in student dormitories in July 1968 during a previous round of the 6th Fleet protests.[93] From this date on, protestors repeatedly displayed images of the late student in many demonstrations. Moreover, his loss altered the nature of the relationship between the protestors and police by increasing the militancy on both sides.[94] Subsequent events after Demircioğlu's death proceeded as public clashes and violent confrontations rather than peaceful demonstrations.

In the photograph, two men carry the title banner in the middle of a buffer zone between the front line and the rest of the crowd. The group occupies a large portion of the street, yet there seems to be room for vehicle movement on the adjacent lane. The mobilization of masses expresses a visual message of strength and solidarity; moreover, it demonstrates the temporary transformation of a normative transportation zone to a place of protest. In this sense, the march suspends everyday dynamics along the protest route.

In their previous organizations, students had discovered the potentials of specific precincts in supporting mobilizations.[95] Thus, they prescribed the Bloody Sunday route to expand the spheres of influence, enrich the collective experience, and build solidarity. Expectedly, the number of participants almost doubled from Beyazıt Meydanı to Taksim Meydanı connected by Sultanahmet, Cağaloğlu, Eminönü, Karaköy, Dolmabahçe, and Gümüşsuyu (also known as

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[93] Some witnesses claimed that Demircioğlu was thrown off the second-floor window of the dormitory by the police. See "Polisten Dayak Yiyen Universiteli Komada," *Milliyet*, July 22, 1968.
[94] Gökalp Eren (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.
[95] Ibid.

İnönü Street).[96] Some of the interviewees expressed that taking a cross-city journey in the company of their compatriots consolidated their sense of belonging and offered a new urban experience that differed from their everyday encounters.[97] Priska Daphi explains that the sensorial experience of mobilizing with like-minded individuals strengthens social relations correlated to the physicality of claimed spaces.[98] Marching from Beyazıt to Taksim applies well to this experience by coupling the solidarity among participants with the sense of symbolically conquering the city, stemming from the physicality of the protest route that connects the two urban cores.
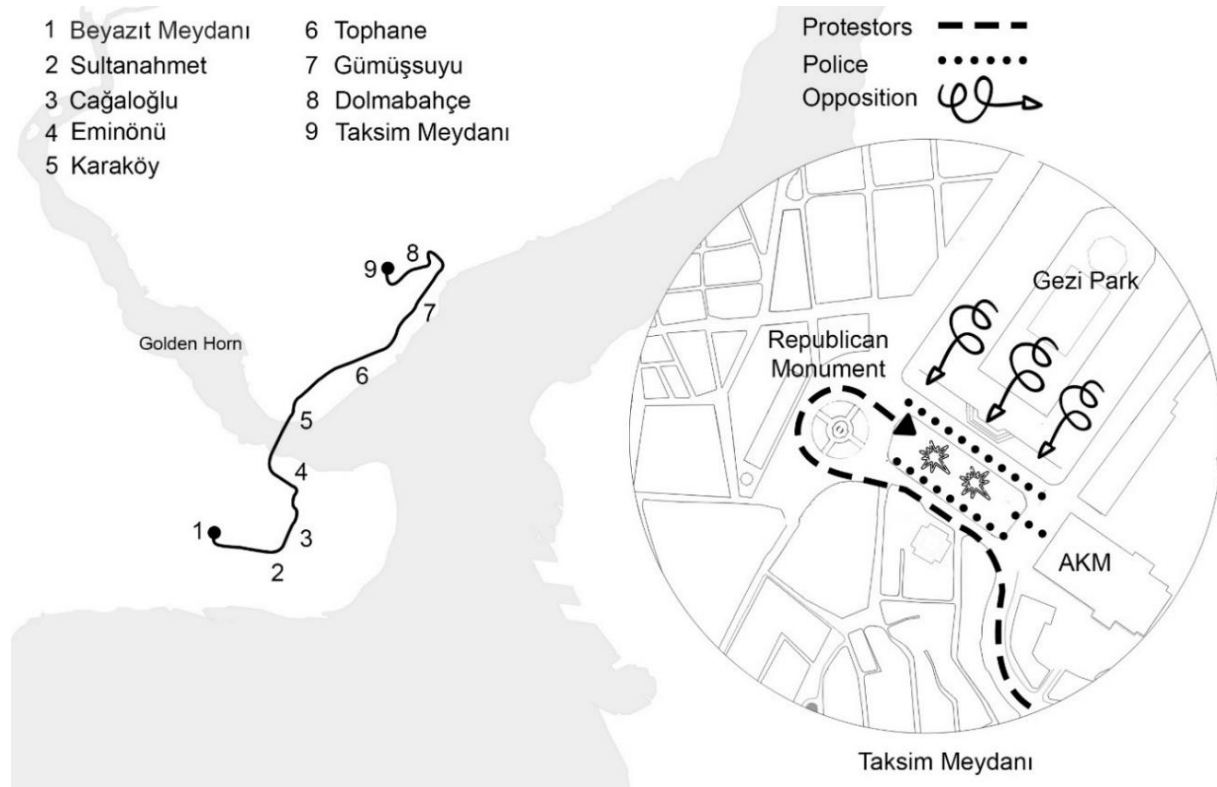
Figure 18. A map of the protest route and the encounter in Taksim Meydanı. Drawing by the author.

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[96] Gökalp Eren (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018; Namık Mustafa Kemal Boya (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018; Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018, Istanbul.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Priska Daphi, "'Imagine the Streets': The Spatial Dimension of Protests' Transformative Effects and Its Role in Building Movement Identity," *Political Geography* 56 (2017): 36.

The second location *en route*, Sultanahmet, was a monumental locus for both the Byzantines and the Ottomans. From Hagia Sophia to several other Ottoman edifices, the site has been a lively tourist destination featuring Istanbul's most visited monuments. Therefore, this part of the city has always held a constant flow of pedestrians. Multiple media outlets and the governorship were located in Cağaloğlu. Given this, navigating through Cağaloğlu would alert the protest to the press and allow for immediate publicity. Furthermore, a confrontation with government officials would simultaneously start a dialogue with decision-makers. That is to say, the route was designed with the explicit intent of opening negotiations between the protestors and authorities. Eminönü and Karaköy were commercial centres on the two sides of the Galata Bridge spanning the Golden Horn. The Mısır Çarşısı (Historical Spice Bazaar), small merchant booths, various street vendors, fishing activities, and ferry services maintained continuous pedestrian traffic in these inherently bustling districts. Especially during the daytime, both were frequented by large numbers of people shopping. Accordingly, these locations were prime opportunities to recruit potential participants to join and populate the crowd. Immediate summoning was a tactic employed to publicize and expand the event effectively.

At the time, Galata Bridge was under the control of the governor's office. There had been prior cases for which the governor used his jurisdiction to open the bridge and restrain the protestors in the historical peninsula. However, a military officer who witnessed Bloody Sunday states that no such action was taken for the event, as it would have violated the protestors' constitutional rights:

> It was evident that there was going to be a scene. The idea was to open Galata Bridge, so the students would not be able to cross and confront the opposing group. Nevertheless, the governor rejected this suggestion because opening the bridge would be against the constitution. The

police stood farther from the crowds, unable to prevent any incident. They had a reckless attitude.[99]

After crossing the Golden Horn, two alternative paths would lead to Taksim. One option was moving up through the back streets of Beyoğlu and accessing Taksim Meydanı via Istiklal Avenue and Tarlabaşı Boulevard. The second option was following Meclis-i Mebusan Street toward Dolmabahçe all along the sea, then entering the *meydan* via Gümüşsuyu. The latter was not always the primary choice to get in Taksim because Istiklal Avenue, constituting the spine that connects the historical peninsula to Beyoğlu, has long been an extension of the *meydan*. Nonetheless, this march was an organization against the 6th Fleet, which then anchored near Dolmabahçe. In order to make a political statement, protestors adjusted the route by including Dolmabahçe and Gümüşsuyu, along which the ITU's educational and dormitory buildings were located.

On the day of the event, Dolmabahçe Mosque and Gezi Park were packed with pro-US groups as the event had fair press coverage days before its occurrence. Consequently, opposing political perspectives had organized and were now conglomerating together in the same space. Pro-US groups, led by the Society for Struggle against Communism and National Turkish Students Union, gathered around Dolmabahçe Mosque and Gezi Park, where police forces were also positioned. Testimonies of Ahmet Karabacak from the pro-US group and Harun Karadeniz from the 6th Fleet protestors, also a famous student leader of the time, are as follow:

> We were at an elevated spot in Gezi Park. The communists walked into the site aloud. Taksim was surrounded by the right-wing supporters [pro-US group]. There was a police line in the middle. The police around the *meydan* disappeared in an instant. Yücel and I ran towards

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[99] For the account of an anonymous high-rank military officer of the time, see "40 Yıl Önce 'Kanlı Pazar'Da Ne Oldu?"

the communists [protestors]. We were holding branches that we had broken off a tree.[100]

Our procession was quite a long one. The bombs exploded while the front end was taking a turn [around the Republican Monument] near the historic water distribution chamber. The brawl prevented most of us from accessing Taksim […]. Besides the bombs, sticks and stones were also falling from the sky. But what repelled the crowds was the shielded riot police who attacked us. Having seen that, we had to retreat. The bombs, stones, hundreds of violent riot police, and the opposition group prevented us from going further into the *meydan*. We dispersed towards the alleys.[101]

Evidently, the protestors expected the possibility of a clash with the opposition, but the severity of it was unanticipated. Participant accounts from both sides validate that the police sided with the pro-US group. Based on the press news and witness accounts, the initial plan of the protestors was to march toward Taksim Meydanı via Gümüşsuyu, make a turn around the big flower bed encircling the Republican monument, and then deliver speeches on the steps of Gezi Park (see Figure 18).[102] As the front end of the march entered the *meydan*, the opposition group and the police intervened. A small number of anti-US protestors trapped in the middle were severely battered.[103] Panicked and injured people withdrew towards Istanbul Technical University's student residences on Gümüşsuyu. The march against the 6th Fleet ended with two people killed and more than two hundred wounded.[104] The extent of violence and public exposure led this tragedy to become firmly grounded in cultural memory and referred to as "Bloody Sunday."[105]

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[100] Ahmet Karabacak, *Üç Hilâl'in Hikâyesi* (Istanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2011), 51.
[101] Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 199.
[102] Some of the interviewees mentioned that it was a spatial tradition to make a turn around the flower bed during the rallies that target Taksim Meydanı.
[103] "40 Yıl Önce 'Kanlı Pazar'Da Ne Oldu?"
[104] Ayça Söylemez, "Kanlı Pazar'la Yüzleşemedik," February 18, 2012. Accessed January 3, 2018. http://bianet.org/biamag/print/136264-kanli-pazarla-yuzlesemedik.
[105] See, for example, Kemal Bisalman, "Boyle Olacak Ki Yaşayabilsin," *Milliyet*, February 20, 1969.

The terminology suggests that a new social space was created in Taksim with the march, especially for those who experienced this very site as a ground of "bloody" political encounters.

Aftermath

Bloody Sunday was front-page news in many newspapers the next day. However, the framing of the events that transpired differed drastically between publications. *Akşam, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet* and *Günaydın* announced that a group gathered in Taksim after the morning prayer attacked the march. *Hürriyet, Yeni Gazete* and *Dünya*, in a moderate tone, identified the event as strife between the right-wing and the left-wing supporters. On the contrary, *Son Havadis, Tercüman* and *Birgün*'s headlines portrayed the chaos as having been instigated by the left wing. In other words, the media representations of the incident, too, were reflective of the political duality manifest in Taksim Meydanı during the action.

In terms of enhancing the polarization among different social and political identity groups—such as right wing/left wing, police/protestor, state authority/citizen—Bloody Sunday opened up a process of binary opposition that would last until the military coup in the 1980s. In this process, various political groups used Taksim Meydanı for demonstrations. For example, in March 1969, students organized the remembrance event for the 1960 protests in the form of a Beyazıt-Taksim march—even though the incidents in 1960 had taken place in Beyazıt Meydanı.[106] In September

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[106] "Yarın Beyazıt'ta Miting Yapılıyor," *Milliyet*, March 24, 1969.

1969, right-wing nationalist groups occupied Taksim Meydanı for a big demonstration.[107] Into the 1970s, even political parties started to take pre-election rallies to Taksim.[108]

The contested claims over the use of the Taksim Meydanı, which amplified gradually in the following years, transformed it into a medium of highly ritualized political action and the primary venue for various forms of political expression. Even though Bloody Sunday was an ordinary procession in terms of following a familiar trajectory that connects Beyazıt to Taksim, it was exceptional regarding (1) its violent ending, which created new social space in Taksim by identifying an instant of collective remembrance (2) its protest repertoire that introduced aesthetic and didactic components to spatial appropriation.

Hatuka argues that violence is an "essential device for social groups to be able to transform environments and send an ideological message to the public."[109] In the aftermath, collective recognition of the violent act produces an opportunity for revision, which is "a performance that usually takes place in the space in which the violence occurs."[110] Bloody Sunday reconstructed the meaning of Taksim Meydanı for many of its users. The violent ending led to revisionist protest practices organized by those who wanted to "invoke images or memories to challenge the dominant meanings of a place."[111] As forms of resistance started to use place-based arguments, Taksim became the first place that citizens aimed to occupy for demonstrations. The newly formed symbolic association of the *meydan* resulted in nationwide popularity. In response,

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[107] "Milliyetçi Türkiye Mitingi," *Milliyet*, September 29, 1969.
[108] "AP'nin Istanbul Mitingi Yapıldı," *Milliyet*, October 13, 1973; "CHP'nin Demokrasi ve Özgürlük Mitinginde Görülmemiş Kalabalık Vardı," *Milliyet*, June 29, 1975.
[109] Tali Hatuka, *Violent Acts and Urban Space in Contemporary Tel Aviv: Revisioning Moments* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 19.
[110] Ibid, 22.
[111] Alexa Robertson and Alexandra Gojowy, "Protest, Place in Pictures: The Public Square in Al Jazeera English Photo Essays," in *Screening Protest: Visual Narratives of Dissent Across Time, Space and Genre*, ed. Alexa Robertson (London; New York: Routledge, 2018), 152.

successive governments operated strategies that limited its use for certain types of public events. For example, in the immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday, the municipality prohibited public demonstrations in the form of Beyazıt-Taksim marches and designated specific protest routes to contain these types of events within the historical peninsula.[112] According to the new regulation, only Beyazıt Meydanı, Saraçhane Meydanı and Sultanahmet Meydanı, all attached to Divanyolu, could be the destinations for in-city rallies.[113]

Tim Creswell contends that "the qualities of place that make them good strategic tools of power simultaneously make them ripe for resistance in highly visible and often outrageous ways."[114] Civil protests were among the most common activities in Beyazıt Meydanı, especially during the early 1960s. They became a regular pattern keeping the *meydan* alive, maintaining the social interaction and reconstructing its meaning. In other words, the place was "made, maintained and contested through the performance of protestors."[115] Taksim's evolution into becoming the favoured location for political activity left Beyazıt less active as a protest space from the late 1960s onward. Taksim became a locus for several activism practices and May Day celebrations with the strengthening labour movement. Having lost much of its former glory, Beyazıt was used primarily as a parking lot, flea market, and hangout for street vendors and 1980s.[116] Even though the city saw a general resurgence in activism practices in the 1990s, Beyazıt Meydanı remained a secondary location for large-scale public gatherings and protests.

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[112] "Beyazıt'la Taksim Arasında Gösteri Yapılmayacak," *Milliyet*, November 17, 1969.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis, Mn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 164.
[115] Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 263.
[116] "Üniversite Kapısında Yerli Turist Pazarı," *Milliyet*, December 24, 1973; "Ahmet İsvan Beyazıt Meydanı'nı Kurtaracak," *Milliyet*, October 9, 1975.

Figure 19. A newspaper report from *Hürriyet*, March 11, 1969. The caption on the top right reads "Beyazıt Meydanı became a flea market not being able to become anything else." The report elaborates on the activities in the *meydan* during its appropriation as a flea market every Sunday. A wide range of products being sold, from old records to street food, is mentioned along with the photographs. Source: Memory of Istanbul in Individual Archives. Şehir University e-Archive.

Figure 20. A newspaper report from *Milliye*t, January 28, 1992. "Beyazıt cannot be ameliorated. The renovation works at the historic *meydan* are of no use. Street vendors are all around." Source: Memory of Istanbul in Individual Archives. Şehir University e-Archive.

The newspaper clipping from 1992 in Figure 20 describes Beyazıt as "a place reflecting the entire chaos of the city, while it was once imagined as the l'Etoile of Turkey."[117] It reports that another round of efforts to revitalize the *meydan* in 1991 also failed to achieve its design and obscured Beyazıt's urban role. Figure 19 from 1969 similarly criticizes the abundance of street traders in the area. The photographs capture citizens who occupy the *meydan* to buy or sell goods, maybe socialize in the meantime. These newly emerging activities in Beyazıt Meydanı

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[117] *Milliyet*, January 28, 1992.

imply the creation of new social relations in public space; nevertheless, they apparently did not match the urban public culture imagined by the authorities. In the meantime, broader discussions over the city and public spaces shifted towards Taksim Meydanı, leaving Beyazıt as a local public space while elevating Taksim's significance to a national level.

In the 1980s, the renewal of Beyazıt Meydanı became a concern for the municipality that announced an urban design competition to rehabilitate the area. The winning proposal was of Vedia Dökmeci and Yaprak Karlıdağ, whose approach to the *meydan* shared similarities with Cansever's, suggesting multiple ground levels and walls. Even though minute implementation attempts were made, it was not fully realized, similar to earlier cases. The design competitions launched to rehabilitate Beyazıt could not be implemented, partly due to shifts in political cadres but its historical and urban significance also complicated the decision-making processes. The pattern of design competitions failing to yield any material change to the landscape continued in the following years—a mode of operation that opens windows of opportunity for future research.

This chapter focused on a protest march that linked Beyazıt Meydanı and Taksim Meydanı through the movement of people. I first discussed public space as a medium enabling political participation and communication throughout the 1960s in Istanbul. I highlighted that the popularization of marching as a form of protest added to the representational character of Taksim as the culminating point of rallies. Next, I analyzed the historical relationship between marching and urban transformations in the city. This analysis revealed that the physicality of both *meydans* was informed by the displays and negotiations of political power. Then, I examined the politics of space at play in Beyazıt in the wake of the 1960s' protest movements. The new design of the *meydan* entailed controversies concerning its public reception and identity as a protest space. Identifying Bloody Sunday as a transformative event, I examined its spatial appropriation

strategies. I argued that the entire choreography, coupled with its violent ending, identified

Taksim as a contested public space. With the repetitive practices building on this identification,

the *meydan* evolved as the primary protest space, the urban role formerly fulfilled by Beyazıt. In

the next chapter, I will look into how May Day 1977 consolidated Taksim's association with

public opposition and resulted in future spatial practices that sustained and contested this

association.

Chapter II

A Carnival: May Day Celebration, 1977

> Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants.[1]

> The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance […] Rank was especially evident during official feasts; everyone was expected to appear in the full regalia of his calling and to take the place corresponding to his position. It was a consecration of inequality. On the contrary, all were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age […] People were, so to speak, reborn for new, purely human relations. These truly human relations were not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind.[2]

On May 1, 1977, hundreds of thousands of people from across the country poured into Taksim Meydanı for the second massive May Day celebration in this location. The crowds initially congregated at dispersed points of origin on two sides of the Golden Horn, Saraçhane and Beşiktaş. A carnivalesque performance enthralled the citizens on the way toward and in the space of assembly. Taksim Meydanı was jam-packed with people spilling over into the radiating streets, in stark contrast to an ordinary day during which it served as a hustling traffic hub. Brightly coloured banners and placards of several occupational clusters enveloped the area, identified by the historical icons of Republican modernism: the Republican monument, Gezi Park, and AKM. Unlike an everyday user walking by, most probably indifferent to the

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[1] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7–8.
[2] Ibid., 10.

surrounding people, activities, and built environment, the participants consciously staged the performance. They danced, sang, shouted slogans, practised their craft in work garments, and shared an out-of-the-ordinary urban experience of Taksim in the company of like-minded people.

The celebration was not exclusive to trade union members; it brought together a broad spectrum of labourers from different income levels. Doctors, architects, actors, artists, teachers all walked in solidarity with factory and construction workers.[3] This multilayered social structure temporarily broke the hierarchy among citizens who stripped off their social statuses to become a part of the "carnival," a utopian antidote to repressive forms of power as Bakhtin describes.[4] The entire Taksim area then became a stage occupied by the masses that manipulated the familiar daily functionings of a public space to their own end in expressing collective demands. Similar to Bloody Sunday, May Day 1977 also ended violently. The panic caused by the gunshots from multiple locations caused a stampede that left thirty-six people dead and hundreds injured.[5] The incident was later dubbed the Taksim Massacre by the media and received broad national and international media coverage.[6]

The turmoil patently granted Taksim Meydanı a privileged position as a place for remembrance from the standpoint of the participants. Beyond the traumatic memories, however, the demonstration made strong political statements with its posters, placards, banners, and public performances through which the relationship between arts and politics gained a spatial dimension. The new imaginings of the built environment and urban space—both by the state and

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[3] BBC News Türkçe, *1 Mayıs 1977: Yaşananların Tanığı Kadınlar Anlatıyor*, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7Bsoy6dzn8.

[4] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 9.

[5] Nail Güreli, *1 Mayıs 1977: Türkiye Devrimcilerinin "İki 1 Mayıs" Belgeseli* (Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 1979), 154.

[6] *New York Times*, *Deutsche Welle* and French Sipa Press were among the international media outlets that reported on the event. Barış Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı* (Istanbul: Müdafaa-i Hukuk Yayınları, 2007), 22.

the citizens—informed how Taksim Meydanı was to function in the years to come. It is the changing spatial traditions in this place that this chapter identifies as a point of interrogation. Consequently, I will explore how the event influenced the symbolic and physical transformations around Taksim Meydanı. I argue that the demonstrators' appropriation of Taksim for May Days made it the subject of a two-sided contestation. On the one hand, the *meydan*'s affiliation with labour and related activism practices challenged the ideologies embodied in its architectural elements, such as AKM and the Republican monument. This affiliation further built on Taksim's recognition as a protest space that allows visibility to collective demands. On the other hand, local and central governments consistently challenged this recognition in the form of design interventions and other spatial appropriation strategies that aimed to change the *meydan*'s operation on an everyday level.

This chapter contributes to the urban histories of Istanbul by tracing the influence of May Day celebrations and the contested claims in the spatial development of one of the most crucial public spaces in the city, Taksim Meydanı. The analyses of the appropriation of urban space through political art contribute to the literature on Istanbul's visual/public culture in the 1970s. The chapter also highlights the central role of arts and design professionals and their contribution to raising the citizens' awareness of sociopolitical issues and promoting social change by transforming everyday experiences into politicized experiences.

In the first section, I discuss the sociopolitical forces at play in the urban mobilizations throughout the 1970s. Then I turn to the politics of May Day celebrations and their publicness in the city. May Day 1977 was not an isolated incident; on the contrary, its connection to public space resulted from a multi-year struggle. Next, I analyze the political artworks that prospered during May Days and how they encouraged citizens to create alternative public spaces in their

city. Studying the spatialization of the 1977 event and its aftermath, I observe that the social

space built in Taksim Meydanı resulted in future spatial practices that both sustained and

contested its association with demonstrations. Deliberate appropriation of the *meydan* and its

built components entailed counter-interventions from the governments that aimed to imbue this

space with new political meanings.

Politics of Public Space in the 1970s

> Anarchy corresponds to pre-coup conditions in the collective Turkish memory.
> When we look at a wider historical interval from a further vantage point than
> that defined by this particular event, anarchy is seen to be used to define almost
> all manners of opposition outside the entire central structure. Istanbul has been
> an important locality of anarchy throughout history. Istanbul constantly defines
> a zone where on the one hand an attempt to bridle and bring order goes on,
> where the public sphere is closed off for a certain section of society and then
> reopened, and on the other hand a zone that possesses dynamics with the
> tendency to constantly violate order.[7]

The definition of anarchy above, in a nutshell, articulates the pre- and post-coup dynamics of

dissent in public space and the government responses to it. After the military memorandum of

March 12, 1971, student movement leaders of the 1960s, such as Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan,

Yusuf Aslan, Mahir Çayan, were executed.[8] Many other activists were imprisoned for long

periods. Sanctions of the military intervention imposed limitations on the operation of unions,

student collectives and political parties, yet ongoing public unrest escalated instead of subsiding.[9]

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[7] Ersin Altın, "Anarchy (I)," in *Becoming Istanbul: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Pelin Derviş, Bülent Tanju, and Uğur Tanyeli (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Garanti Gallery, 2008).

[8] *TBMM Tutanakları/Idam Görüşmeleri: Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, Yusuf Aslan* (Istanbul: Liya Kitap, 2016).

[9] Following the coup, the junta government closed down youth collectives and prohibited the operations of professional associations and unions; it also abolished The Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşci Partisi/TİP) and imposed restrictions on labour rights. See Feroz Ahmad, "Military Intervention, Social Democracy, and Political Terror, 1971–1980," in *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 148–80.

Particularly during the interval from 1976 to 1980, serious street battles between right-wing and left-wing political groups, bombings, and assassinations filled the national agenda. Extreme sociopolitical polarization entailed nationalist attacks toward ethnic minorities in several cities. Some universities fell under the hegemony of certain political ideologies (for example, Gazi University was affiliated with the right wing and Ankara University with the left wing); therefore, campuses witnessed fierce clashes between opposing groups. The encounters of people with different political orientations also pervaded everyday life through streets and *meydans*. Besides the oppositional political activity, short-lived coalition governments further increased overall instability.[10] Altogether, public unrest going hand in hand with administrative fluctuation and financial crisis characterized the public scene throughout the decade. Nonetheless, the sociopolitical and cultural balances that saturated this period can be traced back to the liberal urban developments of the 1950s.

Union Activities in the City

The mechanization of agriculture and an import-oriented economy that prevailed after the 1950s Marshall Plan led to mass migration from rural areas to city centres in Turkey.[11] Istanbul became a preferred destination, as the dream city whose stone and soil were made of gold. A flood of migrants and their efforts to adopt the "modern" life transformed the city's urban structure physically and socially from the 1950s onward. Özgür Balkılıç states that in 1950, 130,000

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[10] Ibid.

[11] See Ahmet İçduygu, İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydıngün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi," in *Türkiye'de Içgöç: Türkiye'de Içgöç, Sorunsal Alanları ve Araştırma Yöntemleri Konferansı 6-8 Haziran 1997 Bolu-Gerede*, eds. Ahmet İçduygu, İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydıngün (Istanbul:Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 207–44.

people moved to Istanbul, which by 1955 hosted 65 percent of the industrial plants in the

Marmara Region.[12] In a few decades, the expansion and growth of the population, in search of

decent work opportunities and living conditions, grew beyond the city's capacity to sustain.

Housing and employment became significant problems for the new residents, who established

squatter settlements near their workplaces.[13] For example, many industrial plants and squatters

were located around the Golden Horn. According to Balkılıç, the struggles of this massive

industrial workforce triggered the establishment of unions as agents to improve the work and

living conditions of the working class.[14]

The accumulation of workers—either employed, precariously employed, or unemployed—led to

a swift increase in the members of the Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (The

Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions/DISK), founded in 1967.[15] Despite the legal

restrictions on union operations, the working class maintained its robust institutional growth

from the 1960s onward.[16] Labour organizations choreographed various demonstrations ranging

from strikes, slowdown strikes, marches, sit-ins to occupations for the betterment of workers'

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[12] By that time, Marmara region included nearly fifty percent of all industrial plants in the country. Özgür Balkılıç, "For the Union That Makes Us Strong: The Istanbul Metal Workers and Their Struggle for Unionization in Turkey, 1947-1970," PhD diss. (Wilfrid Laurier University, 2015), 86–87.

[13] Urban histories of this period predominantly examine the squatter settlements, known as *gecekondu,* and their role in the transformation of sociopolitical and cultural landscapes. See, for example, Halil Taş and Dale Lightfoot, "Gecekondu Settlements in Turkey: Rural—Urban Migration in the Developing European Periphery," *Journal of Geography* 104, no. 6 (2005): 263–7; Tahire Erman, "Squatter (Gecekondu) Housing versus Apartment Housing: Turkish Rural-to-Urban Migrant Residents' Perspectives," *HAB Habitat International* 21, no. 1 (1997): 91–106; Özgür Sevgi Göral, "Urban Anxieties and Kurdish Migrants: Urbanity, Belonging, and Resistance in Istanbul," in *The Making of Neoliberal Turkey*, Cenk Özbay et al. eds. (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016): 111-130.

[14] Balkılıç, "For the Union Makes Us Strong," 125.

[15] The DISK had approximately 50,000 members in 1967. In 1976, the number rose to one hundred ninety thousand in twenty-five affiliated unions. Yüksel Akkaya, *Cumhuriyet'in Hamalları: İşçiler* (Istanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2010), 227.

[16] See Adnan Mahiroğulları, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Türk Sendikacılık Tarihi* (Istanbul: Özlem Kitabevi, 2017); Fikret Adaman, Ayşe Buğra, and Ahmet İnsel, "Societal Context of Labor Union Strategy: The Case of Turkey," *Labor Studies Journal* 34, no. 2 (2009): 168–88; M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi 1908-1984* (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2016).

living and workplace conditions.[17] Primarily factories and nearby public spaces became sites of

resistance where the employees broke daily routines by showing up to engage in collective

action. For instance, throughout the Kavel (private cable production plant) occupations (1963)

and the Paşabahçe (state glass-ware production enterprise) strikes (1966), workers debilitated the

factories for months; during the Big Worker's March on June 15–16, 1970, the crowds mobilized

from within Istanbul and neighbouring industrial towns to occupy central locations.[18]As Balkılıç

contends, these forms of resistance encouraged workers to engage in public debates on social

justice.[19] Furthermore, they transformed institutionally managed environments into insurgent

public spaces that enabled citizens to confront the authorities and status quo by challenging the

city's formal consumption.

The DISK and affiliated unions played an essential role in training a politically conscious labour

class throughout the 1970s. However, class conflict was not always at the centre of the DISK

organizations. From democratic rights and freedoms marches to demonstrations against the State

Security Courts—which were extensions of the state of emergency declared after the coup—,

several public performances addressed mainstream political issues.[20] Accordingly, these

activities appealed to a broader range of participants. As such, the May Days of 1976, 1977, and

1978 brought together various occupational clusters and people from all walks of life in

transcending the discourses of trade unions.[21] While presenting multiple opportunities for the

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[17] For detailed information on the DISK-organized demonstrations of this period, see "DİSK Etkinlikler Dizini (1964-1996)," *Disk.Org.tr* (blog), accessed December 10, 2019, http://disk.org.tr/disk-etkinlikler-dizini/; "1973-1980 Arasinda İşçi Hareketleri," in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1988), 2282–2303.

[18] "1973-1980 Arasinda İşçi Hareketleri."

[19] Balkılıç, "For the Union Makes Us Strong," 172.

[20] "DİSK Etkinlikler Dizini (1964-1996)."

[21] For example, celebrity actors and actresses of the time joined the events under the Cinema Labourers Union. Aysıt Yılmaz, "Tarih Taksim'de Yazıldı," *Milliyet, Gazete Pazar*, April 27, 1997, sec. Joker, 68.

collective appropriations of the city, annual May Day celebrations also enabled the interaction between political and artistic practices to become visible in urban space.

International May Day Celebrations

The process that led to the recognition of an International Labour Day (or May Day) started in the rapidly industrializing countries as a response to labourers' demand for a shorter workday. During the nineteenth century, industrial employees in the USA lodged strikes against long working hours extended from sunrise to sunset—which in some cases meant fourteen to sixteen hours a day.[22] After some industries gave in to limit hours of daily work, the demand evolved into "eight hours work, eight hours recreation, eight hours sleep."[23] The movement spread quickly not only in the USA but in several European countries and Australia. On May 1, 1886, Chicago being the pioneer, many cities saw unfaltering strikes joined by tens of thousands of labourers refusing to work. In 1899, the congress of the Second International held in Paris declared May 1 as the "International Workers' Day," or "Labour Day," during which workers across the world would organize strikes and assemblies.[24] Some countries tailored the celebration dates in accordance with their idiosyncratic national histories; nevertheless, today, May Day is

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[22] For further information on the history of May Day, see, Claude Larivière and Philip S. Foner, "May Day: A Short History of the International Worker's Holiday, 1886-1986," *Labour / Le Travail* 24 (1989).
[23] "The History of May Day" (International Pamphlets, 1932), https://www.marxists.org/subject/mayday/articles/tracht.html.
[24] Ibid.

an official holiday in multiple geographies and is celebrated via public parades and demonstrations.[25]

May Day translates into Turkish as İşçi Bayramı (The Worker's Holiday). Following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, multiple May Day parades were performed in Ottoman Thessaloniki, but the launch in Istanbul dates back to the early 1920s.[26] Despite on and off public celebrations throughout the twentieth century, the occasion became an official holiday only in 2009.[27]

During the occupation in Istanbul between 1918-1923, the Allied Forces Command declared collective public acts as menacing to the regime. In defiance of the extended efforts to obstruct the gatherings, May Days were celebrated publicly in 1921 and 1922. In 1921, the Socialist Party of Turkey invited all factory workers and artisans—except for the electrical workers, to keep the city functioning—to Kağıthane.[28] In 1922, the crowds met in the Sultanahmet area of the historical peninsula. Accompanied by a marching band, they rallied towards a meadowland, known as Çırpıcı Çayırı in Zeytinburnu, via Divanyolu.

