IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVILIZATIONS STUDIES

MASTER'S THESIS

WHO OWNS THE CITY? – THE LEGACY OF SPACE AND URBAN ACTIVISM IN ISTANBUL

HAMİDE COŞKUN

THESIS SUPERVISOR: ASSIST. PROF. HEBA RAOUF MOHAMED EZZAT

ISTANBUL 2021

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Name Surname: Hamide Coşkun

Signature:

ABSTRACT

WHO OWNS THE CITY? – THE LEGACY OF SPACE AND URBAN ACTIVISM IN ISTANBUL

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MA in Civilization Studies

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In recent decades urban policies in Turkey have been affected by neoliberal visions aiming to attract foreign investments. As one of the fastest growing cities and central financial hubs in the Mediterranean and Black Sea in recent years, Istanbul has been where the right to the city claims have concentrated following an unprecedented amount of construction, expansion in urban space and a rising number of inhabitants. Urban activism advocating the importance of representing the city dwellers in planning has encountered many challenges.

The Gezi Park protests in May-June 2013 came in the midst of the culmination of urban landscape re-skinning and brought new dimensions to the urban struggle. Yet over the following years this movement fragmented. This thesis aims to examine one of the most important reasons why the Gezi Park protestors lost momentum. It focuses on reasons related to logics of action rather than the political restrictions that are often highlighted. It demonstrates how the shift from the right to the city to other causes in two following projects- namely the new Istanbul Airport and the planned 'Kanal Istanbul'- resulted in weakening the movement. It explores other emerging logics of action for claiming right to the city in everyday life that might redraw the map of urban activism. The study argues that activism is more sustained on the micro level when urban planning affects the everyday life of people, hence the rise of nonmovements in global cities.

Keywords: Gezi Park protests, Istanbul, logic of action, the right to the city, urban activism, urban space

ÖZ

ŞEHRİN SAHİPLERİ KİMLER? MEKANIN MİRASI VE İSTANBULDA KENTSEL AKTİVİZM

Yazar Coşkun, Hamide

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Heba Raouf Ezzat

Ocak 2021, 92 sayfa

Son yıllarda Türkiye'deki kentsel politikalar, ülkeye yabancı yatırımları çekmeyi amaçlayan neoliberal politikalardan nasibini almıştır. Son yıllarda Akdeniz ve Karadeniz'de en hızlı büyüyen şehirlerden ve merkezi finans merkezlerinden biri olan İstanbul, benzeri görülmemiş oranda inşaat, kentsel alanda genişleme ve artan nüfusla birlikte şehir hakkı taleplerinin yoğunlaştığı bir yer haline gelmiştir. Kentsel planlamada, şehrin sakinlerinin de temsil edilmesini savunan kentsel aktivizm birçok çıkmazla karşılaştı. İstanbul'un çehresindeki kabuk değişiminin zirvesini yaşadığı bir dönemde, Mayıs-Haziran 2013'te meydana gelen Gezi Parkı protestoları ise bu meseleye yeni boyutlar getirmiştir.

Ne var ki müteakip yıllarda Gezi aktivizmi etkisini sürdüremeyip parçalandı. Bu tez, Gezi Parkı eylemcilerinin ivme kaybetmesinin en önemli nedenlerinden birini incelemeyi amaçlamakta olup siyasi kısıtlamalardansa eylem mantığıyla ilgili nedenlere odaklanmaktadır. İlaveten, İstanbul Havalimanı ve halihazırda yapılması planlanan 'Kanal İstanbul tartışılırken kentsel aktivizmden diğer siyasi meselelere nasıl bir kayma yaşandığı ve bunun da Gezi aktivizmini zayıflattığı gösterilmektedir. Bu tezde ayrıca, günlük hayatta şehir hakkı talebine dönük ortaya çıkmakta olan ve kentsel aktivizmin haritasını yeniden çizebilme ihtimalini bize sunan diğer eylem mantıkları da araştırılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, kentsel planlamanın insanların günlük hayatındaki etkisinin artmasıyla aktivizmin mikro düzeyde daha sürdürülebilir hale geldiği ve global şehirlerdeki devrimsiz hareketlerde gözlenen artışın da bundan kaynaklandığı öne sürülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Eylem mantığı, Gezi Parkı protestoları, İstanbul, kentsel aktivizm, kentsel alan, şehir hakkı

DEDICATION

To my late grandfather, *Adil Coşkun,* who wished I would be in the academia but left before his dream came true.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Istanbul has always been among the most important cities in the world with its transportation network, human capital, cultural richness and harmonious texture that provide trade opportunities. Besides these distinctive aspects, Istanbul stands out with its historical places and touristic facilities. The city has witnessed a large amount of population growth and construction in the last decades. The share of the population living in urban areas in Istanbul has increased and the existing residential areas have been insufficient to meet the needs of the population. The city's population increased by 451,543 in 2019 compared to 2018 and reached just above 15.5 million people (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2020).

Faced with problems such as rapid population growth, internal and external migration, and neoliberal urban policies, the city had to make room for the incoming population while renewing itself at considerable cost to its texture, as per ongoing urban debates.

Istanbul as a growing city has become even more cosmopolitan for the last two decades. The city is hosting foreign people more than ever and a remarkable number of them are investors and expatriates. Regulations are made to carry Istanbul to the league of the biggest global cities. Particularly after the 2000s, the governing parties have increasingly invested in transportation. Mega projects have been commissioned such as bridges, airports and tunnels. With the expansion of urban space in Istanbul, new residential areas have emerged to meet the needs of the incoming population. Thus, the city has expanded further towards the periphery. Problems regarding the mega projects that resulted in the enlargement of the city have been discussed extensively.

The shared aspiration among the ruling elite, opposition, bureaucracy and private sector alike to create a global city by transforming Istanbul into a financial hub with improved service sectors and into a more attractive tourist destination forms the backbone of these spatial practices especially for the last two decades. The spatial effects of urban policies have been mostly followed in urban transformation projects and large-scale infrastructure projects in Istanbul. The private sector and municipalities are encouraged to participate in urban planning processes for achieving these projects. Hence, Istanbul has been the most affected city by

neoliberal policies in the last four decades in Turkey. However, while initiating urban policies, a holistic approach that takes socio-economic facts into account has not been implemented. The neoliberal model of global capitalism has caused economic inequalities and poverty in the world as well as in cities and neighborhoods at the micro level. For this reason, devastating social and spatial implications of urban policies in the city cannot be ignored. The housing issue, gentrification, and gated communities in Istanbul are among the socio-spatial issues caused by neoliberal urban policies. Moreover, the urban space in Istanbul today presents an odd conglomeration of un-interrelating spatial units as such that skyscrapers, plazas, gated communities are juxtaposed with slums and neighborhoods.

In line with economic growth targets, Turkey granted new rights for foreigners who invest in Istanbul. Granting citizenship to foreigners meeting certain investment conditions was made easier following a 2018 legislative amendment. Accordingly, over 9,000 foreign investors have become Turkish citizens who made an investment of minimum $500,000 in Turkey (Nüfus ve Vatandaşlık İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020). Marketing and selling Turkish citizenship to foreigners portends new implications and challenges with regard to notions of citizenship and civility as shall be detailed later.

The change in the notion of citizenship determined the civility in the city with the transformation in the social structure and it caused socio-spatial polarizations in the urban space. The dissatisfaction with urban politics and citizenship paradox, in turn, led citizens to claim their rights over the urban space. However, activism was limited by the laws and regulations related to urban politics so that it could not reach the level of effective participation in city-related issues such as urban renewal, urban housing or mega projects.

With the integration of Istanbul into the international global economic system, there have been some changes in urban policies: As Keyder (1993) states the emergence of a network of relations with the globalization that exceeded nation state borders has caused important changes in the locations of the cities" (p. 91).

Many studies have been written about Istanbul with regard to urbanity, urban policies and planning. Some literature primarily focuses on either events such as the Gezi Park protests and neighborhood struggles or laws related to an economic model of neoliberalism as well as laws related to political barrier in terms of demonstrations, urban mobilizations and access to land. The literature then takes cases or economic policies regarding urbanization of Istanbul. Another

issue focused on urbanization studies is habitat, that is, socio-spatial transformations resulting in gated communities, gentrifications and inequalities. Three types of approaches are determined in relation to urbanism in Istanbul in the literature.

Firstly, some literature focuses on the events or cases which occurred in Istanbul such as Gezi Park protest and Canal Istanbul in the process of either urban renewal projects or mega projects. In these studies, it is seen that urban interventions and types of urban resistance against these projects have been discussed based on the events or cases. For example one of the most recent works written within this orientation examines urban mobilization in Istanbul to understand the dynamics of the opposition against the physical and cultural transformation of the city where based on the literature on urban politics and urban social movements in Istanbul, urban activisms, as anti-commodification struggles and collective actions against urban transformation projects are examined (Köksal, 2017, p. 1).

The construction of new residential areas, shopping malls, skyscrapers, and other infrastructures in neighborhoods that underwent urban transformation has once again brought the demands for city rights to the urban agenda. It is observed that in the last decades urban struggles over space are based on two main issues; housing problems and mega projects in Istanbul. In these urban conflicts, neighborhood unions, associations, voluntary organizations and political parties seek solutions to the housing problem mostly at the local level. Regarding this, Ozan Karaman in his study examines grassroots responses to state-directed urban renewal in two poor neighborhoods in Istanbul (Karaman, 2014). In addition, the struggles carried out by those who are against mega projects, which are criticized frequently in the ecological context, are still up to date. As Margit Mayer (2013) states, “The consequences of these novel urban development policies and of the de facto erosion of social rights, which they implied, politicized distributive conflicts towards the question whose city it is supposed to be” (p. 8).

Urban struggle emerged in many cities of the world against gentrification, gated-communities and urban infrastructure services that threatened urban life. Thus, urban resistance slogans such as "Reclaim Streets", "Diren (Resist) Gezi", and "Another city is possible" rose in many cities around the world. Examples of urban resistance against roll-out neoliberalization were previously encountered in New York, Paris, and Berlin.

Previously, there were some groups operating as neighborhood struggles and they were voicing their demands on the region they were in. The radical changes to be made around Gezi Park

within the scope of the Taksim Pedestrianization Project have brought together the organizations and neighborhood unions that were previously community-based. These unions and associations, which were in solidarity with each other, have become part of urban mobilization for the first time in 2013 with such strong slogans in Taksim Gezi Park. Associations, institutions and organizations that were against urban and gentrification projects and operated in fragmented form participated in a major protest for the first time under one roof.

Local scale transformation and renewal projects have met criticisms regarding a neoliberal urban paradigm which dominated over the urban space in the city. Most activities have been owned by the neighborhood unions and associations that their activities mostly have been carried out at the local level. Besides that, it was emphasized that local struggles should be transformed into holistic and collective struggles in the declarations published by some forums such as the Istanbul urban movements. Mayer (2013) argues that local initiatives and neighborhood associations have important responsibilities as manifested by Istanbul Urban Movements. *"*Theory and practice, ideal and reality may differ. It may be unfair to expect a holistic perspective from local struggles (…) Local struggles have their own reality, nevertheless it is important to seek ways for a united struggle and to try to sustain them both" (Strutz, 2010).

Urban activism in Istanbul is mostly shaped around the discussion on Gezi Park protests and more focus is given to the local issues or cases and the access to the land. In this regard, neoliberal economic policies applied to the urban planning have been discussed.

The second important issue the literature focuses on is laws related either to economic/neoliberal or political spheres. It is economic because urban space is occupied through new projects and laws that facilitate the implementation of projects. It is political because urban activism and mobilization have weakened, and demonstrations have been restricted due to the ongoing political contestations and terrorist attacks.

Most of the studies focused on the construction policies of neoliberalism and the devastating results in the urban space since the first implementation of the policies in the 1980s in Turkey. These policies, adopted also by the AK Party government since the early 2000s, have been criticized to a great extent because the urban space is occupied in accordance with the needs of global capital in the cities. Although neoliberal ideology responds to the needs of the global

system, it does not fully restrict state intervention because state as an intermediary realizes neoliberal policies and practices. According to the view that divides neoliberal ideology into two, "*roll*-back neoliberalism" and "roll out neoliberalism", this is a roll-out practice of neoliberalism which refers to "the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, pp. 380-404).

Since the 2000s, roll-out neoliberalization responded to the previously adopted policies and their emerging contradictions. As a result, the city has been defined as an area where global capital flows and the urban policies directing municipal activities occupied the urban space in the city. Urban space began to be treated as a commodity that can be bought and sold.

Another critique of the neoliberal economic model in the city is about the planning system that is designed not in accordance to the needs of the citizens but for the interests of capital owners or investors. This has caused socio-spatial inequalities in each part of the city. Adalberto Aguirre JR. and other examines these interrelated processes of neoliberalism that have basically diminished the rights of ordinary citizens, particularly low-income people and other disadvantaged groups, such as immigrants, racial minorities, ..." (Aguirre et al., 2006, pp. 1-5).

Thereby, many studies have focused on the impact of structural changes in the socio-economic sphere on planning. With the effect of these challenges, the liberal economic model triggered major changes in zoning movements in Turkey. The biggest change in the zoning in 1980s is that with the Zoning Law No. 3194, which entered into force in 1985, the authority to plan, create, approve, implement and if necessary, amend the plan is given to the municipal council (Firidin, 2004, p. 48). This has caused the hierarchical structure in planning. Therefore, the problem is that urban planning has not been dealt with as a holistic approach in terms of urbanism and the public and social participation also have not been efficiently provided in the city.

According to some studies, we can trace the development of the urban movements from the 1980s when Turkey started to adhere to free market principles. Following the 1980 military coup, Turkey changed gear and began to adhere to free market economy principles more strictly, however Turkey's ruling military junta made sure to oversee the ways which would lead the Turkish economy to liberalization by reinforcing its authority. Thus, the analysis of the

historical experience of urban regeneration in Turkey has a periodic distinction when comparing the legal and institutional structure of urban regeneration that is basically focused on two main periods; one is the liberal period (1980-1999) which was accompanied with zoning amnesty and the other is the legal regulation period (2000-2012) which was after the Marmara earthquake in 1999 (Yenice, 2014, p. 83).

In recent years, one of the most controversial laws in Turkey was the Municipality Law of 2012, which significantly/crucially was a conspicuously signaling move from the executive power towards the local administrations. The local administrations in Turkey have always occupied a uniquely testing position in domestic power struggle as the effects of local elections do not only remain local, but also usually pose pivotal implications for both existing the central government and the following general elections with the domino effect (Çelikyay, 2014, p. 7). By questioning the constitutionality of the Municipal Law No. 6360 of 12 November 2012, Gözler (2013) advocates that local administrations should not be weakened, but rather strengthened and he strictly criticizes the administrative organization chart of the Republic of Turkey (p. 37). It is also noteworthy that municipalities in the country are not fully autonomous in budgetary and administrative terms. Another topic of discussion is the neglect of urban issues due to conflicts among political parties both at the central and local levels of governance. Rather than being a party, regulations regarding the functioning of the authorized institutions related to the city should be made and the law of citizens should be observed.