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[25] The USA and Canada honour Labour Day on the first Monday of September. For various types of celebrations and commemorations in different geographies, see "May 1 Labour Day: What Is International Workers' Day?," *Aljazeera*, May 1, 2019. Accessed December 24, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/day-international-workers-day-170429074724991.html.

[26] Zafer Toprak, "Istanbul'da Amele Bayramları/ Cumhuriyet Oncesi," *Tarih Toplum ve İletişim* 41 (1987): 35.

[27] Hasan Örnekoğu, "'Bayram'da uzlaştılar, Taksim 33 yıl sonra 1 Mayıs'a açıldı," *Hürriyet*, April 14, 2010. Accessed February 24, 2020, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/bayram-da-uzlastilar-taksim-33-yil-sonra-1-mayis-a-acildi-14411731.

[28] Zafer Toprak, "Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Tarihte 1 Mayıslar (1906-1925)," *Yurt ve Dünya* 3 (1977): 397–98.
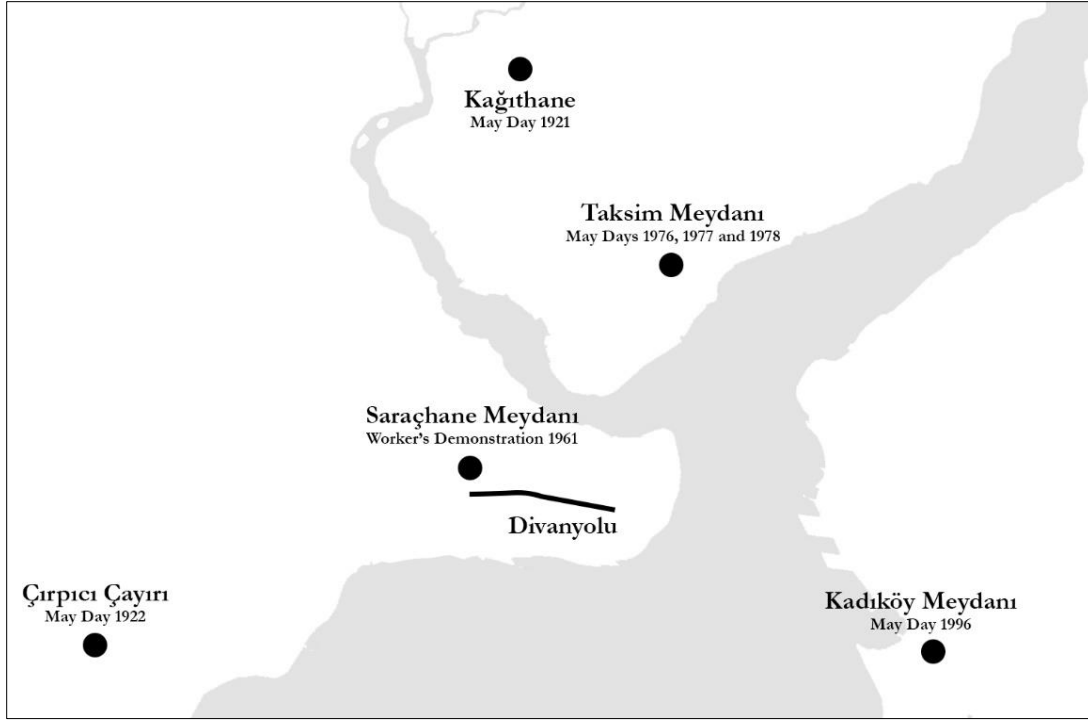
Figure 21. A map of the May Day locations in Istanbul. Drawing by the author.

In 1923, the Allied occupation in Istanbul ended, and the Republic of Turkey was founded.

Citizens cheered for both instances during the big declamatory May Day celebration.[29] Due to the

nation-building policies at play, subsequent years saw small-scale assemblies near central office

buildings rather than large-scale gatherings. In 1925, the legislation on the maintenance of order

(Takrir-i Sükun), which was initially executed to quell the Kurdish uprisings in the eastern

provinces, prohibited any public demonstration organized by labour.[30] In 1935, the date was

renamed Bahar ve Çiçek Bayramı (Spring and Flower Holiday), an ideological attempt,

according to historian Feroz Ahmad, to erase the memory of the event.[31] During the 1930s and

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[29] See Oğuz Topak, "1 Mayıs Geçmişten Geleceğe Bir Köprü," *Türk Tabipleri Birliği Mesleki Sağlık ve Güvenlik Dergisi* 29 (2007): 14–17.

[30] İsmail Göldaş, *Takrir-i Sükûn Görüşmeleri* (Sultanahmet, Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1997).

[31] See Feroz Ahmad, "Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Sınıf Bilincinin Olusması 1923-1940," in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler: 1839-1950/Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1839-1950*, eds. Cahide. Ekiz, Donald Quataert, and Erik Jan. Zürcher (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), 145.

1940s, the banned Communist Party distributed clandestine manifestoes to honour the occasion. The circumstances also remained the same throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The mandatory retreat of May Days from public space implies a diminishing representation and visibility for the working class and its demands for decades.

Taking advantage of the constitutional changes of 1961, workers took action on their legal rights. As early as December 1961, they organized a massive demonstration to demand the right to strike and to negotiate labour agreements.[32] Not being able to secure administrative permits for Taksim, the crowds gathered in Saraçhane Meydanı, a public space known for hosting several protests during the late Ottoman period.[33] This case marked the start of several labour resistances—in the form of strikes, factory occupations and rallies—that kept workers visible and active in the public spheres.[34]

The May Days of the 1970s notably displayed the institutional structuring of the labour. Union members spent a lot of time and effort organizing and publicizing the events that saw massive turnouts. In 1979 and 1980, Martial Law Command prohibited the celebrations and placed military vehicles in Taksim Meydanı to prevent the assembly. Police detained those who attempted to make a public appearance. The 1979 gathering took place in Izmir instead of

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[32] Aziz Çelik and Hakan Koçak, "Türkiye İşçi Sınıfının Ayağa Kalktığı Gün: Saraçhane Mitingi," *Çalışma ve Toplum* 2 (2016): 647–78.

[33] Ibid, 49.

[34] Among them Kavel (cable production plant) and Paşabahçe (glass production plant) strikes, Derby (tire production plant) occupation, and the mass mobilizations known as June 15-16 events stand out. See "İlk Fabrika İşgali: DERBY," *Uluslararası İşçi Dayanışması Derneği*, January 7, 2017. Accessed March 21, 2018, https://uidder.org/ilk_fabrika_isgali_derby.htm; "DİSK'e Giden Yol: Paşabahçe Grevi," Uluslararası İşçi Dayanışması Derneği, October 27, 2016, https://uidder.org/diske_giden_yol_pasabahce_grevi.htm; Feyizoğlu, *15/16 Haziran*.

Istanbul.[35] From 1980 until 2010, Taksim was strictly closed off for May Days; nonetheless, the aspirations to claim the *meydan* for future demonstrations never ceased.

During the expurgatory period, any endeavour to publicly commemorate May Days in Istanbul was met by violent policing.[36] In 1987, crowds attempted to lay a wreath by the Republican monument, but only a handful of parliament representatives were allowed. In 1992, a gathering took place in Ankara in the form of an indoor assembly. In 1996, the location was Kadıköy Meydanı on the Anatolian side; again, there was an immediate police response. In 2010, the governor of Istanbul reopened Taksim for May Days as a component of the AKP's alleged reconciliatory policies. [37] Yet, this long-awaited liberation was a short-term implementation only. As early as 2013, the Minister of Domestic Affairs gave the Taksim Urban Transformation Project's partial execution as a pretext to close off the *meydan* for the celebration again. The municipality employed various strategies to restrain access to Taksim.[38] In addition to the barriers enveloping the site, police vehicles and barricades blocked all the surrounding streets. Metro, rapid bus transport (*metrobüs*), and ferry services were suspended. Atatürk Bridge and Galata Bridge over the Golden Horn were also shut to disable participation from the historical peninsula. The police detained a handful of DISK members who wanted to make a press statement in the vicinity. Since then, no public May Day celebrations have taken place in

[35] "Izmir'de 1 Mayıs Mitingi Olaysız Geçti," *Milliyet*, May 2, 1979.

[36] "1 Mayısın Tarihi," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, May 2, 2001. Accessed February 24, 2020, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/emek/2023-1-mayisin-tarihi.

[37] Hasan Örnekoğu, "'Bayram'da uzlaştılar, Taksim 33 yıl sonra 1 Mayıs'a açıldı," *Hürriyet*, April 14, 2010. Accessed February 24, 2020, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/bayram-da-uzlastilar-taksim-33-yil-sonra-1-mayis-a-acildi-14411731.

[38] "1 Mayıs 2013: Künye ve Bilanço," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, April 25, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/yasam/146326-1-mayis-2013-kunye-ve-bilanco.

Taksim. Concisely, the state strictly curtailed the publicness of May Days, in terms of the physical space they could occupy, following the 1978 gathering in Istanbul.

An interpretation of the map in Figure 21 reveals that May Day demonstrations gradually moved into central locations from the peripheries over several decades. The event, cast out of the city centre in 1979, re-approached the urban core by appropriating secondary *meydans* throughout the 1990s. As the brief history I presented above also demonstrates, regime and government change directly informed how May Days used public spaces (or how they were prevented from doing so) in Turkey. In response, political authorities declared hegemony over the site by monopolizing decision-making processes on what could take place in the meydan or not. The historical process highlights Taksim's transformation in relationship to May Day celebrations on two levels: (1) May Day evolved from being a public demonstration searching for visibility into a struggle over claiming Taksim Meydanı, (2) reclaiming Taksim for purposes that transcend its state-determined functions made it a subject of contestation. This transformation, I examine in detail in the following sections.

Protest Art in the City

May Days were annual gatherings aiming to convey political demands publicly in a festive environment, an aspect that differentiates them from flash mobs or other fleeting demonstrations. The one-year time gap between events enabled unions and collectives to plan and announce them ahead of time. Organization committees gave utmost importance to finding new ways to communicate messages to citizens. Highly influenced by political affairs, the cultural and artistic milieu of the 1970s played a significant role in facilitating this form of communication.

Collaborating with political parties, unions, and other organizations, graphic designers reflected on the sociopolitical circumstances in their artworks of varying shapes and forms. These refined products of political art enhanced the celebrations' visual sophistication with their aesthetic-didactic quality. Moreover, they served as practical mediums that enabled citizens to appropriate urban space and reclaim the city in their unique ways.

According to Feyyaz Yaman, artists of the period had heightened political awareness of national and international affairs.[39] Siding with public opposition, they incorporated street politics, union discourses, and the problems of migrants and urbanites into their professional artistic production. Thus, they employed artworks as a tool to convey political messages. Visual aspects of social movements usually have two primary goals: (1) to share information concerning the events, their contents, and whereabouts, (2) to inform the public about sociopolitical issues and invite citizens to claim their democratic rights.[40] They also function as mediums of propaganda by trying to convince citizens of various political agendas. That is, protest visuals cultivate public engagement and encourage people to act on their political agency.

Especially between the years 1960–1980, political posters and wall paintings constituted major avenues of public communication in Turkey. Thus, labour organizations paid particular attention to their design, production, and placement in the city. Print materials of several unions (such as journals, flyers, and posters) included contributions from famous designers, painters, and artists. The posters covered building facades, lampposts, bus stops and wooden fences that separated private zones from the public. Flyers were a common sight on the streets where citizens could

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[39] Feyyaz Yaman, "Türkiye'de 1970'ler, Direnişin Sanatı," in *77-13: politische Kunst im Widerstand in der Türkei = Türkiye'de Direnişin Sanatı* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 2015), 128–29.
[40] Demarmels, "Posters and Placards."

easily spot them.[41] As display locations, organizers equally targeted central districts with

continuous human flow, such as Beyoğlu, Kadıköy, and Şişli, squatter settlements concentrated

around industrial plants along the Golden Horn, and other poor neighbourhoods further from the

centre, such as Alibeyköy and Zeytinburnu.[42] In this way, the urban experience of people who

inhabited various parts of the city transformed into politicized experiences on an everyday level.
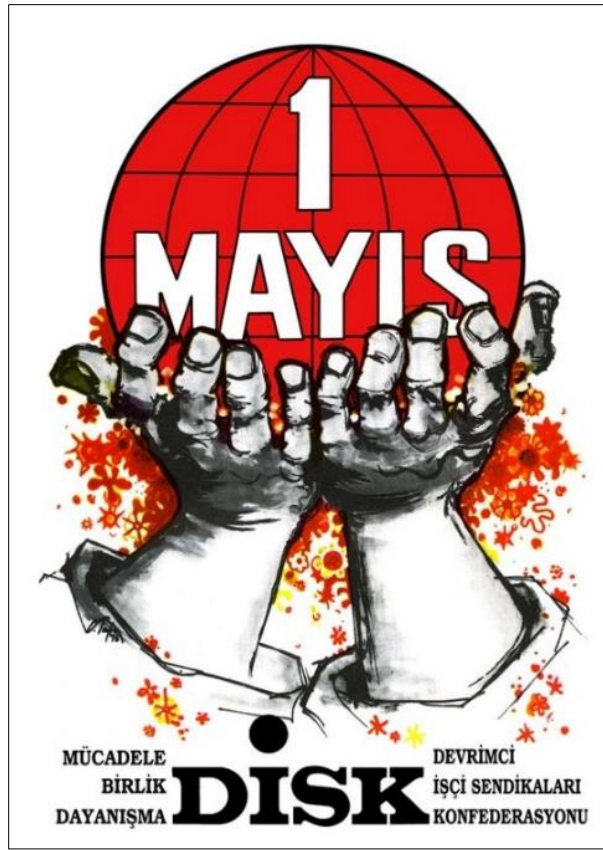
Figure 22. The DISK poster for the 1976 May Day celebration, designed by Orhan Taylan. The poster illustrates two dirty hands, most probably a reference to manual labour, lifting the world. The background is decorated with red floral patterns. The text on the bottom left reads "struggle, unity, solidarity." Source: *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 1 Mayıs, Ilk Dileğimiz: 1920'lerde, 1970'lerde ve 1990'lardan Günümüze 1 Mayıs Afişleri* (Taksim, Istanbul: TÜSTAV İktisadi İşletmesi, 2006)

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[41] Asude Uzgören (participant) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018; Atila Uzgören (participant) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018.

[42] Gökalp Eren (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.; Namık Mustafa Kemal Boya (activist) in discussion with the author, January 3, 2018.

The well-known DISK poster for May Day 1976 in Figure 22 is artist Orhan Taylan's work.[43] A

graduate of the Fine Arts Academy in Rome, Taylan designed multiple murals, posters and

banners for various unions and collectives throughout the decade. The grand piece that blanketed

the façade of the AKM in the 1977 celebration was also in his oeuvre. Taylan's composition in

Figure 22 depicts the world elevated in two dirty hands that presumably symbolize manual

labour. Combined with red floral patterns, the image suggests that the world will ascend in the

hands of labourers. This work was repeatedly used and circulated in different forms and scales

but similar contexts.[44] For May Day 1977, it was printed on a canvas banner to be carried by the

marchers. It was also used as a pamphlet cover page for the DISK in the following years.

Reproductions of the composition in multiple formats and scales must have enabled citizens to

come across the imagery and its intended message repeatedly.

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[43] Nilay Vardar, "Orhan Taylan İle Söyleştik: 'Şans Mı Kader Mi, Bu Afiş 1 Mayıs'ın Simgesi Oldu,'" *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, April 30, 2016. Accessed July 17, 2019, https://www.bianet.org/biamag/diger/174231-sans-mi-kader-mi-bu-afis-1-mayis-in-simgesi-oldu.
[44] Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak*, 336–55.
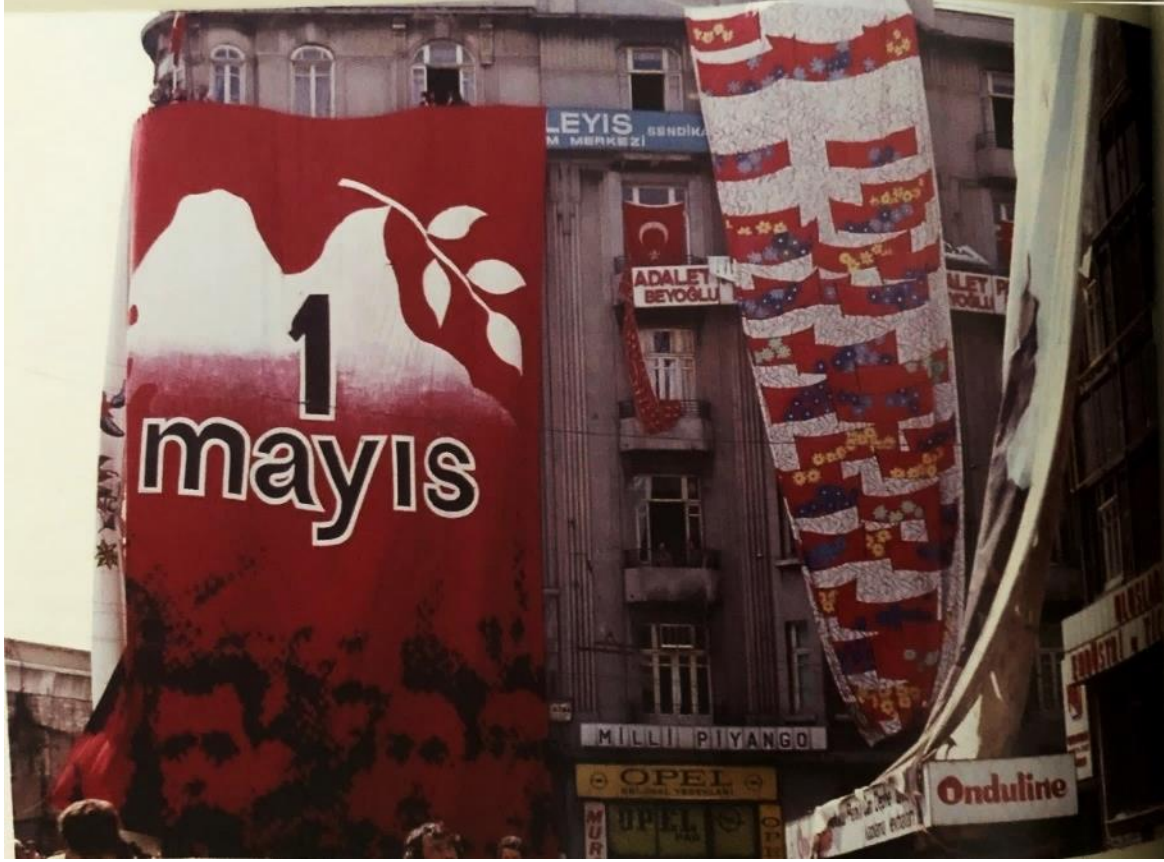
Figure 23. Preparations in Beyoğlu for May Day 1978. The canvas banner on the left side with the black and white May 1st script is originally the poster for May Day 1978. It was designed by the sculptor and graphic artist Şekip Davaz. The composition depicts a group of people gathered under a white dove carrying an olive branch. The banner on the right side, which illustrates black and white marching people figures carrying canvas banners, is specifically designed for the Tekstil Işçileri Sendikası (Union of Textile Workers). The pattern is the work of graphic artist Mehmet Dönmez. Source: Yılmaz Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak: 1963-1980: Solun Görsel Serüveni* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013).

The poster of the 1978 celebration and many other visuals to complement that year's event were

designed by the sculptor and graphic artist Şekip Davaz. Figure 23 shows some graphic

compositions and their display as public art installations in the urban context. The big red banner

with the black and white May 1st script, the main poster of the year, was a competition winner.

The composition appeared in multiple media in different scales to maximize its capacity to

communicate with the public. The white dove and the olive branch it carries on the top half of

the frame are universal symbols of peace. The bottom half is occupied by the silhouettes of a

group, very likely part of a rally. Therefore, the composition in its entirety can be interpreted as a call to unite under a banner of peace.

The longitudinal banner on the right in Figure 23 is the work of graphic artist Mehmet Dönmez, who designed the piece exclusively for the Tekstil İşçileri Sendikası (Union of Textile Workers). While a black and white pattern created by linear figures of marching people fills the background of this composition, foregrounded miniature red-floral canvas banners within the banner draw attention to the textile production. That is, the artist simultaneously displays the material outcome of textile workers' labour, a call to the celebration of the year, and the rally itself. The subtle incorporation of the protest repertoire to the banner invites workers to claim their rights on the street. In this case, both the banner itself and its content show ways to appropriate public space, the former through its placement on a concrete building façade, the latter by illustrating a protest march. Both displays highlight politically active citizens' role in spatial production by presenting alternative ways to occupy the city.
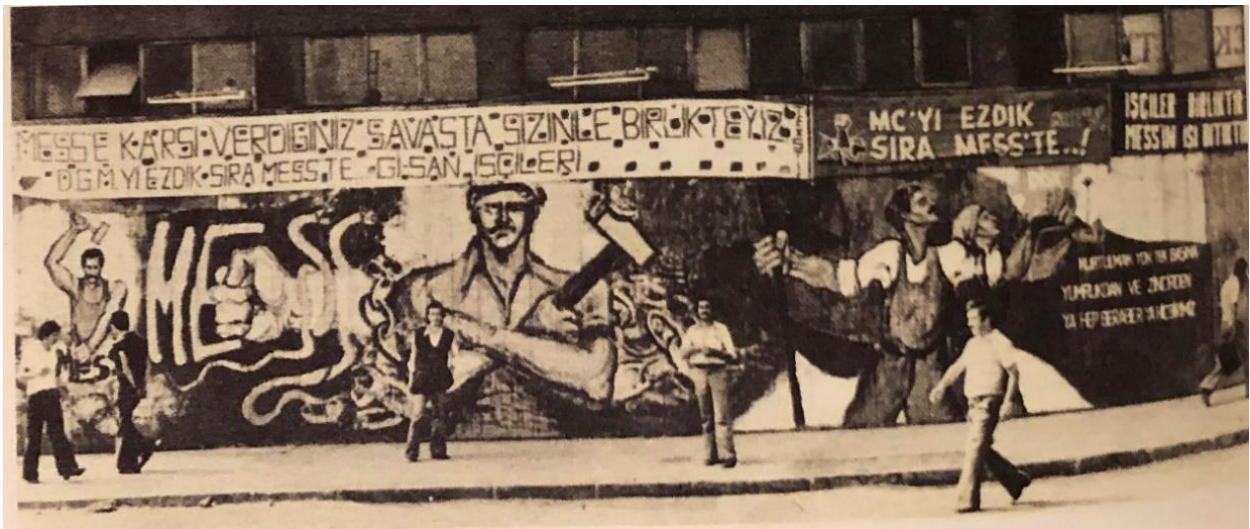
Figure 24. A mural from 1977. The photograph captures a wall painting stretching along a pedestrian lane. It was painted during the strike in the MESS metalworking enterprise. The scripts convey solidarity messages to the employees to support their resistance. Source: Yılmaz Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak: 1963-1980: Solun Görsel Serüveni* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013).

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Besides paper and canvas material, sizable outdoor paintings also occupied the walls and sidewalks. The installations usually told the stories of ongoing cases of resistance and exposed political controversies to urbanites. Figure 24 captures a wall painting regarding the MESS metalworking enterprise workers' strikes that continued intermittently between 1977 and 1980. The mural occupies a building façade (probably the factory) stretching along a pedestrian lane. Larger-than-life figures represent workers practising their craft. The slogans—such as "We crushed the MC, it's the MESS's turn"—express solidarity with striking employees. The resistance is explained by using an alternative vocabulary that seems both appealing and articulate with its aesthetic-didactic quality. Based on the scale and placement of the mural, it is likely that the content would draw citizens' attention. Yaman asserts that the political artworks staged on the street translated the experience of museums and galleries to public spaces by making art accessible for passers-by.[45] In line with his point, the content exhibited on building facades, walls, fences, and lampposts must have enhanced the urban experience for ordinary people, who lacked the means to encounter refined art on the day-to-day, by maximizing the artistic exposure.

Gregory Maney and Pamela Oliver assert that civil protests have a broader range of "carriers" that convey intended messages to the audience and authorities.[46] These carriers, including speeches, ceremonies, symposiums, displays and exhibits, transcend "disruptive action"—such as marches and demonstrations—because they can propose better alternatives for unjust situations in addition to revealing them.[47] In a similar vein, Markussen's discussion of urban

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[45] Yaman, "Türkiye'de 1970'ler, Direnişin Sanatı," 130–31.
[46] Gregory M. Maney and Pamela E. Oliver, "Finding Collective Events: Sources, Searches, Timing," *SMR/Sociological Methods & Research* 30, no. 2 (2001): 148.
[47] Ibid.

design activism highlights that inserting "heterogeneous material objects and artefacts into the urban field of perception […] invite(s) active engagement and interaction, and simply offer new ways of inhabiting urban space."[48] In this sense, political artworks that buttressed the labour movement throughout the 1970s constitute early examples of design activism because they proposed new ways to inhabit urban spaces. The disruptive artistic interventions in the city transformed streets into stages and building facades into billboards. Covering grey concrete surfaces with radiant red fabrics presented an ephemeral departure from the familiar rigidity of the everyday. They motivated collective action through "strategic use of novel, dramatic, unorthodox and non-institutionalized acts, practices and strategies."[49] Beyond aesthetic aspects, these carriers served to provoke, educate, open up discussions, and exhibit demands as well as to raise ordinary people's awareness about their rights as citizens through their didactic content. Thus, the collaboration of arts and politics in urban space challenged the existing systems of power and authority by temporarily taking control of the city.

Targeting Taksim Meydanı

> Protests that consider targeting as a spatial choreography aim to "conquer the city" by reclaiming city streets through processions that end at defined, known, and symbolic locations. The procession's start and end points are equally meaningful […] The city is regarded as a battlefield that is a composite of multiple parts. However, this multiplicity is not without order; even if they are not hierarchically organized, the procession paths include significant landmarks and desired targets.[50]

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[48] Markussen, "The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism," 43.
[49] Andre Carmo, "Reclaim the Streets, the Protestival and the Creative Transformation of the City," *Finisterra* 47 (2012): 113.
[50] Hatuka, *The Design of Protest*, 165.

Scholars of different disciplines have studied May Day 1977 from multiple angles as a notable event in the political history of Turkey. The assailants remain unknown to this day, and many journalists and politicians have considered a provocation by the "deep state" a possibility. Acting on these uncertainties, Korhan Atay, Barış Yetkin, and Nail Güreli aim to forensically analyze the case by referring to participant accounts, police records, and judicial documents.[51] Vehbi Ersan and Şehmus Güzel situate the event in a broader history of left-wing politics and investigate it as an outcome of the rising labour movement.[52] Even though May Day 1977 is a milestone in many aspects, few scholars have studied its relationship to public space. Among them, Aysegül Baykan and Tali Hatuka contextualize the celebration within the instrumentality of Taksim Meydanı in sociopolitical processes in the country.[53] The authors regard the case as an outlet for contemporary mass politics that of industrialization and urbanization. Their analyses also incorporate the ways in which built space inspires civic participation. Derya Fırat and Öndercan Muti assert that May Day 1977 transformed Taksim Meydanı into a shared memory space for the working class and socialist movements.[54] The social, political, and spatial repercussions of this case may be potent enough to transform Taksim into a stronghold of opposition movements. Even so, this transformation was hardly a unilateral process. That is, while successive revisionist practices took place in Taksim to identify it as the May Day arena

[51] See for example Korhan Atay, *1 Mayıs 1977: İşçi Bayramı Neden ve Nasıl Kana Bulandı?*, May 1, 2013, Accessed April 19, 2018; Barış Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı* (Istanbul: Müdafaa-i Hukuk Yayınları, 2007); Nail Güreli, *1 Mayıs 1977: Türkiye Devrimcilerinin "İki 1 Mayıs" Belgeseli* (Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2006).
[52] Vehbi Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013); M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi 1908-1984* (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2016). See also "1973-1980 Arasinda İşçi Hareketleri," in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1988), 2282–2303.
[53] Baykan and Hatuka, "Politics and Culture in the Making of Public Space"; see also Tali Hatuka, "Target | Istanbul, Taksim Square, May 1, 1977," in *The Design of Protest: Choreographing Political Demonstrations in Public Space*, 2018, 165–78.
[54] Derya Fırat and Öndercan Muti, "1980 Askeri Darbesinin Bellek Mekanları," in *Sokağın Belleği: 1 Mayıs 1977'den Gezi Direnişi'ne Toplumsal Hareketler ve Kent Mekânı*, ed. Derya Fırat (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014), 127.

and reinforce its affiliation with the labour movement, local administrations and governments periodically attempted to convert this affiliation through revanchist spatial interventions.

May Day 1977 was designated as a procession targeting Taksim, similar to Bloody Sunday. However, the organization committee aimed at greater visibility, impact, and audience inclusion in this case. The collaboration of artists and workers to produce and disseminate visual materials served as a means to this end.[55] In unionist Süleyman Çelebi's own words:

> Everything was meticulously prepared; it took months. We printed posters, painted banners, and distributed them across the country. We staged theatrical performances to visualize the demands of labour class on the field […], yet it was not only about that. What May Day is and what it represents was explained to the workers in training sessions in multiple DISK branches […]. The members decorated the streets days in advance during nighttime in collaboration with teachers, students, youth, and many other volunteers.[56]

The efforts for wide publicity paid off. While the gathering outgrew Taksim's spatial limits, its geographical reach transcended the boundaries of Istanbul. Thousands arrived in Istanbul from across the country to join the celebration.[57] Thus, the organization amplified the openness and inclusivity of public space by assembling socially and geographically distant groups at the same place with a shared motive.

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[55] Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak*, 219.
[56] Süleyman Çelebi's testimony in Mehmet Ali Birand, *Oradaydım 1 Mayıs 1977*, 1998, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2YdLxNjqXg&t=2s.
[57] Ibid.

1 Saraçhane Meydanı	a Mete Street	g Istiklal Avenue
2 Atatürk Bridge	b AKM	h Water Distribution Chamber
3 Istiklal Avenue	c Gümüşsuyu	i Tarlabaşı Boulevard
4 Taksim Meydanı	d Intercontinental Hotel	j Cumhuriyet Street
5 Gümüşsuyu	e Kazancı Yokuşu	k Podium
6 Dolmabahçe	f Sıraselviler Street	l Republican Monument
7 Beşiktaş		

Figure 25. The protest routes from Saraçhane and Beşiktaş to Taksim. Drawing by the author.

In order to accommodate the expected number of participants, Beşiktaş and Saraçhane were identified as the two gathering locations where the processions toward Taksim would start. Beşiktaş branch would march up to the square via Dolmabahçe. Saraçhane group would cross the Golden Horn via Atatürk Bridge and arrive at the *meydan* on the Beyoğlu side via Istiklal Avenue.[58] Many previous rallies that had targeted Taksim Meydanı followed these same routes. Nevertheless, Saraçhane Meydanı was particularly meaningful for the labour stemming from its role in earlier demonstrations. As many industrial plants and enterprises were located in this part of the city, the Saraçhane branch consisted predominantly of DISK-affiliated unions rather than

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[58] Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı*.

out-of-city participants or individuals. Thus, this group maintained an almost military fashion of walking.[59]

Figure 26. A screenshot capturing the marching groups on Atatürk Bridge. Source: Oradaydım, 1 Mayıs 1977 [I was there, May 1, 1977] Documentary.
Figure 27. A photograph of the DISK members on Atatürk Bridge. Photograph by Aydın Çetinbostanoğlu.

Figure 26 captures the Saraçhane branch on Atatürk Bridge heading towards Taksim. Marchers in the frame carry various banners and placards displaying the names of workplaces, unions, or institutions. The bridge is closed to vehicle traffic, yet the sidewalks are open to non-participant pedestrians. In Figure 27, Aydın Çetinbostanoğlu centres upon the DISK members, performing *halay*—an Anatolian folk dance commonly incorporated into protests—to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments. Both images testify to the suspension of the usual urban rhythm on the bridge as no motor vehicles appear in the frame.

The DISK implemented an internal monitoring mechanism to maintain control of the event based on the rumours of a possible provocation by some leftist factions.[60] 20,000 union members, some

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[59] Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018, Istanbul.
[60] Canan Koç and Yıldırım Koç, *Disk Tarihi: Efsane mi Gerçek mi? (1967-1980)* (Maltepe, Ankara: Epos, 2008), 347.

visible in Figures 26 and 27 in their red aprons, were deployed to prevent outbursts and infiltration of strangers from outside into the crowd.[61] These functionaries formed human chains and escorted the participants up to the *meydan* during the march. They were also responsible for overseeing excessive behaviour in the *meydan*. Both Saraçhane and Beşiktaş routes were rearranged to ensure the integrity of the masses; barriers were lined up to demarcate walking zones to lead both streams to Taksim Meydanı without interfering with the vehicular traffic.[62]

Collective efforts to make the celebration more appealing had such a significant effect that the newspapers approximated a crowd of around 500,000 people.[63] Most participants were affiliated DISK members. Still, unions of various other occupational groups, youth and women's initiatives, students, and individuals also joined in large numbers. To name but a few, Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği (The Union of the Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects), Türk Tabipler Birliği (Turkish Medical Union), and İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Progressive Women's Association) were on the front lines.[64] Well-known politically active celebrities of the time, such as Tarık Akan, Müjdat Gezen, Türkan Soray, Fikret Hakan, joined the events under the banner of the Sinema Emekçileri Sendikası (Cinema Labourers Union).[65]

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[61] Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı*, 33.
[62] Birand, *Oradaydım 1 Mayıs 1977*.
[63] "Törene yüzbinlerce kişi katıldı*," Cumhuriyet*, May 2, 1977.
[64] For a visual record of various participant profiles, see BBC News Türkçe, *1 Mayıs 1977*.
[65] Ibid.

Figure 28. Some members of Dostlar Tiyatrosu (Dostlar Theatre Collective) entering Taksim Meydanı in front of AKM. Both women and men are visible in the front lines joyfully dancing under the banner of their affiliated theatre. Photograph by Aydın Çetinbostanoğlu.

Figure 28 depicts Dostlar Tiyatrosu (Dostlar Theatre Collective) members dancing into the

meydan. Other participants watching on the side seem like an audience that attentively watches a

stage performance. Some of them on the right-hand side seem to greet the collective with

applause. In this frame and many others, AKM appears as if it is a component of a carefully

designed scene. With its glass and aluminum façade displaying the event's banner, the building

looks almost like an entrance portal that creates a background for the crowds entering the

meydan.

Figure 29. Association of Progressive Women, Kocaeli Branch entering the *meydan*. The photograph focuses on the women who attended the celebration under the banner of İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Association of Progressive Women), Kocaeli Branch. One of the many children who joined with their parents is also visible in the front line, carrying a flag. Photograph by Aydın Çetinbostanoğlu.

Singing, dancing, and shouting slogans, defined by Hatuka as the ritual components of a protest, were all at play on May Day in Taksim.[66] Participants gave street performances along the routes and on-site. Introductory announcements were made for each cluster entering the arena. The music, songs, and slogans replaced vehicle noises for a fleeting moment. The performative interventions enabled citizens to re-interpret Taksim Meydanı. For instance, members of Tekstil-İş (The Union of Textile Workers) practised their craft in the open cargo areas of truck vans.[67] Women twilled using their actual machinery. The OLEYIS (Hotel and Restaurant Workers

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[66] Hatuka, "*The Design of Protest*," ix.
[67] Birand, *Oradaydım 1 Mayıs 1977*.

Union) members attended the event in their white uniforms and caps, pretending to cook meals.[68]

Beyond enlivening the crowds, these performances used public space as a medium to make collective struggles and expressions visible, as counter-spectacles that transformed the everyday experience of Taksim Meydanı into a politicized experience. The broad spectrum of participants created the carnivalesque environment that Bakhtin describes in terms of enabling a "special form of free and familiar contact [that] reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age."[69] The richness in the performances, displays, and dialogues produced an interactive and inclusive public space in which power hierarchies diminished. Thus, the gathering temporarily dissolved social and physical boundaries between citizens of disparate cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, who most probably inhabited entirely different geographical portions of the city.

As mentioned earlier, two split routes accommodated the masses on their way to Taksim. The crowds approaching from Besiktas entered via Gümüşsuyu and Mete Streets; Saraçhane branch followed Tarlabaşı Boulevard and Istiklal Avenue (see Figure 25). Gün Zileli describes his experience as follows:

> The march got slower and slower as we came closer to Sişhane [far end of Istiklal Avenue]; it was almost evening by then. We took a couple of steps, then stopped, and then repeated. We saw the DISK members in their red aprons holding bats in their hands, bustling around. Walking like this, two steps forward, one step backward for a long time, we finally entered the area from the Tarlabaşı side, yet we could not move further into the *meydan*. It was too crowded, and there was not enough room to move.[70]

[68] Ibid.

[69] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.

[70] Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018, Istanbul.

As expected, the *meydan* could not sustain the crowd brimming; thus, many people got stuck in the surrounding streets. The intensity of the masses was initially a success; yet, when it suddenly became necessary to evacuate, this turned into a disadvantage causing the stampede near Kazancı Yokuşu.

The performances caused a delay in the main assembly; therefore, the speeches were delivered later in the day. Around 7 pm, toward the end of the DISK president Kemal Türkler's address, several gunshots were heard from multiple locations. According to participant accounts, shootings targeted the podium from Kazancı Yokuşu, the water distribution chamber, and the Intercontinental Hotel's roof (see Figure 25).[71] Police vehicles arrived from Sıraselviler Street and Istiklal Avenue to intervene, but the chaos and panic caused crowds to disperse in different directions.[72] Due to the stampede around Kazancı Yokuşu, thirty-four people died hundreds of others were injured. While the executives of DISK deemed the right-wing National Front government responsible for the incident, the government pointed at extreme leftist groups, namely Maoists; however, the perpetrators have not been charged to this day.[73]

Aftermath

The tone of media coverage can shape public perception; thus, the ways in which journalists portray protests can also shape the perception of protest sites.[74] According to Robertson and

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[71] Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı*.
[72] See Korhan Atay, "1 Mayıs 1977 Neden ve Nasıl Kana Bulandı?," Rengin Aslan, "1 Mayıs 1977: Yaşayanlar ve Arşivler Anlatıyor," Nami Temeltas, "Unutmadan 1 Mayıs 2016'ya," Figen Kumru, "Sol, 1 Mayıs 1977'yle Yüzleşiyor," May 2, 2013. Accessed September 17, 2017, http://kitap.radikal.com.tr/makale/haber/sol-1-mayis-1977yle-yuzlesiyor-360148.
[73] "Taksim Meydanı," *Milliyet, Gazete Pazar*, April 27, 1997, sec. Joker, 69.
[74] Robertson and Gojowy, "Protest, Place in Pictures," 153.

Gojowy, "when a news story begins with a place, it is no longer 'objective': the reader, listener or viewer is invited to experience the event or issue, and not just be informed about it."[75] This understanding applies well to the media treatment of May Day 1977, which overtly reflected publications' predilections. Among the immediate responses in the national press, *Hürriyet*'s headline was "May Massacre: 34 Dead," *Cumhuriyet* also used a similar tone "May Day Ended in Blood, 34 Dead." *Günaydın*, on the other hand, targeted a leftist faction: "Maoist traitors terrorized May Day: 39 Dead." Apparently, the editors prioritized the violent ending and the lives lost in the titles, but visual material simultaneously covered the festive environment and the sense of enthusiasm before the chaos broke out.[76]

Figure 30. The crowds in Taksim on May Day 1977. Anonymous image.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Famous photographers Ara Güler and Coşkun Aral also joined the celebration. The photographs they took after the gunshots were published in national and international media. "Usta ve Çırağın Yollarını Kesiştiren '1 Mayıs,'" May 1, 2019. Accessed February 24, 2020, https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/usta-ve-ciragin-yollarini-kesistiren-1-mayis/1467081.

Figure 30, capturing the assembly at its prime, is one of the most commonly circulated framings of May Day 1977 even today. In the immediate aftermath, similar photographs taken from slightly tilted angles appeared in DISK publications, also in left-wing and moderate newspapers.[77] A large proportion of this frame is composed of people positioned in Taksim Meydanı. They display the identical gesture of raising fists, a symbol of solidarity and support. The photograph depicts Taksim neither as an open space, in which the dominant ideological presence of AKM and the Republican monument is felt, nor as a traffic hub surrounded by vehicles. Instead, the meydan is identified by the people harmoniously occupying the middle space. Besides the participants themselves, flags and banners of several unions are also visible to the eye. One of the scripts on the upper left corner reads "Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği" (The Union of the Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects/TMMOB)," indicating the active involvement of architects. The red banner blanketing the façade of AKM was by Orhan Taylan, the designer of the previous year's poster. The thick-moustached worker, breaking the chains, symbolizes the liberation of the proletariat. This illustration became an icon of the event and was repeatedly used in future May Days. The strategic framing foregrounds the participants and visual components in a meaningful manner. The snap is taken from within the crowd on an elevated spot. Thus the overall composition invites the viewer to get immersed in the urban experience looking vibrant and pleasing.

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[77] Aysan, *Afişe Çıkmak*, 337–55.

Figure 31. Taksim Meydanı after the turmoil. The caption of *Günaydın*'s report was "Maoist traitors terrorized May Day: 39 Dead." Source: *Günaydın*, May 2, 1977.

In contrast to Figure 30, Figure 31 frames the *meydan* after the turmoil. The photograph, taken from a distance, shows people evacuating the centre and scattered all over the place. The emphasis is on the state of disorder. Coupled with the caption "Maoist traitors terrorized May Day: 39 Dead," the image points to the celebration as the cause of this chaotic and vexing urban scenery, almost in a way that marginalizes groups engaging in the demonstration. It invites the viewer to concentrate on the catastrophic results rather than the celebratory aspects. While each narrative works toward different ends in imposing specific perceptions of the event and its urban setting, they both frame the issue around the place. That is, media representations strengthen the site's identification as an arena of public opposition.
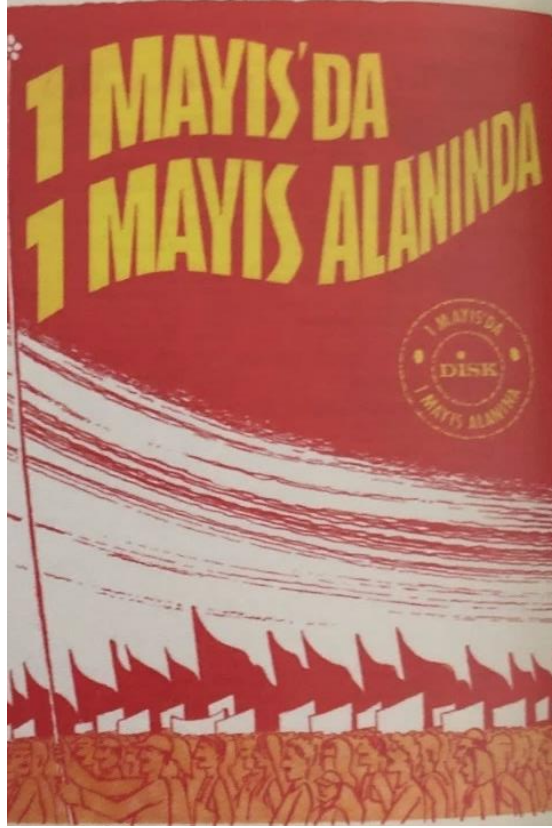
Figure 32. Back cover of the DISK journal (April 1978), designed by Tan Oral. The poster illustrates a group of people, both men and women, marching with flags and placards. The caption that reads "On May Day at May Day Arena" addresses Taksim Meydanı as the May Day arena. This same graphic design was also used as a poster for the 2012 celebration. Source: *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 1 Mayıs, Ilk Dileğimiz: 1920'lerde, 1970'lerde ve 1990'lardan Günümüze 1 Mayıs Afişleri* (Taksim, Istanbul: TÜSTAV İktisadi İşletmesi, 2006).

Even though the progression of May Day 1977 intimidated the society, in addition to the

participants, Taksim continued to function as a public space of political expression. Shortly after

the event, on June 1, 1977, Adalet Partisi (Justice Party) leader Süleyman Demirel addressed his

supporters in the *meydan*.[78] The opposition leader Bülent Ecevit's election rally took place at the

same spot on June 3.[79] Many other demonstrations with varying sociopolitical motives kept

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[78] "Sandık Başına Gitmeye Günler Kaldı," *Milliyet*, June 1, 1977.
[79] "CHP Mitingi Büyük Kalabalıkla Yapıldı, Hiç Bir Olay Çıkmadı," *Milliyet*, June 4, 1977.

occupying Taksim until the declaration of the state of emergency in 1979.[80] Approximately

100,000 people joined the last May Day in 1978.[81] The DISK identified this event as an

intensified demand for democracy and response to the previous year's setback.[82] The primary

slogan was "1 Mayıs'da, 1 Mayıs Alanında (On May Day, at May Day Arena)." This avowal is

quite strong in terms of openly correlating the May Days and Taksim Meydanı. It implies that

May Day is not just a political event in search of public legitimacy anymore; it claims Taksim as

its own and demands visibility specifically at this place.

Consolidated by subsequent protests and media representations, Taksim's association with

labour became a matter of public record after May Day 1977. As a response, the state prohibited

the tradition of celebrating May Days in Taksim. In 1979, a curfew prevented all public

gatherings in the city. Military forces were stationed at the *meydan* as a measure. After the

military coup of 1980, the occasion, in its totality, was banned for an indefinite period. Similar to

the 1930s and 1940s, left-wing groups kept distributing pamphlets and leaflets on the quiet. In

1981, the military junta annulled the official holiday status of May Day, which remained as a

workday until regaining status in 2009. During the interlude, any attempt to celebrate May Days

in Taksim—even the wreath-laying ceremonies—was met by police intervention.

David Harvey notes that "hierarchical structures of authority or privilege can be communicated

directly through forms of spatial organization and symbolism."[83] Thus, having power over the

organization and use of space contributes to the reproduction of social relations. As discussed in

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[80] See, for example, "Tüm-Der Siyasal Cinayetleri Yürüyüşle Protesto Etti," *Milliyet*, July 24, 1977; "Sinema Emekçilerinin Ankara Yürüyüşü Taksim'den Başladı," *Milliyet*, November 6, 1977; "Bayrağa Saygı ve Milli İnanc Mitingi," *Milliyet*, May 27, 1978.
[81] "Yüzbinlerce Kişi Taksim Alanı'na Gelerek DİSK 'in "Düzenlediği 1 Mayıs Mitingini İzledi," *Milliyet*, May 2, 1978.
[82] Yetkin, *Kırılma Noktası / 1 Mayıs 1977 Olayı*, 111.
[83] Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 186–87.

the Introduction, Taksim Meydanı was a public space designated to display state power and cultivate the secular lifestyle through social, cultural, and political practices. The Republican monument, AKM, and Gezi Park became major architectural components in materializing the modernization project undertaken by the Republican authorities. During the 1960s, Taksim turned into a contested public space where protests challenged state power. May Days of the 1970s introduced the appropriation of "critical artifacts" a term Simon Bowen assigns to urban elements charged with certain ideologies.[84] New meanings and functions attributed to AKM and the Republican monument by the citizens started to peel off the nation-state imaginary, which led to a change of spatial traditions around Taksim Meydanı.

Changing Spatial Traditions in Taksim

Discussing the Paris Commune as the production of social space, Kristin Ross defines the Situationist concept of detournement as "using the elements or the terrain of the dominant social order to one's own ends, for a transformed purpose" and "stripping false meaning value from the original."[85] Inspired by her definition, I interpret the transformed uses of Taksim Meydanı and its built components, AKM building and the Republican monument, as a conversion of meaning value because their appropriation in creative ways for May Days, and following protests, turned out to be recurring practices that impacted the social and architectural production in the area.

Henri Prost proposed an opera house for the eastern corner of Taksim Meydanı in his Istanbul plans of 1939 (see Figure 7). Political cadres of the time envisioned this building as a state-of-

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[84] Simon Bowen, "A Critical Artefact Methodology: Using Provocative Conceptual Designs to Foster Human-Centred Innovation," PhD diss. (Sheffield Hallam University, 2009).
[85] Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 42.

the-art facility of the Republican idealism that would provide the sociocultural context for the modernization project. The construction started in 1949 based on French architect Auguste Perret's preliminary design, then administered by Turkish architect Rükneddin Güney. Stood as a frame until 1956, the Construction Office of the Ministry of Development entrusted the project to architect Hayati Tabanlıoğlu, who saw its completion in 1969.[86] Tabanlıoğlu and his team developed the building as an "exclusively crafted concrete and glass box," consisting of a 530-seat concert hall, a 300-seat theatre, a small children's cinema, a 1,317-seat multi-purpose grand hall and a spacious entrance hall.[87] Contrary to the colonnaded symmetrical elevation featured in Perret's proposal, Tabanlıoğlu's façade facing Taksim Meydanı was "a transparent glass skin thinly veiled by the geometric patterns of an aluminum lattice screen," which made the building an icon of post-war Turkish modernism.[88] Inside, splendid chandeliers, glistening floors, and a spiral staircase of light steel construction embellished the refined ambiance of the main entrance hall. Sculptures and paintings of Turkish artists on display emphasized a Republican and "Westernized" ideal of modern Turkish culture.[89] Sadly, AKM suffered severe damage due to a fire that broke out soon after its construction and remained out of use until the reopening in 1977.[90]

Scholars interpret the case of AKM as one of the top ideological conflicts in the city that overtly influenced the formation of the built environment.[91] According to architect Zafer Akay, AKM's

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[86] Esra Akcan, "How Does Architecture Heal? The AKM as Palimpsest and Ghost," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (2019): 84.

[87] Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan, *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 128.

[88] Ibid., 129.

[89] Ibid.

[90] See "Kültür Sarayı Yandı," *Milliyet*, November 28, 1970; Abdi Ipekci, "Her Hafta Bir Sohbet...Hayati Tabanlıoğlu," *Milliyet*, December 7, 1970; "Kültür Sarayı Yeniden Doğdu," *Milliyet*, April 3, 1977.

[91] See Zafer Akay, "Istanbul'un Cumhuriyet Dönemi Simgesi: AKM," *Mimarlık* 392 (2016), http://www.mimarlikdergisi.com/index.cfm?sayfa=mimarlik&DergiSayi=406&RecID=4050.

completion was deliberately put off in the early 1950s by the liberal leader, Adnan Menderes (the

head of the DP), as the facility was a vital component of the preceding government's secular

agenda and a symbol of Republican modernism.[92] During the 1960s, its rehabilitation entailed

further conflicts among the student collectives and celebrity actors who promoted accessible

artistic performances for all classes.[93] The critics enounced their discontent with the high

renovation expenses and launched a petition in 1969 to suspend the repairs until the economic

circumstances improved. To them, the budget should have been channelled into citizens'

immediate needs instead of satisfying the appeal for an elite audience.[94] Among the intellectuals

who signed the petition were famous actors, including Haldun Taner, Genco Erkal, and Ferhan

Şensoy, who also strived to prevent the building's demolition in 2017.[95] Despite the conflictual

design and construction processes—as well as accidents that kept the building out of use for

prolonged periods—AKM hosted several opera, ballet, theatre, and classical music

performances, art exhibitions; it served as a cultural centre of attraction until it was closed for

reputed maintenance reasons in 2008. [96]

AKM was a striking component in many of the photographs taken on May Day 1977. Besides

the building's premier position over the *meydan*, the huge banner hanging on its façade was

likely a reason for its consistent appearance. Either way, the images that incorporated AKM into

the frame sent a powerful message to the viewers by highlighting architecture as a tool that

enables free political expression. Taking on a new meaning as a political platform, AKM

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[92] Ibid.

[93] The Movement for Revolution Theatre (DIHT) was also against an immediate renovation. *Tiyatro 70 Dergisi* 10 (1971).

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ipek Türeli, *Istanbul, Open City: Exhibiting Anxieties of Urban Modernity* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 1–2.

entrenched itself in the collective memory, particularly of the left-wing opposition. The way demonstrators used its façade as an urban billboard not only co-opted AKM as a constituent of public opposition but also inspired future protests and their visual reproductions, too, to be framed around this very building. AKM amplified the public voice on different occasions by being used as a billboard that enables freedom of expression. As a response, various governments mimicked the act of appropriating the façade in service of the dominant political and economic trends—which I will discuss in Chapter IV.

The Republican monument represented a similar conversion of meaning value. This marble and bronze structure was the first defining component of Taksim Meydanı that appeared "suddenly, even before the landscaping, like it was fallen from the sky."[97] The eleven-metre high landmark depicts the War of Independence and the proclamation of the Republic on two sides.[98] Figures of the founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, his leading officers, soldiers, civilians, and women who joined the war, present a historical narrative canonizing the secular nation-state and its achievements. For decades, the monument promoted a designated Republican memory through its existence in Istanbul's cosmopolitan centre; moreover, it created a traditional ground for official state ceremonies, national holidays, military parades, commemorations, and celebrations.[99] Wreath-laying was a complementary ritual in most of these events. Even

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[97] Gülersoy, *Taksim*, 1986, 21.

[98] For the symbolism of the monument, see Güldem Baykal, "The Iconography of Taksim Square: Competing Claims on a Public Space," Master's thesis (Boğaziçi University, 1997); Birge Yildirim and Arzu Erdem, "Taksim Meydanının İnşası," *tasarım + kuram dergisi* 11, no. 19 (2007): 95–106; Imren Arbac, "Taksim Cumhuriyet Anıtı'nda Rus-Turk Yakınlaşmasının Sembol Figürü," *Yeditepe Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü Araştırma Dergisi* 1 (2017): 138–61.

[99] "Denizcilik Bayramı Hazırlığı," *Milliyet*, June 13, 1950; "Ormancılar Kongresi," *Milliyet*, January 4, 1954; "30 Ağustos Zafer Bayramı Kutlandı," *Milliyet*, August 31, 1955; "Cumhuriyet Bayramı Yarın Törenle Kutlanacak," *Milliyet*, October 28, 1962; "Milletvekili ve Generaller Atatürk Nöbeti Tutacaklar," *Milliyet*, April 17, 1966; "Kadınlar Partisi Kuruluyor," *Milliyet*, November 16, 1972.

diplomatic visitors put in an appearance at the monument as a show of respect for the state.[100]

Many public demonstrations of the 1960s, too, took account of the monument's symbolic

character and used wreath-laying as a protest tradition.[101] Some marches that occupied Taksim

ended with placards or flowers left around the landmark. This conduct implies that Taksim still

maintained its identity as the symbolic space of the Republic, despite having been appropriated

as a protest location frequently. Even the opposition acts that challenged state authority in

Taksim accounted for its symbolic meaning to a certain extent. For May Days, crowds

appropriated the space by gathering around the monument, waving flags, shouting slogans, and

listening to speeches, but wreath-laying was not incorporated into the demonstrations. This mode

of practice indicates that the monument's ceremonial identity and the spatial patterns it entailed

faded in the course of May Day celebrations. The occupations created powerful counter-

spectacles that enhanced the *meydan*'s capacity to build new relations with citizens. Key

architectural elements undertook significant roles in this creation process.

According to Linda Hershkovitz, repetition of use becomes a crucial aspect in the production of

spaces: "It is in this way that place may be broadly understood as something that is produced

politically—as the outcome of a cumulative and dialectic process." [102] As such, repetitive

appropriations of Taksim Meydanı reproduced a public space estranged from its original

symbolism and identity embedded within the built environment. The spatial production was now

following the oppositional political discourse and practice rather than a promotional trajectory.

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[100] "İngiliz Denizcileri Abideye Çelenk Koydular," *Milliyet*, July 26, 1952; "Fransızlar Bugun Abideye Celenk Koyacaklar," *Milliyet*, April 2, 1955; "Mısırlı Denizciler Taksim Anıtında," *Milliyet*, September 15, 1969.
[101] "Her Tarafta Miting ve Şenlik Yapılıyor," *Milliyet*, June 4, 1960; "Minibüsçülerin Mitingi," *Milliyet*, September 22, 1964; "Vartolular Kara Tabutla Yürüdüler," *Milliyet*, September 30, 1966; "Zammı Protesto Için Tutulan 99 Saatlik Açlık Grevi Bitiyor," *Milliyet*, March 16, 1967; "Branda Işçileri Yürüyüş Yaptı," *Milliyet*, October 15, 1968; "Sakatlar Yürüyüs Yaptı," *Milliyet*, March 31, 1969.
[102] Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," 397.

Throughout the 1970s, citizens deeply internalized Taksim's association with protests and the protesting worker as an urban figure. Some movies produced for the general public featured this association bluntly. The famous family movie Neşeli Günler (Joyful Days) from 1978 was one of these productions. The plot features a couple who gets divorced based on a pickle conflict when their six children were quite young. The father, who claims that the right way to make pickles is with lemon juice, takes three of the children and the mother, pro-vinegar, takes the other three. They raise the children apart and in no contact with the other side whatsoever. Some years later, the children—five of them now young adults, one a teen—coincidentally find each other. Eventually, they decide to start a hunger strike in Taksim Meydanı, on the steps of Gezi Park, to bring their parents together. While the crowd watches the children sit, a newcomer asks: "What's happening here? Are these workers?" While this visual language becomes a tool for understanding the interaction between protest and public space, the formulation of the question and strike location communicates certain aspects clearly about the Taksim Meydanı of 1978. Firstly, if someone wanted to become visible or voice a demand, Taksim Meydanı was the right place to occupy—even for trivial matters that had nothing to do with politics. Second, if a person was protesting in Taksim Meydanı, they might have been related to the working class. The spatial practices that cultivated Taksim's association with public dissent and visibility continued until the coup 'd'état of 1980, which brought all activism practices in the country to a halt.

Post-1980 Public Space

Clashes between the supporters of right-wing and left-wing ideologies took a turn for the worse following the Taksim Massacre. Many people lost their lives during the nationwide violent encounters. To end the state of "anarchy," the military seized power with yet another coup in

1980. The Armed Forces halted all political activity and dissolved the parliament. The justification for the takeover was "to protect the indivisible integrity of the nation, prevent the fight between brothers (in reference to the intense street battles between left wing and right wing), re-establish the state authority, and remove impediments to the proper functioning of democracy."[103] In this parallel, the National Security Council authoritatively governed citizens' social and political lives.[104] All political parties were dismissed; the top brass was taken into custody. Leading activist figures were put under lock-down; some received the death penalty. Military officers undertook administrative roles as governors, mayors, and public servants. The new constitution, replacing the 1961 constitution, withheld many freedoms by crippling the activity of labour organizations, trade associations, and other collectives. These draconian measures disrupted the operation of urban public life, especially in big cities; nonetheless, citizens across the country felt the iron fist of junta administrations in their everyday lives.

In the immediate aftermath of the public declaration, the National Security Council ordered a country-wide curfew. Military officers and vehicles occupied main streets and *meydans* to promulgate the ultimate state dominance over public space. Unions and professional organizations were suspended; strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of resistance with political motives were declared illegal. Emergency powers were put into use, which gave security forces excessive authorization over the control of public spaces and compelled everyday users to refrain from entering the outside world.[105] Until the end of the decade, state

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[103] For the entire announcement text see "Kenan Evren'in Türkiye'yi Karanlığa Taşıyan Darbe Açıklaması," T24 Bağımsız Internet Gazetesi, May 10, 2015. Accessed March 22, 2018, https://t24.com.tr/haber/kenan-evrenin-turkiyeyi-karanliga-tasiyan-darbe-aciklamasi,296157. See also Mehmet Ali Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980* (London; Washington: Potomac Books Inc, 1987).
[104] Then the chief of the general staff, Kenan Evren became the head of the council after the coup.
[105] As participant Atila Uzgören describes, police had the jurisdiction to detain or arrest a small group of three or four people on the street based on a simple suspicion. Thus, people were even scared to go out to buy bread from the

administrations put a choke-hold on public demonstrations all over the country. Public spaces were re-appropriated to erase the residue of the pre-coup period. To "clean up the streets," *meydans* and major governmental buildings were draped with gigantic Turkish flags; political street writings and murals were painted over. Orhan Taylan's reliefs and wall paintings were among those that were deemed "provocative" by the junta administrations. As a common practice, place names were altered in an attempt to wipe out the ideological associations that specific sites carried.[106] Mushrooming statues of national symbolism replaced the political artworks of the previous two decades.[107] For instance, the Turan Emeksiz memorial was relocated to a secluded corner of Beyazıt Meydanı from the central spot where the student died during the clashes.[108] The bayonet statue, erected after the 1960 military coup in Taksim Meydanı, was removed as the two military interventions had conflicting ideological motives. Post-coup hierarchical reorganization of public space, buttressed with policing as a means of intimidation, restrained political freedoms for long years to come.

Urban design decisions of the post-coup period followed the trajectory of the liberal organization of the economy. Particularly between 1984 and 1989, Istanbul Mayor Bedrettin Dalan's aspirations to rearrange Beyoğlu as a locus of touristic consumption came with critical physical changes. The demolition of several historic buildings during the widening of Tarlabaşı Street—paralleling Istiklal Avenue—severely damaged the urban texture. The neighbourhood's transformation into a profit-oriented zone and concomitant gentrification displaced inhabitants,

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bakery, let alone going out for a political activity or meeting with friends. Atila Uzgören (participant) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018.

[106] For example, 1 Mayıs Mahallesi (May 1st District), a neighbourhood inhabited mostly by left-wing groups and Alewis, was renamed as Mustafa Kemal District—after Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the Republic. Sükrü Aslan, *1 Mayıs Mahallesi 1980 Öncesi Toplumsal Mücadeleler ve Kent* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2010).

[107] For further information on the built and removed statues of the period, see Begüm Sönmez, "1980'lerde Kamusal Alan Heykelleri: Ankara ve Istanbul," Master's thesis (Hacettepe University, 2015).'

[108] See Gülpınar, "Şehitliğin İnşası ve İmhası: Turan Emeksiz Örneği."

most of whom were middle and lower-class citizens.[109] In the process of the pedestrianization of Istiklal Avenue, vehicle circulation around the Republican Monument died out, and the circular base merged with the pedestrian zone. It became desolate on a concrete ground abstracted from its surroundings.

In 1987, an international urban design competition was launched for Taksim to promote its development as a "prestigious hotel district."[110] Vedat and Hakan Dalokay's project, proposing an enormous pond over Gezi Park and complete pedestrianization of the *meydan*, was selected as the winner. After the change of mayors in 1989, the proposal was put aside and never implemented. The idea of pedestrianization resurfaced in the 2000s but monopolized decision-making processes were met by nationwide mass protests in 2013, which is the topic of Chapter IV.

This chapter focused on May Day 1977, the largest public celebration in the city up until that time. Throughout the 1970s, rapid industrialization and urbanization went hand in hand with the increase of the migrant population that created a labour force that actively sought their rights and freedoms in public space. Political demands and messages were articulated all over the city in ways that aimed to subvert existing systems of power. The visual materials (posters, murals, and banners) produced for the events, coupling aesthetic concerns with practical and didactic ones, encouraged citizens to rethink and remake alternative public spaces in their city. Furthermore, they transformed the urban experience for ordinary people by maximizing artistic-political exposure. Designer artworks became accessible to the public outside of galleries or museums.

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[109] Tolga İslam, "Current Urban Discourse, Urban Transformation and Gentrification in Istanbul," *Architectural Design* 80, no. 1 (2010): 58–63.

[110] Erhan İşözen, *Taksim Meydanı Kentsel Tasarım Proje Yarışması* (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı, 1987), 14.

During the celebration, the masses manipulated the familiar daily functions of Taksim Meydanı for their own ends in expressing collective demands. The multilayered social structure of the gathering temporarily broke the hierarchy among citizens who, stripped of their social status, became part of the "carnival."

Photographic representations of May Day 1977 imposed conflicting perceptions of the celebration and its urban setting. Nevertheless, being framed around a particular space, these representations consolidated Taksim's urban role as a place of protest. In the aftermath, the use of AKM as a political platform became a recurring political practice. Furthermore, the spatial tradition around the Republican monument shifted from paying respect to the state to expressing opposition against it. May Day celebration itself started to be associated with and sought visibility primarily in Taksim Meydanı. The shifting urban roles of the *meydan* and its built components were juxtaposed with several proposed or built urban design interventions that aimed to regain control over the area. Strict restrictions imposed upon the use of Taksim Meydanı after the coup d'état in 1980 compelled citizens to seek alternative locations for future civil protests. In the next chapter, I examine one of those cases, Saturday Mothers/People, and its role in the production of Galatasaray Meydanı on Istiklal Avenue.

Chapter III

A Sit-in: Saturday Mothers/People, 1995

<div align="right">

Find me in bottomless wells
Find me naked on a shore
On a ship of torture, being kept awake by electrocution
Lost in military barracks
Mom…
At the end of a street
At a grave nameless, faceless
Find me underneath a gravestone scripted "whoever is lost has lost."
Mom, find me among the Argentinian mothers in Plaza de Mayo
Find me at Galatasaray Meydanı

Benim Annem Cumartesi (My Mother is Saturday), Bandista

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The occupation by the monumental gate of Galatasaray High School is a familiar urban sight for Istanbulites who frequent Istiklal Avenue on Saturdays at noon. The motive for the weekly sit-ins is well-known by the locals. However, even for a stranger viewing this setting for the first time, the visual aesthetics speak clearly on behalf of the protestors' collective claim: justice. These half-hour-long silent sit-ins consist mainly of female participants, who call for an explanation on the whereabouts of their children, husbands, or siblings who vanished decades ago under police custody. Portraits of the disappeared, enlarged, printed, and posted on cardboards accompany the protests to render the missings visible by using the most basic means of identification: names and photographs. Meanwhile, the occupation itself brings life to a *meydan*, on one of the busiest streets in Istanbul, associated with the mothers and their struggles.