In line with the policies aimed at transforming the urban space, Istanbul has progressed to become a city competing with other global cities such as New York, London and Tokyo. Thus, inter-urban competition intensified, and Turkey brought up a new urban agenda in the 2000s which aims to carry out constructions of mega projects via public-private partnership as well as urban regeneration projects to meet the needs of the expanding city. Urban policies led the city to an inevitable competitive direction which relies on neoliberal urban governance.

Investment opportunities, citizenship and housing facilities for foreigners have led to changes in the traditional citizenship concept and a new housing concept has emerged in the city. Gated communities and gentrified urban areas have emerged as an effect of the changing paradigm in the city. In relation to this, most studies are basically focused on the implementation of this new system into planning processes. According to some studies, laws and regulations pave the way

for the new constructions and projects implemented in the city, particularly urban transformation projects.

As for the second type of laws, it is regarding political issues such as restrictions, access to the public sphere and mobility. Turkey's changing domestic context and security paradigm as a result of increasing PKK terrorism and the purging of Gulenist infiltration in the bureaucracy have tamed civic engagement, civic space and civic activism even more particularly as some critics emphasizes that Erdogan's neoliberal and socially conservative government has come to regard Gezi Park protests as a "revolt". As Özge Zihnioğlu (2019) states "Recurrent bans and restrictions on public gatherings and assemblies under an extended state of emergency significantly narrowed civic space (…) and the boundaries of what was politically permissible in terms of civil society activities in Turkey has changed" (p. 15).

Thirdly, some literature focused on the habitat in the city. Urban transformation projects as a result of urban planning in the axis of neoliberal policies have been the most emphasized issue on the urbanity of Istanbul. They have been mostly shaped around the discussion on the social and spatial restructuring of the city. Gated communities, gentrifications and displacement of citizens have been shown to be among the most obvious consequences of this restructuring. For this reason, most of the studies in literature on urban transformation have focused on either planning laws or transformation activities held by the government.

Although spatial practices carried out in line with the goals of becoming a global city serve the growth targets of Istanbul, they caused social spatial inequalities and environmental problems. Socio-spatial inequalities caused polarization and social exclusion in the city. Besides these, civility is negatively affected by new investment programs attracting more foreign residents and wealthy segment of society to the inner areas of the city.

Last of all, I noticed that there is no line showing the different logics of action in urban activism regarding Istanbul in the last decades, it has mostly focused on the cases or it is taking economic policies, therefore this study arose from the lack of analysis regarding the logic of action. There is no emphasis on making us understand the dynamics of action in Istanbul. I am thus trying to investigate what happened by focusing on the framework of logic of action in urban activism.

The notion of citizenship has transformed as a result of citizenship laws that facilitate the granting of citizenship to foreign investors who have fulfilled certain conditions in the cause of

economic growth. In addition, urban transformation activities and interventions, regardless of resident's rights and public interest, brought the question of who owns the city, in other words, who has the right to the city.

While the new urban trends that Istanbul city and the citizens have to face, and the right to the city issue are significant, we need to address another problem that has received less attention: political contestation. Urban activism has been a major level of political contestation in Turkey for the last two decades. For instance, the Gezi Park protests were environmentally focused at the start, however protests turned into mass civic scene through unexpected rapid mobilization that included violent actors during the demonstrations. Deviations and strategy shift in urban activism led the government to take sharper measures against demonstrations and protests in the city.

Urban activism gradually weakened as a result of restrictions and subsequent political developments. It is crucial to understand what impact Turkish urban policy has had on the cases of urban activism in Istanbul and how different structural and cyclical problems are overlapping in activisms for 7 years since Gezi Park protests. In this thesis, I am going to address the right to the city and urban activism in response to these changes and I will try to map the different Logics of Action and how the government responded to that because there is also the urban politics dimension. Thus it is not only the right to the city, but also urban politics formed on urban space. There is an inevitable link between urban activism and urban politics.

In this study, Taksim Pedestrianization Project, Istanbul Airport Project and Canal Projects are the three moments of urban activisms, that will be discussed within the framework of the question "Who owns the city?" with regard to the overlapping discussions on the city, activism and logic of action.

Research Questions:

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1- What are the different logics of action which have been used in the urban space in Istanbul in the last few years since Gezi Park protests?

2-How did the changing notions of citizenship and the financial interests of investors create new stakeholders and affect urban activism?

3-What are the new logics of action which emerged on the urban scene to defend the right to the city apart from Gezi Park activists?

Approach:

As the thesis is exploring urban activism, and examining diverse social logics and different types of movements, analyzing the changing nature of movement will be the main analytical approach, not only by classification but also in terms of their changing dynamics. In the theoretical part in chapter two, I will discuss in detail how the right to the city was addressed by different studies and I will be pointing out in chapters three and four the different moments of urban activisms. The study will conclude with neighborhood representation in Istanbul which deserves further study in future research.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Urban mobilization and urban activism movements in many cities of the world continue to be a part of the political scene as a result of neoliberal policies and their devastating results. Urban activism in the city of Istanbul raises questions related to spatial manifestations of power: How did social movements react in different parts of the city and in different contexts and what were the strategies used? What are the logics of actions detected in urban activisms? What are the similarities and differences observed in the mobilization processes?

This chapter will try to examine the theoretical debates framing urban activism in order to answer these questions, drawing on the notion of the right to the city, the examination of social movements, and focusing on the logics of action.

2.1. Right to the City

Right to the city is a demand that emerged in many cities of the world for the last century as a result of the rapid increase of the urban population and urban growth. Social cleavages and inequalities brought about by the concentration of population in urban spaces resulted in different demands and movements to reclaim the city as a space of equal citizenship. Because the city and the civil society had been threatened by the capitalist interventions and inequalities, entitlements to space and power sharing in decision making about its ownership, allocation and use emerged.

Many theorists, especially Lefebvre and Harvey, contributed to the development of the concept of right to the city. Henri Lefebvre popularized the concept in his book Le Droit à la ville in 1968 as “a cry and a demand. This right slowly meanders through the surprising detours of nostalgia and tourism, the return to the heath of the traditional city, and the call of existent or recently developed centralities” (Lefebvre, 1967, p. 158). Marcuse (2009) suggests that “Lefebvre’s right is both a cry and a demand, a cry out of necessity and a demand for something more” (p. 190). He formulated this distinction as “the demand is of those who are excluded, the cry is of those who are alienated; the demand is for the material necessities of life, the aspiration is for a broader right to what is necessary beyond the material to lead a satisfying life” (Marcuse, 2009, p. 190).

The concept of the right to the city has many functional features. “The paradigm of the right to the city provides the potential for a radical reappraisal of urban policy” (Brown et al., 2008, p. 10). So that the city dwellers would build a better city life both economic and social. In addition to these features, it provides a framework for rights and the responsibilities of inhabitants of the city.

Right to the city is owned by the local settlers and grassroots in many regions and countries of the world such as Latin America and Europe. In addition, it is as a new paradigm also caught international attention for implementation of the New Urban Agenda in 2016 which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Urban debates and policies, that are largely on the national and international agenda of academic debates, have gained importance with the evolution of urbanization.

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development - Habitat III focused mainly on the concept of “right to the city” and recognized a vision of “cities for all” by addressing the major challenges cities have to face. Accordingly, “The Policy Paper unpacks the Right to the City through examining three pillars: Spatially Just Resource Distribution, Political Agency and Socio, Economic and Cultural Diversity” (UN-Habitat III, 2016, p. 2). Habitat meetings aim to create sustainable human settlements in general and to provide technical assistance and financial support for the solution of the problems in the cities. In 2016, Turkey's Habitat III national report also focused on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Turkey-Habitat III, 2016).

“Who owns the city” or “the right to the city” has been a longstanding discussion among urban theorists. Saskia Sassen in her article “Who owns our cities – and why this urban takeover should concern us all” expresses that the ownership of city land has important effects in terms of equality and social justice. Accordingly, public property is increasingly narrowing towards private ownership. She points out “the reduction in public buildings, and an escalation in large, corporate private ownership” (Sassen, 2015). This has various implications for how urban housing provision is managed, and how citizens can access the urban land. She adds “...today, rather than a space for including people from many diverse backgrounds and cultures, our global cities are expelling people and diversity” (Sassen, 2015).

In the early 2000s, local struggles expanded in such a way that urban activism appeared in the form of collective action. Urban change and mobilization leveled up during this period. Groups adopted new strategies and models and protests cycles during their right to the city contention.

As for the question of what the demands and appeals of such a powerful slogan supply for us, the slogan claims “the right to information, the rights to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the center” (Lefebvre, 1967, p. 34). Therefore, the right to the city is an entitlement of people who live in the urban space and shape everyday life, and facilitate their benefit of the cities’ resources.

As to the question of who the legitimate people are to claim the right to the city, for Lefebvre everyday life is a corner stone of the right to the city. Inspired by Lefebvre’s work, Mark Purcell explains that it is because “the right to the city revolves around the production of urban space, it is those who live in the city – who contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space – who can legitimately claim the right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996; Purcel, 2002, p. 102). Accordingly, those who produce everyday life have the right to the city in urban space. It must be added that there are two main rights either right to participate or to appropriation.

For Lefebvre (1967), right to the city is a "demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life" (p. 158). Therefore the right to the city facilitates people to claim right to space, in other words, it means the right to have access to social life. While urbanization brings along a set of social relations, right to the city gives way to reproduce social relations through public spaces.

Harvey (2003) elaborates further on the concept of right to the city by conceiving it as “far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization” (p. 1-2). Then, the concept of right to the city has evolved in a direction that is a far more collective-driven one than just remaking our city life. To be noted in this model, the residents are more active in urban life than in traditional city life. This activity is contingent on the circumstances over urban space. People are not members of city life, but they are contingent actors mobilized repeatedly so they want to be a part of solutions about city-related issues, or they have their claims over it.

The point is that urban residents are shaping the urban space in daily life when they move around the city. The urban realm itself is a political condition for residents through transportation, networks etc. However, another feature of the right to the city is that it is a claim more consciously demanded by people. People must claim their rights of the city by their engagement. Harvey (2008) argues that claiming right to the city "...is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and re-made and to do so in a fundamental and radical way" (p. 1). Urban space is thus an arena where the city dwellers remake the city unceasingly. Civic participants are encouraged to attend the remaking activity in the urban space by having a say related to urban space. Domaradzka (2018), referring to Harvey, examines the concept of right to the city "as the individual liberty to access urban resources (including space, service, and infrastructure) and the ability to exercise a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization" (p. 612).

As the spatial dimension of the city stands also as a public sphere, Habermas, who is one of the current representatives of critical theory, examines public sphere. Habermas handles public sphere as a realm that enables undistorted communication in the sense through which the established media agents are deactivated or bypassed in order to make room for a more transparent communication (Canovan, 1983, p. 105). In other words, there is intersubjectivity by which communication is not arbitrated but straight (Vatikiotis & Yoruk, 2016, p. 9). Manuel Castells is another theorist who analyzed the city from a Marxist approach. By focusing on mobility and globalization, he argues that the metropolitan city establishes the best mobilization facilities for the collective action. People have become more effective in the city through facilities presented by the new communication tools (Castells, 1996, xxxi).

Mobility is a primary dimension of urban life and is also the most important factor in the politicization of the public sphere. Information technologies have also contributed to the functional development of both mobility and mobilization. Public sphere is carried to virtual spaces that make communicative action more efficient in many cases such as in the Gezi Park protests through social media tools. This eases mobilization of participants to any social movements. This can be a large protest or a small group of activists that has come together for any purpose. Therefore, every actor in the city somehow participates in the policy making process. Local authorities and initiatives determine the degree of this participation.

The public space is politized because citizens are not just communicative actors, but they produce an action in everyday life that challenges the power structures that the city mirrors. They mobilize, they move, and they challenge policy-making processes in the urban space by their struggle for power sharing. Thus, urban life is a political life in essence. Urban dwellers are political actors, because as we move around the city for our routine works and education etc., we built networks and interpersonal relations over the city space. That being so, urban is both a realm and space which is produced in everyday life, a "*theatre*" in the words of Mumford:

> The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater. It is in the city, the city as theater, that man's more purposive activities are focused ... The physical organization of the city may ... through the deliberate efforts of art, politics, and education, make the drama more richly significant, as a stage-set, well-designed, intensifies and underlines the gestures of the actors and the action of the play (Mumford, 1973, p. 29).

2.2. Social movements – Contentious Politics

The concept of right to the city was approached from different perspectives by research in social movements and contentious politics. The concept also gained new relevance because of urban paradoxes and complicated factors at play in specific instances of contestation or dissent.

Though social movements are mostly discussed in the context of right to the city, they have different characteristics because they are more organized by their nature, aiming to develop from a systemic reaction to a proactive agenda. This systemic and organized structure is expected to initiate social as well as political change. Their demands are manifested in many areas, including citizenship rights, group struggles and social resistance. The right to the city has also different aspects as portrayed by Domaradzka (2018) in figure 1 which shows groups mobilizing around different demands of the right to the city.

Economic and social rights	Housing rights	Civil and political rights	Environmental rights	Cultural rights	Ownership rights
Different facets of the right to the city mobilization					
Social entrepreneurs Precarious workers Trade unions Unemployed Marginalized poor Community-based organizations Self-managed social centers	Housing activists Tenants' associations Squatters Grassroots housing initiatives	Right to the city federations Local election committees Advocacy groups Estate councils Watchdog initiatives	Environmental groups Ecological organizations Food cooperatives Commoning and sharing initiatives	Neighborhood associations Ethnic and religious groups Alternative cultural spaces Intercultural centers Heritage conservation groups	NIMBY groups House owners Home-owner associations Private investors

Figure 1. Different Aspects of Right to the City and Groups Mobilizing Around Them (Domaradzka, 2018)

In this sense, the right to the city presents a very holistic structure while social movements focus on a specific situation and have a more systemic reaction. Right to the city can manifest itself in different manners. However, the mainstream of literature is focusing on social movements and contentious politics depending on the nature of the movement, its ideology, size, goals and tactics. Studies ever since the Gezi protests have tended to concentrate on the systemic reactive aspect of movement in collective action. For example, Farro and Demirhisar (2014) were unhesitant to label the protests a collective movement. Vatikiotis and Yörük (2016) not only treated Gezi as a movement in the abovementioned sense but also likened it to other contemporary movements. Zihinoglu (2019) preferred to refer to the protests as movement. In this thesis, on the other hand, it is argued that the Gezi protests, though well attended, did not constitute a movement as shall be demonstrated in later stages of the thesis.

Within that frame we can approach Istanbul and its urban scene. Istanbul has been a crucial city with its urban structure in terms of multi-layered characteristics such as historical public spaces in Eminonu, Beyoglu and Beyazıt where social interaction takes place and trade opportunities exist, besides the diverse locations where citizens share their opinions and express themselves. Some studies point out this urban characteristic of the city over public spaces and planning. As Inceoglu and Yurekli (2011) state, "In a metropolis life Istanbul, public squares generally have a multi-layered characteristic, with a multiplicity of phenomena overlapping continuously".