It was a handful of women who coalesced around the İnsan Hakları Derneği (Human Rights Association/IHD) and initiated the sit-ins at—now known as—Galatasaray Meydanı. Dubbed as "Cumartesi Anneleri" (Saturday Mothers) by the media, the group met every week from the first

meeting on May 27, 1995, until March 13, 1999, the 200th week, without interruption. However, systematic police violence resulted in an imperative break that lasted until the ritual's resumption on January 31, 2009. The Saturday Mothers/People (SMP), as they named themselves, received volumes of media coverage partly due to the protests' transnational dialogue with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo of Argentina. Solidarity acts and various forms of artistic production, including films, songs, and photographs, also contributed to the popularity of the sit-ins. Consequently, the weekly spatial appropriations and their media representations heightened awareness of a state-led human rights violation in Turkey.

The location for the sit-ins is a junction on Istiklal Avenue by the main gate of Galatasaray High School (Lycée de Galatasaray), an establishment of long-standing influence. Also known as "Mekteb-i Sultani" (Sultan's School) in the Ottoman period, it is one of the most prestigious institutions in the country since its foundation in 1868 by order of Sultan Abdülaziz for training bureaucrats.[1] Even though the school had a strong physical and symbolic presence in the area, the junction right outside its main gate had not been identified as a *meydan* nor correlated with forms of collective action. The SMP's years-long appropriation turned this location into "Galatasaray Meydanı," a toponym now commonly used by the general public to refer to the protest site. Even though the Galatasaray High School gave the *meydan* its name, both the physical location and the term "Galatasaray Meydanı" have been primarily correlated with the SMP sit-ins and the injustices it represents, rather than the institution, for over a decade.

In this chapter, I focus on the spatiality of the SMP that has still been (as of 2020) actively taking place in Galatasaray Meydanı. How has the ritual challenged the norms of making public space?

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[1] "Mekteb-i Sultani'den Galatasaray Lisesi'ne," accessed February 1, 2020, https://www.peramuzesi.org.tr/Sergi/Mekteb-i-Sultaniden-Galatasaray-Lisesine-/51.

How have the physical characteristics of space informed and been influenced by the progression of the sit-ins? How have the visual representations altered citizens' perception of the protest site? My argument here is two-fold: (1) the SMP challenges the conventional assumption that the protest space is a site in which bodily performances take place; it produces a public space via collective action, (2) the ritual carries the struggles of the city's, and even the country's, peripheries to an urban centre; in this sense, it suggests that invisible boundaries of citizenship could be redefined by claiming rights to the city.

The case of SMP sit-ins offers valuable insights into the social, political, cultural, and spatial transformations in Turkey from the 1990s onward. While my primary concern here is the interaction between the protest form and physical space, my analyses can appeal to social movements, sociology, and visual/cultural studies scholars beyond spatial disciplines, in terms of translating the spatial experience of the marginalized in the city during the post-1980 period.

In what follows, I first look into the public space activism practices of the 1990s that emerged as a response to post-coup violations of human rights and freedoms. A majority of the protests in the decade featured identity struggles and empowered marginalized citizens in discovering the potentials of public space in practising democracy. Gaining national and international popularity, the SMP stood out among others. Furthermore, it generated changes regarding the meaning, function, and architecture of the protest site. I examine how the occupation and the symbolic acts that accompanied the sit-ins created a contested public space amidst the clashes between the police and protestors. I further situate the case within the politics of space on Istiklal Avenue to provide an understanding of how the design and development of this historical urban strip led to its selection as the location for the SMP. After years of appropriation, the meetings inspired architects to respond to the social production in the area, underlining the reciprocal relationship

between civil protest and urban design. I end the chapter with the media representations of SMP, which consolidated the urban identity of the protest location as a *meydan* affiliated with the case and the struggles it represents.

Civil Protest in the 1990s

Sociologist Aysen Uysal categorizes some of the significant agendas of the 1990s in Turkey into three groups (1) Kurdish conflict, exclusion, human rights violations, (2) dissolution of centre-right, the rise of political Islam, polarized social structure, (3) fragile coalitions and governing through crises.[2] While her grouping falls short of encapsulating a whole set of rights struggles, the identified topics fairly address the "new social movements," whose spatialization manifestly altered urban spaces in the country.[3] The majority of the rights struggles in the 1990s arose in reaction to the post-1980 restriction and exclusion in public spheres. The junta and elected governments disabled citizens' activism in public space through intimidation and imprisonment during the 1980s. The lack of collective activity in this period caused a pronounced state of depoliticization. Toward the end of the 1980s, a diversity of marginalized groups—e.g., extreme left-wing and right-wing supporters, Islamist hard-liners, feminists, LGBTQI+ communities, Kurds, Alevis—re-emerged to overcome, in Richard Sennet's terms, the "fear of exposure."[4]

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[2] Ayşen Uysal, ed., *İsyan, Şiddet, Yas: 90'lar Türkiye'sine Bakmak*, 2016, 9.

[3] For an overview of some of the movements of this period, see Sefa Şimşek, "New Social Movements in Turkey Since 1980," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004): 111–39.

[4] Sennet defines the fear of exposure as losing the ability to expose self and interact with each other. See, Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1990).

Seeking to gain democratic rights and freedoms, people challenged the controlled and regulated uses of urban spaces prescribed by the power structures.

According to Hou, "reclaimed and appropriated urban sites, temporary events, and informal gathering places" that communities create transcend the "archetypal categories of neighbourhood parks, public squares, and civic architecture" by introducing alternative placemaking practices into contemporary cities.[5] Throughout the 1990s in Istanbul, such practices enabled citizens to open up public spaces to new possibilities as new social movements progressed. Besides conventional forms of protest such as marching, occupying, striking, boycotting, and petitioning, creative civil disobedience and passive resistance acts also took the front stage in vocalizing demands.[6] Initiating collective medical visits, slowing down work, shortening shift intervals, marching bare feet, growing beards, symbolically putting up children for sale, filing for divorce and creating human chains were widely spread among activist groups to promote various agendas. For instance, in 1998, thousands of participants formed a human chain from Istanbul to Ankara to protest the ban on veiling (*türban*) in universities, induced by the post-modern military coup of February 28, 1997.[7] Several small-scale sit-ins also took place in Beyazıt Meydanı in the process.[8] Sürekli Aydınlık İçin Bir Dakika Karanlık (One Minute of Darkness for Perpetual Illumination) began against a series of corruption scandals between government, police, and

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[5] Hou, *Insurgent Public Space*, 2.
[6] See, for example, the article series "The Rights Struggles of the 1990s" on online platform Bianet featuring a diversity of cases. Nadire Mater, "90'ların Hak Mücadeleleri'ne Başlarken," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 8, 2014, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/160590-90-larin-hak-mucadeleleri-ne-baslarken.
[7] For further information on February 28th incident and its aftermath, see Ümit Cizre-Sakallıoğlu and Menderes Çınar, "Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003): 309–32.
[8] See Elif Ince, "Kişisel Bir '"Başörtüsü"' Mücadele Öyküsü," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 25, 2014. Accessed December 10, 2018, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/kadin/161061-kisisel-bir-basortusu-mucadele-oykusu. See Ayse Olgun, "Bedel ödedim ama iftihar duyuyorum," *Yeni Şafak*, February 28, 2016. Accessed September 30, 2017, https://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/bedel-odedim-ama-iftihar-duyuyorum-2424176.

mafia, which surfaced after a car crash in a small town named Susurluk in 1996.[9] Across the country, citizens switched the lights on and off every day for one minute at 9.00 pm. In time, people started to bang pots and pans from their windows and balconies—a transnational form of protest known as *cacerolazo*—and turned the resistance into a celebratory event in challenging the street's normative everyday order and functioning. In short, the public reawakening of the 1990s itself became one of the characteristics of the decade—along with the scandals, assassinations, and never-ending European Union (EU) process.

Turkey's candidacy as an EU member necessitated plenty of political reforms. The preparations effectuated positive steps in sensitive areas, such as eliminating the death penalty, confining military authority, and broadcasting in the Kurdish language. Keen efforts of the state to meet the Copenhagen Criteria opened up new avenues to facilitate free sociopolitical expression in public spheres; nevertheless, these efforts did not necessarily ensure equally peaceful living conditions or freedoms for all citizens.[10] Therefore, the decade has subjective connotations for different sociopolitical and ethnic clusters, each of which tells different stories of spatial transformation. I briefly address some of the struggles in this section to invite future research on the relationship

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[9] For a journalistic analysis of the event, its before and after, see Enis Berberoğlu, *Susurluk: 20 Yıllık Domino Oyunu* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1998). For the details of the protest see for example Elif Ince, "90'ların Hak Mücadeleleri/Ergin Cinmen Anlattı: Bir Dakika Karanlık: 'Minimum Seviyede' Bir Eylem," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 9, 2014. Accessed November 1, 2018, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/160565-bir-dakika-karanlik-minimum-seviyede-bir-eylem; Elif Ince, "Faksla Yayılan Çağrı: Sürekli Aydınlık İçin Bir Dakika Karanlık," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 9, 2014. Accessed November 1, 2018, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/160561-faksla-yayilan-cagri-surekli-aydinlik-icin-bir-dakika-karanlik.

[10] For example, following the incorporation of private media outlets into public life as new agents of change, there had been an upsurge in the establishment of local and national radio stations, TV channels, journals, and newspapers. See Raşit Kaya and Barış Çakmur, "Politics and the Mass Media in Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 4 (2010): 521–37.

between social movements and physical space that may shift the lens from the influence of power holders to marginalized people on the architectural and urban culture of the city.[11]

One of the front page affairs throughout the 1990s was the Kurdish conflict, which for the Kurdish citizens signified violence at its most dehumanizing form, while in the state's terminology referred to as the years of terror.[12] In the early years of the nascent nation-state, government officials envisioned creating a homogenous Turkish population "purified" from linguistic, ethnic, and religious differences.[13] Policies of exclusion and dispossession targeting minorities, including the Kurds, served as a means to this end. Although the Kurdish movement gained some public visibility from the 1960s onward, it was brutally suppressed by the coup in 1980, like many other movements.[14] After the establishment of the Kurdish Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê/PKK, a militant organization of the Kurdish movement active since 1984), the Turkish state took drastic measures against the operations of the organization, including guerilla warfare. The State of Emergency Regional Governorships were established in fourteen eastern provinces to fight against the movement and remained active from 1987 to 2002.[15] In this period, the governorships' comprehensive jurisdiction over the region targeted civilians besides the militants. Educational services were suspended, channels of communication

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[11] See, for example, Çağlar Keyder, "A Brief History of Modern Istanbul," in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 504–23; Murat Gül, *Architecture and the Turkish City: An Urban History of Istanbul Since the Ottomans*, 2017; Kuban, *Istanbul, an Urban History*; Cenk Özbay, *The Making of Neoliberal Turkey* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016).

[12] Ayşen Uysal, "90'larla Hesaplasmak: Bir On Yılın Siyasal ve Toplumsal Yapısını Yeniden Düşünmek," in *İsyan, Siddet, Yas: 90'lar Türkiye'sine Bakmak*, ed. Ayşen Uysal (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2016), 8–18.

[13] See Senem Aslan, "Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 1 (2011): 75–93; Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey*.

[14] Rasim Özgür Dönmez, "Nationalism in Turkey: Political Violence and Identity," *Ethnopolitics* 6, no. 1 (2007): 43–65.

[15] Meltem Ahıska, "Counter-Movement, Space and Politics: How the Saturday Mothers of Turkey Make Enforced Disappearances Visible," in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, ed. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 167.

were consistently monitored, and moving in and out of certain territories was restrained.[16] On top

of the aggravated living conditions, government agents forced Kurdish citizens to relocate to

large cities for the alleged purpose of cutting logistic support to the PKK. According to Batuman,

constant migration to metropolises (especially to Istanbul) from the mid-1990s onwards

facilitated the "urbanization of the Kurdish movement."[17] By this, he means that the migrants

sought democratic participation through (1) pursuing formal representation in parliament through

political party organizations and (2) upholding the movement in the form of public

demonstrations, Newroz celebrations, civil disobedience acts, and petitions.[18] That is, the

mobilization of the Kurds from rural to urban areas carried struggles of the country's peripheries

to city centres. The majority of the SMP participants were also from families who moved to

Istanbul due to dispossession and displacement in the early 1990s.[19]

Activism practices of the decade featured a broad spectrum of topics, including protests against

crimes of urbanization, environmental movements, and identity struggles. For instance, in 1998,

the construction of the high-rise Park Hotel in Gümüşsuyu on top of a historic building was met

by public demonstrations.[20] The neighbourhood residents and the Chamber of Architects pursued

legal action eventually stalled the construction. Residents of the small town of Bergama, Izmir

resisted the goldmine to operate in the area. For almost a decade, citizens refused to participate in

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[16] Özgür Sevgi Göral, Ayhan Işık, and Özlem Kaya, *The Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances* (Istanbul: Truth, Justice, Memory Center, 2013), 16.

[17] Bülent Batuman, *New Islamist Architecture and Urbanism: Negotiating Nation and Islam through Built Environment in Turkey* (London: Routledge, 2018), 112.

[18] See Bahtiyar Mermertaş, "'Kuçe'lerden Sokağa: 1990'lardan Günümüze Zorunlu Göç Sonrasi Kürt Hareketinin Sokak Devinimi," in *Sokağın Belleği: 1 Mayıs 1977'den Gezi Direnişi'ne Toplumsal Hareketler ve Kent Mekânı*, ed. Derya Fırat (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014), 234.

[19] Göral, Işık, and Kaya, *The Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances*, 45.

[20] The lawsuits of the Chambers of Architects and Urban Planners stalled the construction until 2011, yet after the annulment of the stay of execution, the building was opened as CVK Bosporus Hotel in 2013. Elif Ince, "Kentin Direnişi: Park Otel'in 17 Katı Yıkıldı," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 9, 2014. Accessed May 30, 2019. http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kent/161151-kentin-direnisi-park-otel-in-17-kati-yikildi.

the population census, marched half-naked, occupied the mine, chained themselves on the

Bosporus Bridge to stop the traffic, and demanded a referendum.[21] Ethnic and identity struggles

manifested in public space through the blossoming LGBTQI+ organizations, Pride marches, and

other socioethnic groups' search for acceptance.[22] Examples are multiple, yet overall the

emerging consciousness on a variety of previously neglected or impeded affairs reminded

citizens of the importance of public space as a medium of democratic political discussion.

According to political scientist Nancy Fraser, the exclusion of certain groups from within the

regulated discourse triggers the formation of alternative public spheres.[23] These alternative public

spheres, which she coins as "subaltern counter-publics," constitute "parallel discursive arenas

where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to

formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs."[24] Fraser further

contends that subaltern counter-publics broaden the scope of discursive contestation, which

brings out positive development in stratified societies.[25] From this perspective, social movements

and public space activisms that abounded throughout the 1990s can be interpreted as subaltern

counter-publics. These practices entailed not only discursive but also spatial contestations that

directly altered the built environment. SMP has been one such example that created an accessible

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[21] Elif Ince, "Bergama Altın Madeni Direnişi: Toprağın Bekçileri," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 13, 2014. Accessed May 30, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/160766-bergama-altin-madeni-direnisi-topragin-bekcileri.

[22] Elif Ince, "LGBTİ: Kaldırımın Altından Gökkuşağı Çıkıyor," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 8, 2014. Accessed December 10, 2018, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/lgbti/160544-lgbti-kaldirimin-altindan-gokkusagi-cikiyor; Ismail Güney Yılmaz, "90'lar: Laz Kültür ve Kimlik Hareketinin Doğuşu," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, January 7, 2015. May 30, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/161339-90-lar-laz-kultur-ve-kimlik-hareketinin-dogusu; Aydın Erdogan, "Alevi Realitesini Tanımak," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, December 23, 2014. Accessed January 1, 2019. http://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/160992-alevi-realitesini-tanimak.

[23] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig J Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 109–42.

[24] Ibid., 123.

[25] Ibid., 124.

site of political participation whose social and physical organization progressed in response to user behaviour.

Mothers' Activism

Social movements scholars have thoroughly studied protesting mothers. The characteristics of the cases vary depending on their unique agendas; nevertheless, the struggle against war and authoritarian power regimes strike as a common ground for many.[26] Among the most notable cases of this type of activism is the resistance to enforced disappearances initiated in Latin America, as I discussed in the Introduction.[27] Mothers and wives of the individuals who disappeared under military junta governments have organized miscellaneous protests to find their relatives since the mid-1960s.[28] In the Middle East, Palestinian and Israeli women's contribution to nationalist and revolutionary movements portrayed mothers as active agents (rather than passive subjects) in bringing political change.[29] While these examples open up essential discussions on the role of women and (trans)formation of their identities in the processes of sociopolitical participation, feminist scholars, such as Mary Dietz and Anne Phillips,

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[26] Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck and Diana Taylor present insightful analyses on cases of mothers' activism across countries, based on personal accounts, memoirs, and interviews in addition to essays addressing theoretical and ideological concerns. Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck, and Diana Taylor, *The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right* (Hanover: Dartmouth College, 1997); see also Danielle Poe, *Maternal Activism: Mothers Confronting Injustice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015).

[27] Banu Bargu, "Sovereignty as Erasure: Rethinking Enforced Disappearances," *Qui Parle; Durham* 23, no. 1 (2014): 39.

[28] Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994); Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[29] Julie Marie Peteet, *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Sara Helman, "From Soldiering and Motherhood to Citizenship: A Study of Four Israeli Peace Protest Movements," *Social Politics* 6 (1999): 292–313.

problematize the overemphasis on the agency of maternal thinking in demanding political rights.[30] According to this line of thought, women should claim political rights as citizens rather than mothers because acting on motherhood builds on women's role as caretakers rather than as individuals. Despite the differences in interpretation, however, both strains confirm that women develop political identities beyond their domestic roles through their activist participation.

In the context of Turkey, scholars who examine human rights activism by mothers address the issue from familial and political domains.[31] Nisa Göksel's research, for example, focuses on the Barış Anneleri (Peace Mothers), a group of Kurdish mothers whose children were either PKK guerrillas or political dissidents.[32] Göksel argues that the mothers' activism, which intended to bring a peaceful solution to the ongoing political conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK, enabled them to develop political identities in their own right and challenged the dominant distribution of roles in familial and political realms.

The hierarchical organization of space that associates women with domestic and men with the public realm has been a topic of criticism for a long time.[33] The feminist movement and subsequent protests that gained acceleration in the late 1980s in Turkey were against this

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[30] Mary Dietz, "Citizenship with a Feminist Face: The Problem with Maternal Thinking," *Political Theory* 13, no. 1 (1985): 19–37; Anne Phillips, "Citizenship and Feminist Theory," in *Citizenship*, ed. Geoff Andrews (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991), 76–91.

[31] Özlem Aslan, "Politics of Motherhood and the Experience of the Mothers of Peace in Turkey" Master's thesis, (Boğaziçi University, 2007); Handan Çağlayan, *Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden: Resmî Kimlik Politikaları, Milliyetçilik, Barış Mücadelesi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013); Zeynep Kutluata, "The Politics of Difference within the Feminist Movement in Turkey as Manifested in the Case of Kurdish Woman/Feminist Journals" Master's thesis, (Boğaziçi University, 2003); Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar ve Siyasal-Toplumsal Hayat* (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1982).

[32] Nisa Göksel, "Losing the One, Caring for the All: The Activism of the Peace Mothers in Turkey," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 10 (2018): 1–20.

[33] See for example Linda K Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 9; Doreen B Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden, *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London; New York: E & FN Spon, 2000).

association.[34] In the context of the 1960s and 1970s, the interaction between social change and urban space consolidated woman's public image as a cognizant feminist in search of her rights and freedoms.[35] This image has evolved from the late 1980s onwards and manifested in women-led public demonstrations. Women openly represented themselves by creating new mediums of participation as an alternative to conventional means of politics. The rally entitled "Dayağa Hayır Yürüyüşü" (No to Battering) that took place in Istanbul Yoğurtçu Park in 1987 was among the first public demonstrations that revitalized public space in the post-1980 period.[36] "Bağır Herkes Duysun" (Let Everyone Hear) in 1988, "Cinsel Tacize Hayır-Mor İğne" (No to Sexual Abuse-Purple Needle) in 1989 and many other events followed. The establishment of the Mor Çatı Sığınma Evi (Purple Roof-Battered Women's Shelter) to aid victims of domestic violence was also a big step toward women's liberation in Turkey.[37] Concurrently emerged as another women-led activism practice, the SMP differed from these protests in terms of (1) the continuity of the action that sustained spatial appropriations for a prolonged period and created a meaning value for Galatasaray Meydanı, (2) the transnational dialogues that enhanced the popularity of the sit-ins.

From the very beginning, the SMP did not necessarily have feminist overtones because the resistance was not built on the sacredness of motherhood.[38] Even the name "Saturday Mothers"

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[34] Ann E Biddlecom and Şirin Tekeli, "Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader," *Population and Development Review Population and Development Review* 24, no. 3 (1998): 652; Şirin Tekeli, *Kadın Bakış Açısından: 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadınlar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş., 1990).

[35] Emine Görgül, "Türkiye'de Kamusal Alandaki Kadın Figürünün Değişimi," *Arredamento Mimarlık* 324 (October 2018): 52–59.

[36] Berna Erkal, "'Geceleri de, Sokakları da, Meydanları da Terk Etmiyoruz!': Türkiye'de Sokak ve Feminist Hareket," in *Sokağın Belleği: 1 Mayıs 1977'den Gezi Direnişi'ne Toplumsal Hareketler ve Kent Mekânı*, edited by Derya Fırat (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014), 171–86.

[37] "Mor Çatı: Ulusal Eylem Planı Kadın Sığınağına Yer Vermeli," *Bianet - Bağımsız İletişim Ağı*, March 7, 2008. Accessed November 1, 2020, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplumsal-cinsiyet/105436-mor-cati-ulusal-eylem-plani-kadin-siginagina-yer-vermeli.

[38] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.

was assigned to the group by the media.[39] The activists desired to be known as Cumartesi İnsanları (Saturday People) instead, to refrain from any comment that would imply emotional exploitation through motherhood.[40] Moreover, wives, siblings, children, fathers, and non-kin participants also joined the sit-ins next to mothers. Consequently, the alternative "Saturday Mothers/People" was endorsed by many to accentuate both the mothers' role and the action's inclusivity.

The academic research on the SMP derives predominantly from sociology and social movements disciplines. As such, these studies have gender-based arguments that prioritize the interaction between motherhood, activism, and the formation of identity politics in processes of human rights struggles. Meltem Ahıska, for example, focuses on the aspect of loss and defines the case of Saturday Mothers/People as a counter-movement that presents an opportunity for the mothers to make their losses visible and political in space.[41] Ayşem Sanlı Sezer examines how social opposition changes everyday life for the Saturday Mothers/People by transforming their domestic identities into activists. Berat Günçıkan and Erzade Ertem, Aydın Öztürk, and Mücevher Özmüş and Özgür Yurttaş document first-person accounts based on which I comprehend the participants' personal experiences of the sit-ins.[42] The existing scholarship on the subject insightfully represents the roles women undertake as active agents rather than passive subjects in social movements and the (re)production of space. However, these works primarily

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Meltem Ahıska, "Counter-Movement, Space and Politics: How the Saturday Mothers of Turkey Make Enforced Disappearances Visible," in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, eds. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 162–75.

[42] Berat Günçıkan and Erzade Ertem, *Cumartesi Anneleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1996); Aydın Öztürk, *Cumartesi Anneleri: Anımsamanın Zaferi* (Istanbul: İnsancıl Yayınları, 1996); Mücevher Özmüş and Özgür Yurttaş, *Cumartesi Öyküleri* (Istanbul: Ceylan Yayınları, 2000).

reflect on the transformation of identities rather than the physical space. Research on the

spatiality of the event is considerably sparse. Among existing scholarship, Evren Kocabıçak

examines the relationships between space and politics by identifying Istiklal Avenue—in Edward

Soja's terms—as "Thirdspace" where political resistance occurs and positions the Saturday

Mothers/People itself as a Thirdspace.[43] Gülsüm Baydar and Berfin Ivegen observe the de-

territorialization of motherhood and urban space during the SMP weekly sit-ins.[44] The authors

argue that the case helps dissolve the binary opposites (such as masculine versus feminine and

motherhood versus fatherhood) and offers new uses to urban space that transcend administrative

measures. While these analyses provide perspectives into the study of the relationship between

the SMP ritual and Istiklal Avenue, they overlook the case itself as an agent in designating a

public space, "Galatasaray Meydanı,"—beyond the act's political character that presents a

challenge to the prescribed uses of Istiklal Avenue. Identifying this as a point of interrogation, I

build on the existing scholarship by addressing the SMP as the social practice that brought

Galatasaray Meydanı into life as a public space, primarily a site of resistance. Therefore, my

research identifies the *meydan* not solely as a container of the resistance but mutually

constitutive with it.

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[43] Evren Kocabıçak, "Locating Thirdspace in the Specifities of Urban: A Case Study on Saturday Mothers, in İstiklal Street Istanbul" Master's thesis (Middle East Technical University, 2003).
[44] Gülsüm Baydar and Berfin İvegen, "Territories, Identities, and Thresholds: The Saturday Mothers Phenomenon in Istanbul," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 3 (2006): 689–715.

Find the Disappeared

> They held two photographs attached on cardboards and a placard that reads
> "Hasan Ocak was taken under custody; he was lost like hundreds of others and
> found dead. We want the murderers. Rıdvan Karakoç was taken under custody;
> he was lost like hundreds of others and found dead. We want the murderers."
> Nobody cared about the first meeting, including the police.[45]

In parallel with the frequency and severity of the state interventions targeting Kurdish

organizations, the news of individuals being declared lost under custody started to increase in the

1990s. From 1980 to 1990, 13 people; in 1991, 4 people; in 1992, 8 people; in 1993, 31 people;

in 1994, one hundred seventeen people were recorded lost under custody in official police

documents.[46] Missing reports came from various cities; however, many of the individuals were

from the south-eastern provinces, populated mainly by the Kurds.[47] Hasan Ocak disappeared

after being detained based on his alleged connection to a series of events known as Gazi

Mahallesi Olayları (Gazi District Incident).[48] His body was found at a potter's field, and the

similar case of Rıdvan Karakoç followed soon after. Both Ocak and Karakoç were of Kurdish

origins, like many others.[49] Having exhausted all efforts seeking the disappeared in several

governmental institutions, police stations, hospitals, and even cemeteries to no avail, the relatives

decided to collaborate with the IHD to publicize the issue.[50] Pursuing a career as a journalist

then—also a former activist during the 1960s' student movements—Nadire Mater was among

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[45] Nimet Tanrıkulu, in *Toplumsal Hareketler Konuşuyor*, ed. Leyla Sanlı (Istanbul: Alan, 2003), 279.

[46] Günçıkan and Ertem, *Cumartesi Anneleri*, 10–15.

[47] Göral, Isık, and Kaya, *The Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances*, 25.

[48] Gazi District was a working-class neighbourhood in Istanbul inhabited predominantly by Alevis. After a provocative gunned attack on multiple coffee houses in the area, the unrest spread over other districts in Istanbul and Ankara. Twenty-three people died, and more than a hundred were injured during the four-day-long incident. Orhan Tüleylioğlu, *Namlunun Ucundaki Mahalle: Gazi Mahallesi Olayları, 12-13 Mart 1995* (Ankara: Uğur Mumcu Araştırmacı Gazetecilik Vakfı, 2011).

[49] Özmüş and Yurttaş, *Cumartesi Öyküleri*, 132, 161.

[50] Human Rights Association started its first campaign concerning enforced disappearances in 1992 using the motto of "Find the Disappeared." "Kayıplar Bulunsun; Failler Yargılansın ve Cezalandırılsın!," *İnsan Hakları Derneği*, accessed July 19, 2019, https://www.ihd.org.tr/kayiplar-bulunsun-failler-cezalandirilsin/.

the lead participants who proposed to follow a similar road map with the Mothers of Plaza de

Mayo as the two cases shared common demands.

> After Hasan's incident, we organized a meeting as the Human Rights Association. We said we had to do something. What we knew the most was the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina. So, we also considered a repetitive form of action to keep the issue high on the agenda. I suggested Saturday. People spend more time outside on Saturdays than on weekdays. And the timing was delicate. It should have been convenient for the journalists as well, so they could come to observe the event and then prepare for the next day's print. We said 12 pm. It was ideal for the people coming from the suburbs, too.[51]

The SMP came to life as a silent weekly sit-in nearby Galatasaray High School on Istiklal

Avenue to take place from 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm every Saturday. Approximately thirty people

joined the very first meeting on May 27, 1995.[52] The main goal was to draw attention to the

missing persons and bring whoever was responsible to justice. Gaining visibility was a driving

force behind the action; however, the participants prioritized keeping a low profile at the

beginning to avoid immediate police notice. Only a few trusted journalists were invited to the

"opening" to ensure media coverage. The meetings were to last for an hour; nonetheless, the

challenge of sitting in silence for that long called for a shorter (half-hour-long) interval for future

meetings.[53] The performance was to be plain in visual and auditory aspects; hence, only a few

cardboards displaying the demands escorted the occupations during the first few weeks. Later on,

the protestors incorporated the identities of the missings by holding their photographs and names

printed on cardboards. Each week one individual's disappearance story was told, and then the

protestors sat in silence. No anthems or slogans were chanted. At the initial stages, the organizers

considered playing a background song to express the political message vocally. The British

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[51] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

singer Sting's "They Dance Alone," written for the mourning mothers of Chile, was translated to

Turkish for this purpose.

> Why are these women here dancing on their own?
> Why is there this sadness in their eyes?
> Why are the soldiers here, their faces fixed like stone?
> I can't see what it is they despise, dancing with the missing
> They're dancing with the dead, they dance with the invisible ones
> Their anguish is unsaid
> They're dancing with their fathers,
> They're dancing with their sons, dancing with their husbands
> They dance alone, they dance alone
>
> The only form of protest they're allowed
> I've seen their silent faces, they scream so loud
> If they were to speak these words, they'd go missing, too
> Another woman on the torture table, what else can they do?
> Dancing with the missing
> They're dancing with the dead, they dance with the invisible ones,
> Their anguish is unsaid
> They're dancing with their father, dancing with their sons
> They're dancing with their husbands
> They dance alone, they dance alone

The lyrics of Sting's piece describe the women whose relatives disappeared under Augusto

Pinochet's dictatorial regime. Even though the politics of Chile in the 1970s was different from

Turkey in the 1990s, ruled by parliamentary democracy, the circumstances were comparable.

Using an acoustic medium to narrate the story might have been a plausible strategy to interact

with the public. However, despite its pertinence, the organizers later abandoned this act to avert

slogans from onlookers and to foreground the silence that the protests intended to create.[54]

The noon to 12.30 pm interval worked perfectly for the sitters because the pedestrian flow would

be at its maximum on a Saturday midday. To secure the continuity of the meetings, they had to

be held under the police radar. Yet, at the same time, public exposure was necessary and needed

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[54] Ibid.

to begin and maintain awareness. The sit-ins were deliberately planned as a subtle occupation to be ensconced in the flow of Istiklal Avenue—rather than a rally that generally would have disrupted or slowed down pedestrian traffic. Consequently, due to the low profile of the sit-ins, it took a while for the police to figure out that a few people sitting in a corner on a crowded Saturday were up to something political.

The ritual gained widespread popularity in media swiftly after its start. Actors, artists, politicians, various professionals, and journalists joined the sit-ins and sent messages of outpouring solidary on both national and international levels. As the increasing support and population of the sitters aroused the government's attention, police teams began to escort the gatherings. Photographer Aclan Uraz visually documented the meetings between 1995–1997 and published a selection of his work in the form of a book, which he defines as "a visual cross-section of the history of Turkish democracy."[55] In his compositions, Uraz captures various participant profiles, such as mothers, fathers, wives, relatives, kids, artists, intellectuals, police, and journalists, in addition to places. In the book, a brief description accompanies each photograph on the opposite page to inform the viewer about the contents of the frame. In this manner, the photographer reveals how the meetings progress and how the audience—who participates voluntarily or under obligation, such as the police—responds to them. Uraz's photographs demonstrate the spatial production on the site by capturing various subject positions that space assumes in the process. The choice of black and white imagery presumably supports the author's aim of "reaching an international

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[55] Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri/Saturday Mothers: 1995-1997* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Çağ Pazarlama, 1998). Later on, the photographer shared a richer selection of the photographs on his personal YouTube page in video format. See, Aclan Uraz, "Cumartesi Anneleri-Saturday Mothers," YouTube, accessed November 14, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy6fyeB1DJo.

audience by using a visual means of expression," [56] as this style is known to enhance the dramatic effect of representation.[57]

Figure 33. The photograph with the caption "And shots from the *meydan* with voices in my ears: the rage of mothers will drown the killers." The image captures a mixed group of protestors facing toward the Tünel Meydanı end of the strip. Taksim Meydanı is located on the opposite end in the background. The names and disappearance dates of the missing individuals are displayed along with the headshots. The text on the bottom right reads as "Don't forget the disappeared." Source: Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri/Saturday Mothers: 1995-1997* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Çağ Pazarlama, 1998).