Although Istanbul is culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse, whether this aspect of the city plays a role in terms of right to the city, urban activism or social movements. That is, right to the city in Istanbul is not that much diverse culturally, ethnically and religiously. There are modes of activism for cultural, ethnic and religious rights but they are usually not juxtaposed

with urban activism in Istanbul. Actually, social and political emancipation of formerly marginalized groups have been more visible in the quest for civic rights as also having gone hand in hand with the cultural turn from the 1970s onward and new social movement theory. Turkey and Istanbul in particular, as a reflection of the former, have not been an exception for these trends.

To put it another way, gender, race, ethnicity, youth, sexuality, spirituality, countercultures, environmentalism, animal rights, pacifism, and human rights are new motives behind modes of actions (Buechler, 2013). which Turkey and Istanbul are no exceptions of. Yet there is also uniqueness in the case of Turkey: first, as mentioned above, urban activism is mostly rooted in non-cultural, non-ethnic and non-religious causes. For instance, a neighborhood famous with a historically religious identity would hardly be seen protected and defended by people assuming those religious identity badges. Secondly, the devastating policies and implementations of the neoliberal policies in Turkey in recent years have not united people as much as, say, the so-called Kurdish or Alawi questions have. By that I mean, although the very cities, districts, neighborhoods, streets, and even villages where people live are contiguous with the ruining effects of capitalist investments, urban space in Turkey appears far away to be a subject of new social movements and Istanbul is again no exception to this for now.

As stated above, it is hard to say Istanbul's colorful identity is reflected in urban activism. There is a possibility that Istanbul may become an "unpossessed city" as Inceoglu and Yurekli (2011) mentioned. “Istanbul being an ‘unpossessed’ city and also a city bringing together people of plentiful origins stems back hundreds of years”(p. 214). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (2019), the province with the highest number of immigrants and emigrants is Istanbul in Turkey. “When the emigrants were analyzed by provinces, it was seen that İstanbul had the largest emigrant population with the proportion of 42.5%”. Yurekli and Inceoglu (2011) point out that

> Today, being a citizen of Istanbul is accepted as a super-identity. Even more, it can be suggested that it is not accepted as an identity. Citizens of Istanbul, when asked about the city they are from (they belong to), generally refer to the original locations their families or they emigrated from (p. 214).

Indeed, modern-day Istanbul is such a welcoming city that, sociologically speaking, she does not replace her residents’ provincial background anymore. While Istanbul is economically indispensable for its citizens, the same cannot be said socially and culturally. More concretely,

the challenge faced today is that Istanbul is not embraced as a place where people belong, but as a place where they make a living. Considering the multi-layered spatial characteristics and human capital of Istanbul, it is open to question whether the urbanization experienced in recent years has been on the same ship with these inherent features of the city, namely, urban planning policies. There is a potential in the daily life in urbanity which may be ignored while discussing issues regarding the city by not just policymakers but also by critical eyes looking at the city.

As mentioned in the previous section, urban transformation in Istanbul is discussed on the basis of right to the city. Solmaz (2013) in her doctoral thesis "Urban Transformation and Urban Movements: Struggles for Right to the City in Istanbul" elaborates that "the planning practices carried out or attempted to be realized under the name of "urban transformation" have destroyed the historical, cultural and identity texture of the city in many cases". Accordingly, the lack of interest in residents' needs and rights in urban planning, which in turn resulted in the contention with powerful opponents. Inspiring from the Charles Tilly's explanation on describing social movements, Solmaz states that reactions against the urban transformations examined in the local and urban scale remain at the campaign and repertoire level (p. 16).

Referring to the social movement literature when evaluating urban activism in Istanbul will lead to an incomplete evaluation because urban struggles such as neighborhood resistances, ecological struggles and protests observed in Istanbul have not eventually turned into social movement. Hereby, Tilly and Tarrow (2015) define movement as "a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities. But most forms of contentious politics are not social movements" (p. 11).

Social movements combine four aspects which accordingly combine four features (1) sustained campaigns of claims making, (2) an array of public performance such as demonstrations, (3) repeated displays of worthiness unity, numbers, and commitment, and (4) organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities which sustaining these undertakings (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, p. 11).

Although the city has the potential to bring plurality and diversity together, it has become a center of conflicts in some cases due to the lack of planning in either urban transformation projects or the mega projects. These projects fetch more and more investment and foreign population to the city and in turn suppressed civil society and the civility is affected. I will be

referring to these issues in detail in the following chapters, but I want to point out that as a metropolis, Istanbul is the carrier of both alliances and contentions in many fields. In this study, I will approach urban activism and struggles around the claims of the right to the city, ongoing contentions in urban space, but most importantly, the logic of action as an overlooked issue.

Istanbul has suffered from the paradox between the implications of neoliberal urbanism and rights of citizens over urban spaces. The city has started to be under pressure by the capitalist urban interventions, particularly for the last two decades. Capitalist urbanization has transformed the urban environment for the sake of investors and capital owners.

With the rising tide of globalization, foreign investment, restructuring and marketing of urban spaces and their impact on social texture, the quality of public services, and the environmental cost have been subject to heated discussion. Castells (1979) approaches cities as spaces for "collective consumption" (p. 94). For him, the state is the main apparatus that sustains collective consumption services and therefore it is the main actor of fragmentation in urban space. Many theorists argue that urban social movements exist to seek answers to existing urban questions and generate social change. The right to the city has arisen from such a problem regarding the urban environment. However, it is questionable whether the demand for right to the city has manifested itself as a social movement.

These conflicting interests in urban space feed the contention. According to Wirth (1938) some features are contingent on the city such as density, size and diversity. As Wirth states "There are number of sociological propositions concerning the relationship between numbers of population, density of settlement, heterogeneity of inhabitants and group life, which can be formulated on the basis of observation and research" (p. 10). Variety of people and groups bring about variety of interests, because "…the greater number of individuals participating in a process of interaction, the greater is the potential differentiation between them" (Wirth, pp. 10-11). This interaction may end up with a contentious environment when many interests clash. Contentious politics is defined by Tarrow and Tilly (2015) as "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on others' interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims or third parties" (p. 7). Accordingly, social processes of contention, collective action and politics are the main factors of contentious politics.

The most central process in contentious politics is described as "mobilization" (Tarrow & Tilly, 2015, p. 119). Recent mobilizations and protests all over the world have also shown that urban is a unique realm of power for mobilizations. Urban mobilizations concentrated mainly on the central areas in the city where occupying space can achieve both halting the speed of mobility and attracting media attention.

We have witnessed many examples of urban activism sprouted in the squares around the world, from revolutionary struggles to protests such as Arab Spring, protests in Spain and Occupy Wall Street. These instances show us the importance of the urban struggle and highlight the agency of people who are mobilizing around the city produce unceasing action.

As Tarrow (1994) argues, *"*(…) when contention spreads across an entire society, as it sometimes does, we see a cycle of contention; when such a cycle is organized around oppose or multiple sovereignties, the outcome is a revolution" (p. 10). Therefore, in order for the demand for the right to the city to be transformed into a social movement, the contention should have spread to the whole society rather than being sustained in a certain social network. For this reason, I think that evaluating the examples of urban activism organized against urban policies in Istanbul in the last decades only within the framework of social movements will give us an incomplete understanding.

Urban is an important space to understand sociopolitical interactions. Some views point out that cities are not just areas where the contention proceed but they also are unique for their constitutive mechanisms of social movements. In the opinion of some, cities breed contention by nature and they form an essential element of social movements where the latter express themselves, but cities have been seen solely a backdrop, on which social movement activity unfolds (Uitermark et al., 2012, p. 2546).

Social movement can be defined as a crowd or company of people campaigning toward a shared objective particularly organized to accomplish or prevent a change in society. There are some characteristics that differentiate social movements from other types of collective behavior such as organized structure and tendency to reorganize in line with the society's goals. Social movements might be considered organized yet informal social entities becoming involved in extra-institutional conflict bound for a goal, which can be directed at a specific and narrow policy or cultural change (Christiansen, 2009, p. 2).

Appropriately, collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity, and sustained interaction are empirically embedded in social movements ((Tarrow, 1994, p. 4). Most studies have focused on the movement-building process, referring to the role of social movement organizations and the demands and grievances of participants. Urban struggles in literature evaluated as social movements in some studies occurred in public spaces and neighborhoods in Istanbul. These studies have mainly focused on the movement type of reactions to the urban question. However, there is a different logic of action which I want to point out apart from urban activism that is highly effective on the urban. It is because the existing conditions show that there are many different types of activism over urban space and understanding these actions exactly is possible through pointing out different logics of action.

Looking at the urban activism in the last two decades in Istanbul, there has been a blend of old and new social movements. Bayat (2009) looks in a brand-new way to activism which proposes that ordinary people or non-collective actors can change their society not simply by attending a protest cycle or revolutionary movement but by resorting non-movements that is the collective endeavors of millions of noncollective actors (p. 20).

2.3. Logic of Action

This part of the theoretical work has some propositions that will draw attention to the logic of action. Although the right to the city and social movements literature is important in urban activism, there is a point that is missed, which is the shifting logic of action. While examining the cases of urban activism, we will see that the right to the city is not the reference point of urban activism in Istanbul in events such as Gezi Park protests and Istanbul Airport protests. My second proposition is that the social movements literature cannot explain such examples because events such as Gezi Park did not turn into a social movement, but were portrayed as transformed through media.

Logic of action will be discussed in two parts: modes of participation and logic of action.

2.3.1. *Modes of Participation*

The concept of participation implies citizens are involved in the decision-making process or affecting it by formal or informal means. Citizens may choose to participate in formal events like voting, or by membership in a political party, or becoming involved in a non-governmental

organization, as well as informal participation in strikes, protests or campaigns. Particularly, youth are more inclined to participate in informal processes than in formal political and electoral ones (Ferreyra et al., 2020). Recent studies predicate that people are in some cases more inclined to participate in informal processes. The waves of protest and anti-government demonstrations in the early 21st century can be seen as part of this type of participatory processes.

Modes of participation have also transformed in the transition to the digital age. Castells (1996) points out that people have adopted new methods of communicating in the digital age that transcend boundaries, hence the network society is global (p. 4). Younger generations are more inclined to communicate through new media tools and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. In some countries, they are the available realm of interaction and expression when public space is highly secularized. The change in the forms of information flows has had several effects in the networked society. The ways of participation and attending for people have diversified and the spread of information has accelerated. Participation habits and the degree of effectiveness is questioned when compared with the dominant formal participation.

By extension, there is another problem that we must also address, namely the issue of identity. It appears to be a highly relevant issue while dealing with the logic of action in urban activism. It has been controversial among anthropologists and social scientists whether participation is a matter of identity or a matter of interaction. The concept of participation is more than just a socio-political matter. It can be more deeply explained as "the ambivalent encounter between the singular and the plural in the formation of the person in the world" (Pina-Cabral, 2017, p. 2). Hence, our individual nature encounters our social nature in different cases. If we are to agree with Pina-Cabral's explanation, in order to understand participation, it is necessary to focus initially on the individuality of the participant.

Pina-Cabral (2017) approaches the participation as a source of theoretical perplexity, because anthropologists explain "we" as a categorical matter—a matter of identity. However, he points out there is another aspect of "we" which as concerning the presence and action of live persons in dynamic interaction with the world and each other (Pina-Cabral, p. 2). This categorization is the main source of that perplexity. Based on Pina-Castal's argument, it is necessary to focus on the individuality of the participant.

If we go through the logic of collective action in social movements and contentious politics, mainstream literature mostly approaches participation through the separation between individual and collective types of participation. However, there are some other approaches focusing on different modes of participation. Differentiating between "the individual and the dividual" is one of the most crucial issues in regards to modes of participation. This "recognition", which goes beyond the logic of collective action as mobilizing for a goal or influencing a decision, is important for understanding social life and the conflict within it (Ott, 2018, abstract). More importantly it serves to make sense of the logic of action in social and virtual networks where this conflict occurs.

Is participation a matter of interaction more than a matter of identity? It could be useful here to engage in a brief sociopsychological discussion. As Ott (2018) states "During the first year of their lives, in acting and being acted upon together in human company, persons become 'we' at the same time as they become 'I', which means that persons will ever be both 'I' and 'we' ambivalently" (p. 2). Thus, personhood is as an achievement acquired in social life through participation, "being part" hence by the interaction. People are able to adapt to different situations as being "I" or as being "we" because there is a dynamic relationship that people establish both with themselves and with the world, and this is the 'inter-action'.

Individuality is a referenced aspect to explain the relationship between participants. Yet the collective action itself takes different roots and affiliations (ideological, religious, professional, associational ethnic, etc.). With the transformation in the communication technology and digital networks, the 'individual' has been redefined. In recent years, there has been some references in the literature that individualism has lost its old popularity. Inspired from the distinction of modes of personhood by Marilyn Strathern, Pina-Cabral (2017) points out there are two principal families of use related to the participation that are individual tradition and the dividual tradition (p. 4).

When all this came out, political participation became more remarkable. Especially in the early 21st century, the wave of protests spread to many countries around the world in many examples such as Arab Spring, indigenous protests in Spain or the Occupy movement, Gezi Park protests that required an in-depth study of political participation from both social and political perspective. The basis of these attempts is the individual and the participation, but these

individuals and participations are unusual because individuals exist not as themselves, but by their dividual characters therefore the nature of participation is variable.

This division is a highly debated issue both in the anthropology and the social sciences to make sense of participation processes. To clarify, the rapid changes in communication and interaction have caused the need to explain the individual's interaction area and the logic of collective action, especially in the virtual spaces. In order to explain these processes and changes it is necessary to understand the difference of dividual tradition from individual tradition. As Ott (2018) states "The dividual version does not assume the indivisibility of each participant and rather stresses the constitution of participation, focusing on the more transcendent or mystical aspects of the relations that participation describes" (p. 5). Hence, dividual tradition has a more complex nature.

Ott (2018) argues that "because of our bio(techno)logical entanglements with non-human others, billions of microorganisms and our multiple (in)voluntary participations in socio(techno)logical processes, we have to conceive of ourselves no longer as individuals, but as dividuations (p. abstract). Multiple (in)voluntary participations in online networks have several aspects in the logic of collective action. Fragmented identities or "dividualized us" are visible in social media thorough new slogans and discourses in order to spread ideological targets besides campaigning protests in the name of democracy, freedoms and improvement of living conditions.

There is another notion that explains the action which is the logic of connective action. Political protests in the digital age are referred in recent studies of action. Social media has become an indispensable part of the collective action in Turkey. In these platforms called social networks, our dividual activity takes place through our sharings. As Bennett and Segerberg (2012) state, "The linchpin of connective action is the formative element of "sharing": the personalization that leads actions and content to be distributed widely across social networks" (p. 740).

González-Bailón and Wang (2016) approach to the social movements and political processes by adopting the analytical language of networks in order to understand the networks of communication and their interactions with each other in contentious politics. They point out that online networks have also mediated the organization of political protests such as Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in May of 2013 and the protests in Hong Kong in 2014 (p. 103). These networks provide an understanding of the logic of connective action. That beingso there is a

link between the logic of collective action and connective action that contribute to the ongoing debates of participation and provides a common ground for comparative research.

Digital networks and new modes of political participation are proof that we have entered a new era. Returning to the dividual tradition to understand these approaches surrounding the logic of action, all kinds of data are in circulation on social networks, from a mouse click to an unsent message (Ott, 2018, p. 3). This raises the question of who the participants or actors are in social networks; whether they are individuals or virtual shadows. Thus, participation poses a multidirectional character in digital networks and social media. Yet the spatial dimension of urban activism remains essential and decisive.

Going back to the issue of dividuality, Williams (2005) defined the "dividual" as "physically embodied human subject that is endlessly divisible and reducible to data representations via the modern technologies of control, like computer-based systems" (p. 104). Our dividual identity, on the other hand, serves the capitalist accumulation with the data obtained from us. "It is the logic of capitalist accumulation that breaks down life into measures of information, and populations into databases"(Bogard, 2017). As the dividual participation is a newly-recognized issue, the mainstream literature may not be enough to explain modern uprisings. However, there are many attempts expounding the above-mentioned digital networks. The dividual character in participation weakens social connections while improving connections with virtual users.

Perhaps it would be to the point to discuss urban protests in Turkey in light of such a proposed theory. In other words, how much or to what extent was urban activism individual or dividual in recent cases? Social movements and activism that have taken place in many countries in the last decades have been organized more commonly through digital networks and the sharing of dividual participants.

In addition, for some researchers "the relevant theoretical question is not how digital technologies are changing the logic of collective action, but whether and how they are changing the structure of communication networks" (González-Bailón & Wang, 2016, p. 102). It must be considered that these networks are determined most notably by the political context. For Anduiza et al. (2012) "...engagement with digital environments influences users' political orientations and that contextual features play a significant role in shaping digital politics".

In this study, modes of participation, the logic of collective action besides the logic of connective action, are explored in order to examine the dynamics of collective action. Studies in the literature on collective action will contribute to our approach to the logic of action from a broader perspective.

What makes us participate in a collective action is a compelling question in terms of our dividual characteristics. What is more compelling is to ask probably the efficiency and possibility of collective actions such as initiating a movement or protesting in streets having an ideological background. As I pointed out in the previous section, dividual characteristics of individuals are more prominent in such activisms. I want to address the main problem in such huge protests and movements, that is, dividual actors are very fragmented and their demands are diverse driven by economic, social or ecological factors. Bayat (2009) comes up with the concept of *non-movement* in which actors directly practice what they claim as individuals, despite government sanctions towards a single goal (p. 19). Our dividual character disappears in daily life and the action is very convenient to make a change. When the fragmented identities of dividual characters disappear, action takes place on the stage.

Politicization of urban "everyday life" should be cited here as a contribution to the discussion. As a political action, the urban everyday practices, in addition to getting increasingly more visible, are considered to be collective, organized and strategic practices that challenge state and market (Beveridge & Koch, 2018, p. 5). And accordingly, the more the urban everyday gets politicized, the less state becomes (or should become) noticeable as it is outdone by micropolitical action, namely by the realm of civic engagement (Beveridge & Koch, p. 1). Taking all these into consideration, it comes as no surprise citizen participation is cited as the most prominent area of concern in the relevant literature.

2.3.2. Logic of Action

In this part of the study, I will discuss different types of urban activism and examine different logics of action in Istanbul from 2013 to 2020. There is a particular problem that most urban issues and activism with reference to the right to the city and social movements. However, it is also necessary to refer to the changing logic of action in urban space in order to understand the

nature of urban activisms. In this study, I want to approach urban activism within the framework of the logic of action to provide us a broader understanding.

Etienne and Schnyder (2014) define the logic of action as "the set of goals or motivations that influence the way in which actors organize their preferences" (p. 367). In Istanbul though, these motivations have translated in to the different logics of action in many occasions, such as to structural affairs like economy, labor, unions and workers rights. In other words, it is not mainly about the right to the city as it is conceived because the logic of action depends on the more specialized discourses such as rights of the workers, environmental discussions, investments and the collapse of the economy.

Besides that, another problem that must be addressed is that the mainstream literature has mainly focused on the systemic reactions such as movement type of action in regard to social movements and contentious politics. However, this study aims to approach activism from a different angle that is the logic of non-movement because some protests did not turn into a movement such as Gezi Park protests. The main question of this thesis is how the logic of action has changed from 2013 to 2020. I intend to show the timeline for the changing logic of action as indicated in figure 2.

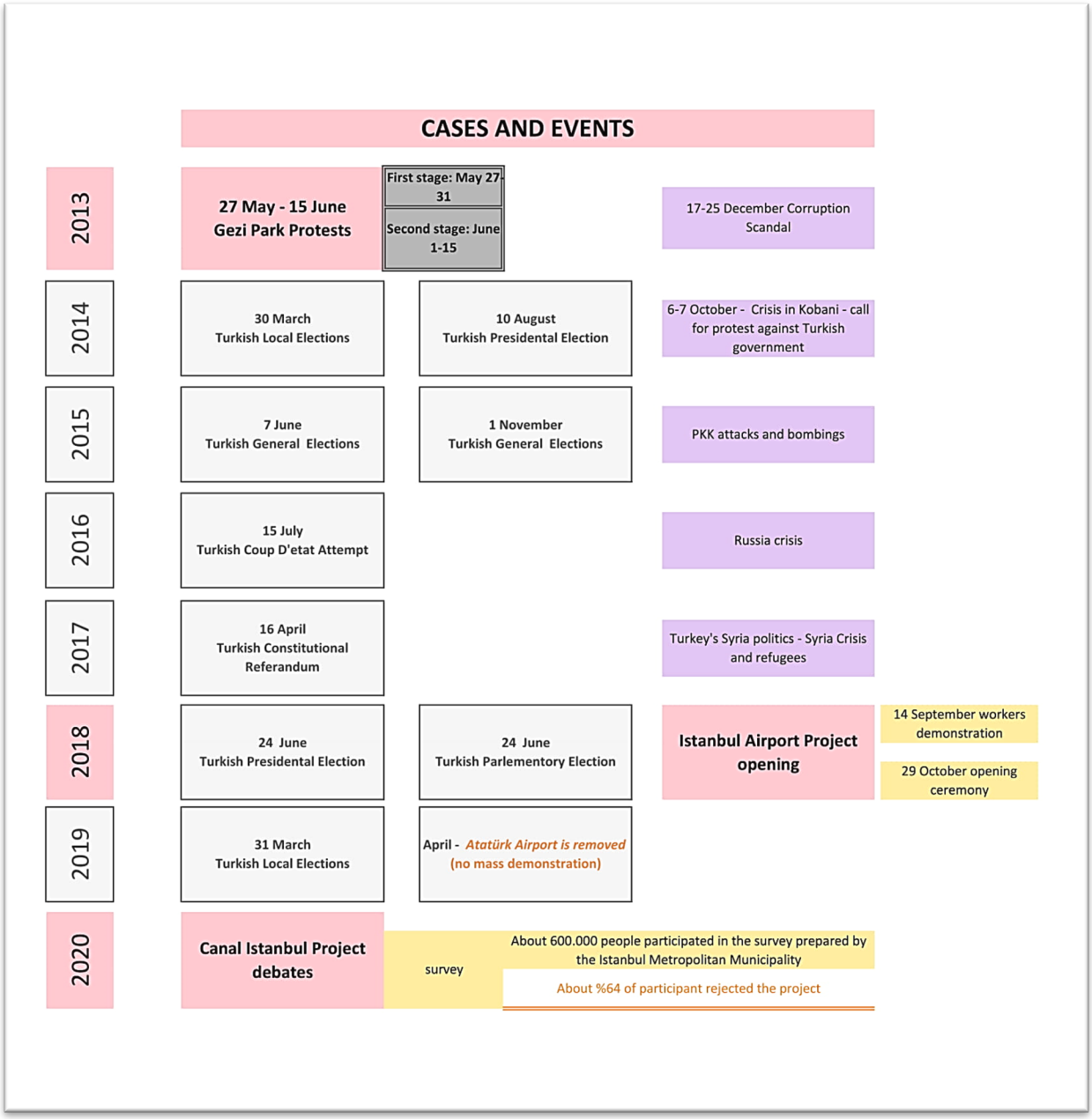


Figure 2. The Timeline of Cases and Events Between 2013-2020

CHAPTER III

URBAN ISTANBUL

Before examining urban activism and urbanity, this thesis will focus on the issue of urban socio-politics being an important realm of power in terms of space and politics. It is a realm that socio-politics is expected to lead away from its mostly cyclical and the relational character. It is the fact that the socio-political is rarely looking at urban politics as it may provide a limited perspective for the sociopolitical aspects of urbanity.

Urban is everyday life as a time zone and as a space of exercise of hegemony. This feature attributed to urban makes it crucial. In this sense, the urban also is of great importance to urban designers, policy-makers, intellectuals and scholars of urban. Defining as an active, constantly changing and rapidly transforming space sometimes challenges imaginations in our minds about space and time. Given this, urban is important but what is also important is to bring the urban into the socio-political analysis.

Urban activism has become ever more common since the 2010s. This study aims to analyze urban activisms under the title of right to the city by referring to the urban spatial dynamics and urban policies in terms of their effect on social structuring. The scope of research will limit my discussion within the national urban politics to better understand the national characteristic of urban paradigm in the city of Istanbul. I chose Istanbul because it is the city where urban mobility and change is most evident and the city that has attracted the most attention in urban activism for the last decades.

3.1. Understanding Urban

The construction of urban space and production of daily life, and then the shape and phases of urban activism, which is the main subject of the study, is going to be discussed from this point onward. It will be emphasized that the residents of the city are the producers of the urban space and their participation processes in urban activism is to be examined in the action that takes place in the city.

It can be stated that there are definitions related to the urban as much as the number of academic disciplines engaged with the city. Concept of the urban is highly debated on the account of its relatively ambiguous definitions. For this reason, it is very difficult to define the urban by restricting it into certain patterns. Iossifova et al.(2017) point out, "It is clear that the urban, so pervasively used as a unique analytical category, remains imprecisely defined. While it is often used as a descriptive type—neither explanatory nor predictive—it is almost always based on arbitrary criteria (p. 7).

A definition according to which a city was a geographical area where it was categorized based on social structure, namely rural and urban areas, has been very popular. Nowadays, a city is also defined based on growth, development and spreading factors that can contain gentrified areas and, at the same time, it can accommodate a lifestyle that symbolizes crooked structures or underdevelopment.

Scott and Storper (2015) suggest, *"*(…) viable urban theory should enable us to distinguish between dynamics of social life that are intrinsically urban from those that are more properly seen as lying outside the strict sphere of the urban" (p. 12). Viable urban theory accordingly allows us to evaluate urban dynamics along with their social dimensions.

Therefore, our use of rural and urban separation for cities may limit us to better understand the urbanity because urban is not just a settlement but rather it is a constantly renewed and transformed space. Above that urban is also an action that is produced in the everyday life. Urban can therefore be defined not only a sense of space, but also a time zone and a place of hegemony in everyday life.

Understanding the urban as a political area where the action takes place provides a comprehensive perspective because socio-economic relations and the political relations should be taken into consideration together. In this study, it is aimed to conduct a sociopolitical analysis by examining the right to the city and urban activism examples through the question of who owns the city.

The increase in interventions in the city caused the phenomenon called urban paradox to remain alive. At this point, the ecological and sociological perspective is also neglected.

The concept of the urban has been reshaped over time through the impact of the changing economic conditions over interpersonal relations in the society. With globalization, the

homogeneous distribution of production has been replaced by a more heterogeneous one, which is under the umbrella of capitalist mode of production around major cities. For this reason, social condition has been reshaped by this transformation. Economic conditions thus also affected the social condition of citizens in the cities. As Boudreau (2017) states, "...With urbanization interpersonal relations have been transformed from "organic" community-based relations to "individualized" interest-based capitalist relations".

The notion of human interaction now helps us to understand that out of capitalism, a public authority that is arising from this interaction prevails in urban life. As Magnusson (2012) states that although some scholars, such as Lefebvre and Harvey, gave consideration to the urban through the capitalist order in city, for Hayek, "order of things will be determined by human interaction and not simply by the action of those who claim ultimate authority".

Boudreau (2017) examines that "Urban life is characterized by the fact that everyday people make it happen". The authority in the city cannot be reduced to the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, it is possible to regard the city as a political area. Hence, urban is a political condition and action is a crucial part of the urbanity. Urbanism today does not refer to settlements alone but rather it is an action.

Urban space is a very dynamic realm in terms of production of daily life and space. It is neither just a spatial area nor a time period but rather an area where socio-economic and political relations are determined. Boudreau (2017), inspired by Lefebvre, emphasizes that urban is not a geographical condition, but a specific type of socio-economic and political relations. Urban life refers to a political realm where the action takes place as well as being a contentious place as a result of this dynamic relationship within the accelerated time and space. Accordingly,

> The urban is not the city – it is more than just a type of settlement characterized by concentric centrality and density; nor is it an enclosed zone defined by clear boundaries. The urban is rather a specific mode of relation to space, time and affect, marked by mobility, intense interdependence, discontinued spaces that carry emotional significance, and multiple temporalities (Boudreau, 2017, p. xx).

The development of new information technologies is a challenge for urban life. This is one of the important agents that are effective in making the public space politicized. One of the reasons why the public sphere is out of the traditional definitions today is that new information technologies equip urban life. Examples of public space definition that enable communicative

action of Habermas are confirmed by the emergence of social media as a public space. The protests that started in Tunisia and spread to other countries and became the symbol of urban resistance were evaluated by many scholars as a result of this communicative action. Thus, it can be said that the imagination of a virtual public space, which enables communicative action, has emerged. As Chandler (2017) puts, "...the implementation of information technology into the built environment is raising questions about the role of technologies in public space and civic life".

Public and private are almost not conceived separately nowadays and the relationship between them is more blurred in urban space as the urban space is distinguished as being a realm of politics not only as the public sphere of Habermas. Individuals can reach the political space to demand their rights to the city or even unexpectedly to the state without standing on any physical space, particularly through virtual communication tools. Therefore, the public space exceeds its borders as communication for citizens through virtual tools and social media. Many scholars have defined the public sphere as a field that enables communicative action in the social environment through institutions and organizations. For Habermas, the public sphere undergoes a structural transformation under the influence of capitalism and the public sphere refers to communicative action (Chandler, 2017). Similarly, as Chandler states Hannah Arendt also addressed, in her book *The Human Condition*, the private and public realm distinction in Greek society. She believes that the public realm is the key area where the action occurs because while the private sphere arises from human needs, the public sphere is the place where the individual and his or her thoughts become important (Chandler, 2017).

Sennett (1992) approaches collapse of the public sphere as the neoliberal order has created new kinds of relationships. However, an ordered community cannot proceed as individual development is shaped through the existence of disorder in a community. He argues that life is very complex so that it necessitates a disordered community. According to Sennett, public sphere is not a space but is a process (Sennett, 1992, p. 17).

Network society has changed also the use of the public space as well as mediated communication (Vatikiotis & Yoruk, 2016, p. 9). Public space is not the physical space anymore rather a virtual space by new technology and mediated communication tools.