Figure 33 shows a populous group of sitters occupying Galatasaray Meydanı and many standing participants overflowing into Istiklal Avenue. The density of the crowd presents a contrast to the sparsely populated meetings in the beginning. The participants consist of a diversity of men and

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[56] "Bir Cumartesi Öyküsü," *Milliyet*, December 22, 1997.
[57] For the effects of black and white imagery on the audience, see Saskia Sassen, "Black and White Photography as Theorizing: Seeing What the Eye Cannot See," *Sociological Forum* 26, no. 2 (2011): 438–43.

women who are dressed differently. Some of the mothers and relatives reveal themselves in their traditional clothing and headscarves, yet many others wearing fashionable dresses and sunglasses also stand out, an indicator of the attendance of multiple social groups. In the background, the onlookers are also visible. By incorporating various actors into the frame, the composition displays how the protestors occupy Istiklal Avenue and how the audience positions themselves towards the occupation.

Istiklal Avenue has been a centre of attraction for a long time due to the commercial, cultural and entertainment activities it offers to both locals and visitors. Therefore, the route is always busy. The framing here does not portray the sit-in as an out-of-place happening that obstructs the everyday flow on the avenue. Instead, it gives the impression of an ordinary event that conforms to the familiar crowdedness of Istiklal, similar to the crowds gathering around a street musician. The photograph captures the mothers and the images of the disappeared, similar to many other visual representations of the sit-ins. Yet, it does not specifically focus on either. It instead emphasizes the collective action that brings together a broader set of actors in space. The frame is composed as if it invites the viewer to partake in the protest. It draws attention to the experience of solidarity, unlike a close-up that aims to convince the audience to feel compassion for the mothers through the conveyance of emotions.

Figure 34. A group of policemen deployed on Istiklal Avenue. Another photograph of Uraz capturing the avenue before the start of a sit-in. A team of police officers is aligned in a military fashion across the street from the protest site. Another group appears in distance near the gate. Police vehicles are also visible on the right-hand side beside the statue of "50th Anniversary," comprised of vertical metal columns. Despite a handful of passers-by, the avenue is much less busy than its normal state. Source: Aclan Uraz, "Cumartesi Anneleri-Saturday Mothers," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy6fyeB1DJo&ab_channel=AclanUraz.

Figure 34 is a stark contrast to the density and diversity in Figure 33. The photograph captures police officers positioned on Istiklal Avenue to claim the site before the protestors' arrival. A big squad aligned in a military fashion occupies the opposite side of Istiklal Avenue. A few others are also visible in front of the school's gate. The protestors are absent in the frame; hence, only the security forces inflict power and hierarchy on the site. In opposition to the scenery of the sit-ins, the order imposed by the police presence seems to be out of place as the typically bustling avenue gives the impression of being atypically deserted.

States usually regard civil protests as disorderly acts that unsettle the spatial traditions in a public

space. Accordingly, authorities attempt to prevent public gatherings under the pretext of

"normalizing" everyday movements, which was also the case for the SMP sit-ins. However, a

comparison between Figures 33 and 34 challenges this assumption by provoking questions such

as: What is it that actually unsettles/monopolizes the urban routines on Istiklal Avenue? The

presence of police or the protestors?

1 Taksim Meydanı
2 Istiklal Avenue
3 Galatasaray Meydanı
4 Tünel Meydanı

a Istiklal Avenue
b Galatasaray High School
c Galatasaray Meydanı
d 50th Anniversary Monument

e YKKS
f Post Office
g Yeni Çarşı Street

Golden Horn

Galatasaray Meydanı
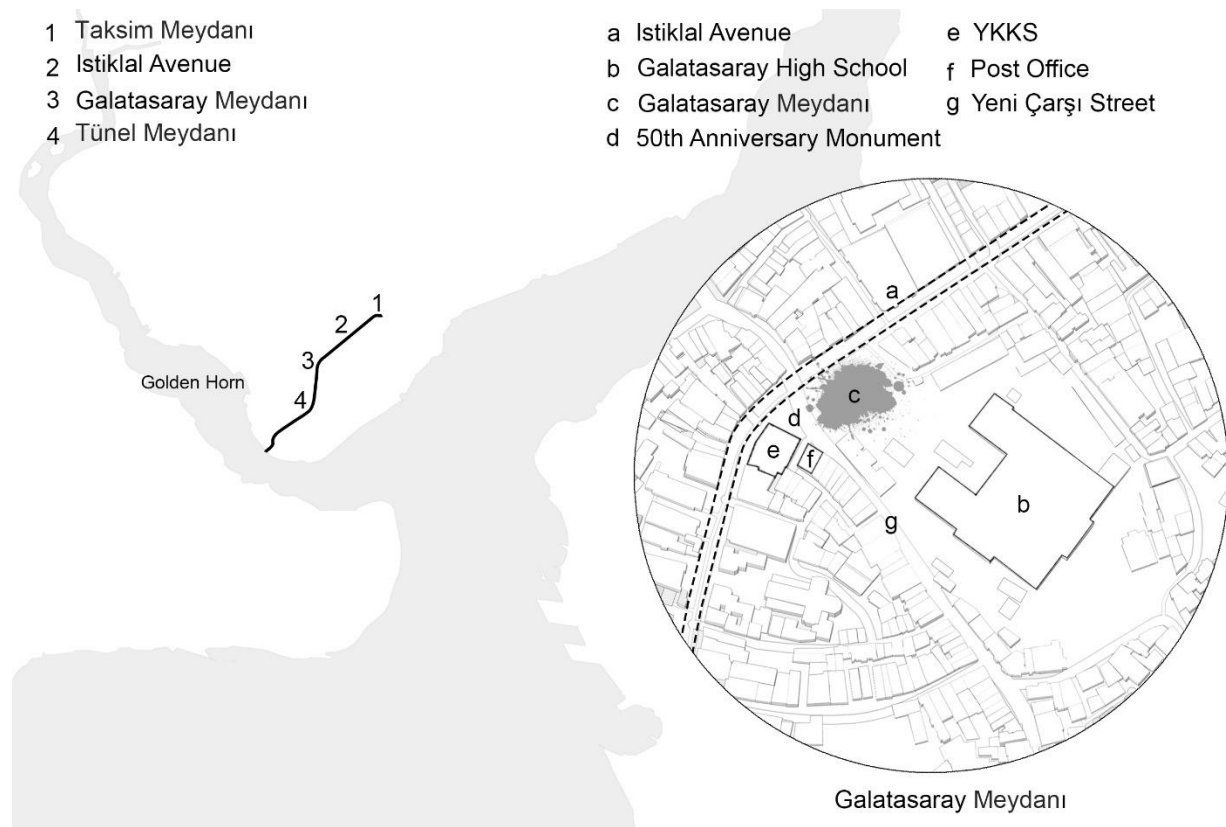
Figure 35. A map of Istiklal Avenue and Galatasaray Meydanı. Drawing by the author.

Between August 1998 and March 1999, police obstructed access to the site in the form of spatial

interventions in Beyoğlu. In addition to the police occupation in Galatasaray Meydanı, support

squads were deployed along Istiklal Avenue as a "security measure." Barricades were placed on

both Taksim Meydanı and Tünel Meydanı ends to limit the pedestrian movement. Nevertheless,

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the sitters insisted on meeting at the original location. They used secondary roads branching from the avenue as alternative access paths to escape the impediments. They occasionally sat near the post office across Yeni Çarşı Street but never gave up on the *meydan*.[58] This iterant contestation between the police and protestors over the appropriation of place introduced a new aspect to the resistance: claiming the site. The struggle between the citizens and the state created a "terrain of resistance" at that location, a term defined by Paul Routledge as a "site of contestation and the multiplicity of relations between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic powers and discourses, between forces and relations of domination, subjection, exploitation and resistance."[59] Not surprisingly, subsequent meetings witnessed systematic police brutality that ended up in custody. The protestors persevered to appropriate Galatasaray Meydanı every Saturday for four years; nevertheless, they had to suspend the sit-ins eventually due to the severity of the conditions.[60] In the early years of Erdoğan's rule, during which he allegedly blended moderate Islam with a pro-Western outlook, the 1990s human rights violations gained currency to make terms with the exclusionary political practices of the past. As soon as the diplomatic peace negotiations with the Kurds took effect, the Saturday meetings were relaunched on January 31, 2009.[61]

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[58] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.

[59] Routledge, "Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance," 516.

[60] "Türkiye'nin En Uzun Eylemi: Cumartesi Anneleri/İnsanları'nın 600 Haftası," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, September 20, 2016. Accessed July 21, 2019, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/178812-turkiye-nin-en-uzun-eylemi-cumartesi-anneleri-insanlari-nin-600-haftasi.

[61] Özlem Akarsu Celik, "Benim Annem Cumartesi," *Milliyet*, October 26, 2014. Accessed February 1, 2020, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ozlem-akarsu-celik/benim-annem-cumartesi-1960139.

Figure 36. Saturday Mothers/People, 2009. The image focuses the mothers standing near the gate. The banner hanging on the railings reads "Perpetrators are known, where are the disappeared?" The three posters in the front row, from left to right, read "Hasan Gülünay, disappeared under custody on July 20, 1992," "Hüseyin Taşkaya, Missing," "Ayşenur Şimşek, disappeared under custody on January 24, 1995." Photograph by Mehmet Kaçmaz, Nar Photos.

Figure 36 is from one of the sit-ins in August 2009. The photographer Mehmet Kaçmaz works

with the Nar Photos, an independent collective in Istanbul specializing in social documentary

photography.[62] The image shows a group of protestors, mostly women, holding photographs of

the disappeared by the school gate. All placards have similar graphic compositions, including the

names and status of the individuals, *kayıp* (missing). Some of them include the dates of

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[62] The Stories section of the collective's website covers narratives of demonstrations and activism—including Saturday Mothers/People and Gezi Park Protests. See http://www.narphotos.net/

disappearance as well. The banner hanging on the railings displays the question that mothers

have been asking since the very first day "Perpetrators are known, where are the disappeared?"

Unlike the framings of Uraz, Kaçmaz gives the central stage to the mothers and the disappeared

in his plain composition. As the close-up captures the faces of both parties, the photograph draws

attention to both physical and virtual participants of the meeting. The graphic organization of the

posters resembles an official ID document in terms of providing the basic information that would

belong to a citizen: a portrait and a name. What differs from an ID is the specified date that

normally refers to the time of birth, which in this case stands for the time of disappearance. The

incorporation of photographs into the sit-ins accentuates both the absence and presence of the

disappeared. The aim is to speak for the missing, and the missing themselves do most of the

speaking figuratively through their ignored identities. For that reason, some mothers

intentionally covered their faces throughout the meetings by lifting the placards in an attempt to

obscure themselves and expose the disappeared instead.[63]

The close-up of Kaçmaz also draws attention to the emotional state of the women, most of whom

seem to express sadness, agony, and anger. Social movements scholars that study the relationship

between emotions and collective action observe that emotions have been a significant component

in mobilizations.[64] According to Lorraine Bayard de Volo, emotions can be both the cause and

benefit of collective action.[65] Maternal movements, particularly, can trigger changes in the

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[63] See Asiye Karakoç's testimonial in Kocabıçak, "Locating Thirdspace in the Specifities of Urban," 81.
[64] Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, "Why Emotions Matter," in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, eds. Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1–24; Marysa Navarro, "The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo," in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Susan Eckstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 241–58; Sally Webb Thornton, "Grief Transformed: The Mothers of the Plaza De Mayo," *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying* 41, no. 4 (2016): 279-289.
[65] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, "The Dynamics of Emotion and Activism: Grief, Gender, and Collective Identity in Revolutionary Nicaragua," *Mobilization* 11 (2006): 465.

development of protests by acting on emotional states. Since shared emotions of maternity can

carry a "high emotional resonance," they could turn into a powerful form of resistance against

the state.[66] Personal stories of the SMP attest that dealing with pain in the company of like-

minded people helped them develop a collective identity.[67] Expressing emotions in a dynamic

district also eased communication with the audience. The popularity of the sit-ins indicates that

the images of maternity accentuated notions of compassion, peace, and justice in contrast to the

paternal images of militaristic power and violence.

Figure 37. Saturday Mothers caricature by Turhan Selçuk. Source: *Milliyet,* July 15, 1996.

Cartoonist Turhan Selçuk later used this maternal/paternal duality in one of his drawings of the

sit-ins. The upper half of the frame in Figure 37, with the caption Cumartesi Anneleri (Saturday

Mothers), shows the mothers being beaten by the police forces on the street. Overweight men

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[66] Ibid., 463.
[67] See personal accounts in Günçıkan and Ertem, *Cumartesi Anneleri*.

resting on piles of cash and gold are the focus of the bottom half. The depiction of the men with beards and prayer hats represents political Islam, referencing the current government. The caption Pazar Babaları is equivocally charged. Pazar means both Sunday and Market in Turkish. The combination Sunday/Market Fathers, coupled with the drawing, implies a critique of the rise of political Islam and the neo-liberal market economy's greediness, with a twisty reference to the day that comes after Saturday. The two halves of the cartoon altogether can be read as a commentary on the violent action taken towards the mothers as well as the richening of political Islam by using the imagery of maternal/paternal duality. Here, the cartoon presents a causality: mothers suffer because of the political Islam in power. This implication is problematic because the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state goes back to the foundation of the Republic and the continual nationalist policies at play. Even though the government officials of the time should be held accountable for the violence imposed upon the mothers, it would be mistreatment to attribute the long-term systemic oppression and exclusion of the Kurdish population to one single ideology or government.

Initially, the SMP did not use any specific visual language or props except the cardboards; however, throughout the process, many symbolic acts organically emerged and consolidated the impact of the sit-ins. A striking aspect in Kaçmaz's photograph in Figure 36 is the white headscarf, which became a symbol as the sit-ins progressed. This traditional headpiece *yazma* is a practical everyday garment commonly worn by Kurdish women. Unlike the Islamic headscarf (*türban*), it has not been an ideologically charged object. The Peace Mothers previously used *yazma* as a symbol of their resistance in calling for peace.[68] As mentioned in the Introduction, head coverings were associated with backwardness and deemed non-compliant with the modern

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[68] Göksel, "Losing the One, Caring for the All," 11.

woman profile embraced by the Republican authorities.[69] Thus, the permeation of secularism into everyday life was promoted by emphasizing women's visibility in public space. Periodicals featured the new Republic's "modern" women in European clothing as professionals, teachers, pilots, and athletes, socializing in mixed company of men and women. Sibel Bozdoğan argues that the images of modern women, similar to modern buildings, symbolized breaking ties with the Ottoman past; hence, the photographic compositions contained historical buildings together with modern women to represent an "old versus new" construct.[70] Figure 36 challenges the image drawn during the early Republican period by revealing the new visibility that "traditional" women gained in public space regardless of cultural and ethnic dispositions. It portrays a strong-willed, independent woman figure searching for rights and freedoms, countering stereotypes.

Regularly wearing *yazma* was not a planned strategy, as in the case of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. The act caught on when a few participants attended the meetings with their headpieces. Red carnations gained popularity during the second round of the ritual as an essential symbolic component. Each participant carried one red carnation to leave behind on the street after departure. In this way, a reminder of the performance emblematically occupied the space even after the protestors' disappearance. Various other acts of emotional and political expression were later added to the repertoire as placemaking strategies.

> The red carnation is an important symbol for us because it symbolizes
> those who do not have a grave. We use carnations to express that we

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[69] Alev Çınar, "Subversion and Subjugation in the Public Sphere: Secularism and the Islamic Headscarf," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, no. 4 (2008): 891–913.

[70] To Bozdoğan, the correlation of modern architecture with Republican women was a symbolic association. Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Late Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001): 87.

are the families of the grave-less. We leave them behind at the *meydan* instead of a grave.[71]

From time to time, we incorporated other symbolic items too. For instance, some participants tied black clothes around their mouths to emphasize the aspect of silence. In some cases, we exposed shoes. During the police raids, the participants' shoes would remain on the site. Shoes were symbolic of the struggle. It is a global symbol, actually.[72]

The people in the photographs were entirely missing, with a few exceptions whose bodies were coincidentally found and properly buried. No locale or gravestone exists for the relatives to return and physically and emotionally grieve their loss. In the course of the meetings, the sitters transformed the protest site into a memorial ground; the families could connect with their children by coming to the site and bringing flowers. The bond built between the protestors and public space during this social act resulted in the transfer of the tradition from generation to generation. Daughters and wives took over the mission of attending the sit-ins from the mothers, adding to the meaning of the locale.

According to Karen Till, places hold memories that later transform them into material and imagined settings that are relatively permanent and stable in time.[73] Places of memory are "never merely backdrops for action or containers for the past; they create and mediate social spaces and temporalities."[74] In the case of the SMP, the incorporation of aesthetic elements and repetitive action consolidated the act of remembrance and marked the protest location as a place of memory. In line with this, public space became an imaginary memorial ground for the missing

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[71] Testimony of an anonymous member of the Human Rights Association in Ayşem Sezer Şanlı, "Gündelik Hayatın Dönüşümünde Bir İmkân Olarak Toplumsal Muhalefetin Değerlendirilmesi: Cumartesi Anneleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma." PhD diss. (Hacettepe University, 2018), 225.
[72] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.
[73] Karen E Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 10.
[74] Ibid., 8.

people. Consequently, a *meydan* came to life in response to its citizens' contemporary needs and demands.

Politics of Public Space on Istiklal Avenue

> Different social groups endow space with an amalgam of different meanings and values; particular places frequently become sites of conflict where the social structures, relations of power domination and resistance intersect.[75]

Istiklal Avenue, extending from Tünel Meydanı to Taksim Meydanı, is a prime location where Istanbul's social, cultural, and economic diversity has manifested itself over the years. An array of historically significant buildings, such as embassies and educational institutions, are located along the strip. Kerem Öktem describes the architecture as "*fin-de-siècle* European, providing a perfect setting for the fantasies of a cosmopolitan way of life to unravel."[76] Since the Ottoman period, Istiklal has been a significant commercial and touristic zone appealing to both locals and visitors.[77] During the Ottoman modernization, new commercial, business, and cultural centres spread along the axis. Rising elites of the empire, mostly non-Muslim subjects and Levantines, settled here through the historic city extending to Beyoğlu via Grand Rue de Pera (Cadde-i Kebir in the Ottoman period, Istiklal Avenue in the Republic) leading to Taksim Meydanı. During the Republican restructuring, authorities "nationalized" this part of the city by inserting political symbols into its multi-cultural texture. The avenue was renamed Istiklal, meaning Liberty, to legitimize the new regime and its achievements.

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[75] Routledge, "Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance," 519.

[76] Pelin Derviş et al., *Becoming Istanbul: An Encyclopedia* (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Garanti Gallery, 2008), 202.

[77] See, for example, Gülersoy, *Taksim: Bir Meydanın Hikayesi*.

Place-names, or toponyms, have long been used to "evoke powerful images and connotations, contributing to the development of a sense of place."[78] By attaching meaning to spaces, they initiate processes of social construction.[79] Richard Grounds regards toponyms as "symbolic monuments" with the potential to shape public memory.[80] This potential makes place-name changes vital components of nation-building processes by enabling the promotion of ideological shifts.[81]

The Republican government eminently benefitted from place-name changes in constructing the narrative of the Turkish nation-state while assimilating multi-ethnic built environments. For instance, in 1927, all street and *meydan* names of foreign origin were replaced by Turkish names in Istanbul.[82] Similar strategies were also pursued in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II. Galata Mevlevi Lodge, Asmalı Masjid, and a barracks for novice janissaries were constructed along the strip to draw the Muslim population to the neighbourhood.[83] John Agnew emphasizes that broader economic and political processes are at play in places (*locations*).[84] The formation of class, gender, race, and nation-building, inform social and political positions constructed and consolidated through everyday interactions with other

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[78] Derek Alderman, "Place, Naming, and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Peter Howard and Brian Graham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2008), 196.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Richard A. Grounds, "Tallahassee, Osceola, and the Hermeneutics of American Place-Names," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 2 (2001): 289.

[81] See Maoz Azaryahu, "The Purge of Bismarck and Saladin: The Renaming of Streets in East Berlin and Haifa, a Comparative Study in Culture-Planning," *Poetics Today* 13, no. 2 (1992): 351–67; Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey*.

[82] Kerem Öktem, "The Nation's Imprint: Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponyms in Republican Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, no. 7 (September 23, 2008), http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/2243.

[83] Vedia Dökmeci and Hale Çıracı, *Tarihsel Gelişim Sürecinde Beyoğlu* (Istanbul: Turing Yayınları, 1990).

[84] John A. Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

people.[85] In addition, they transform physical and imagined settings that constitute a *locale*.[86] The factors at play in the formation of Istiklal Avenue reveal such processes inscribed into spatial production through symbols, visions, interactions, and architecture. Put differently, spatial manifestations of political power in this area signify it as a subject of political control.

During the Empire, the Galata-Pera area was primarily inhabited by minorities such as Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Levantines. Churches of various denominations and many synagogues still operate in the neighbourhood. While the footprints of multiculturalism that once flourished remain, the memory of the events of September 6–7, 1955 (sometimes referred to as Istanbul's *Reichskristallnacht,* a pogrom carried out against the Jews in Nazi Germany in 1938) also exist. During the riots, street mobs looted all explicitly non-Muslim shops, businesses, and religious buildings as leverage in the Cyprus conflict. According to Batuman, the nationalist rallies of the 1950s primarily utilized Istiklal Avenue to reflect their political imagination onto the public space characterized by ethnic diversity.[87] Tekeli observes that the displacement of non-Muslim minorities after the 1955 events catalyzed the dilapidation of this area in the years to come.[88]

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[85] Walter Nicholls, Justin Beaumont, and Byron A Miller, *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements*, 2013, 4.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim,'" 10.
[88] Tekeli, *The Development of the Istanbul Metropolitan Area.* 139-142.
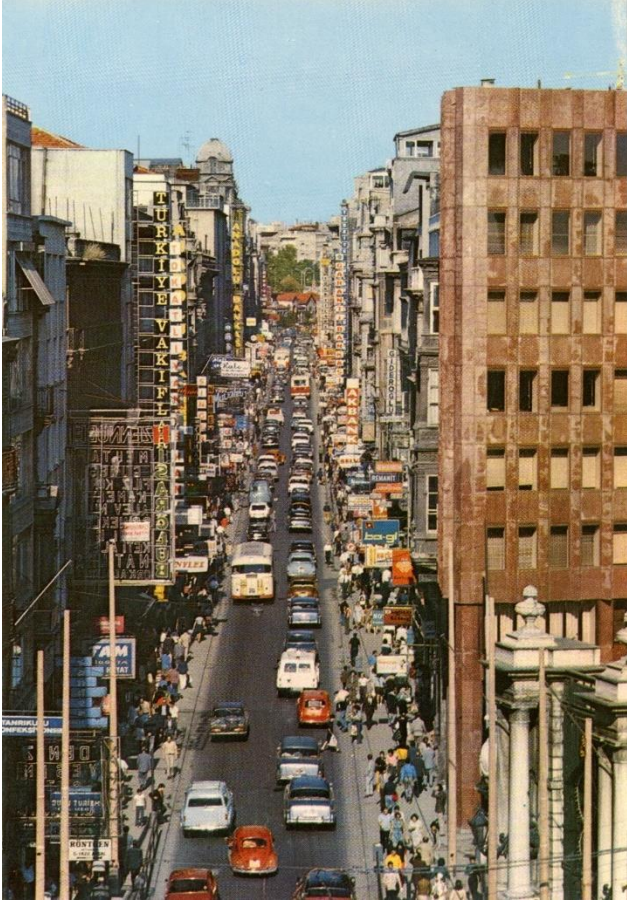
Figure 38. Istiklal Avenue before pedestrianization. Source: SALT Research Online Archive, Kemal Söylemezoğlu Collection, https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/118268
Figure 39. Istiklal Avenue after pedestrianization. Source: SALT Research Online Archive, Çalıkoğlu Collection, https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/7030

Prime Minister Turgut Özal and Istanbul Mayor Bedrettin Dalan, who came to power in the 1983 elections, envisioned Istanbul as a "World City" that should offer a built environment favourable for international business, tourism, and entertainment as well as parks and green spaces for the use of urbanites.[89] Large scale infrastructure works, shopping malls, gated communities, luxury hotels and real estate development projects shaped the urban texture of the city from the 1980s

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[89] See the urban design competition booklet, Erhan İşözen, *Taksim Meydanı Kentsel Tasarım Proje Yarışması* (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı, 1987).

onwards in parallel with the neoliberal transformation of the economy.[90] In 1990, Istanbul

Metropolitan Municipality commenced a renewal project to develop Beyoğlu as a locus for

commerce, entertainment, culture, and tourism. The construction works on Istiklal Avenue

included the rehabilitation of buildings in disrepair and the separation of vehicle and pedestrian

traffic to reconfigure the neighbourhood as a centre of attraction.[91] The elimination of vehicular

traffic between Taksim and Tünel within this scope enabled the operation of a tramway and

inevitably increased pedestrian dominance in the area.

Istiklal Avenue is primarily a commercial strip, yet it has also been an urban space where

politics, arts and commerce intersect on an everyday level. The avenue bears a resemblance to

Taksim Meydanı in terms of facilitating expressions of various sociopolitical and cultural

opinions—besides being an urban axis that physically connects to it. As mentioned in the

introduction, the avenue has been on the spine that connects Beyazıt Meydanı to Taksim

Meydanı. In other words, many processions that set Taksim as their final destination pass

through this route. It is common to see people distributing political magazines, leaflets, and

newspapers or giving speeches to the passersby along the avenue. Facades facing the strip

display political posters and graffiti as well as advertisements and announcements for art events.

The reason for excluding Taksim as the protest location for the SMP sit-ins was the extreme

visibility it offered around the time.[92] Any protest attempt in the *meydan* was to be terminated

within minutes by the ever-present police officers. Istiklal Avenue, on the other hand, offered a

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[90] Çağlar Keyder, "Capital City Resurgent: Istanbul since the 1980s," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 43 (2010): 177–86; Cenk Özbay et al., "The Making of Neoliberal Turkey: An Introduction," in *The Making of Neoliberal Turkey*, ed. Cenk Özbay et al. (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016), 1–14.
[91] Ufuk Altunbaş, "Kent Merkezlerinde Yayalastirmanin İslevsel Degisim Uzerine Etkileri: Istiklal Caddesi Örneği" Master's thesis (Istanbul Technical University, 2006).
[92] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.

relatively safeguarded environment for activism practices. This was partly due to the physical form, but its primary association with commercial and touristic activities was also a factor. As an approximately two-kilometre long street demarcated by adjacent buildings, Istiklal was a confined location compared to Taksim that was exposed on all sides. The linear path would slow down the mobilization of police officers or vehicles, unlike an open space. Taking advantage of the physical form of space, the Saturday sitters remained under the police radar on Istiklal Avenue at least until they could make a public statement and convey the demands in front of an audience.

The Making of Galatasaray Meydanı

The exact location of the SMP sit-ins, Galatasaray Meydanı, is a junction where Yeni Çarşı Street meets Istiklal Avenue in Beyoğlu. The place does not have a well-defined shape, function, or strong symbolic connotations like a European square or an Ottoman *meydan*. Nevertheless, it has a physical connection to the adjacent Galatasaray High School's grand entrance gate accentuated with neoclassical columns and railings. The gate leads up to the school's front yard inside the walls. Yet, it has long been out of use and opens only on special days for official ceremonies. For access, campus residents use an auxiliary entrance on the Yeni Çarşı Street side. On the opposite side of the junction stands a modernist statue designed by Şadi Çalık for the 50th anniversary of the Republic (see Figure 34). The modest-in-scale artwork displays a combination of steel columns oriented towards the sky located on a base that marks its year of construction, 1973, and the foundation of the Republic, 1923. Arguably, the art piece did not impose any particular symbolism or meaning onto space; it rather remained an unremarkable urban element

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blending into the hustle and bustle of all-time-busy Istiklal Avenue. Nonetheless, the subtle

existence of the statue also transformed with the pedestrianization, sit-ins, and the renovation of

the Yapı Kredi Culture and Arts (YKKS) building in the background.
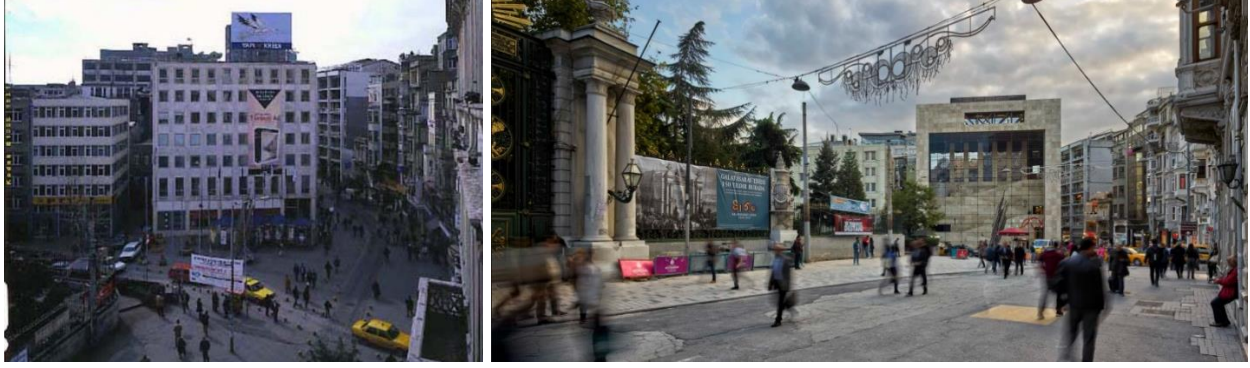
Figure 40. YKKS building before and after the renovation. The photograph on the left is of Schmittener's original design that lasted from 1960 to 2014. The image on the right captures Teğet Architecture's renovation with its transparent façade and its visual connection to Galatasaray Meydanı. The 50th Anniversary statue also becomes visible with the glass surface in the background.
Source: "Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat (YKKS)," *Arkiv-Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi*, http://www.arkiv.com.tr/proje/yapi-kredi-kultur-sanat-ykks/8613

In 1958, German architect Paul Schmittener was commissioned to design the Yapı Kredi Bank

Headquarters at the intersection of Yeni Çarşı Street and Istiklal Avenue, across the Galatasaray

High School. The construction of the office complex was completed in 1960.[93] Established in

1944 by Kazım Taşkent, the bank pursued an agenda of nourishing cultural production through

publications and archiving artworks.[94] Despite several changes in the ownership of private

enterprises, the promotion of arts and culture always remained a priority for the institution. With

the incorporation of the YKKS into the program in 1992, the owners purchased the adjoining

building on Istiklal Avenue to provide additional space to accommodate cultural activities. In his

design of this annex, architect Bülent Marmara maintained the order and material of

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[93] For a history of the YKKS building, see Aslı Alp, "'Tangent' Architecture: YKKS Building Reconstructed" Master's thesis (Middle East Technical University, 2019), 7–21.
[94] Hasan Ersel, *Kazım Taşkent, Yapı Kredi ve Kültür Sanat* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014).

Schmittener's original façade.[95] The collaboration of Koç Group and UniCredit that undertook

the administration in 2005 launched a design competition in 2010 to express the establishment's

care for arts and cultural events in its architecture.

Schmittener's façade facing Galatasaray Meydanı created a geometric composition outlined by

the building's structural order. Repeating rectangular windows of varying scales on different

levels dominated the elevation (see Figure 40). The ground-level arcade, open on both Istiklal

Avenue and Yeni Çarşı Street sides, offered a transitionary zone, connecting the building with

the daily life on the avenue.[96] The winner of the 2010 competition, Teğet Architecture Office,

abided by many design decisions that shaped Schmittener's building, even though a total

demolition was allowed. In the words of a spokesperson from the office:

> The proposed stacking of programs shifts the horizontal organization of
> public space and the linear alignment of commercial storefronts of the
> main street to a vertical path of movement in the carved-out gallery
> space. The new building preserves the existing shell yet interprets the
> arcade as a vertical promenade at the facade looking Galatasaray
> Meydanı. The building once again breaks the interior-exterior divide
> with a void, this time it opens up the arts and cultural uses with
> transparency to the outer square and the city.[97]

As the firm's statement reveals, its treatment of the structure is overtly responsive to Galatasaray

Meydanı as a public space. The project was deliberately designed to establish a visual

relationship with the *meydan* and ensure communication between the exterior and interior of the

building. Furthermore, the transparent glass façade, replacing the former massive configuration

and its strict order, is intended to transpose the public space into the verticality of the building

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[95] Burcu Kütükçüoğlu and Emiliano Bugatti, *YKKS Kente Bir Açılım - An Opening to the City* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2019), 72.

[96] Alp, "'Tangent' Architecture: YKKS Building Reconstructed," 26.

[97] Ece Unubol, "AR New into Old Winner: YKKS," *Teget* (blog), accessed March 1, 2020, https://www.teget.com/ykksar-2/.

and reflect the artistic environment of the interior onto the *meydan.* Within this new spatial arrangement, the 50th Anniversary Statue also becomes an eye-catching urban element having a plain background that accentuates its existence.

Lead architects Mehmet Kütükçüoğlu and Ertuğ Uçar say that while designing the structure, they aimed to "keep the connection to an influential fragment [Galatasaray Meydanı] of the collective memory of Istiklal axis."[98] This statement is quite prominent in terms of identifying the regular meeting spot of the SMP as a public space of assembly, not merely as an avenue junction. In other words, the spatial appropriation facilitated by the use of bodies, symbols, and repetitive action and eventually generated a collective memory becomes a contributing factor in the design process. The opening of the YKKS towards the *meydan* was a way of coming to terms with the social production on an architectural level. Galatasaray Meydanı itself was created through social action in the first place—rather than urban design interventions—, but its development as a *meydan* changed the physicality of Istiklal Avenue.