The public space has lost this old reputation in the 20th century. Instead, scholars are concentrated on life in cities where all these relationships are shaped, that is, on urbanity.

Urbanity, moreover, is a socio-spatial structure that includes the political field. It covers all kinds of structural planning processes and social space, so it is a very political area in its nature. While spatial arrangements affect daily life, urban space has become a field of hegemony. It is as a realm of politics and the citizens as an urban catalyst for creating the city.

It can be said that there is a bilateral relationship here. Urban space, as a realm of politics, transforms constantly through urban policies. Secondly, urban space transforms also as a social process. This change takes place by public agents in everyday life. As Boudreau (2017) states, everyday action generated by people actually make urban life happen, by which new forms of authority are also generated as a result of which informalization of state takes place as ultimate actor is not state anymore. In other words, the urban space where the civic action takes place is highly flexible and it is regulated by the movement of people.

The concept of citizenship was conceived more as a status to determine the legal rights and responsibilities of people through the state relations in the past. As a reflection of this relationship, the definitions regarding public sphere in Turkey was also mostly defined by sharp boundaries between the private and the public. Accordingly, the democratic sphere became inevitably a space where the interests of the two conflicted.

However, the urban space as a realm of politics is beyond the public sphere of Habermas. Rapid population growth and socio-spatial inequalities in urban life has instigated claims for the right to the city even more. The right to the city in Istanbul has progressed in parallel with neoliberal interventions. In other words, urban activism of Istanbulites shows a parallelism with the projects implemented within the framework of urban transformation that has been encouraged by municipality and zoning law amendments and accelerates contentious politics even more in a city like Istanbul where the effects of current urban policies and cyclical structure are felt enough.

This thesis however does not intend to explain urban activism by placing it within the narrow framework of the cyclical political structure but rather within the extent to which urban activism is related.

The idea behind the right to the city is to confront interventions, be it neoliberal or political, over the urban space and many urban sociologists perceived the Gezi Park protests in 2013 as a part of this right to the city against the neoliberal urban policies. Protests in Taksim Square

were considered as the most influential action ever for claiming rights of the citizens and as an awakening for civic action in the city of Istanbul. In the following part of the chapter, citizenship and rights with regard to civil society will be examined further. The first concern of the thesis is whether city residents having right to the city or asked in another way "who owns the city of Istanbul" or more specifically urban space in Istanbul. In conjunction with this, the second concern is the question whether rights of the citizens have been taken into account before commissioning as well as during construction of mega projects. As also being a case study, Taksim Gezi Park pedestrianization project (2013), Istanbul Airport Project (2016), and Canal Istanbul Project (2020) will be looked into and compared to each other with regards to logic of action.

Urban space has become essential to civic life as well as socio-political and economic conditions. Urban policies, especially with the waves of neoliberalism from the 1970s onward, have come to be implemented in line with the economic growth targets and investments. Urban now would mean beyond what it used to mean in terms of place of citizens within it. Capital owners and investors have increasingly had more influence over the use, disposition and formation of urban space at the expense of the citizens as a result of which urban space does tend to form more for the sake of the priorities of stakeholders, especially the ones pumping capital in the city. This has transformed the notion of the citizenship because the right of citizenship has become a right that can be acquired, for instance, in return for a certain amount of investment.

In this respect, Istanbul is of no exception since the 1980s, expectedly as it has always been the locomotive city for the nation's economy. The 1980 military coup pushed the implementation of neoliberal policies in the country for the city's integration with the capitalist world. Istanbul was introduced with new comers which led to changes in economic, social and spatial fabric in the city. The notion of civility in return has changed inversely, which already had as a result of intense domestic migration from the rural to Istanbul as of 1950s. One of the results of this was varying practices in urban space, such as gated communities and gentrification of some neighborhoods.

Transformation of urban space starts from the city, within which the urban policies shape the urban space and citizens. With the transformation of the citizenship, civility is affected in urban

life. What follows is reaction and it reverses to claiming right to the city. However, the civic action challenges the urban policies shaped by the state and the capital in Istanbul.

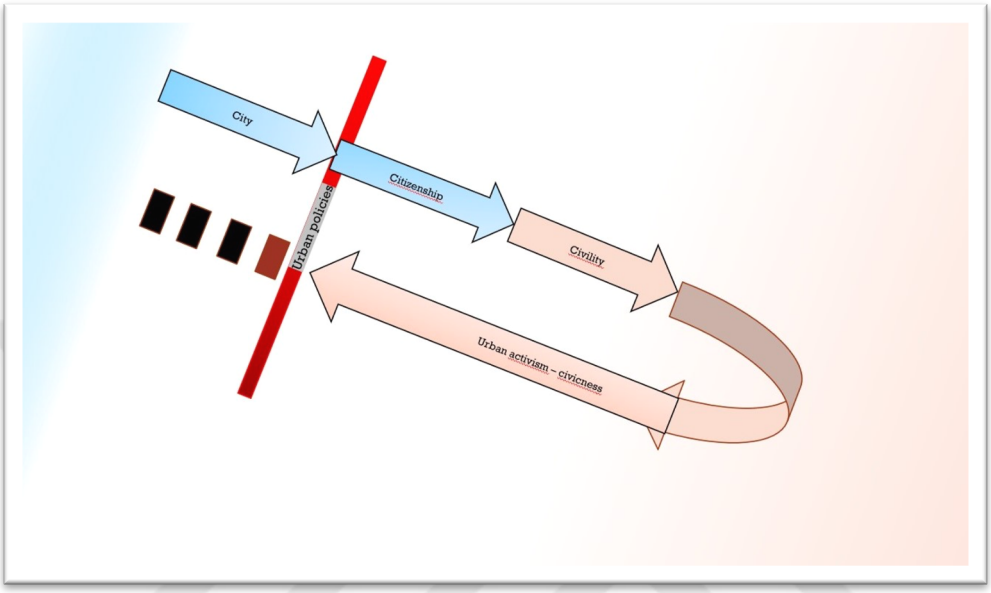


Figure 3. The Impact of Urban Policies on the Civic Life (Civility)

According to Habermas, public space is an area where private people assemble for common good (Lennox & Lennox, 1974, pp. 49-55). Above the public sphere that enables communicative action, civil sphere has gained importance recently as a field where citizens not only express their opinions as civic actors but also contribute to policy making. Civic sphere then touches a more extensive realm where the political action may occur.

Civic action has been on the rise, especially in the 2010s, from the right to the city demands to the revolutionary movements in the world. From the Middle East to Europe, Latin America and to China, civic action has triggered the masses. Violent or not, what we have witnessed lately, leaderless and self-organizing civic action which gained power through digital networks, require new explanations and conceptualizations in literature, particularly in urban sociology.

In addition, it was observed that states with formal structure were replaced by world cities that attracted the attention of global capital. Conventional theories of public sphere prove insufficient to explain urban social movements mobilized in cyberspace. With globalization,

cities came to the forefront of policy-making processes. The residents of the city were either influenced by these policies (urban condition) or they have attended policy making processes as civic actors by trying to claim their rights over urban space instead of remaining figurant.

Systems of governance have been conditioned by the transnational dynamics because mega cities have become the carriers of transnational dynamics. As Sassen (2000) argues city has come to challenge state polity (p. 143). Urban space meanwhile allowed citizens to stand out as political actors and claim rights over the city.

3.2. Urbanization in Turkey

Global cities have become where capital, information, goods and services flow as physical boundaries become less visible. In this respect, the city is an intermediary for economic and commercial development and a showcase to attract global capital for states. This phenomenon brings with it new challenges and dimensions in relation to urbanization both in real life and in literature.

According to a UN report, by 2050, 68 percent of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas (Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2019). According to UN urbanization estimates, the share of the total population living in urban areas in Turkey by 2050, are as follows;

Table 1: Share of the Population Living in Urban Areas (Ritchie & Roser, 2018)

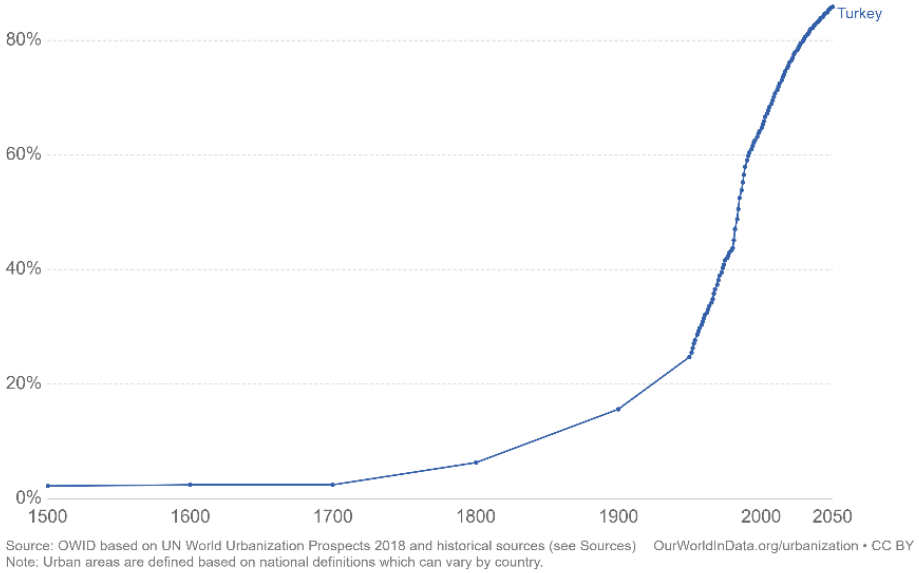


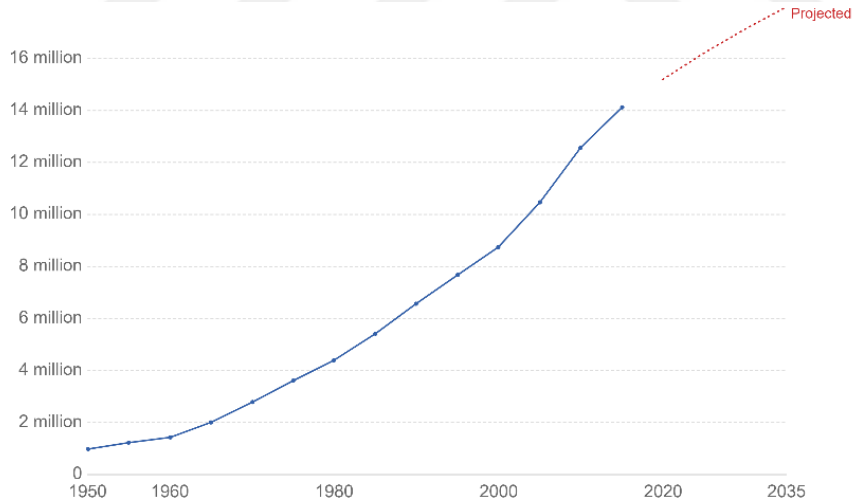
Table 1 shows that rate of those living in urban areas in Turkey are expected to be 85,951 percent in 2050 (Ritchie & Roser, 2018). This rapid growth in urban areas requires new evaluations related to urbanization. As Ritchie and Roser state, "Across all countries urban shares are projected to increase in the coming decades, although at varied rates. By 2050, it's projected that 68 percent of the world's population will live in urban areas.

Turkey's population increased by 1,151,115 people, compared to the previous year, and reached 83,154,997 people as of 31 December 2019 (TÜİK, 2019).

Table 2. Annual Population Growth Rate, Between 2007-2019 (TÜİK, 2019)

According to the results of Address Based Population Registration System, foreign population residing in Turkey increased by 320,146 people and reached to 1,531,180 people (TÜİK, 2019). [1]

Table 3. City Population of Istanbul (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2018)



According to Table 3, there is a sharp increase in the population of Istanbul particularly after 2000s (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2018). It shows that the population of Istanbul, which is expected to be 25.41 million in 2035, has experienced a rapid increase by the 2000s.

[1] Foreign population covers individuals who are holding a valid residence/work permit at the reference day and individuals who have a valid address declaration at the reference day while holding an identity document equivalent to residence permit such as international protection identity document and the individuals who have already renounced his/her Turkish Republic citizenship and who have a valid address declaration at the reference day. In addition to Syrians under temporary protection, foreigners holding visas or residence permits shorter than 3 months with the purpose of training, tourism, scientific research, etc. are not covered.

UN World Urbanization Prospects (2018) projections show that city population in Istanbul is expected to reach 21.78 million people in 2020.

Table 4. The First 5 Provinces with the Highest Population by Sex, 2019 (TÜİK, 2019)

				Proportion in the total population (%)		
Provinces	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
İstanbul	**15 519 267**	7 790 256	7 729 011	**18.66**	18.67	18.65
Ankara	**5 639 076**	2 793 850	2 845 226	**6.78**	6.70	6.87
İzmir	**4 367 251**	2 174 319	2 192 932	**5.25**	5.21	5.29
Bursa	**3 056 120**	1 530 956	1 525 164	**3.68**	3.67	3.68
Antalya	**2 511 700**	1 265 171	1 246 529	**3.02**	3.03	3.01

The population residing in Istanbul increased by 451,543 people compared to the previous year and reached 15,519,267 people. Istanbul has 18.66% of Turkey's population. Proportion of population residing in province and district centers increased to 92.8% in 2019 from 92.3% in 2018. Besides, proportion of population living in towns and villages decreased to 7.2% from 7.7% (TÜİK, 2019).

Figure 4 below shows the GPCI (Global Power City Index) 2019 Comprehensive ranking. Looking at the comprehensive ranking of the Istanbul in global scale, Istanbul is ranked 37th based on the variables of economy, research and development, cultural interaction, livability, environment and accessibility. According to GPCI (2019) function-specific ranking, Istanbul is in the top 20 cities based on variables of cultural interaction and accessibility.

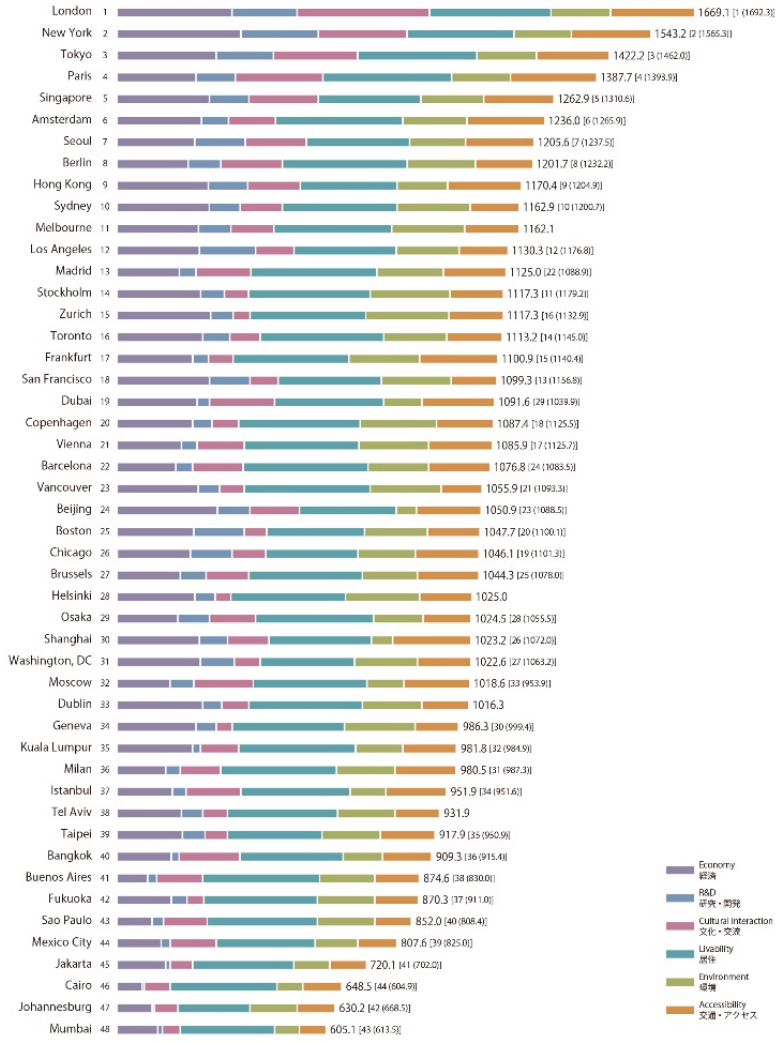


Figure 4. Global Power City Index 2020 (Institute for Urban Strategies-The Mori Memorial Foundation, 2020)

	Economy 経済		R&D 研究・開発		Cultural Interaction 文化・交流		Livability 居住		Environment 環境		Accessibility 交通・アクセス	
1	New York	358.5	New York	224.5	London	382.7	Paris	371.8	Zurich	242.5	Paris	247.1
2	London	331.4	London	187.8	New York	254.1	Amsterdam	365.5	Stockholm	232.4	London	239.1
3	Beijing	288.4	Tokyo	166.2	Paris	252.2	Madrid	364.4	Copenhagen	222.8	New York	226.6
4	Tokyo	286.6	Los Angeles	163.1	Tokyo	241.9	Vancouver	364.3	Helsinki	218.9	Shanghai	225.7
5	Zurich	269.4	Seoul	146.5	Singapore	204.3	Berlin	361.8	Sydney	216.0	Frankfurt	223.7
6	Singapore	266.4	Boston	145.7	Dubai	188.2	Barcelona	361.4	Melbourne	215.5	Amsterdam	223.6
7	San Francisco	266.0	Chicago	121.2	Berlin	177.7	Toronto	358.4	Geneva	210.0	Hong Kong	212.9
8	Sydney	264.8	San Francisco	117.3	Bangkok	173.8	Copenhagen	352.8	Frankfurt	207.5	Tokyo	208.0
9	Hong Kong	262.7	Paris	114.5	Seoul	173.4	London	351.8	San Francisco	206.2	Dubai	207.9
10	Toronto	248.3	Hong Kong	113.4	Moscow	170.7	Stockholm	351.2	Vancouver	206.1	Singapore	199.7
11	Dublin	246.3	Singapore	112.0	Istanbul	159.8	Tokyo	343.3	Vienna	204.9	Seoul	199.1
12	Amsterdam	244.5	Washington, DC	98.3	Madrid	159.0	Melbourne	340.8	Madrid	196.1	Moscow	185.8
13	Stockholm	241.6	Beijing	96.1	Hong Kong	153.4	Osaka	340.3	Berlin	195.2	Vienna	183.5
14	Washington, DC	241.0	Melbourne	95.3	Barcelona	148.1	Buenos Aires	338.7	Amsterdam	187.8	Beijing	182.2
15	Los Angeles	237.3	Berlin	94.2	Beijing	143.1	Kuala Lumpur	338.1	Boston	185.8	Chicago	182.0
16	Shanghai	236.6	Sydney	90.6	Amsterdam	138.4	Zurich	336.8	Singapore	184.7	Madrid	178.2
17	Melbourne	233.1	Osaka	90.5	Vienna	137.9	Milan	335.3	Washington, DC	184.7	Milan	175.4
18	Vancouver	232.8	Shanghai	80.3	Mexico City	135.3	Frankfurt	334.6	Los Angeles	183.5	Istanbul	173.7
19	Dubai	231.3	Amsterdam	76.2	Osaka	133.6	Helsinki	331.2	Toronto	183.2	Barcelona	173.7
20	Geneva	228.9	Toronto	75.6	Buenos Aires	133.3	Sydney	330.1	Dublin	178.0	Brussels	172.5

Figure 5. Global Power City Index 2020 (Institute for Urban Strategies-The Mori Memorial Foundation, 2020)

This makes Istanbul both carriers of investments and of human capital among other cities and a city growing and transforming according to the needs of global powers. In addition, the current global system invites more citizens to come and invest in the megacities. This has both advantages and paradoxes for urbanity in the city, especially in terms of socio-spatial dynamics.

The population growth and urban density in Istanbul has increased gradually as it is seen on the tables. As a result of this exponential population growth in Istanbul especially in the last decades, accumulation related to the population density has taken place whereby the urban space has been interlaced but also been reorganized for better or for worse. As in other megacities around the world, this organization and planning, skewed urbanization, and urban planning practices, at the expense of public interest in most cases, have left on the one hand residents mostly ending up moving from the urban core and settling on the margins of the city, and urban sociologists on the other hand to face these new trends in Istanbul. As Sassen (2000) argues that cities are facing major challenges such as globalization and new information technologies, investigates whether these can be addressed by urban sociology to understand the

macrosocial transformation and addresses the spatial distinctions of regions that cause social discrimination towards the middle class (p. 159).

3.3. The Legacy of Space

Urban activism has been a major level of political contestation in Turkey in the early 21st century. However, it has been mostly neglected as focus has been mostly on cyclical democratic elements such as parties and elections. Furthermore, as mentioned already above, neoliberal incursion into the city has brought about new challenges in terms of both policymaking and citizens, therefore, there is the emergence of a new citizenship paradox because of conflicting interests. This chapter aims to look into urban policies in Turkey in recent years and reactions in line with the right to the city and demands with the existence civic action. Joining this is the socio-political analysis of urbanization in Turkey for the last two decades. In the light of these evaluations, examples of urban activism that are directly related to urban space will be examined. While analyzing the spatial results of top-down decisions under the title of The Legacy of Space; the right to the city from bottom to up will be discussed under the title of Urban Activism.

In addition, there are other determinant features in global cities such as research and development, cultural interaction, livability, environment, and accessibility (Institute for Urban Strategies, 2020). Cities are expected to fulfil these main functions. Istanbul is the city that can meet these functions in line with sustainable development goals. However, when the negative effects of global competition started to appear in urban spaces as urban spatial inequalities, citizens were not satisfied with this situation. In the following sections, the effects of urban policies implemented at the national level on urban planning will be discussed by referring to the features of the city.

According to global city reports, some global cities, such as New York, Tokyo, London, are marked as the financial frontrunners for the future. The world is evolving into a new process that the cities, depending on economic and political advantages driven by global economic and urban policies, now supplanting nation states. The world's top-performing cities attract foreign investments. Many factors play roles in choices of investors from multinational corporations to non-governmental organizations (Kearney, 2019).

The point nevertheless is that city is crucial as the fundamental basis in the process of economic growth and competition with other cities. Cities are strategic locations for states to encourage more and more investment and control human capital for healthy structure both to strengthen the economy to compete with other global cities. Istanbul has come to compete to be one of the financial hub cities in the world ranking competing with other cities in terms of its economic, cultural and social accumulation. As a bridge between Asia and Europe with a rich historical and cultural heritage, Istanbul stands out with its human capital, investment areas that attract people and businesses alike. Globalization has facilitated transportation networks of countries and cities thanks to which Istanbul has also benefited from this interconnectedness being located in a strategic transit route. But in order to harvest more fruits from this network, infrastructural implementations have been fulfilled. For instance, the Istanbul Airport, accredited as a candidate to be Europe's major air transfer hub, is spatial implementation of urban policies. Urban regeneration and renewal processes function as facilitators of urban politics over the past two decades. In addition, the vision of creating a world city by transforming Istanbul into a finance, service and tourism hub forms the backbone of these spatial practices.

Another dimension we face related to modern-day urban space is socio-spatial differentiation of spaces and Istanbul offers plentiful samples as a consequence of the ongoing reconfiguration, gentrification and appropriation of space. This ever-changing fabric, infrastructure and composition in Istanbul in accordance with the abovementioned processes do add another facet to the subject in the sense we now not only witness and deal with the results of the decades-long processes mentioned, but also, literature-wise, even lag behind this enormous reshaping and transfiguration of Istanbul.

Gentrification has been inevitable for Istanbul as a historically and socially multilayered city, it both attracts capital and changes skin rapidly, especially considering that the control mechanisms for the protection of historical quarters and buildings are prone to flexing.

While the spatial practices for the sake of urbanization, such as urban planning and housing, are discussed alongside globalization, the social effects of these implementations in everyday life may be ignored. However, the social aspects of globalization are vital part of the reality of urbanization. Urban policies to be implemented without considering social dynamics may lead to socio-spatial problems in society.

Urban space has a dynamic structure that enables socio-political processes and institutions as well as social and interpersonal relations. All kinds of mobilization, networks and transnational dynamics take place in that realm. Urban space might be understood as a dynamic aspect of urbanization. As Aguirre (2007) states that defining urban space is difficult and this difficulty increases when urban space regarded as an artifact of urbanization that is a process by which cities grow and societies become more complex (p. abstract).

All mentioned so far should also lead us to housing. Over the last 20 years, new patterns emerged in the city in terms of housing and planning. With the effect of globalization, urban city has faced with different urban dynamics which borne new urban housing patterns. Urban areas have transformed or reshaped for the sake of new settlers who expect to lead a wealthy life at the city centers. As Özalp and Erkut (2016) put it, "Today urban dynamics follow changes in global restructuring processes and cities are becoming the stages for transformation. The urban dynamics that arise from global platforms also have an effect on the formation of new urban housing trends" (p. 244).

For Istanbul, challenges coming with globalization, neoliberalism and capitalism have had unique results one can claim. The city had already been facing an endless flow of domestic migration from Anatolia since mid-1950s as a result of which unguided urbanization and urban sprawl have been the norm so to say, by which unrestricted growth of housing commercial development, and roads over large expanses of land occur. Historical, cultural and socio-spatial fabric of the city had already suffered in the absence of strict urban policies. Laws are also easily bent and bypassed in order not to irritate residents, or voters, who may end up being disadvantaged, should the laws are properly exercised. So much so that, with occasional zoning amnesties issued, residences without title deeds or occupying public-owned land have been legitimized on many occasions.

Gecekondus are squatter shanties built by people migrating from rural areas to cities over a night, hence the name *gecekondu* (*gece* means night, *kondu* means settled in Turkish and literally meaning "built in one night.") And these dwellings are the epitome of irregular migration to Istanbul therefore irregular urbanization. In addition to aforementioned repercussions related to urban space in Istanbul introduced with migration from Anatolia since the 1950s, these repercussions themselves came to produce new ones in that urban transformation projects over those spaces which have been source of contention. In recent years,

with the pressure of the authorities, residential developments programs have been introduced that oversee replacement of illegal, non-earthquake-proof, unlicensed shanties with blocks of apartments, which bring new insights and challenges to urbanization, socio-spatial space and fabric. Moreover, this policy itself led to a speculative construction market full of disagreements and irregularities and on many cases leaving the residents to the mercy of construction companies. Within the framework of urban transformation projects, it is aimed to reproduce the slum areas and bring them to the city. However, as a result of the intervention of different interest groups in the improvement activities in these regions, it caused many problems in the long term in the planning and housing in the city.

As Mutlu (2007) states, "the changing meaning of squatters over time has changed from the need for housing to urban plot speculation and eventually to rent maximization" (p. 63). The new housing concept brings not just diversity and heterogeneity but fragmentation in society and the feeling of not belonging to space in the city because of income level. This fragmentation is more evident in the inner-city because the majority of the population of different income levels live there. It can be argued that the civic participation is more obvious in the inner-city than outer-city as a result of this.

On top of this already reforming layer comes afflux of neoliberal urban politics, which makes the abovementioned uniqueness in the case of Istanbul. Airports, bridges, transportation systems, skyscrapers, TV towers, intercontinental railways and road tunnels underneath the Strait, and many other complexes have been built over the years not only for the sake of citizens but rather of neoliberal agenda pursued fiercely. Implications of these developments are twofold for Istanbul: on the one the one hand, the city has been added a new spatial layer, onto a historical and a crooked one resulting from domestic migration, with modern-looking mega projects examples of which we usually are used to seeing in Hong Kong, Dubai, New York, Shanghai, Taipei and so on, through which the city gets a more spatial and architectural chaotic outlook. On the other hand, this new layer's socioeconomic implications are much more compared to the previous layers. In other words, the citizens are not only deprived of urban space originally belonging to them but also, economically-speaking, they become unable to compete with new businesses arriving in the city and get marginalized more. Istanbul may have gotten her share from the enormous inflows of foreign investments. From another perspective though, this constant capital flow has had its toll on Istanbul having been articulated to already-

present mounting pressure, at least more domestically out of internal migrations before AKP-backed influx of investing, on the city's socio-spatial urban challenges.

Neoliberal urban policies adopted in Turkey since the 1980s is another dimension in terms of regeneration. Free market economy was kept alive and the investment environment was strengthened. In particular, the AKP government, particularly since 2002, has encouraged international capital and foreign companies to invest in Turkey. This welcoming stance has paid off over the years as capital inflows or "hot money" in Turkish context, has flowed into Turkish economy whereby long-term interest rates are kept at bay. As a part of this, foreign companies and capital owners have made considerable investments especially in the real estate market in Turkey. Investment by citizenship is one of these incentives to entice foreign investment into the country as shall be detailed further below.

3.3.1. *Citizenship by Investment in Turkey*

Citizenship-through-investment is implemented in many countries when certain legal and economic conditions are met. Turkey in recent years encourages and welcomes more and more citizenship by investment.

"Article 12 of the Turkish Citizenship Law No. 5901 allows foreign investors to acquire Turkish citizenship in exceptional terms; with 18.09.2018 dated and 106 numbered Presidential Decree, amendatory new arrangements have been made regarding the amounts mentioned in the Article 20 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the aforementioned Law" (Nüfus ve Vatandaşlık İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2018) . Since this date, an increase has been observed in the number of foreigners who acquired citizenship through investment.

This regulation, which aims at the source for government's revenues by attracting foreign investors, has achieved great success in its first year. According to the data of the Ministry of Interior, in its first year, 2.611 foreign investors acquired Turkish citizenship after the Regulation on the Implementation of the Turkish Citizenship Law published in the Official Gazette dated 19.09.2018.

As for the acquisition of Turkish citizenship by foreign investors, the law stipulates that immovable property worth a minimum of USD 250.000 should be purchased on condition that

it is not sold in the land registry for 3 years (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Investment Office, 2018). Immigrant Investor Programs Residence by Investment (RBI) Citizenship by Investment (CBI) offer more detailed information on which areas and how investment programs are made (Adim, 2019).