Aftermath

> Today, Galatasaray is above all a space of memory. It is always Saturday in front of that gate. Even when it is not 12 pm, even when it is not Saturday, even the Saturday Mothers/People are not there, they still tell the passersby the stories of the disappeared and the last twenty years of the country with their resistance.[99]

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Nimet Tanrıkulu, "Galatasaray Hafıza, İtaatsizlik ve Küreselleşmenin Mekanı," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, accessed July 19, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/160801-galatasaray-hafiza-itaatsizlik-ve-kuresellesmenin-mekani.

After the suspension of the meetings in 1999, Istanbul's chief of security suggested Kazlıçeşme as an alternative to Istiklal Avenue. Kazlıçeşme is a vast concrete open space in the Zeytinburnu district designated for large-scale public gatherings. Located on the Marmara shore of the historic peninsula, it is considerably far from the urban core of Istanbul and has no immediate connection to the city. Therefore, it promised very little, if any, visibility or public engagement. Having no appeal for the SMP, Kazlıçeşme would have been contrarily favourable for the municipality because diverting the action to a remote location would significantly diminish its public impact. Not surprisingly, the sitters never relocated to this isolated area. Furthermore, by 1999, the original protest site had already developed a character as a *meydan* of public visibility. Numerous events with varying agendas now targeted Galatasaray Meydanı as their urban setting.

Since the strongest association of the protest site was the long-established educational institution to that date, the earlier media coverages on the SMP usually described the locale as "nearby" or "in front of" the Galatasaray High School.[100] This description has gradually shifted from the late 1990s toward the 2000s. The news reports of various public events, from demonstrations to art and cultural organizations, began to call the site Galatasaray Meydanı, even though the municipality initiated no decision-making processes or design interventions to pinpoint it as a *meydan*.[101] Instead, the newly emerging political role of the place was countered by a stationary police presence, an attempt to reassert state power to the site.

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[100] See for example "Cumartesi Annelerine 10 Gözaltı," *Milliyet*, July 14, 1996; "187. Haftada Da İzin Yok," *Milliyet*, December 13, 1998; "Cumartesi Annelerine 188. Haftada Da İzin Verilmedi," *Milliyet*, December 20, 1998; "Nerede Bu Kayıplar?," *Milliyet*, January 3, 1999; "Cumartesi Annelerine Af Örgütünden Destek," *Milliyet*, November 22, 1998; "Kayıpların Dünya Günü," *Milliyet*, October 27, 1996; "Annelere 30 Gözaltı," *Milliyet*, August 23, 1998; "Cumartesi Anneleri Eyleme Devam," *Milliyet*, January 4, 1998.
[101] See for example "Anti-Nükleer Cephe Galatasaray Meydanı'na Gaz Maskeleriyle Geldi," *Milliyet*, February 19, 2006; "Barış Yürüyüşüne Mor ve Ötesi Desteği," *Milliyet*, July 29, 2006; "Istanbul'da Pop-Art Günleri," *Milliyet*, July 1, 2001.

According to Lefebvre, bodies have the potential to produce space through creating movement, changing direction, introducing new rhythms, leaving residues and traces that construct a *topos*.[102] Then, by opening doors for the interaction between bodies and space, protests can become potent mediums through which this potential manifests in the urban landscape. The sit-in ritual of the SMP created *a topos* in Istiklal Avenue by using the power of bodies, symbols, and repetitive action. The interaction between the Saturday sitters and the protest location produced a *meydan* associated with the injustices disclosed during the occupations.

As Mitchell contends, public space is a place "within which a political movement can stake out the space that it allows it to be seen […]. By claiming space in public, by creating spaces, social groups themselves become public."[103] This assessment applies particularly well to underprivileged or excluded groups as they have limited political representation via official channels. Bayat explains the importance of the streets in expressing discontent for people who are exempt from political power as follows:

> When people are deprived from, or do not trust electoral power to change things, they tend to resort to their own institutional power to exert pressure on adversaries to meet their demands (like workers or University students going on strike). But for those (such as the unemployed, housewives, and broadly the "informal people") who lack such institutional power/settings, streets become a crucial arena to express discontent.[104]

That is, streets offer a stage, alternative for institutional power settings, for the use of those who do not have direct access to political decision-making processes. The SMP ritual empowered a

[102] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* 174.
[103] Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* 85, no. 1 (1995): 115.
[104] Asef Bayat, "Politics in the City-Inside-Out," *City & Society* 24, no. 2 (2012): 110–28.

group of women who were unconventional political actors of their time; moreover, the action enabled them to control Galatasaray Meydanı through temporary inhabitation.

Most of the Saturday mothers were migrants in Istanbul, originally from the south and south-eastern provinces. Among the well-known participants, Kiraz Şahin, Emine Ocak, Hanım Tosun, Elmas Eren, Asiye Karakoç were of Kurdish origins.[105] They may not have had particular political dispositions; nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to identify them as apolitical. Most of the mothers experienced the Turkish state-Kurdish minority conflict firsthand. Married in their teens, they did not have much education or autonomy outside their homes.[106] Despite that, the mothers left their familiar domestic spheres and built new environments out on the street while seeking their children. Public appearance allowed for not only the disappeared but also the mothers themselves to become visible. Furthermore, by addressing the Kurdish population's struggles at a cosmopolitan point of attraction, the sitters facilitated the mobilization of a conflict from the country's margins to its centre. In this way, the SMP sit-ins spoke volumes for an ethnic problem that would have otherwise been easy to dismiss.

Media coverage of protests has the power to shape public spaces.[107] Messages embedded in such representations serve as cultural sites and enable meanings to be constructed, shared, and reconstructed on a daily basis.[108] The SMP's popularity in national and international media facilitated this construction process on many levels. As of 1996, international protest acts were organized as solidarity statements. Amnesty International showed support by organizing

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[105] Nadire Mater (activist, author) in discussion with the author, January 19, 2018.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Robertson and Gojowy, "Protest, Place in Pictures," 153.
[108] Ibid.

Saturday sit-ins in capitals like Paris, Berlin, Sydney and London.[109] Well-known documentary director Bernard Debord's short movie Les "folles" d'Istanbul (The Nutty Women of Istanbul) was televised on Arte (German-French TV channel) on August 31, 1996.[110] It made appearances at art festivals and was awarded "FIPA d'Or 1997 du Grand reportage" in the FIPA film festival.[111] Argentinian director Marco Bechis dedicated his movie Garage Olimpo, which tells the stories of people murdered under custody, to the Saturday Mothers/People.[112] The mothers received the International Human Rights Association Carl Von Ossietzky Prize for the defence of human rights, International Hrant Dink Prize, and Human Rights Democracy Peace and Solidarity Prize.[113]

Celebrities from actors, artists, and writers to singers expressed their support in various artistic forms—in addition to joining the sit-ins. Famous singer and songwriter Sezen Aksu's Cumartesi Türküsü (Saturday Song) and rock band Bandista's Benim Annem Cumartesi (My Mother is Saturday) were dedicated to the SMP. The Irish rock group U2 sang for Fehmi Tosun, one of the disappeared, whose wife Hanım Tosun has been an avid participant of the sit-ins.[114] A few members of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo travelled to Istanbul to express international solidarity in 1998.[115] Consequently, the ritual earned respect and sympathy from a broad range of people. Deputies from various political parties, women's groups, professional chambers, human rights

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[109] "Turkey: Listen to the Saturday Mothers," Amnesty International, accessed July 2, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=eur44%2f017%2f1998&language=en.
[110] Baydar and İvegen, "Territories, Identities, and Thresholds."
[111] Ibid.
[112] "Konu Bizden Çekim Onlardan," *Milliyet*, January 12, 1997.
[113] Dink was a Turkish-Armenian journalist, columnist, and editor-in-chief of Agos who was assassinated in 2007. Tanrıkulu, 283.
[114] Ibid., 292.
[115] Emre Orman, "Plaza De Mayo Anneleri İHD Önünde Cumartesi Anneleri/İnsanlarıyla Birlikte," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, May 11, 2019. Accessed December 26, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/208390-plaza-de-mayo-anneleri-ihd-onunde-cumartesi-anneleri-insanlariyla-birlikte.

organizations, trade unions, parties and other non-governmental organizations participated in the meetings.[116]

In 2013 and 2014, the Ankara Photography Artists Association organized workshops in collaboration with the HRA and the Socialist-Realist Photography Atelier (Toplumcu-Gerçekçi Fotoğraf Atölyesi), during which the protestors were photographed and interviewed.[117] The participants later marched from Tünel Meydanı to Galatasaray Meydanı carrying the photographs they had taken. In this way, they had the opportunity to explore the community created by the sitters and further understand the actual context by becoming deeply involved with the situation. Consequently, the visibility and recognition that the SMP gained on multiple platforms reconstructed the meaning of Galatasaray Meydanı as a place for public gatherings and demonstrations.

Since 2009, the SMP sit-in ritual has had its own Facebook and Twitter pages where the meetings and related events are shared with followers. For example, the supporters widely circulated photographs and footage from the 700th sit-in, banned by the district governorship. Images of brutal police treatment and protestors being tear-gassed were documented online as sources of information. This interplay among multiple mediums helped shape public opinion predominantly in favour of the resistance. Despite decades-long territorial contestation over the site, today, Galatasaray Meydanı remains a public space that the SMP protests brought alive.

This chapter discussed the role of the Saturday Mothers/People sit-in ritual in bringing Galatasaray Meydanı to life as a public space of political visibility and memory. Firstly, I

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[116] Tanrıkulu, 281–85.
[117] Sezer Şanlı, "Gündelik Hayatın Dönüşümünde Bir İmkân Olarak Toplumsal Muhalefetin Değerlendirilmesi," 256.

examined the public space activism practices in the service of rights struggles in the 1990s. Istanbul witnessed many civil protest events that emerged as a response to post-coup violations of human rights and freedoms throughout the decade. The mobilizations empowered different social, political, and ethnic groups in discovering opportunities that cities can make possible for publicly practising democracy. I noted that the SMP stood out among others with its continuity aesthetics, which brought national and international popularity to the meetings. While the symbolic acts consolidated the sense of remembrance in the protest location, the constant struggle between the police and protestors created a contested public space. The ritual's years-long appropriation and its representations on multiple media platforms assigned a new meaning to the protest location in compliance with the protestors' needs and demands. Galatasaray Meydanı came to life as a public space of political visibility and memory through the appropriation of the SMP, which redefined its urban role. I highlighted that the sit-in ritual granted visibility to a conflict of predominantly marginalized people that would have been overlooked otherwise by the state officials. In addition, it enabled the mothers to build autonomy outside of their homes on the street. By examining how the design of the YKKS building responded to the newly emerging identity of Galatasaray Meydanı, I explored the relationship between the social and physical production of space. In the next chapter, I look into the Gezi protests of 2013 that featured an encampment that lasted three weeks to protect a central urban park in Taksim from demolition.

Chapter IV

An Encampment: Gezi Park Protests, 2013

The 2013 Gezi Park Protests, which brought global attention to Taksim Meydanı, were sparked by the public discontent with an urban renewal project to remake the *meydan* and its surroundings. Istanbulites protested the uprooting of trees in Gezi Park, one of the few green spaces left in the rapidly growing city, for the reconstruction of long-ago demolished Ottoman Artillery Barracks to function as a shopping mall-hotel-residential complex. What set off the events was a handful of activists' occupation of the park against the profit-driven urban transformation project of the AKP government. However, as time progressed and the demands made by the activists diversified, protests came to represent a culmination of years of discontent and anger against the policies of the neoliberal-conservative government. The clashes between the protestors and police lasted for three weeks nationwide, doing justice to the slogan "Everywhere Taksim, Resistance Everywhere." During the events, participants used various spatial appropriation strategies to occupy the park, maintain the encampment, and prevent police brutality. The surge of political art on street walls reclaimed the urban landscape and created spaces of democratic encounter. Tents, barricades, artistic performances, and other forms of resistance helped sustain the occupation. Furthermore, they spearheaded the development of new means and methods to facilitate future public engagement processes such as public forums and documentation projects.

The Gezi uprising erupted in a period during which protest movements swept through Europe and the Middle East. These public demonstrations that brought together diverse social groups in

occupying urban spaces enabled interactions among those of different views, opinions, and

lifestyles.[1] Andy Merrifield notes:

> What equally unites these [21st century] movements is how they have used prominent spaces of the city and new social media to express common grievance and collective solidarity. They have affirmed new forms of resistance, contesting, amongst other things, our hyper exploitative undemocratic system of global urbanism.[2]

Similarly, Judy Lubin, in the context of the Occupy Movement, argues that "by occupying public

spaces, protestors forced city governments and mainstream media to acknowledge their

presence."[3] In other words, people's demand to participate in political processes underlies many

of the contemporary movements. The Gezi Park protests were in dialogue with its transnational

counterparts in terms of featuring the citizens' rights to free expression of discontent, access

public space, and participate in transparent political processes. Nonetheless, mainly idiosyncratic

domestic currents shaped the progression of events.

Following the 2001 economic crisis, the AKP rose to power as a majority government and

installed a set of policy reforms favouring neoliberal developments.[4] The Gezi Park protests were

an unanticipated reaction to one of the many urban transformation projects in the city.

Regardless, multiple issues that had caused discontent among citizens during the AKP

government's authoritarian rule, including but not limited to the intrusion upon secular ways of

life, violation of the separation of powers, the chokehold on the independent press and

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[1] Cihan Tuğal, "'Resistance Everywhere': The Gezi Revolt in Global Perspective," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 49 (2013): 157–72.

[2] Andy Merrifield, *The New Urban Question* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), ix.

[3] Judy Lubin, "The 'Occupy' Movement: Emerging Protest Forms and Contested Urban Spaces," *Berkeley Planning Journal* 25, no. 1 (2012): 191.

[4] Caner Bakır, "Wobbling but Still on Its Feet: The Turkish Economy in the Global Financial Crisis," *South European Society and Politics* 14, no. 1 (2009): 71–85.

journalists, restrictions on women's choices, limitations on alcohol use, entered the scene in due course. The occupation at the park enabled people to act on their political rights where all other channels of communication had failed.[5]

In this chapter, I focus on the ways in which Gezi Park protests expanded the use of public space in a period of political monopoly. How did creative spatial interventions of the encampment enable citizens to claim their rights to the city? What are the implications of the case for the continued enactment of activism practices? How did the protests ignite ideas that would transform the built environment around Taksim? I argue that many incarnations of Taksim Meydanı overlapped in Gezi by informing (1) the renewal project, (2) the protests against it, and (3) the post-Gezi transformations in the *meydan*.

Firstly, I look into the materialization of neoliberal urbanism in Istanbul dating back to the 1980s, which imposed a spatial reconfiguration guided by privatization and commodification. I clarify the political power relations behind the proposed resurrection of the historic Artillery Barracks over Gezi Park. Then, I examine the occupation at the park and how protestors facilitated it. I discuss how tents, barricades, and performances physically and socially reconstructed space on the foundation of collectively shared meanings, values, and imaginative uses. I pay attention to the role of the architecture collective Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All) in bringing transparency to the Taksim Urban Transformation Project since its initial announcement and documenting the make-shift structures of the encampment. Additionally, I explore how certain aspects of the Gezi protests reincarnated in different shapes and forms in

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[5] See, for example, Hatem. Ete, Coşkun Taştan, and Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı. Siyaset, *The Gezi Park Protests: A Political, Sociological and Discursive Analysis* (Ankara: SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, 2014); Ahu Karasulu, "'If a Leaf Falls, They Blame the Tree': Scattered Notes on Gezi Resistances, Contention, and Space," *International Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (2014): 164–75; Erdem Yörük and Murat Yüksel, "Class and Politics in Turkey's Gezi Protests," *New Left Review*, no. 89 (2014): 103–23.

subsequent activist and artistic practices. I suggest that the case of Gezi became instrumental in inspiring further public engagement projects that enabled citizens to discuss and make decisions on the future of their cities. Finally, I interpret the new AKM and Taksim mosque projects as counter-appropriation strategies of the AKP government that aim to alter the urban experience and symbolism of the built environment in Taksim.

From Neoliberal Urbanism to the Pedestrianization of Taksim

Following the military coup of 1980 and the subsequent rule of Prime Minister Turgut Özal, the effects of privatization and commodification started to unfold in Istanbul. In this period, the efforts to integrate the city into the global economic system resulted in its marketization—in Saskia Sassen's terms—as a "global city."[6] Margit Mayer describes some of the visible stages of neoliberal transformation in cities as the involvement of global developers and investors in urban formation, gentrification-oriented restructuring of urban centres, and "marketization of cities through branding, festivalization, mega events, and attraction centre of creative industries."[7] Given this, Istanbul's rich cultural and historical heritage and geopolitical position contributed to its growth as an intercontinental, cultural, social and economic hub welcoming international investment.[8] In line with dominant economic forces, the urban operations promoted the decentralization of industry, the emergence of business districts, the transformation of slums into areas of high-rise residential buildings, and the sterilization of historic quarters for tourist

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[6] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
[7] Margit Mayer, "First World Urban Activism," *City* 17, no. 1 (2013): 9.
[8] Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Istanbul was staged as a destination for international events and organizations (to name but a few Habitat II in 1996, NATO Summit in 2004, Eurovision Song Contest in 2004, UEFA European Champions League Final Game in 2005, 2009 World Water Forum).

consumption, which generated a new sociospatial structuring pivotal for the expansion of gentrification.[9]

During the AKP rule, the construction industry was identified as the primary source of revenue. This mode of operation burdened the sector as a means of economic growth rather than a by-product.[10] Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's collaboration with national and international private enterprises opened the floodgates to profit-oriented mega projects, many of which were executed for financial gain at the expense of public benefit.[11] For instance, the third bridge over the Bosporus (also known as the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, completed in 2016) and the new Istanbul Airport (completed in 2019) were constructed in the face of countless demonstrations, petitions, expert objections, and judicial verdicts addressing environmental concerns.[12] Kanal Istanbul—an artificial canal set to connect the Black Sea to the Marmara Sea by cutting through the European side of the city for real estate development—has still been occupying the agenda despite harsh criticism of its projected economic and environmental detriments.[13] The municipality also publicized many renewal projects for cultural and historical heritage buildings,

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[9] In this process, the city's skyline was modified by the multiplying office towers, gated communities, luxury hotels, residences, and shopping malls. See, for example, İslam, "Current Urban Discourse, Urban Transformation and Gentrification in Istanbul"; Öykü Potuoğlu-Cook, "Beyond the Glitter: Belly Dance and Neoliberal Gentrification in Istanbul," *Cultural Anthropology* 21, no. 4 (2006): 633–60; Ayfer Bartu Candan and Biray Kolluoğlu, "Emerging Spaces of Neoliberalism: A Gated Town and a Public Housing Project in İstanbul," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 39 (2008): 5–46.

[10] Evinç Doğan and Aleksandra Stupar, "The Limits of Growth: A Case Study of Three Mega-Projects in Istanbul," *Cities* 60 (2017): 283.

[11] See "Mülksüzleştirme Ağları," Networks of Dispossession, accessed June 7, 2019, http://mulksuzlestirme.org/index.en/. Networks of Dispossession is a collective data compiling and mapping network that visualizes capital-power within urban transformations in Turkey. The connections among corporations, institutions, and individuals behind the projects demonstrate that the powerful businesses and government supporters enormously profit from the constructions.

[12] Many other controversial urban transformation projects were announced on a website entitled Istanbul's Mega Projects. For the projects and their details, see "İstanbul'un Mega Projeleri," accessed June 1, 2019, http://megaprojeleristanbul.com.

[13] See, for example, "Ya Kanal, Ya Istanbul, Kanal Istanbul Projesinin Ekolojik, Sosyal ve Ekonomik Degerlendirilmesi" WWF Rapor, 2015, https://d2hawiim0tjbd8.cloudfront.net/downloads/kanalistanbul_1.pdf

such as AKM, Haydarpaşa Train Station, and Emek Theatre. Some were executed against the

Preservation Board's statements of opposition.[14]

Putting private interests before the common good and public well-being led to long-term

displacement, dispossession, and privatization of public space in Istanbul. Inevitably, various

collective action patterns emerged to counter the government's self-ordained decision-making

mechanisms that factor out transparent urban processes. The case of Gezi Park was one such

example that erupted to protect the open green space from demolition. Nevertheless, an

accumulation of neoliberal operations, continuously violating the city and citizens' right to it,

and restrictions on civil liberties were at play in the background. As events unfolded, the accrued

struggles over the commons surfaced in varying forms of public expression.[15]

As Mayer states, the twenty-first century protest movements are highly connected to neoliberal

designs and enclosures.[16] This perspective grants public space a special status in the emergence

and facilitation of mass mobilizations because they can be both the sites and subjects of

struggle.[17] Gezi Park was an embodiment of this interpretation in terms of featuring a public

space that both caused and facilitated the resistance.

The AKP government's vision for Taksim Meydanı and its surroundings was a complete urban

restructuring with multiple stages, including the pedestrianization of the area, the demolition of

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[14] Özge Özdüzen, "Cinema-Going during the Gezi Protests: Claiming the Right to the Emek Movie Theatre and Gezi Park," *Social & Cultural Geography* 19, no. 8 (2018): 1028–52; "Yeni AKM Projesi," *Mimarizm*, November 6, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2018, http://www.mimarizm.com/haberler/gundem/yeni-akm-projesi_128789.
[15] See, for example, Erensü, "The Work of a Few Trees."
[16] Margit Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in Urban Social Movements," in *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*, ed. Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 63–85. See also Sara Fregonese, "Mediterranean Geographies of Protest," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 1 (2013): 109–14; Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism*, 2014.
[17] Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in Urban Social Movements," 110–11.

AKM, the reconstruction of the Ottoman Artillery Barracks over Gezi Park, and the erection of a mosque behind the historical water distribution chamber. The Taksim Urban Transformation Project's initial announcement in 2007 featured the pedestrianization phase.[18] The objectives included moving vehicle traffic underground, widening surrounding streets, and merging Gezi Park with Taksim Meydanı.[19] In 2011, the Conservation Board overturned the existing conservation plan for the historic site in favour of the government's new proposal—as the board was operating under the government at the time. This change foreshadowed the replacement of Gezi Park by the Artillery Barracks replica to replace the park and serve as a shopping mall-hotel-residential complex. The proposed re-functioning would entail a crucial shift in the park's status as a central public space by transforming it into a commercial site of consumption. Thus, the government's proposal received immediate reactions from citizens and professional organizations, including the Union of Chambers of Engineers and Architects, based on its indifference to public benefit. Still, neither public opposition nor legal appeals could avert the start of operations on site. Non-profit collectives organized public events to inform the users about the possible repercussions of the implementation. Still, the reach of these attempts remained insufficient to influence Prime Minister Erdoğan's opinion.

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[18] "Taksim Projesi'nde İlk Etap Başlıyor; Diğerleri Kurulda Bekliyor," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, Feb 16, 2009. Accessed November 1, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kent/141482-taksim-projesi-nde-ilk-etap-basliyor-digerleri-kurulda-bekliyor.
[19] Ibid.

Figure 41. Taksim area circa 1900s. Source: Çelik Gülersoy, *Taksim: Bir Meydanın Hikayesi* (Istanbul: Istanbul Kitaplığı, 1986). Captions added by the author.

Figure 42. Taksim Meydanı in 1936 with the barracks extant. Source: SALT Research Online Archive, Salih Alkan Collection, https://www.flickr.com/photos/saltonline/12966438075/in/album-72157642193440774/

The Taksim Artillery Barracks, to be resurrected, was built in 1806 to facilitate the Ottoman Empire's modern military.[20] With the additions of Taşkışla and Gümüşsuyu Barracks, during the reign of Abdülmecid (1839–1861), this part of the city served mainly as a military district. The lot on the west side of the barracks, Talimhane, was also a ground reserved for military training activities. During the reactionary rebellion against the constitutional regime in 1909 (March 31st Incident), the barracks suffered significant physical damage. The subsequent wars fought by the Empire (Balkan Wars, 1912–1913) kept the army out and active on various fronts. Lacking proper maintenance, the building remained in disrepair and gradually lost its military function.

Figure 43. First Youth and Sports Day Celebration at Taksim Stadium on May 19, 1928. Source: Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Photography Collection, Istanbul Research Institute, Online Exhibit, https://artsandculture.google.com/search/asset/?p=istanbul-research-institute&em=m05yrnh&categoryId=place
Figure 44. The football game at Taksim Stadium between Fenerbahçe Football Club and English occupational forces, 1923. Source: Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation Photography Collection, Istanbul Research Institute, Online Exhibit, https://artsandculture.google.com/search/asset/?p=istanbul-research-institute&em=m05yrnh&categoryId=place

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[20] Çelik Gülersoy describes the building as "eclectic yet orientalist" in style with respect to its onion domes and ornamented façade that emulates Russian and Indian architecture. Çelik Gülersoy, *Taksim: Bir Meydanın Hikayesi*, 78–81. For further information on the barracks, see Berrak Kırbaş Akyürek, "Re-Construction of Ghost Buildings: Taksim Artillery Barracks" Master's thesis (Middle East Technical University, 2014).'

After the Ottoman National Company for Industry and Trade's purchase in 1913, it became a stage for many public events, including national and international soccer games, horse races, acrobatic shows, wrestling and boxing matches, cricket, field hockey, and concerts, and accommodation for pilgrims (see Figures 43 and 44).[21] Renamed by the French occupation forces, MacMahon barracks served as a military base during World War I.[22] However, after the capital's relocation to Ankara, the facility suffered maintenance neglect.[23] From 1921 until the construction of Gezi Park in 1940, the barracks was named and used as Taksim Stadium. Thus, the public events and activities from then on were not military-related at all. Its demolition in the first place has been a subject of discussion among design professionals and scholars; however, the proposed reconstruction in 2013 was an apparent ideological attempt to transform the symbolic landscape and redraw the politics of space in Taksim. Certainly, the design decisions concerning the site had no solid footing in heritage conservation.

As the historical segments provided in the chapters of this research demonstrate, a study of the spatial transformations around Taksim Meydanı unravels narratives of social, political, and ethnic conflicts of different periods. The site has evolved as a showcase of various imaginations since Ottoman times and remains a contested space of public appearance to this day. The Ottoman revivalist vision of the AKP government added yet another layer of ideological controversy over the historically and politically charged *meydan*. In other words, the historical and political resonance of Taksim was equally a motivation for the urban renewal plans and the

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[21] "Taksim | The Heart of Istanbul," *Istanbul Research Institute*, accessed December 23, 2019, https://en.iae.org.tr/Exhibition/Taksim/185. For the digital exhibition https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/taksim/PAICzpgA-6ypJg?hl=en

[22] Cem Kozar, "Hayal-Et Yapılar Sergisi'nde Taksim Kışlası," *Arkitera* (blog), February 29, 2012, accessed March 18, 2018, https://www.arkitera.com/gorus/hayal-et-yapilar-sergisinde-taksim-kislasi/.

[23] Gülersoy, *Taksim*, 1986, 69–76.

protests against them. But how did the idea of resurrecting the Artillery Barracks, a historically and ideologically charged building, come into focus in the first place?

The Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency organized a series of artistic events to expose Istanbul's historical and cultural heritage to an international audience after the city's selection as the European Capital of Culture in 2010.[24] Visual and literary narratives produced by artists articulated the theme of "the most inspiring city in the world."[25] In this context, the Hayal-et Yapılar (Ghost Buildings), an exhibition project to open up discussion on the destruction and reconstruction of the city, was born.[26] The curators selected twelve demolished buildings, including the Artillery Barracks, to represent Istanbul's multi-cultural heritage and created provocative scenarios by speculating on what would have happened if these buildings were still intact. Each scenario was shared with the public via the main exhibition, in-situ installations, and an exhibition catalogue.

In the Introduction of *Istanbul, Open City,* Türeli discusses the power of visual representations on shaping the built environment based on Istanbul's staging as the Cultural Capital of Europe.[27] She explains how reproductions "can be read and used to support or critique particular projects in ways that may not have been intended by their original producers."[28] The case of the Artillery Barracks, also mentioned in the book, is an embodiment of this interpretation. The Taksim Pedestrianization Project was initially announced as a promise for the election campaign by the AKP. The municipality used one of the images from the Hayal-et Yapılar for publicity without

[24] For further information, see Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, and Ipek Türeli, eds., *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010).
[25] "'Dünyanın en ilham verici' kentini 'yeniden keşfetme' zamanı...," Milliyet, December 4, 2009, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/kultur-sanat/dunyanin-en-ilham-verici-kentini-yeniden-kesfetme-zamani-1169738.
[26] "Hayal-et Yapılar," accessed February 29, 2020, http://www.hayal-et.org/i.php/site/bilgi_info.
[27] Türeli, *Istanbul, Open City*, 1–7.
[28] Ibid., 3.

permission from the artists who had no such intention of a literal reconstruction.[29] The selected

scenario portrayed the barracks still functioning as a soccer field. Taksim Meydanı was not a

designated public space anymore. As planned, the artwork served its purpose by opening

speculative discussions on the city's past. Yet, unexpectedly, it also inspired the government

decisions regarding the park's future.

Figure 45. 3D model of the proposed renewal project for Taksim Square and surroundings by Istanbul.
Metropolitan Municipality. Source: "Topçu Kışlası Yapılabilir mi?," *Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi*,
November 18, 2014.
Figure 46. The scenario of Hayal-et Yapılar for the Artillery Barracks and Taksim Meydanı. Source:
"Hayal-et Yapılar Sergisinde Taksim Kışlası," *Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi*, February 29, 2012.

Visual representations of the project shared on the municipality's website depicted the *meydan* as

a massive concrete surface. The 3D model in Figure 45 demonstrates the extent of vast emptiness

to be created by the implementation. The scale is overwhelming as the ant-sized human figures

scattered around are barely visible. The white-gray quadrangular shapes in the middle of the area

likely indicate metro exits. The barracks appears in a rectangular form, its courtyard overfilled

with random greenery and trees. The tunnel entrance on Gümüşsuyu Street, where vehicle traffic

goes underground, is also noticeable. However, the depiction fails to communicate any specific

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[29] "Hayal-Et Yapılar Sergisi'nde Taksim Kışlası."

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design decision concerning the transportation, functionality, public perception, or social aspects that an urban design proposal should offer to upgrade the site in focus.

The consensus among scholars and design professionals was that the proposal would limit pedestrian access to Taksim—despite being marketed as a pedestrianization project.[30] Architect Ömer Kanıpak interprets the envisioned reconstruction of the Artillery Barracks as a means to architecturally materialize the AKP government's power through one of the most prestigious spots in the city.[31] To him, the proposal exemplifies the "edifice complex," a concept that corresponds with despotic regimes' inclination to legitimize their authority by constructing monumental buildings. Historian Nora Şeni describes the proposal as impractical and outdated for Taksim and ascertains its only promise for pedestrians to stand on their feet.[32] Architect and lecturer Aykut Köksal discusses how the implementation in and of itself would exclude pedestrians with reference to the pedestrian-restrictive capacities of interchange projects in metropolitan centres.[33] Another architect Korhan Gümüş discusses Taksim in relation to the gradual privatization of public space in Istanbul since the 1950s.[34] Gümüş further argues that the underground tunnels would necessitate a narrowing down of the pedestrian lanes above, an intervention that would limit pedestrians rather than provide them with options.[35] This strikingly self-contradictory aspect is visible in Figure 45, where Gümüşsuyu Street goes underground. As

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[30] Nilay Vardar, "Taksim'i Yayalaştırma(Ma) Projesi," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, January 17, 2012. Accessed November 1, 2019, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/135506-taksim-i-yayalastirma-ma-projesi.

[31] "Bir Devrimin Mimari Şifreleri," *Arkitera* (blog), June 17, 2013. Accessed March 8, 2018 https://www.arkitera.com/gorus/bir-devrimin-mimari-sifreleri/.

[32] Nora Şeni, "Taksim'i Ne Yapmalı?," (Discussion, Institut français d'études anatoliennes, Istanbul, November 29, 2011).

[33] Aykut Köksal, "Taksim'i Ne Yapmalı?," (Discussion, Institut français d'études anatoliennes, Istanbul, November 29, 2011).

[34] Korhan Gümüş, "Taksim'i Ne Yapmalı?," (Discussion, Institut français d'études anatoliennes, Istanbul, November 29, 2011).

[35] See interview with Korhan Gümüş in "Taksim'in Ortasında Tanımsız Bir Beton Kütlesi," *Bianet - Bağımsız Iletişim Ağı*, September 6, 2013. Accessed February 29, 2020, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/149715-taksim-in-ortasinda-tanimsiz-bir-beton-kutlesi.

I examined in previous chapters, this path was a segment of the protest routes that arrived at Taksim (along with Istiklal Avenue). That is, it enabled the masses to access the *meydan* for public gatherings. The small space left for pedestrians above ground after a possible tunnel construction intends to impede mass mobilizations, in conflict with the project's so-called pedestrian priorities. Beyond the multifaceted criticism addressed by the experts, the proposal limits perhaps the most common pedestrian activity that has coalesced into Taksim for decades: public demonstrations.