According to the regulation, foreigners who own real estate in Turkey worth a minimum of $250,000, instead of the previous limit of $1 million, can now acquire Turkish citizenship. Also, the lower limit of fixed capital investments to acquire Turkish citizenship for foreigners was reduced to $500,000 from $2 million.

Over 9,000 foreign investors became Turkish citizens after legislative amendments that eased the minimum requirements for acquiring Turkish citizenship were introduced on Sept. 19, 2018, by making it available for foreigners to acquire it by investing $500,000 according to the Interior Ministry, fueling the number of investors as well as the investment volume.

According to the results of Turkish Statistical Institute (2018) - Address Based Population Registration System (2018 and earlier) foreign population by country of citizenship and the first year of residence numbers are given below.

Table 5. Foreign Population by Sex, Country of Citizenship and the First Year of Residence in Turkey as of December 31 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018)

Country of citizenship	Total foreign population	The first year of residence (1)					
		2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013 and earlier
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Total	1 211 034	473 351	266 074	164 056	107 977	55 495	144 081
Irak-Iraq	283 934	113 458	81 756	45 068	32 750	6 530	4 372
Afganistan-Afghanistan	120 409	47 063	35 003	23 268	5 802	2 579	6 694
Suriye-Syria	87 955	39 196	21 324	15 192	7 507	2 127	2 609
Almanya-Germany	82 031	8 900	7 548	7 066	7 500	6 835	44 182
İran-Iran	68 839	32 111	13 162	10 704	6 393	2 638	3 831
Türkmenistan-Turkmenistan	68 146	34 940	13 193	5 908	4 840	3 513	5 752
Azerbaycan-Azerbaijan	61 807	23 359	12 084	8 721	5 901	4 352	7 390
Özbekistan-Uzbekistan	34 090	15 241	7 809	4 076	2 929	1 740	2 295
Rusya Federasyonu Russian Federation	33 441	13 844	4 938	3 444	3 352	2 771	5 092
Mısır-Egypt	26 162	13 544	7 362	2 790	1 371	800	295
Gürcistan-Georgia	19 920	5 564	3 832	2 604	1 870	2 291	3 759
Kırgızistan-Kyrgyzstan	19 552	9 150	3 660	2 274	1 668	1 048	1 752
Libya-Libya	19 479	7 446	5 039	2 198	2 944	1 576	276
Ukrayna-Ukraine	18 471	5 931	3 505	2 300	2 281	1 857	2 597
Kazakistan-Kazakhstan	16 828	7 430	2 634	1 712	1 514	1 105	2 433
Avusturya-Austria	15 993	1 661	1 453	1 456	1 597	1 243	8 583
Filistin-State of Palestine	15 749	8 606	4 063	1 392	633	451	604
Yemen-Yemen	14 978	8 614	3 294	1 395	927	404	344
Çin-People's Republic of China	13 837	5 147	2 646	2 592	1 392	830	1 230
Ürdün-Jordan	11 999	7 989	2 040	833	503	295	339
Birleşik Krallık-United Kingdom	11 701	2 912	1 338	875	695	631	5 250

As of 2018, the foreign population in Turkey has reached its highest level. This increase was observed also in 2019.

Table 6. Foreign Population by Country of Citizenship in 2018-2019 (TurkStat, 2019)

Foreign population by country of citizenship, 2018, 2019

	2018	2019
Country of citizenship	Total	Total
Toplam-Total	**1 211 034**	**1 531 180**
Irak-Iraq	**283 934**	**313 810**
Afganistan-Afghanistan	**120 409**	**152 230**
Türkmenistan-Turkmenistan	**68 146**	**133 669**
Suriye-Syria	**87 955**	**114 277**
İran-Iran	**68 839**	**92 718**
Almanya-Germany	**82 031**	**88 539**
Azerbaycan-Azerbaijan	**61 807**	**68 515**
Özbekistan-Uzbekistan	**34 090**	**44 906**
Rusya Federasyonu-Russian Federation	**33 441**	**40 201**
Mısır-Egypt	**26 162**	**31 105**
Libya-Libya	**19 479**	**24 296**
Kırgızistan-Kyrgyzstan	**19 552**	**23 541**
Gürcistan-Georgia	**19 920**	**22 096**
Filistin-Palestine	**15 749**	**21 457**
Kazakistan-Kazakhstan	**16 828**	**21 151**
Ukrayna-Ukraine	**18 471**	**20 228**
Ürdün-Jordan	**11 999**	**19 550**
Yemen-Yemen	**14 978**	**18 881**
Çin-China	**13 837**	**18 505**
Avusturya-Austria	**15 993**	**17 300**
Somali-Somalia	**7 770**	**16 598**
Fas-Morocco	**8 406**	**14 096**
Birleşik Krallık-United Kingdom	**11 701**	**13 950**

TurkStat, The Results of Address Based Population Registration System, 2019

Foreign population covers individuals who are holding a valid residence/work permit at the reference day and individuals who have a valid address declaration at the reference day while holding an identity document equivalent to residence permit such as international protection identity document and the individuals who have already renounced his/her Turkish Republic citizenship and who have a valid address declaration at the reference day. In addition to Syrians under temporary protection, foreigners holding visas or residence permits shorter than 3 months with the purpose of training, tourism, scientific research, etc. are not covered.

According to most recent figures based on the official address-based population registration system, 1,531,180 foreigners resided in Turkey (TurkStat,, 2019). In 2019, foreign population became 1,531,180 by increasing 26.4% compared to the previous year. Most of the residents of the foreign population were Iraqi citizens according to country of citizenship. 313,810 Iraqi citizens reside in Turkey in 2019. The followers of Iraq were Afghanistan with 152,230 residents, Turkmenistan with 133,669 residents, Syria with 114,277 residents and Iran with 92,718 residents.

Accordingly, there is an increase in the numbers of residents in Turkey especially after the regulation in the Citizenship Law (as amended in 2018). Amendment on Citizenship Law not only facilitated foreign investors to become Turkish citizens but also caused an increase in the number of resident foreign population in Turkey, primarily in Istanbul. This led to an increase in house sales to foreigners in the country.

In 2019, foreign population became 597,440 in Istanbul by increasing 38.2% compared to the previous year that the numbers were 432,243. The increase in the number of foreign citizens who started to reside in Istanbul was reflected in the house sales.

Due to its rapidly growing economy and wide investment opportunities as well as its central importance in the region, Turkey has been one of the most preferred countries by international investors. Istanbul was identified as the most preferred destination for many foreigners, with 597,440 in total people residing in the metropolis.

According to most recent figures based on the official address-based population registration system (ADNKS), released as of 2019, foreigner's population has reached 1,531,180, recording an increase of 320,146 foreign people year-on-year. Istanbul was again the country's most preferred city, with 597,440 foreign residents in the same year.

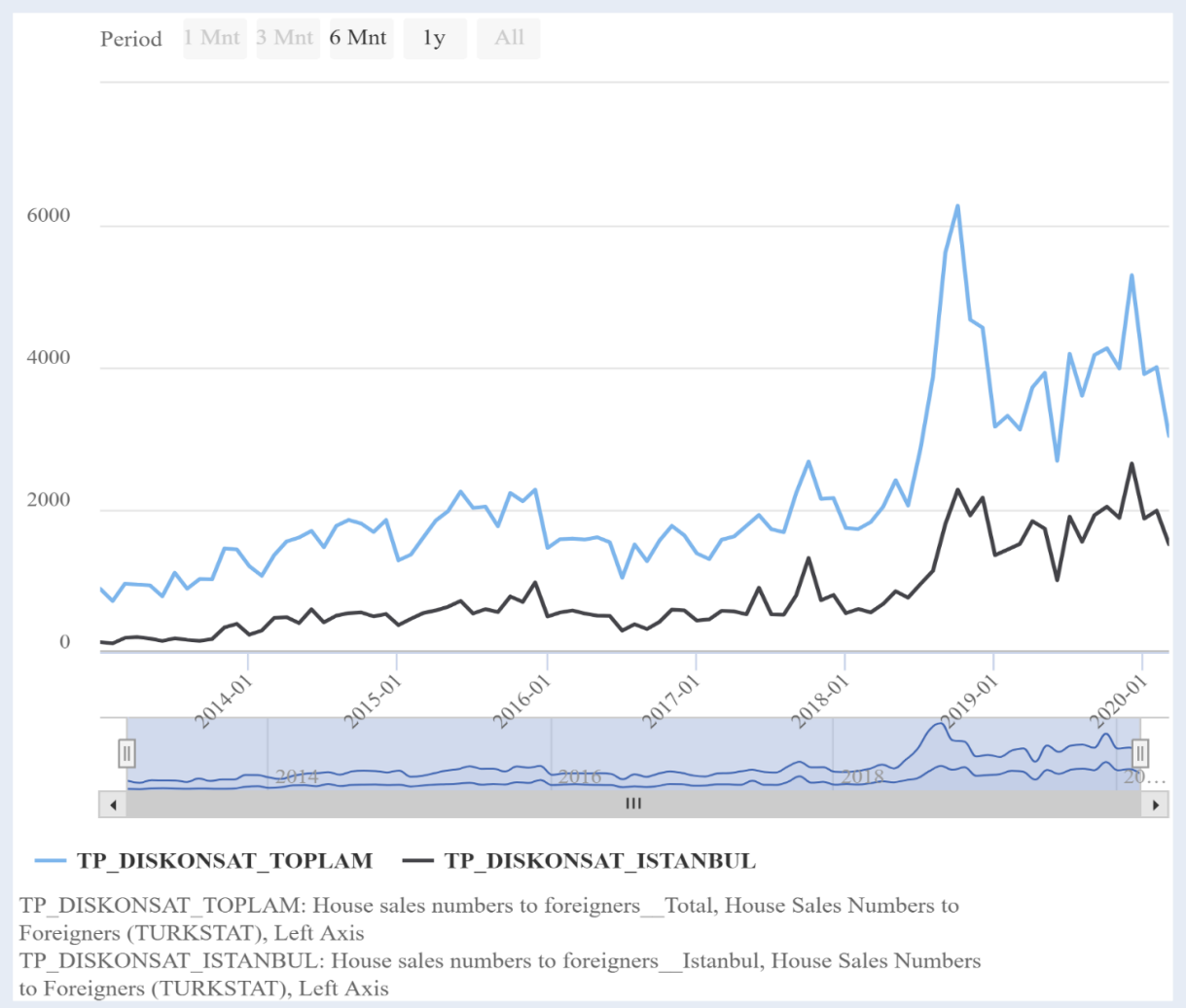
Investment opportunities have been eased for foreign investors with the Amendment of the Citizenship Law in Turkey as of December 31, 2018. Thus, foreign investors have determined areas where they can invest in cities, especially in Istanbul. Istanbul has attracted more and more residents through the city with its diverse facilities in investment as well as presenting a luxurious life for the newcomers.

After the Regulation on the Implementation of the Turkish Citizenship Law published in the Official Gazette in 19.09.2018, house sales rapidly increased compared to the previous years of

house sales to foreigners. Istanbul has become the leading city wherein foreign investors choose to buy houses and invest in different fields such as transport, energy, finance, and manufacturing sectors. Among these, real estate investments drew reaction from citizens on the grounds that they served neoliberal urban policies.

According to the data from Turkstat, the Amendment positively affected the sale of housing to foreigners as it is seen below. Table 7 shows the total number of house sales to foreigners between the years 2013-2020 in Turkey and in the city of Istanbul.

Table 7. Total Number of House Sales to Foreigners Between the Years 2013-2020 in Turkey and in the City of Istanbul (Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey, 2020)



According to house sale statistics in October 2018, 6.276 houses were sold to foreigners in Turkey.

The year 2018 saw a booming in house sales to foreigners in Turkey. 6,276 houses were sold to foreigners by increasing 134.4% in comparison to October 2017. Iraqi citizens led the list with 1,439 house purchases in October 2018 and were followed by Iranian, Kuwaiti, German and Russian citizens with varying purchases of three-digit numbers (TurkStat, 2019).

Table 8. The Number of House Sales in Table 7 in Accordance with the Months and Years, Turkey (TurkStat, 2019)

History	TP DISKONSAT ISTANBUL	TP DISKONSAT TOTAL
2013-10	181,00	1.021,00
2014-10	556,00	1.806,00
2015-10	780,00	2.236,00
2016-10	423,00	1.566,00
2017-10	1.321,00	2.677,00
2018-10	2.283,00	6.276,00
2019-10	2.043,00	4.272,00
Series Descriptions		
TP.DISKONSAT.ISTANBUL	House sales numbers to fore	Observation: Original Observation
TP.DISKONSAT.TOTAL	House sales numbers to fore	Observation: Original Observation

.

Istanbul has been the most preferred city by both domestic and foreign investors. Growing economy and commercial facilities as well as its geopolitical position has made Istanbul the most preferred city in the region. In recent years, Istanbul has come to the fore with mega projects such as Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, Istanbul New Airport and Canal Projects. With 76,5 million-m² surface area Istanbul Airport serves as a global hub between Asia, Africa and Europe.

According to the data from The Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Investment Office, total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow was recorded as 13 billion dollars in 2018 while the share of real estate and construction sectors in this amount was 5.9 billion dollars (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Investment Office, n.d.).

To attract even more investment to Istanbul and Turkey, an artificial sea-level waterway called Canal Istanbul connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara in order to bypass the

Bosporus is planned to be built. Leaving aside why and how necessary bypassing a natural strait by construction an artificial one, the most dramatic dimension this audacious attempt shows us the extent to which disposition of urban space in Turkey would go.

Although investments contribute to economic growth to a certain degree, socio-spatial paradoxes are often overlooked. Investment opportunities, citizenship and housing facilities for foreigners have led to changes in the traditional citizenship concept. Given the notion of citizenship itself has been exposed to such a radical experiment, it becomes even more normal that the notion of urban citizenship to be eroded and vulnerable against the multi-faceted challenges surrounding these notions.

On the other hand, though, the challenges urban citizenship facing are also inevitable not only because of what was mentioned so far but also this is now a global phenomenon. That is to say, since the millennium, for the first time in human history, more people are residing in urban areas than in rural regions. Further, urban population is expected to be two thirds of the globe, which in whole render notions of civicness, civility, citizenship, urban and city more questionable as to what they will come to mean (Bauböck, 2019).

Figure 6. A billboard at Istanbul Airport (Ensonhaber, 2019)

The citizenship by investment implementations in turn brought a new challenge in urban space in terms of restructuring social and spatial patterns. As a result of these policies, cities began to be shaped and transformed by global capital. Istanbul is one of the cities where this change is most evident. The social, economic and environmental implementations of new urban trends such as globalization have often been ignored on the way to strengthen the domestic and national economy. At this point, ignoring the needs of citizens for the sake of urban interventions and adopting urban policies appropriate to the needs of the capitalist market has caused tension in cities to increase. It is important to evaluate not only the change in the city but also the reactions of the citizens to this change. As a result of this, many social, economic and environmental problems are awaiting to be interpreted about the cities that are globalized and sometimes pave the way for capitalist market.