Both Taksim Meydanı and Gezi Park need redesign. The *meydan* is a vast concrete open space with no sense of security or harmony.[36] It serves primarily as a traffic hub rather than a pleasant public space for social activities. The allocation of bus stops and metro entrances creates a constant commotion, which at times results in entanglements between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Adjacent Gezi Park's connection to surrounding streets is problematic as level differences impede access from the sides.[37] Inadequate lighting in the area compromises the security of passersby at night. However, the proposal's focus was on benefitting private interest rather than solving these immediate design and management problems to create a pleasing and functioning public space for the citizens.

Furthermore, the Taksim area has many characteristics that consolidate its urban heritage status. Architecture professor Gülşen Özaydın identifies the *meydan* as "a space of memory created by collective experiences" and highlights its ceremonial and monumental presence, iconic design, aesthetic landscape, and ancient sycamores as crucial aspects that necessitate proper

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[36] Onur Atay (architect) in discussion with the author, June 15, 2019.
[37] Ibid.

preservation.[38] The driving force behind the occupation was to prevent the destruction of this landmark; nevertheless, the events swiftly spiralled into a national outcry that manifested itself in a broader criticism of the authoritarian government.

The Aesthetics and Mechanics of the Occupation

> Gezi Park is like the Smurfs' Village! There are people helping each other, frolicking around. Everybody is waiting for Gargamel to come.
>
> A street writing at Gezi

Mayor Kadir Topbaş announced the Artillery Barracks project in November 2012; however, the construction of underground throughways had already started on the surrounding streets a month earlier than the announcement.[39] This hasty start, lacking proper site analysis and expert consultation, caused many problems, including a slump on Gezi Park's northern edge (Asker Ocağı Street). The uprooting of trees that ignited the protests stemmed from the efforts to fix the blocked pedestrian lane, not the building construction itself.[40] The arrival of bulldozers on May 27th alarmed concerned NGOs, politicians, intellectuals, and citizens, who immediately assembled in the park. On May 28th, citizens staged a peaceful demonstration to stop the operation, but to no avail.[41] Police used excessive tear gas and pepper spray on the protestors guarding the park. As the news spread swiftly on social media, the number of protestors increased exponentially. Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a Kurdish parliament member who stopped the

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[38] Gülşen Özaydın, "'Taksim'in Üstü Altına İniyor!,'" *Mimarlık* 364 (2012).

[39] See Amnesty international's timeline of the events f or a detailed chronicle, Amnesty International, *Gezi Park Protests: Brutal Denial of the Right to Peaceful Assembly in Turkey* (Amnesty International Ltd, 2013), 54–58.

[40] See journalist Elif Ince's testimonial in Serkan Ocak, *Gezi Park Documentary - Resist*, accessed June 19, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niVcH507uRE.

[41] See "Taksim Platform," accessed June 1, 2019, http://www.taksimplatformu.com/english.php.

operation of a bulldozer by using his parliamentary immunity, joined the resistance along with a few other politicians. On the same day, at a celebration for the 560th anniversary of Istanbul's conquest, Prime Minister Erdoğan said in a speech: "Do whatever you want at Gezi, we made our decision."[42] His statement meant that no matter what the public opinion, it would be disregarded by the government officials.

The activists persevered and set up new tents to maintain the watch. On May 30th at dawn, police raided the camp again and set the tents on fire. Tear gas, pepper spray, plastic bullets, and pressurized water were extensively used during the attack. The brutality provoked larger groups to join rather than intimidate the occupiers on-site. Meanwhile, the execution of the project was suspended by court order.[43] On May 31st, the masses poured into Taksim to reclaim the site for good.

From the early days onward, there was little coverage of the events in mainstream national media. In other words, "the revolution was not televised" in the Turkish case.[44] TV channels and the press are highly monopolized by Prime Minister Erdoğan because of the media tycoons' dependence on government contracts. Thus, TRT, NTV, and CNN Turk, to name but a few, completely censored the chain of events. At the peak of the clashes between the protestors and police, CNN Turk aired a penguin documentary, while CNN International broadcasted live coverage simultaneously. In the following days, penguins became an icon of the resistance;

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[42] "'Gezi Parkı için karar verdik,'" *Hürriyet*, May 29, 2013. Accessed July 6, 2019, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/gezi-parki-icin-karar-verdik-23390657.

[43] "Mahkeme Topçu Kışlası'na dur dedi!," *Cumhuriyet*, May 31, 2013. Accessed September 23, 2016, https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/mahkeme-topcu-kislasina-dur-dedi-425124.

[44] "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" is a poem and song by Gil Scot Heron. The song's title was originally a popular slogan of the 1960s Black Power movements in the United States.

images of protesting penguins went viral. Stencils and murals captioned "Antarktika Direniyor" (Antarctica Resists) occupied urban surfaces as reminders of the occasion.

Similar to many other twenty-first century movements, at times referred to as Facebook and Twitter revolutions, the power of social media technologies played a significant role in the progression of Gezi protests. Virtual space aided the orchestration by creating public networks and expanding the reach of the movement.[45] Especially in the early phase, #direngezi, #occupygezi, and #resistanbul hashtags became reliable sources of information and remained trending topics throughout the occupation.[46] Subsequent status updates and reposts on individual and collective Facebook/Twitter pages became prominent tools in orienting people's movement approaching the park. Countless opinion posts, calls for participation, and solidarity statements effectively engaged the public and drew growing numbers of participants to the streets. The power of digital technologies tipped the scales in favour of citizens in challenging authoritarianism across the country.

Tents, Barricades, and Performances

The protests spread throughout Istanbul on the night of May 31st. People from various social, political, and age groups joined from all quarters. On June 1st, police withdrew from the park, and the formation of a miniature tent-city commenced in the reclaimed public space. Meanwhile, Taksim Solidarity enunciated a list of immediate demands on behalf of the occupiers.[47] Among

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[45] Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012), 2.
[46] Stavroula Chrona and Cristiano Bee, "Right to Public Space and Right to Democracy: The Role of Social Media in Gezi Park," *Research and Policy on Turkey*, (2017), 56.
[47] Ay and Miraftab, "Invented Spaces of Activism," 563.

them were the abandonment of tear gas, the release of detained protestors, the resignation of officials responsible for police violence, and the abolition of the bans closing public spaces to civil protests. Other government proposals with the potential to "pillage ecological heritage with plans and practices," including the new Istanbul Airport, the third bridge over the Bosporus, depredation of Atatürk Forest Farm in Ankara and country-wide spread of hydroelectric power plants were also on the agenda.[48]

Taksim Solidarity was a citizens' initiative founded in 2012, primarily by architects and urban planners to demand "transparency and the opportunity for input in the renewal process of Taksim Meydanı."[49] It was supported by various guilds, such as the chambers of engineers, architects, and lawyers; local environmentalist groups; cultural associations and individuals. The collective's initiatives included several protests and legal objections to the implementation of the project. The platform played a significant role in overseeing daily steps and communicating with official bodies; nevertheless, Gezi was a leaderless movement, and it developed organically without a structure. Participants transparently and collectively coordinated subsequent public declarations and decision-making processes.

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[48] Reclaim Istanbul, accessed September 4, 2014, https://reclaimistanbul.com/.
[49] "Taksim Dayanışması," accessed September 6, 2019, https://www.taksimdayanisma.org/.

1 Vandalized Bus
2 Mete Street Barricade
3 Speaker's Point
4 Library
5 Encampment
6 Bunk Beds
7 Gümüşsuyu Barricade 2
8 Gümüşsuyu Barricade 1
10 AKM
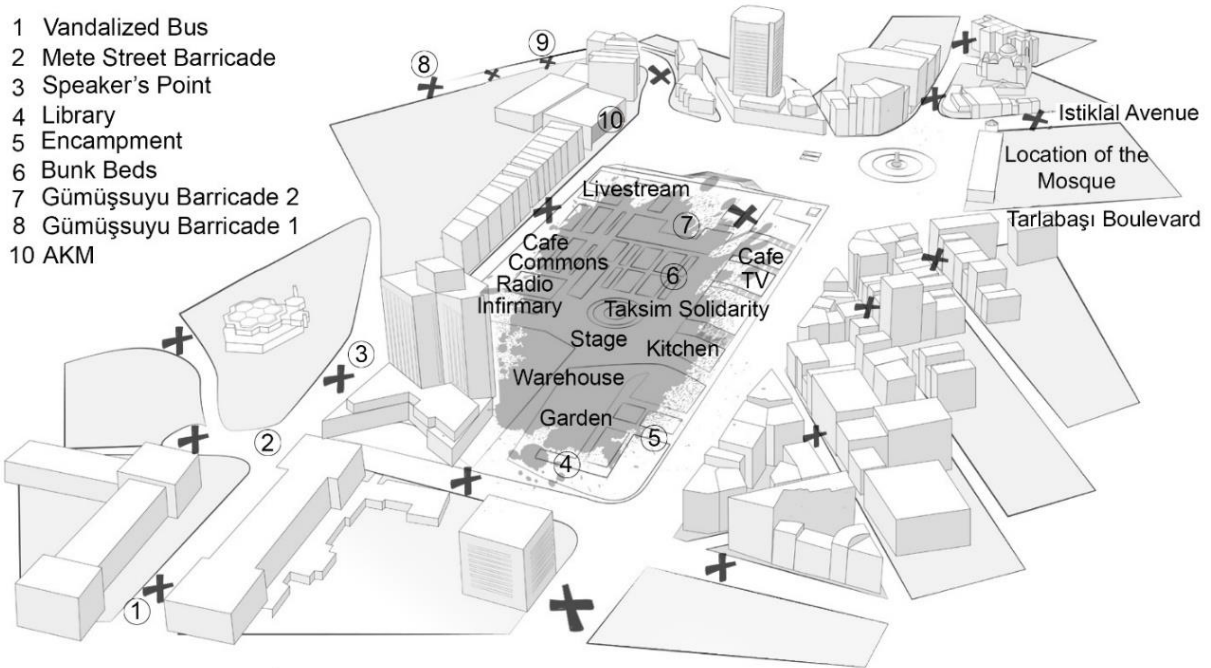
Figure 47. Allocation of the barricades and spatial interventions around Taksim. Drawing by the author. The map illustrates some of the interventions that emerged during the occupation. Cross marks pinpoint the strategically positioned barricades around the park. While creating this map, I benefitted primarily from the interviewees' recollections. They identified the barricade locations as far as they could remember; nevertheless, the barricades were mobile, and their positions changed daily during the resistance. Thus, the map does not refer to a specific date; instead, it depicts a collage of the spatial elements that existed anytime during the occupation.

The park was full of tents and stands serving various functions within a few days. The "festive village" of Gezi had many sub-spaces that accommodated a wide range of collective activities, including a public library for sharing books; a health centre with actual doctors, nurses, medical stretchers and various supplies; a kitchen; a free market where everybody could take their needs free of charge but by exchange; an organic plant garden; TV and radio stations; a performance stage for concerts, theatre, and ballet; daycare, recycling bases; food and drink stands and a forum area.[50] The spatial organization, fully capable of catering to the needs of its users, was referred to as Gezi Commune, doing justice to the voluntary contributions that maintain social

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[50] Michael Kimmelman, "In Istanbul's Taksim Square, an Achilles' Heel."

and material exchange.[51] Decisions concerning everyday operations were made democratically in the forums that gave representation to people from all walks of life. Despite the presence of different age groups, the majority were university students in their twenties.[52] People of diverse social, political, and ethnic backgrounds—such as Kurds, feminists, academics, workers, nationalists, seculars, anti-capitalist Muslims, anarchists, communists, LGBTQI+ communities, football fans, artists, actors—attended the protests, but no sort of power hierarchy overshadowed the process. The park was spontaneously and peacefully appropriated with no privileged zones. Political factions had their own stands where they would deliver leaflets, booklets, and magazines; however, the representatives of opposing political ideologies maintained the occupation at peace with each other. In other words, the equal distribution of representation was also visible in the spatial organization of the camp.[53] The occupiers were on guard duty day and night to protect the reclaimed site. They found small-scale architectural solutions to secure permanency. Participants Onur Atay and Gün Zileli narrate the first few days as follows:

> Factions that would typically start a street battle in case of a random meeting were present. They had stands set up next to each other. Communists protected anti-capitalist Muslims from the rain by holding umbrellas while they were doing prayers. I have been an activist since the 1960s; I have never seen this level of tolerance and respect before.[54]

> The most apolitical friends of mine came right away. On May 31st, the police cleared the park, the *meydan*, and Istiklal Avenue. Then, when people started rushing in, the police retreated. Inside the park, a security system was formed immediately. From June 1st to 6th, the tension was visible. People were expecting another raid at any moment, so to be able to establish permanency and create a self-sustainable community, everybody perpetually carried food. It spontaneously evolved to "let's build a library," "let's group the tents over there," "let's move the food to that corner," "let's put the medical supply here," "what needs to be

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[51] Poyraz Kolluoğlu, "21st Century Protest Repertoire: Istanbul's Gezi Commune and the Affective Dynamics of Urban Social Mobilization" PhD diss. (Queen's University, 2018).

[52] Marcie J. Patton, "Generation Y in Gezi Park," *Middle East Report* 268 (2013): 30–37.

[53] For a wide range of participant profiles and their experiences, see Uluğ, *Bir Olmadan Biz Olmak*.

[54] Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018.

kept warm should be stacked here, cold there." There was a constant
activity of storage maintaining a spatial balance.[55]

Thousands of people visited the encampment every day from different social, political, cultural

and age groups, providing supplies, such as medical materials, food, clothing, and books. Rival

fan clubs of major soccer teams were active—at times leading—actors enlivening the

atmosphere with their partisan spirit. Many free workshops and classes were organized for

children and adult groups, including yoga, Pilates, and meditation sessions. Invoking the spirit of

"free speech," a makeshift speaker's point was built using the metal pieces of a dismantled police

barricade and a street sign. It allowed people to express their opinions freely and encouraged

public engagement in the park. The plethora of activities bolstered social inclusivity and

amplified users' agency in spatial production.

The transformation of Gezi into a collective site of resistance by citizens created, in Paul

Routledge's terms, a "convergence space" where different people, ideas, and concepts come

together.[56] Convergence spaces, both material or virtual, enable communication, coordination,

and interaction among various groups. The interrelationships established in these spaces create

new communities by building national and transnational solidarity networks among participants.

According to Batuman, when governments restrict the use of public space, protest encampments

"reconstruct it within the urban public."[57] Having their own internal order and dynamics, protest

camps reproduce their own public spaces by dismantling the existing order. Hakim Bey identifies

these new spatial formations as "temporary autonomous zones," constituting revolutionary

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[55] Onur Atay (architect) in discussion with the author, June 15, 2019.
[56] Paul Routledge, "Convergence Space: Process Geographies of Grassroots Globalization Networks," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 3 (2003): 333–49.
[57] Batuman discusses the nomadic living conditions of the TEKEL protest encampment in Ankara and argues that the encampment evolved as a response to the lifestyles imposed by neoliberal currents. See, Batuman, "Political Encampment and the Architecture of Public Space."

spaces free from state control.[58] The self-sufficient encampment at Gezi Park provided ample

opportunities for the practice of democratic participation that fits the characteristics of a

temporary autonomous zone. The communities built during the events cultivated the rise of new

social actors and organizations; moreover, they led to the emergence of a new "reawakened

political consciousness."[59] Besides the tent-city itself, a significant component of the autonomous

zone at Gezi Park were the barricades, collectively built overnight to secure the reclaimed area.

> Several barricades were built on the streets using elementary daily
> items, like chairs and tables. When the police retreated, the barricades
> were moved forward. They [police] were obviously puzzled by the scale
> of the events and eventually had to leave the *meydan*.[60]

From the beginning of the occupation, participants built barricades around the encampment and

alleys leading up to Taksim Meydanı to secure the reclaimed zone (see Figure 47). These

makeshift structures spread across the occupied area very swiftly. Dozens of large and small

scale barricades of various styles were deliberately located at the entrance of Gezi Park,

Gümüşsuyu and Sıraselviler Streets, Istiklal Avenue, and the webs of smaller streets in Beşiktaş

and Beyoğlu primarily to restrict the movement of police forces. All types of readily available

material, such as brick, metal pipes, couches, chairs, tables, garbage bins, advertisement panels,

vandalized busses, traffic cones, and even police barriers, were used to assemble the structures.

Protestors strategically positioned, defended, and maintained them like military fronts. Thereby,

the construction activity turned into a medium that drew people in and "convert[ed] observers

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[58] Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (California: Wiretap, 1990s).
[59] Jeffrey Hou and Sabine Knierbein, *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space in the Age of Shrinking Democracy*, (New York; London: Routledge, 2017), 3.
[60] Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018.

into participants."[61] This form of spatial practice engendered social bonds between the "passers-

by [who were] invited to contribute a paver," while physically isolating the reclaimed site from

the rest of the city.[62]

Figure 48. Barricade on Taşkışla Street, photograph by Kürşad Bayhan. This barricade was located by the entrance of Istanbul Technical University's Faculty of Architecture, Taşkışla (for the exact location, see Figure 47). The photograph demonstrates a vandalized bus blocking the main street, supported by corrugated metal panels and police barricades on the side to restrict passage completely.

Figure 49. Abdullah Cömert Barricade. Photograph by Kürşad Bayhan. This barricade was constructed mainly with the scaffolding materials taken from the adjacent construction site. It was dedicated to Abdullah Cömert, who died on the fifth day of the protests during the clashes in Hatay. The panels blanketing the scaffolding on the right are spray-painted with slogans.

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[61] Carl Douglas, "Barricades and Boulevards: Material Transformations of Paris, 1795-1871," *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts* 8 (2008): 39. See also Mark Traugott, "Barricades as Repertoire: Continuities and Discontinuities in the History of French Contention," *Social Science History* 17, no. 2 (1993): 309–23.
[62] Douglas, "Barricades and Boulevards," 39.

Figure 50. Another barricade, unspecified location around Taksim. Photograph by Kürşad Bayhan. This barricade was built by piling up advertisement panels, pavement bricks, and construction materials taken from surrounding sites. Other panels within the area were also painted with scripts and drawings and were used as means of political expression throughout the resistance.

Jacques Rancière contends that space reflects politics through partitionings and distributions; therefore, disturbing the existing spatial organization can change the operation of politics.[63] From this perspective, the barricades carried both practical and symbolic significance for the Gezi Park Protests. They constituted thresholds of the autonomous zone—whose epicentre is the encampment—in terms of demarcating the physical boundaries free of state intervention and the social boundaries through the space produced during their construction and maintenance.

The emergence of barricades as a tool of urban insurrection can be traced back to mid-sixteenth century Paris.[64] Mark Traugott notes that this repertoire emerged as a by-product of residents' everyday efforts to protect their neighbourhoods in times of unrest.[65] To maintain control of the streets, the citizens would place chain barriers at road ends, then reinforce them by heaping earth

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[63] Jacques Rancière, *Dis-Agreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[64] Mark Traugott, "Barricades as Repertoire: Continuities and Discontinuities in the History of French Contention," *Social Science History* 17, no. 2 (1993): 313.

[65] Ibid.

and paving stones into wooden barrels. Ivan Arenas contends that barricade construction brings together the elements of organization and spontaneous building on an everyday level, a practice that relates to Lefebvre's triangulation of material, social, and mental spaces.[66] Barricade construction as a spatial practice reveals how the restricted and defended positions that public spaces assume during an occupation can transform their physicality. Moreover, the need to manage and maintain barricades requires forging social bonds, which in Arenas' terminology creates a "barricade solidarity."[67] Gezi barricades were maintained mostly by young people in their teens or early twenties.[68] Başak Ertür describes this diversity as an "odd amalgam of the dispossessed from the surrounding neighbourhoods and middle and upper class but otherwise disenfranchised kids."[69] The cooperation that turned strangers into acquaintances during barricade construction created shared experiences and imaginings that explicitly influenced the space and its social relations. Then, the sociomaterial relations of building barricades transformed both the physical and social landscapes of the city.

Barricades functioned as art installations in and around the protest site beyond their contributions to spatial production. They were collectively built, maintained, moved around, and decorated. Like an open-air art event, they popped up each day in a different aesthetic form and location. People painted, scripted, and turned them into planes of political expression. Some were named after the people who died during the clashes and served as memorials (see the Abdullah Cömert barricade in Figure 49).[70] Besides redefining the flexible boundaries of the reclaimed space,

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[66] Ivan Arenas, "Rearticulating the Social: Spatial Practices, Collective Subjects, and Oaxaca's Art of Protest" PhD diss. (UC Berkeley, 2011), 59.

[67] Ibid., 51.

[68] Başak Ertür, "Barricades: Resources and Residues of Resistance," in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, ed. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 101.

[69] Ibid.

[70] See also "Gezi Parki ve Barikatlar... - Dailymotion Video," Dailymotion, accessed December 1, 2019, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x10qgnt.

barricades became a tool for citizens to subvert dominant rules and regulations. The spatial structures of Gezi protests responded to the needs and demands of users, who reproduced the park as—in Lefebvre's terms—a "lived space" that citizens experienced through images and symbols. In this sense, public space as a medium of political representation and visibility manifested through practical, conceptual, and aesthetic manipulations, which arguably went beyond the promises of any art or urban design project.

The Gezi protests featured a rich repertoire of dissent. The appropriation of urban space took many shapes and forms, enabling people to make their own social and material spaces in the city.[71] The outburst of aesthetic-political acts and creative interventions provided opportunities for meaningful encounters between city dwellers and the urban environment they inhabited. Therefore, brand new imaginings of the city were inscribed onto its surfaces as alternative layers of history. Artistically vandalized busses, police vehicles, media vans, and seized construction vehicles covered with graffiti were common to see during the occupation. Urban surfaces were manipulated creatively to enrich the resistance. Stairs were painted in rainbow colours. Humorous graffiti and street writings transformed streetscapes into mediums of self-expression.[72] AKM was again the platform to speak volumes through the political flags and banners hanging on its façade. Creating soundscapes of resistance, many people supported the events from their homes without confronting the police. Mothers formed human chains against police violence.

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[71] See "Visual Archive of the Gezi Park Protests," accessed July 28, 2019, http://dismagazine.com/bb9/vardaman/#24; "Everywhere Taksim," accessed July 28, 2019, http://everywheretaksim.net.

[72] For the role of street art in the occupations of Tahrir Square and Gezi Park, see Taş, "Street Arts of Resistance in Tahrir and Gezi"; Yeşim Kaptan, "Laugh and Resist! Humor and Satire Use in the Gezi Resistance Movement," *PGDT Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 15, no. 5 (2016): 567–87; "Everywhere Taksim."

Fast-breaking events called "earth tables" stretched all along Istiklal Avenue, offering a new use for the strip, spontaneously disrupting its formal functioning.

Performance pieces were omnipresent. The image of German pianist Davide Martello playing for peace accompanied by thousands of people quickly became a powerful symbol of the transnational solidarity generated around Gezi Park. A few days into the occupation, the "standing man" stood still facing AKM for eight hours to perform a passive resistance act against police brutality. A dervish in the *meydan* with a gas mask on and people reading books against police shields seemed like parts of an interactive art installation.[73] Various modes of performance prompted critical dialogues among the citizens by provoking them to rethink public space. Overall, the activist practices of Gezi socially reconstructed space on the foundation of collectively shared meanings, values, and imaginative uses.

Documenting the Resistance

Public articulations of political dissent were widely circulated on social media during many phases of the protests. In time, contributors built a sizable but disorganized digital archive comprising photographs, interviews, footage, and posts. Zoning maps, documentaries, and short films portraying the occupation in their unique ways were also accessible. These digital representations became essential tools in providing information on the movement's expansion throughout the city.[74] Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All), a non-profit organization

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[73] "In the Wake of Gezi, Taking Stock of Istanbul's Art Scene," Hyperallergic, February 9, 2015, https://hyperallergic.com/180922/in-the-wake-of-gezi-taking-stock-of-istanbuls-art-scene/.
[74] Pantelis Vatikiotis and Zafer F. Yörük, "Gezi Movement and the Networked Public Sphere: A Comparative Analysis in Global Context," *Social Media + Society* 2, no. 3 (2016): 2.

consisting of architects, urban designers, and sociologists, specifically focused on documenting the spatial interventions under the umbrella of Occupy Gezi Architecture.

The founding purpose of Architecture for All in 2011 was to bring architectural solutions to social problems by facilitating participatory decision-making processes.[75] In line with their basic principle of "designing for and with the society," the collective organized many public discussions to draw attention to the Taksim Pedestrianization Project that came on the scene without proper public and media debate. In early 2012, the first of the Traditional Gezi Park Festivals was held at the park. The agenda was to inform users about the controversial proposal and discuss the park's future in a lively environment attended by artists, singers, and dancers. A member of the collective, Emre, explains as follows:

> We wanted to get to know the park and observe what was actually going on. We wanted to learn how we see it and how we use it. But we also wanted to talk to people in the park and understand how they use it. Within the same year [2012], between March and September, we organized ten festivals. We invited citizens to spend time in Gezi Park, have picnics, experience it on an everyday level, and discuss its future. This was our primary motivation. Our statement was not "you cannot do anything over Gezi Park, or Taksim Meydanı." It was "you cannot do it this way; it requires a participatory process, transparency, and citizens' opinions taken into consideration." In September, the park was surrounded by metal plates. Some construction was underway. Things got stirred up. Press releases and protests took the stage. Meanwhile, we decided to design some infographics to explain the project as we understood it. We aimed to show the problems that would occur after the trees were gone and the traffic transferred underground. We wanted to make them accessible for everyone. After writing six or seven articles, we published them all online.[76]

The collective's initial focus was on imparting the project's probable impacts on everyday users of the *meydan.* They used multiple mediums to share details and make the process as transparent

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[75] For further information on the collective and their projects, see "Herkes İçin Mimarlık," http://herkesicinmimarlik.org/.

[76] Emre Gündoğdu (Architecture for All Member) in discussion with the author, November 15, 2018.

and accessible as possible. The members designed a website, "Taksim'de Neler Oluyor? (What is Happening in Taksim?)," which provided a timeline illustration of the critical moments and events that led to the Gezi Protests of 2013, beginning with the June 2011 public announcement.[77] It included newspaper articles, court documents, architectural proposals, and other related information about the controversial project. Providing official documents and commentaries, the website enabled citizens to make an informed decision by interpreting the accessible data. Many makeshift structures and spatial interventions that emerged during the occupation were also visually documented and reproduced under the hashtag #occupygeziarchitecture. The collective welcomed contributions from the residents of Gezi in the form of architectural drawings and photographs. Of course, the legibility and audience of the collected data are open to debate; regardless, such public engagement facilitates access to first-hand information, which is pertinent for further practical and academic use.
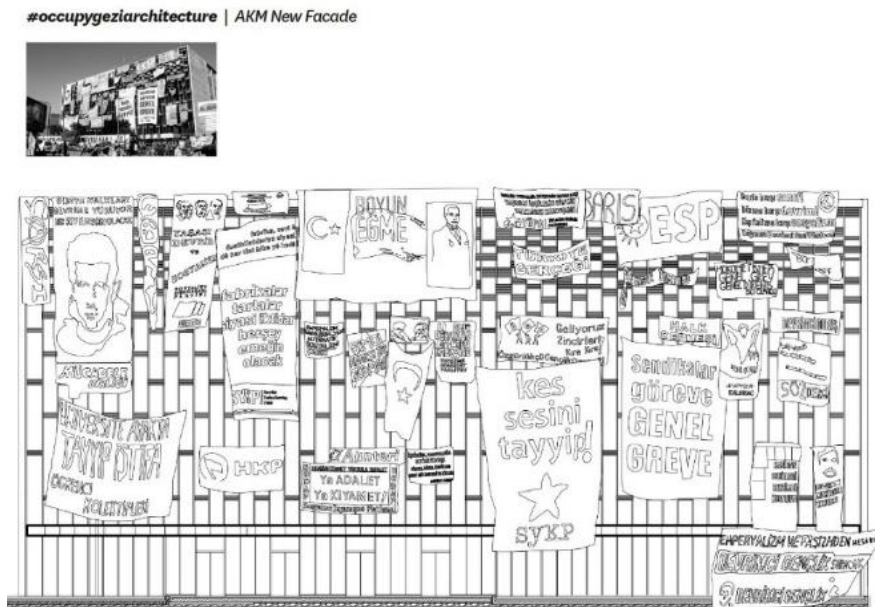
Figure 51. AKM's façade during Gezi protests, by Architecture for All. Some of the slogans read "Peace," "Resign Tayyip," "Justice or Hell," "Labour," "Unions, act! Strike!" "Viva la revolution."

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[77] The website is not active anymore.
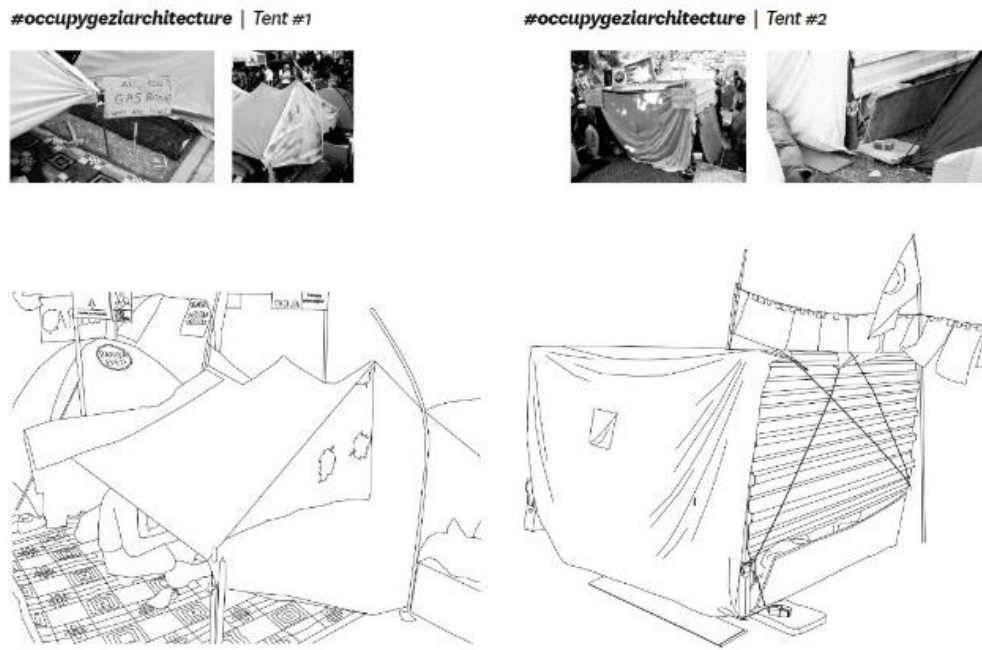
Figure 52. Make-shift shelters of the encampment, by Architecture for All.

Figure 51 demonstrates a front view illustration of the AKM with the banners blanketing its

façade. Figure 52 details two make-shift structures that accommodated the occupiers at the park.

These images were shared on digital publishing platforms and were available for public access.

Architecture for All's documentation of the #occupygeziarchitecture displays line drawings and

in-situ photographs. In this way, the audience is informed about the interventions' structural

details and original spatial context (such as location, scale, relationship with other activities

nearby) at the same time.

Elif Artan explores Architecture for All and archiving as architectural data production.[78] She

defines four major contributions by the collective's autonomous media archives: (1) providing

primary source information about the movement's demands, (2) verification in the face of

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[78] Artan, "'#OccupyGezi Architecture' and Archival Tactics of Resistance."

misinformation perpetuated by media, (3) learning tools for future resistance movements, and (4) temporality as a conceptual framework in newly established occupation areas.[79] From the proposal's announcement to the protests, Architecture for All's active involvement in the entire process brought a new perspective to knowledge production—overwhelmed by institutional narratives—by highlighting ordinary people's contribution to spatial production. The data collected provides insights into the spatialization of a social movement and underscores the design solutions that could be used as models for future events.

Another popular form of data collection during the resistance was the video footage of occupied urban spaces.[80] According to Peter Snowdon, protest videos are important "resource[s] for understanding the subjective experience of ordinary people."[81] Video activism, which includes videos produced in public spaces, opens discussions on the role of bodies in creating urban narratives.[82] Performance and images demonstrating bodies and their orientation in protest space constitute democracy.[83] Furthermore, representations of occupied sites "consolidate activists' understanding of DIY citizenship."[84] Accordingly, video documentation also allows the audience to better understand how people can creatively use the city and its spaces to challenge authoritarian governments, which was the case for Gezi protests.

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[79] Ibid., 411–12.
[80] See Özge Özdüzen's chapter for an analysis of how activist films and videos portrayed creative resistance practices after the Gezi Park protests. Özge Özdüzen, "Bearing Witness to Authoritarianism and Commoning through Video Activism and Political Film-Making after the Gezi Protests," in *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*, ed. Aidan McGarry et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 191–210.
[81] Peter Snowdon, "The Revolution Will Be Uploaded: Vernacular Video and the Arab Spring," *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 6, no. 2 (2014): 401.
[82] Guobin Yang, "Narrative Agency in Hashtag Activism: The Case of #BlackLivesMatter," *Media and Communication* 4, no. 4 (2016): 14.
[83] Özdüzen, "Bearing Witness to Authoritarianism and Commoning through Video Activism and Political Film-Making after the Gezi Protests," 193.
[84] Ibid., 196.

Aftermath

Despite elaborate efforts to violently suppress the protests, the reach of Gezi transcended the limits of the park, Taksim Meydanı, and even Istanbul physically and virtually. Synchronistic gatherings that occurred in 79 out of the 81 cities of Turkey stretched out the geographical boundaries of the resistance and created an extensive network of public spaces coming alive.[85] From the first day of the events, thousands of people mobilized to Gezi Park from within Istanbul and other cities. The demonstrations organized outside Taksim and even Istanbul adopted the slogan "everywhere is Taksim, resistance everywhere" to declare solidarity. The distance between the city centre and its peripheries was closed on multiple levels even after the park's evacuation.

> In fact, the activity around Gezi continued for a while. Small structures were created as memorials for those who died during the resistance. People kept visiting them. But police still surround the area on special occasions. The governments see the *meydan* as a potential danger. Taksim has this thing. People died there. The place is banned then banned again. All these events made it a place of resistance. The government wants to reconquer it by inscribing its own ideology, either with mosques, bans or ever-present police.[86]

After the removal of the barricades on June 11th, the park and roads leading up to it were taken over by excessive policing. On July 15th, the tent-city was also evicted. Nobody was allowed to pass through the park for the first few days. Despite its limited opening to daily use after a few days, ever-present police officers with water cannons were on duty day and night around Taksim to immediately intervene in the case of dissident activity. Public assemblies in other parks were also met with police intervention and were dispersed forcefully. The municipality replaced flags,

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[85] "2.5 milyon insan 79 ilde sokağa indi," *Milliyet*, June 23, 2013, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/2-5-milyon-insan-79-ilde-sokaga-indi-1726600.
[86] Gün Zileli (activist, author) in discussion with the author, November 1, 2018, Istanbul.

banners, and posters on AKM's façade with oppressively large Turkish flags and a portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Taksim Meydanı and its surroundings were returned to a sterile condition by the state officials seeking to erase the memory of the events.[87] Murals, stencils, and street writings were painted over to clear protest narratives from the public eye, media, and even memories. Instead, the press depicted the activists as looters and traitors and anathematized the resistance.

Despite the violation of human rights, the Gezi Park protests confirmed the centrality of public space in practising participatory democracy. Concrete political victories of the resistance are questionable—except saving the park; nevertheless, the municipality continued the small-scale urban operations and ironically publicized them with the caption: "We are uniting Taksim Meydanı and Gezi Park." This statement was an indicator of the government's withdrawal from the *meydan* and its surroundings—only for a few years.

Başak Tanülkü and Jens Kaae Fisker identify a "set of shared principles" that evolved during the Gezi Park Protests, which are "(1) collectivism, in the sense of sharing duties; (2) equality in terms of sharing resources and space; and (3) non-hierarchical management, understood as equal participation in decision-making processes."[88] Taking these principles as a departure, I argue that citizens kept the "Gezi Spirit" alive by directing their attention to other urban processes with similar undertones.

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[87] Kyle T Evered, "Erasing the Place of Dissent: Inscriptions and Eliminations of Gezi Park Graffiti," *Area* 51, no. 1 (2019): 155–65.
[88] Basak Tanülkü and Jens Kaae Fisker, "Alternative Spaces Emerging from the Gezi Protests: From Resistance to Alternatives," *The Production of Alternative Urban Spaces: An International Dialogue*, 2019, 192.

The theme of the 13th Istanbul Biennial, "Mom, am I a Barbarian?," had been announced long before the Gezi protests erupted as "public space as a political forum."[89] The biennial and related events were to launch in September 2013, but the theme manifested all over the city way ahead of its time due to the unexpected turn of events. The evening assemblies, namely forums, held in public parks during the occupation of Gezi corresponded nicely to the biennial's theme in transcending the mainstream ways of practising democracy. The critical dialogues opened up by the forums were not limited to the issues that emerged during the resistance; general political problems were also discussed. These public gatherings enabled a broad spectrum of participants from different social, political, and cultural backgrounds and age groups to voice disagreements and freely express opinions.[90] Citizens kept gathering in smaller public parks in both the European and Anatolian sides of Istanbul after the eviction of the Gezi encampment and other big cities. Facebook groups of the neighbourhood forums aided the organizations while creating broader networks.[91] The forum culture became one of the significant gains of the Gezi Protests by transforming public spaces into sites of expression in which citizens could discuss the future of their cities. Maybe these small-scale gatherings were not powerful enough to bring about genuine political change. Yet, their contribution to encouraging citizens to use public space for discussions and providing inclusive environments for debate was profound. Especially for the generation labelled as "apolitical," the forums served as a medium to gain political awareness.[92] Tanülkü and Fisker further argue that as a direct result of these assemblies, various alternative

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[89] "13th Istanbul Biennial," accessed March 2, 2019, http://13b.iksv.org/en.

[90] Emel Akçalı, "Do Popular Assemblies Contribute to Genuine Political Change? Lessons from the Park Forums in Istanbul," 23, no. 3 (2018): 323–40.

[91] Ibid.

[92] The families who suffered from the atrocity of the coup d'état of 1980 raised their children to be nonresponsive to politics; thus, those who were born in the 1980s are known to be the apolitical generation in Turkey. See for example Bülent Eken, "The Politics of the Gezi Park Resistance: Against Memory and Identity," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113, no. 2 (2014): 427–36.

public spaces were created in the inner-city neighbourhoods for the benefit of dwellers, such as social centres and guerilla gardens.[93] Even though the interpretation of these social engagement projects as derivatives of each other can be debated, their role in opening up multiple avenues that shift citizens' traditional ways of thinking about the city and its spaces is significant.

Similar activist practices also emerged as a response to other state-imposed urban transformation projects with neoliberal overtones. For instance, in February 2020, Architects Association 1927 (Mimarlar Derneği 1927) organized a series of workshops, panels, forums, and an exhibition, about Kanal Istanbul. The goal of the "Mimarlar Kesitle Konuşur (Architects Talk via Sections)" was to visualize a set of scientific data about the proposed project site by drawing attention to the possible ecological, topographical, political, economic, social, and spatial impacts of the controversial proposal as a whole on various scales.[94] Scholars and students from design disciplines collaborated to produce drawings, models, and infographics and shared their findings with the public. A different project with a similar purpose was Between Two Seas, featuring a walk along the proposed route of the Kanal Istanbul to draw attention to ecological and urban transformations of the city's peripheries resulting from human intervention.[95] Exhibited in the 13th Istanbul Biennial, the activist and artistic project was identified as "a child of the Gezi Resistance" by artist Serkan Taycan.[96] The project invited the audience to observe the possible destruction, gain insights, and make informed decisions. Türeli and Al suggest that artistic and activist initiatives offer transparency to urban processes, even though they may not be powerful

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[93] Tanulku and Fisker, "Alternative Spaces Emerging from the Gezi Protests," 191–92.
[94] "Mimarlar Kesitle Konuşur! - Kanal İstanbul'u Kesitler Üzerinden Düşünmek," accessed March 1, 2020, http://www.mimarizm.com/haberler/gundem/mimarlar-kesitle-konusur-kanal-istanbul-u-kesitler-uzerinden-dusunmek_131006.
[95] "Iki Deniz Arası," *Iki Deniz Arası*, Accessed June 6, 2020, https://ikidenizarasi.org/. For a detailed discussion of the art project, see Ipek Türeli and Meltem Al, "Walking in the Periphery: Activist Art and Urban Resistance to Neoliberalism in Istanbul," *Review of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 310–33.
[96] The artist quoted in Türeli and Al, "Walking in the Periphery," 325.

enough to influence final decisions radically.[97] They regard the "critical spectatorship" encouraged in Between Two Seas as "individually empowering" and "politically transformative."[98] These activist practices that promote the transparent and participatory decision-making process regarding controversial design projects substantiate how Gezi motivates new ways of thinking and paths to be followed in urban operations. By revealing citizens' potentials to influence decision-making processes, the Gezi protests transformed people as much as they transformed public space.

AKM and Taksim Mosque

As examined previously in this chapter, the urban transformation of Taksim had several phases. The AKP envisioned dominating the area by implementing four interrelated projects: pedestrianizing Taksim, demolishing the AKM, resurrecting the Artillery Barracks, and building a mosque. Istanbulites managed to protect the park by preventing the construction of Artillery Barracks; nonetheless, the government's aspiration to insert political power into the *meydan* by becoming architecturally permanent continued with the projects next in line.

In Chapter II, I discussed AKM's role in the Republican nation-building process and the changes in the building's meaning value entailed by its use as a tool of political expression during May Day celebrations. In 2010, when the government permitted a celebration in Taksim, the DISK placed the same banner on AKM to remind the 1977 event. During the occupation at Gezi, the façade again displayed many colourful banners delivering social, political, and cultural messages

[97] Ibid., 311.
[98] Ibid., 333.

to the public. After the final raid in the park, the city ordered all installations to be replaced by

Turkish flags and an Atatürk portrait gazing toward the *meydan* as an act of reclaiming state

authority. Furthermore, police officers were stationed on higher floors to surveil the area.

Figure 53. Ertuğrul 1890 movie poster on the façade of AKM. Source: "AKM'ye Reklam Panosu Muamelesi," Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi, http://www.arkitera.com/haber/25774/akmye-reklam-panosu-muamelesi.
Figure 54. AKM during the occupation of Gezi Park. Photograph by Ekim Cağlar, https://www.flickr.com/photos/124196967@N05/14110824530

In 2015, when the building's alleged restoration was into its seventh year, its façade was covered

with a film poster, *Ertuğrul 1890,* co-produced by Turkey and Japan, despite the covering being

in violation of the building's heritage status.[99] This new functioning can be read as a

manifestation of the political mainstream, as commercial advertising aligns with the urban

policies of the AKP, prospering on a neoliberal economy. Alternatively, it can also be interpreted

as an attempt to convert the meaning value, yet this time pursued by the government to

overshadow the secular references in the Taksim.[100]

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[99] Beyoğlu Urban Defense activists responded to this act with a lawsuit. See Derya Gürsel, "AKM'ye Reklam Panosu Muamelesi," *Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi*, NOvermber 27, 2015. Accessed July 18, 2019, http://www.arkitera.com/haber/25774/akmye-reklam-panosu-muamelesi.
[100] For AKP's vision of an Islamic Taksim Meydanı, see Nikos Moudouros, "Rethinking Islamic Hegemony in Turkey through Gezi Park," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 16, no. 2 (2014): 181–95.

Figure 55. *Uykusuz*, April 2013. The caption below the title reads "Taksim is closed off for May Day celebrations due to construction," and the bubble text reads "The day he broke his chains, he fell into a pit."
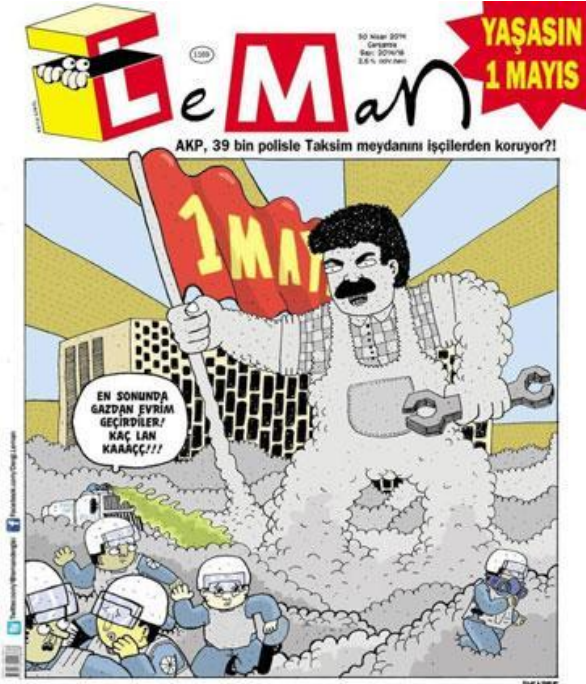
Figure 56. *LeMan,* April 2014. The caption below the title reads "AKP is protecting Taksim from the workers with thirty-nine thousand police officers." The bubble text reads "Finally they have evolved after all that [tear] gas. Run!" most probably referring to the extensive use of pepper and tear gas during the Gezi Protests.

After the legalization of the May Day celebrations, some cartoons evoked AKM's long-term association with civil protest by illustrating iconic images from 1977. Since the late Ottoman period, cartoonists have used their work to criticize regimes in power and influence public opinion by conveying political messages through their drawings.[101] However, during the AKP rule, Erdoğan's continuous assault on the freedom of the press and speech resulted in multiple lawsuits filed against the cartoonists and publications criticizing the party and its operations. The front pages of satirical magazines *Uykusuz* (April 2013) and *LeMan* (April 2014) in Figures 55 and 56 describe Taksim Meydanı with an illustration of AKM rather than the Republican

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[101] Efrat E. Aviv, "Cartoons in Turkey – From Abdülhamid to Erdoğan," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 2 (2013): 221–36.

monument or Gezi Park. The worker in the middle of Figure 55 emulates May Day 1977's famous banner with its descriptive details, such as the worker's moustache, chains, and clothing. The excavator and steel fencing suggest that the area is restricted due to construction (and the celebration by extension). A clear image of AKM occupies the background, yet the InterContinental Hotel is also visible behind the bubble. In Figure 56, on the other hand, the only urban element that refers to Taksim Meydanı as the protest location is AKM. The caption explains that thirty-nine thousand police officers guarded the *meydan* to prevent the gathering. The "gas-man" worker figure coupled with the bubble text "Finally they have evolved after all that [tear] gas. Run!" points to the extensive use of tear gas during the Gezi protests. Having used the figure of Erdoğan in many of their satirical drawings, both publications had been sued multiple times by (then) the Prime Minister.[102]

AKM's role as an object and agent of political expression over the years provoked its contested appropriations, both by the state and citizens, in different shapes and forms. According to Esra Akcan, AKM started to represent the memory of social movements with its role in the Gezi Park protests; therefore, it became a symbol of the resistance—besides the Republican period's cultural modernism.[103] The prolonged contestation over the facility that brought about its demolition can be translated as a reaction to this dual symbolism.

When the Gezi protests erupted in 2013, AKM was closed and awaiting restoration for almost five years. Architectural circles fought legal battles over the rumours of a possible demolition; nevertheless, Prime Minister Erdoğan's insistence on replacing the building with a "Baroque

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[102] Ibid., 232.
[103] Esra Akcan, "Bir Cepheyi Paylaşmak: Parşömen Olarak AKM ve Toplumsal Bellek," *Mimarist* 48 (2013): 85–92.

opera house" eventually led to its demise.[104] The new building was designed by the architectural office of Hayati Tabanlıoğlu's son Murat Tabanlıoğlu.[105] Even though son Tabanlıoğlu preserved the transparent façade and the outline of the original structure, years of sociopolitical history and architectural values that the facility represented got lost in another political-spatial controversy.

Governmental mechanisms tend to propose top-down urban modernization and reform projects in the aftermath of protests to prevent future occurrences and assert the state's presence in the public domain. Since "the usurpation of dominated space is quite deliberate and in itself a political act expressed in spatial practice," regaining political and physical control of the protest site becomes a priority for power holders.[106] According to Batuman, the mosque, "swing[ing] between domination and appropriation," has been a means that local and central administrations use to control public space in Turkey.[107] Drawing from Batuman's assessment, it is possible to interpret the mosque proposal following May Day 1977 as a sociospatial strategy aiming to dominate Taksim Meydanı.

The tension between secular and conservative political ideologies translates into mosque projects periodically in Turkey.[108] Right-wing governments frequently come up with mosque projects to pursue populist policies. According to Sefa Şimşek, Zerrin Polvan and Tayfun Yeşilşerit, the Taksim mosque project has developed from within a broader process of Islamizing urban

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[104] "'AKM Yerine "Barok" Bir Opera Binası!,'" *Gazete Vatan*, June 8, 2013. Accessed November 28, 2019, http://www.gazetevatan.com/-akm-yerine--barok--bir-opera-binasi---544347-gundem/.

[105] Murat Tabanlıoğlu, "İstanbul AKM Yenilenirken," *Mimarlık Dergisi* 352 (2010).

[106] Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," 397.

[107] Bülent Batuman, "'Everywhere Is Taksim': The Politics of Public Space from Nation-Building to Neoliberal Islamism and Beyond," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (2015): 26; See also Batuman's chapter on the politics of mosque building in Turkey Bülent Batuman, *New Islamist Architecture and Urbanism: Negotiating Nation and Islam through Built Environment in Turkey*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 2-47.

[108] See Sefa Şimşek, Zerrin Polvan, and Tayfun Yeşilşerit, "The Mosque as a Divisive Symbol in the Turkish Political Landscape," *Turkish Studies* 7, no. 3 (2006): 489–508; Alev Çınar, "National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (2001): 364–91.

topography in Istanbul, "as a challenge to the city's Christian past and secularist present."[109] The

first attempt to build a mosque in Taksim was in the 1950s under the DP rule. In 1977, when the

project was proposed again for the agenda, centre-right leader Süleyman Demirel of the Adalet

Partisi (Justice Party) was in power. On May 13, 1977, while the Taksim Massacre was still fresh

on the agenda, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs revived the Taksim mosque proposal.[110] The

designated location was the west of the *meydan*, behind the historic water distribution chamber.

This site was unsuitable for any construction work due to zoning and property laws. The remains

of a Byzantium cemetery, of historical heritage status, also prevented any licence from being

approved by the Council of Monuments.[111] Even though the ministry passed some regulations

favouring the project, the permits could not be obtained prior to the military intervention in 1980.

In 1983, the proposal was put into a final form as a complex consisting of a mosque, a shopping

mall, a bank, and a multi-storey parking garage instead of merely a place of worship.

Nonetheless, the State Council still found it objectionable with regard to "the principles of

urbanism, fundamentals of planning and public interest."[112]

According to architect Oktay Ekinci, the proposal had a subtext of obstructing the right to protest

in Taksim Meydanı; hence, it was against the country's secular foundations.[113] Mayor Bedrettin

Dalan's urban design competition for Taksim in the 1980s received criticism from centre-left

opposition and many architectural organizations that interpreted the competition as an excuse to

revive the mosque project. Regardless, most of the proposals, including the winner, did not

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[109] Şimşek, Polvan, and Yeşilşerit, "The Mosque as a Divisive Symbol in the Turkish Political Landscape," 496.
[110] Oktay Ekinci, "Taksim Camisi Yasalara Aykırı," *Cumhuriyet*, July 19, 1996.
[111] Oktay Ekinci, *Bütün Yönleriyle Taksim Camisi Belgeseli* (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1997).
[112] Güldem Büyüksaraç, "Demokrasi ve Tahammül: Taksim Meydanı Örneği," *Istanbul Dergisi*, 2007, 31.
[113] Ekinci, "Taksim Camisi Yasalara Aykırı."

suggest a mosque on the designated project site to avoid contesting Taksim's Republican symbolism.[114]

The justification for those who advocated for the mosque was the changing social dynamics and the need for a Muslim religious structure around Taksim, surrounded by the non-Muslim minorities' places of worship.[115] With the rise of political Islam under Necmettin Erbakan's Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) into power in the 1990s, the project again occupied the agenda.[116] Another coup (by memorandum) on February 27, 1997 stalled this attempt similar to previous cases.

In 2012, architect Ahmet Vefik Alp put his "avant-garde approach" for a Taksim mosque on paper in the form of a cultural complex, including seven underground floors for a library, museum, conference hall, restaurant, and banquet room.[117] His proposal won two architectural prizes, but the Prime Minister's persistence on an "Ottoman-style" architecture interfered with the construction.[118] In 2017, Erdoğan entrusted the project to Sevki Birkiye and Selim Dalaman, who also designed the presidential palace on the site of Atatürk Orman Çiftliği in Ankara. The mosque now holds a commanding position over the *meydan* with its colossal scale that competes

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[114] Büyüksaraç, "Demokrasi ve Tahammül," 32.

[115] Timur Hammond, "The Politics of Perspective: Subjects, Exhibits, and Spectacle in Taksim Square, Istanbul," *Urban Geography* 40, no. 7 (2019): 1049.

[116] The rise of political Islam had significant impacts on the urban transformations in Istanbul. In 1994, Welfare Party candidates won the local elections in many metropolises; Recep Tayyip Erdogan, today's president, was elected as the mayor of Istanbul. Urban policies in favour of Islamic display were put into effect immediately. The conversion of the Hagia Sophia Museum to a mosque and construction of the Taksim Mosque were among the priorities (Hagia Sophia was eventually reopened as a mosque in 2020). City administrations organized festive events and commemorations with reference to the country's Ottoman past—including the anniversary of Istanbul's conquest—in major *meydans*. Tents and pavilions were set up to provide food, drink, entertainment, and other religious activities during the month of Ramadan in Gezi Park and Sultanahmet Meydanı. See, for example, Alev Çınar, "National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (2001): 364–91.

[117] "Mosque of the Republic and Museum of Religions, Taksim," Alp Architects, accessed January 28, 2020, http://alparchitects.com.tr/eng/proje_detay.asp?id=27.

[118] Tim Arango, "Mosque Dream Seen at Heart of Turkey Protests," *The New York Times*, June 23, 2013, sec. Europe, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/24/world/europe/mosque-dream-seen-at-heart-of-turkey-protests.html.

with the surrounding monumental structures, including nearby churches and AKM. Primarily a place of worship, a mosque also "serves as a means of maintaining a sense of community and the spatiopractical production of identities built on shared religion."[119] Accordingly, the Taksim mosque project can easily be interpreted as a reaction to the social space created in Taksim over decades by the "spatial imaginary of the activists as well as the spatial routines of daily life [that] influence[d] the availability to join protest as well as its forms."[120]

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the effects of neoliberal policies in the urban transformation of Istanbul. The renewal of Taksim Meydanı was one of the many projects on the AKP government's neoliberal agenda. The proposal for an ideologically driven reconstruction of the Ottoman Artillery Barracks on Gezi Park promised a consumerist site, unresponsive to immediate design and management problems. The government's decision, disregarding expert opinions and public debate, was met by a country-wide resistance network to protect the site from demolition. During the occupation, small-scale architectural solutions reconstructed space on the foundation of collectively shared meanings, values, and imaginative uses. Architecture for All facilitated transparent public processes by providing information about the Taksim Urban Transformation Project on various media. Certain aspects of the Gezi protests reincarnated in different shapes and forms in subsequent activist and artistic practices. I suggested that Gezi became instrumental in transforming many public spaces into sites of political expression in the "age of shrinking democracy" by enabling citizens to engage in discussions and act on the future of their cities.[121] Finally, I examined the cases of AKM and the Taksim Mosque, whose construction processes stood as counter-narratives to the social and material production in

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[119] Batuman, *New Islamist Architecture and Urbanism*, 14.
[120] Della Porta, "Putting Protest in Place: Contested and Liberated Spaces in Three Campaigns," 28.
[121] Andy Merrifield, *The New Urban Question* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), viii.

Taksim. I argued that many incarnations of Taksim Meydanı overlapped in Gezi by informing (1) the pedestrianization project, (2) the protests against it, and (3) post-Gezi transformations in the *meydan*. A spatial analysis of the transformation of Taksim is crucial because collective action and design processes constantly reproduce the social and political meaning of this historically significant place.

Conclusion

> Buildings and monuments—designed by architects, planners, and policy makers in an endless process of production—define and change our landscape and establish a spatial array. This sociospatial array forces us to adjust to particular social contexts, behavioral codes, and political regulations. But at the same time this spatial array also provides us with a space in which to negotiate, oppose and resist. This particular dialectic of constraint and freedom is what makes urban spaces so crucial to political dissent, so strategic as a tool allowing people to negotiate their claims.[1]

In discussing civil protests, Hatuka argues that the process of protesting shapes the interaction between the state, city, and citizens in addition to defining space.[2] While protesting, citizens disrupt the constituted rules and meanings by rethinking space strategically and creatively; thus, they transcend its everyday uses and regulations. Drawing from Hatuka's approach, this study started with the premise that civil protests actively change the meaning, function, and form of public spaces. I examined four case studies between 1960 and 2013 to investigate how the design and development of *meydans* in Istanbul changed over time, responding to the alternative conceptions of urban life put forward by demonstrators, activists, and other socially engaged groups. Each case under examination empowered different social, political, and cultural communities, institutions, actors, and agents in the process of spatialization. By making power relations visible in physical space in the form of conversations, displays, performances, and design interventions, each case took part in shifting the traditional perceptions of public space. Drawing from Hershkovitz, this study viewed public space not only as a "backdrop to political drama or a container of human actions," but as a subject in its own right, one that opened up a narrative of conflicts and helped to engender activism.[3]

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[1] Tali Hatuka, "Walking as Politics," in *Actions: What You Can Do with the City*, edited by Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2008), 71.
[2] Hatuka, *The Design of Protest*, 15.
[3] Linda Hershkovitz, "Tiananmen Square and the Politics of Place," 396.

The historiographies of the Ottoman and Turkish cities, for the most part, tend to reflect on the changes in the built environment entailed by top-down administrative programs and reforms. Many of the studies on Republican Istanbul are concerned with a relatively narrow group of identities, structures, and landscapes that emerged during the early Republican period nationalism and post-1980 neoliberalism. Therefore, the role of ordinary and marginalized people in the making of cities—their material and imagined settings—remains missing from the existing narratives. By identifying civil protest as a medium that enhances people's participation in spatial production, my research has focused on how people who appropriate urban spaces contribute to the formation of built environments in opposition to those generated by high-level political shifts. To me, a focus on the role of protests in this formation is crucial because they address the importance of sociopolitical relations as a part of the architectural design process— rather than concentrating merely on the end product. In line with this, my analyses prioritized user-generated changes that allow for a deeper understanding of how discourses of power and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion motivate the creation, use, and appropriation of public spaces.

All of the cases in this study navigated several locations in Istanbul in compliance with the spatial orchestration of dissent. Although each was unique regarding the protest form, they shared a common link to Taksim Meydanı. Each case built on the development of this very site as the primary political public space in the city. Nonetheless, they also influenced the urban development of other public spaces involved, such as Beyazıt Meydanı and Galatasaray Meydanı. Taksim's evolution, since its genesis, reveals layer upon layer of sociopolitical conflicts. Architectural and urban historians have offered some understanding of the role of ideological motives on this central *meydan*'s transformation over the years; however, the

spatialization of protests has entered the discussion only recently regarding the Gezi Park protests. Earlier cases of public dissent in Taksim (and other *meydans* in Istanbul) have remained almost ignored. Responding to this gap, this research project contributes to the architectural urban histories of Istanbul and Taksim Meydanı by revealing alternative views, accounts, and ways that citizens have found to inhabit their city, transcending administrative rules and regulations.

Historical processes are crucial in understanding the spatial development of urban spaces because *meydans* can become protest sites due to their historically and symbolically charged identities, present in "spatial relations, furnishings and architecture of the place."[4] However, my exploration of the relationship between public space and protest in the context of Istanbul has demonstrated that places do not necessarily develop according to the ideals with which they were charged. Civil protests can challenge existing meanings and produce new ones.

Forms of protest have different potentials in manipulating urban spaces. Marches take their power from the disruption of existing rhythms. The act of walking together with like-minded people in an orderly manner creates a sense of solidarity and symbolic conquest of the city. The suspension of social and spatial hierarchies builds new relations among the participants, independent from discrimination and exclusion. The power of the ritual sit-in, on the other hand, lies in the perseverance of ephemeral bodily and symbolic interventions in space. Thus, this form summons public space into existence by repetitive social action. Encampment, which requires a certain degree of permeance and self-sustainability, enables the formation of diverse communities and solidarity networks. Therefore, each tactic provides insights into how citizens'

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[4] Setha M Low, *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 184.

collective experiences shape the built environment and urban space. By discussing forms of protest and their enactment, I have shown how protest repertoires evolve as by-products of everyday experiences, influenced by prevailing economic, social, political, and technological mainstreams.

Activist practices of the 1960s that constantly promoted public discussions on contemporary political issues challenged the agreed-upon order of public spaces in Istanbul. Marching gained popularity in this period due to its advantages in strategically engaging specific locations. Meanwhile, the movement of protestors created a connection between the start and endpoints of the protest routes, usually identifying Beyazıt Meydanı as the former and Taksim Meydanı as the latter. Bloody Sunday was one of the most notorious events of this period because the pro-US/anti-US encounter in Taksim ended violently. Thus, the case opened up a process of binary opposition during which public demonstrations began to use place-based arguments wanted to "invoke images or memories to challenge the dominant meanings of a place." [5] I have suggested that this change in perspectives granted Taksim a privileged position as a contested political arena where state power is challenged rather than displayed. Consequently, the former favourite Beyazıt Meydanı, exhausted from a long period of failed urban design processes that partly hampered its function as a protest space, gradually fell from favour.

Into the 1970s, the rapid industrialization and urbanization, increasing migrant population in Istanbul, created a labour force that actively and publicly sought their rights. These new inhabitants transformed institutionally managed sites into sites of resistance where they confronted the authorities and the status quo. Coupling aesthetic concerns with practical and

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[5] Robertson and Gojowy, "Protest, Place in Pictures," 152.

didactic, the visual components of dissent (such as posters, murals, and banners) encouraged citizens to rethink, act on, and produce alternative public spaces. Thus, the decade witnessed the subversion of existing systems of power through the articulation of political content all over the city. Being the primary protest space, Taksim hosted May Day 1977, a carnivalesque celebration that intended to bring together people from all walks of life in an interactive and inclusive environment that obscured power hierarchies among participants. Even though the media treatment of the celebration and its urban setting worked towards different ends in shaping public perception, framings of the issue around place strengthened Taksim's identification as a protest location. In the aftermath, the May Day celebration itself evolved into a political demonstration that was associated with and achieved visibility specifically in Taksim Meydanı. While the use of AKM as a political plane became a recurring activist practice, the spatial tradition around the Republican monument shifted from paying respect to the state to expressing opposition against it. Regarding Taksim as where public discontent manifests, several governments attempted to alter its urban function through design interventions and constant policing. Strict restrictions imposed upon the use of the *meydan* compelled citizens to seek alternative protest locations as convenient but not as protected as Taksim.

SMP was one such case that occupied a junction on Istiklal Avenue instead of Taksim Meydanı. Initiated by the women, whose children, husbands, and relatives were officially declared "lost" after being detained by the police on different occasions, the weekly meetings received broad media coverage across countries, partly due to the transnational dialogue with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. While the sit-ins' aesthetic components consolidated the act of remembrance as a marker of the public space, the constant struggle between the police and the sitters created a contested political site out of the protest location. The SMP assigned a new

meaning to the junction in front of Galatasaray High School by disclosing a conflict of predominantly marginalized people that would have been overlooked otherwise. Galatasaray Meydanı has come to life as a public space of political visibility and memory through repetitive bodily and symbolic appropriations of the SMP. Consequently, the social production informed the design of the YKKS building that reciprocates the identity of Galatasaray Meydanı as a public space of assembly and protest.

The 2013 Gezi Park protests erupted against a renewal project that would generate a crucial shift in the park's status as a central public space by transforming it into a commercial site of consumption. During the events, participants used various spatial appropriation strategies to occupy the park, maintain the encampment, and prevent police brutality. The self-sufficient tent city provided ample opportunities for democratic participation, including the setting of physical space and public forums for collective discussions. The barricades forged social bonds among the citizens that maintained them besides defining the physical boundaries free of state intervention. The performances provided opportunities for meaningful encounters between the city dwellers and the urban environment they inhabited. My analyses have shown that these aesthetic-political acts physically and socially reconstructed space based on collectively shared meanings, values, and imaginative uses. They also spearheaded the development of new means and methods to facilitate future public engagement processes such as public forums and documentation projects. Thus, the case became instrumental in transforming many public spaces into sites of political expression by enabling the citizens to engage in discussions and act on the future of their cities. The government counterposed growing oppositional practices with ideologically charged architectural interventions, such as the destruction of AKM and the construction of a mosque, that aimed to engender new spatial production patterns in Taksim.

In this study, I also mentioned the role of architects— when the opportunity presented itself— in promoting social change by opening up discussions, raising people's awareness about sociopolitical affairs and their rights to the city, and encouraging citizen involvement as mediators between communities and institutions. Architects, then, are more than technical problem-solvers. This research takes up the responsibility inherent in design disciplines to respond to user needs; specifically, it provides insights for practising architects, urban designers, and planners about responding to the necessities and episodic spatial traditions of ordinary and marginalized people inhabiting the city. Nonetheless, further research is needed in this domain because the built environment and urban spaces that we live in have continually been shaped by sociopolitical processes, collective action, and architectural and urban design.

In my analyses, I sought to propose a framework for the study of the spatialization of social movements by presenting a broad set of social, cultural, and political institutions, actors, and agents that played a part in the transformation of urban space in Istanbul. In line with this, I have underscored the dialogues among multiple mediums, tools, and methods that constitute the mutual relationship between civil protest and urban design, based on the dynamics of each case. Nonetheless, the arguments I have presented in this study rely on my personal and professional interpretation of selected cases, *meydans*, periods, and sources that I had access to. Istanbul has a rich history of social movements and civil protests that influenced the urban (trans)formations in the city, but which was beyond the scope of this research. Undoubtedly, they will provide fertile ground for future scholarly work that would constitute timely contributions to the literature on public space and civil protest by presenting models of transnational dialogues and cultural exchange. My approach to the subject is grounded in the specific context of Istanbul (and, more broadly, Turkey); however, my findings are pertinent beyond the study of just this one city or

country as urban processes in global cities (like Istanbul) certainly share important attributes, such as shifting political winds, variable resources, and fluctuating citizen engagement.

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