Urban transformation activities carried out on urban areas in Istanbul after 2000 have themselves transformed over time in parallel with economic and political developments. A different urban regeneration and transformation dimension has been gained in the city. In addition to making the city a center of attraction for foreign investors, urban transformation and

renovation activities continue, and a series of planning and projects have been implemented in order to make Istanbul a city that will compete economically with global cities by supporting large-scale infrastructure projects.

Urban Regeneration Law was enacted in 2012 regeneration and transformation of urban areas in Istanbul has accelerated. The powers of municipalities have been given to the government so that the decisions supported by the law are carried out quickly by the state, thereby aiming to accelerate urban transformation activities. In this regard, Mass Housing Development Administration (TOKİ has been authorized to realize housing projects. Along with the planning authority given to, the planning has been centralized to a level as never before. In addition, (TOKİ)'s competence has increased.

In addition to that large losses experienced by international capital in Turkey in 2001 economic crisis can be said to play an important role in the adoption of neoliberal policies. In this way, the financial participation of the private sector in urban projects was encouraged. The government therefore provided some incentives to the private sector for the provision of infrastructure services and financial participation.

The second point on which urban transformation is based was the realization of prestigious projects to realize Istanbul's vision of becoming a global city. In addition, changes have been made to the coastal strips and gentrification projects have been carried out.

Istanbul is a global city that has expanded its network with the impact of its location and economic conditions, as well as the neoliberal policies it has adopted over the past two decades. Neoliberal policies have been adopted in the city and the city has been promoted by marketing strategies. Increasing competition between cities led to the adoption of neoliberal policies to attract more investment and people. Marketing and branding strategies gave direction to the new planning projects and urban transformation projects in the city. Renewal projects carried out in historical areas continued to be carried out within this scope.

While these projects attracted more investors and residents to the city, they had negative effects on the historical and cultural texture of the city. The city has been reproduced through the transformation and renewal projects and the mega projects on behalf of functioning as "mega city" or "financial capital".

Urban transformation projects have been realized mostly in line with the measures taken to meet the need for housing after the earthquake. These projects also include the urban renewal activity areas of the regions that have become the center of attraction of capital. In this sense, construction of mass housing, arrangement of coasts and harbors, gentrification works are among the applications that come to the forefront in urban planning.

Mega projects are projects carried out in the city in order to meet the growing and expanding needs of the public and private sectors and to attract foreign capital. New projects have been launched in Istanbul due to the globalization of Istanbul and being among the world cities and the Republic's 100th anniversary within the framework of the 2023 vision.

Urban transformation is used as a concept that covers the renewal of residential areas in Istanbul, as well as projects that are privatized or realized through a public-private partnership. Therefore, urban transformation activities can bring urban interventions to the city. These interventions are not always for the benefit of the citizens but for the benefit of the private sector or stakeholders.

The new legal regulations have had a major impact on urban transformation. When the current version of the regulation (June 21, 2019) on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization is examined, a great increase in the number of changes in laws and regulations has been observed especially after the Mass Housing Law, Privatization Law and Municipality Law (Özalp & Erkut, 2016, pp. 234-250). In parallel with this increase, it has accelerated in urban applications in Istanbul.

The revitalization of the construction industry, tourism and privatization practices has been the basis of the economic policy. The urban policies after 2000s, thus, are directly related to the new economic policy adopted by the government.

With the AK Party government coming to power in 2002, new steps were taken in municipalism and it was aimed to grow Istanbul in a socio-economic sense and to strengthen trade in a level to compete with global cities.

The Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 of 10.07.2004 was put into practice. With the Law No. 5216, metropolitan municipalities have assumed the role of implementers in addition to their coordination powers and supervisory authority. In the light of these developments, urban transformation activities have accelerated.

After those regulations, the powers were gathered in the central government. With the Metropolitan Law No. 5216 of 2004 and Law No. 6360 of 2012, the issue of rescaling municipal borders was brought to the agenda in Turkey. Considering in the context of new urban policies, it is seen that these laws and regulations are aimed to consolidate management in one hand.

Under these conditions, it is inevitable that the space will be shaped around a market-based management structure because the inclusion of rural areas in urban areas expanded the urban area and limited the participation of rural residents in local administrative activities. As Urul (2014) asserts,

> The main objective will be to develop new investment models in these areas by removing the legal entities of the municipalities of villages and towns. In this case, it will cause the natural assets, pastures, forests, historical and cultural values to be massacred and turned into a market tool (pp. 325-344).

The point of criticism in these laws is that, as a result of Law No. 6360, the democratic participation mechanism will decrease and the metropolitan municipality will be responsible for the execution of the services. This will lead to the loss of natural areas, historical and cultural areas and become a market tool by removing from the legal personality of the municipalities of villages and towns (Özalp & Erkut, 2016, pp. 234-244).

However, many of these objections emerged as political objections of opposition parties to the political management modeling, apart from environmental concerns. The point that should be emphasized in this regard is to prevent political conflicts from undermining efforts to resolve urban issues and to take measures to increase the opportunities for democratic participation in the city.

Transformation was not limited to disaster risk areas but also expanded public areas and properties to the use of public and private sectors. The effects of urban policies adopted after 2000, especially in Istanbul, have been observed to a great extent.

Transformation policies and practices have changed understanding of housing in Istanbul very much as a house is the most important commodity now and the newly formed suburbs are the focal point of this commodification, as a result of which emerged the competition of the middle classes to own a house or multiple houses as the way to financial security (Ucoglu, 2016).

Transformation activities supported by law brought about spatial inequalities and environmental problems. As a result of the inclusion of rural areas in urban areas, dispossession has been realized and these areas have become the market of capital.

In this sense, spatial interventions brought social inequalities while implementing urban planning strategies rapidly. Citizens who are uncomfortable with urban planning and think that they are not involved in policy making gathered around unions, NGOs and expressed their demands for city rights. In this sense, communities protesting spatial inequality and ecological problems have come together in different districts.

Planning approach should be based on integrity and participatory policies. Increasing the participation of citizens in urban planning and projects is essential. Considering the factors such as population growth, migration and urban transformation requires a fair and egalitarian understanding of space in a city. In this sense, urban planning activities should be brought to the fore by reshaping the urban paradigm and based on the perspective of public interest. In this sense, participatory policies should be adopted by considering socio-spatial evaluations in the planning processes and following a path in line with the needs of the citizens.

Besides that, locals may would sell their existing properties which are located at the center of the city because of socioeconomic problems they face such as social exclusion and gentrification or they may be unable to buy real estate because of an increase in prices by the foreign investments embedded on real estate. At the end of this process, at the worst, citizens are forced to change their locations and be pushed out of the city.

City is growing and expanding through adopting new laws and regulations considering the needs of global capital in line with sustainable development goals so as to govern human capital, attract more investors to the country, on behalf of promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Notwithstanding most of the cities cannot ensure rights for its own citizens. While the city of Istanbul is made eligible for carrying such interventions to ensure the economic growth goals, it mostly remained apathetic to citizens' claims.

The notion of citizenship has changed through new interventions over the city such as citizenship by investment. Those who come and invest start having rights over the space and settled at the centers of the city. Centers and public spaces are granted for foreign investors and stakeholders in Istanbul. This brought another part of discussion on the urban policies which

are related to the urban planning and housing issues in terms of new socio-spatial challenge for the city. Transnational trend and citizenship issues have been mostly debated in academia and on the media's agenda.

The state's policies and regulations are largely emphasized on the demand for the concept of right to the city in the literature, claiming that urban policies are not structured based on the public interest perspective.

There is a shift in urban studies since the beginning of the 21st century. Environmental determinism left its place to the new sociopolitical trends resting not just on the geographical condition, but rather socio-spatial condition through which interpersonal relations and social mobility has been shaped in the urban space. The classical politic-economic vision of city has been transformed along with the new urban trends such as globalization and the new information technology.

Accordingly, urban is not an arena of contentious politics anymore but rather one of its primary stakes. Rearranging urban habitat is more and more seen as a way of transforming wider political-economic structures as well as spatial configuration of early 21st century capitalism in general (Brenner, 2013, p. 89).

Examples of these challenges and conflicts are also seen in Turkey as in other countries. However, in some cases, it can be said that civic engagement remains dim. A comparison will be made to measure the responses of civilians to urban interventions in Istanbul. Taksim Gezi Park Pedestrianization Project, Istanbul Airport Project and Canal Istanbul.

CHAPTER IV

URBAN ACTIVISM

4.4. Taksim Pedestrianization Project and Gezi Park Protests

4.4.1. *Taksim Pedestrianization Project*

Taksim Pedestrianization Project, financed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, is a plan dating back to 2011 to expand the square by moving the vehicle traffic underground and rebuild a 19th military barracks for the use of shopping malls, hotels and residences on Gezi Park's site. At first the project drew little reaction. It was on 27 May 2013, two years after the project was first was made public, that the project was suddenly moved under nationwide limelight when bulldozers entered the park and sparked a quick backlash. What followed was weeks-long protests, riots, clashes, sit-ins, not only in Taksim but in almost every part of the country. In the midst of the protests, the Istanbul 1st Administrative Court canceled the project on June 6, 2013. However, the construction was completed and the underground tunnels were opened on 13 September 2013. The concern that one of the last remaining green areas in the city would be gone forever formed the gist of the crisis.

4.4.2. *Gezi Park Protests*

Turkey faced with a huge wave of protests, lasting from May 27 to June 21, 2013. Citizens all over the city of Istanbul took to the streets from different social and political circles, parties and NGOs in order to express their dissatisfaction with the urban transformation and planning of Istanbul, particularly that of Taksim Square. Many of these protests had been centered in the city of Istanbul but they also spread to other cities such as Izmir, Diyarbakir and Ankara.

4.4.2.1. *Before the Gezi Park Protests.*

From 2010 onward, cities all around the globe have witnessed civic action in the forms of mass protests, civil disobedience and uprisings whereby urban activism has become more evident. The Arab Spring and Occupy movement are first cases to be named. This trend found its

reflection in Turkey mostly in relation to the right to the city. But the fact that the existing literature mostly tends to unite in arguing that the democratic structure is restricted by the government in Turkey is problematic. This criticism of the adoption of an authoritarian form of government comes forth regardless of the overall picture of the development of protests. I suggest that protests have ceased to be a legal and ecological claim and have rather evolved into a not solution-oriented direction. The fact that activists and participants did not make concrete demands during the protests have a great impact on this assumption.

This study aims to evaluate Gezi Park protests in its own national practices and in consideration of other examples in the world on the account that it has different urban dynamics. At this point, for instance, Gezi Park protests have been framed as a Turkish Spring in the printed media. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the coverage of the protests as well in terms of discursive practices.

The implementation of urban transformation projects regardless of public interest and the urban policies are mostly aimed at urban housing and planning and are widely discussed in Turkey. In response to urban interventions and renewal projects, neighborhood resistances emerged at different parts of the city such as Tarlabaşı, Fikirtepe, Sulukule, and associations were established in neighborhoods in 2005. It was requested to draw attention to the problems in the city with the organized public and to create a policy making process in which citizens will have a say in the gentrification projects or anything related to the city structure as social conditions of the citizens have been threatened by the new paradoxes produced in the city by investments and interventions.

In this context, in 2008, neighborhood associations came together and established the Istanbul Neighborhood Associations Platform, a platform where they would share their transformation and planning experiences from their own respective districts. Thus, a project that concerns a part of the city found stronger repercussions in the public. It can be argued that the examples of urban resistance in the neighborhoods that existed before 2013 proved instrumental to the subsequent occurrence of the Gezi protests.

Besides the urban planning and housing problems, the new citizenship paradox emerged on the account of these interventions. Urban activism was nurtured from such an environment and the civility has been affected because of the new citizenship paradox the city had to face.

The dissatisfaction with the adaptation of neoliberal policies to urbanity and the socio-economic conditions that restrict citizens' access to public spaces in the city led citizens to participate in urban activism movements. Complaints that started in the neighborhoods reached the squares after the government announced the implementation of the Taksim Pedestrianization Project.

4.4.2.2. *Gezi: A Timeline (27 May- 15 June 2013).*

This timeline summarizes the course of events during the Gezi Park protests between May 27 and June 15. The first stage of the demonstrations represents sparking of the events that took place in the second stage. The preceding dissatisfaction with urban transformation projects, decisions and practices encroaching on the city's historical and cultural tissue culminated in the Gezi Park Protests. According to some observers, the first phase stood for the beginning while the second phase represented politicization of the demonstrations.

From the second stage onward, there were clashes between the demonstrators and the security forces while government officials made harsher statements. Beyoğlu was the scene of violence and confrontation. The demonstrations spread to big cities such as Ankara and İzmir with the effect of calls made via social networks. Thus, the Gezi Park-focused demonstrations turned into anti-government protests. Simultaneous protests were seen by some groups in the evenings by turning on and off the lights in the houses, banging pots and pans (cacerolazo) on the balconies, or chanting slogans on the streets, and the cars honking. It was observed that the government took an uncompromising attitude to the events. The government did not remain insensitive to the demonstrations and called for dialogue by directly addressing the demonstrators.

However, as a result of the continuation of the demonstrations and the lack of a conciliatory attitude, on June 11, police entered Taksim in the morning and removed pictures, banners, inscriptions and posters of parties and illegal organizations in Ataturk Cultural Center (AKM), Taksim Republic Monument and surrounding buildings.

First Stage of the Gezi Park Protests (May 27-31)

May 27: Members of Taksim Gezi Park Conservation and Beautification Association started to stand guard in the park on the grounds that some trees in Gezi Park would be transferred to another place in line with the Taksim District Pedestrianization Project. A handful of people joined them.

May 28: Thousands flocked to the park after a call from social media following the municipal constables and police interfered with the protestors.

May 29: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, said: "No matter what you do, we will move on with the plan."(Quite ironically though, as construction of the bridge itself was going to see removal of millions of trees; an irony with twofold: challenging an environmentalist-looking protest from the construction of a bridge on forested lands. Looked reversely, none of the Gezi protestors showed up on the bridge construction site.)

May 30: Police asked the demonstrators to evacuate the park and remove the tents that were built by the protestors as part of sit-ins. The tents were burned.

May 31: Police forces intervened in the demonstrations at the park in the morning. Demonstrations and actions spread throughout the country. Istanbul 6th Administrative Court accepted the cancellation case of Taksim Artillery Barracks Project and decided to stay execution. However, despite this decision, the actions were not ended.

Second Stage of Gezi Park Protests (June 1-15)

June 1: The group in Taksim Square did not disperse despite all warnings. The clash between the police and the demonstrators lasted all night.

June 2: Demonstrators clashed with security forces by seizing tracked machinery used in an ongoing construction in a nearby site.

June 3: With the call of Taksim Solidarity, groups gathered in Taksim, Gümüşsuyu Street, Maçka Park and Dolmabahçe areas, blocked the traffic by building barricades with paving stones and railing bars where they gathered around. The riot continued throughout the night.

June 5: Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç accepted the Taksim Solidarity Committee and listened to their demands.

June 6: Flags of PKK alongside its former leader Abdullah Öcalan were hung on the poles at the entrance of Taksim Gezi Park.

June 7: AK Party supporters gathered in Istabul's Ataturk Airport to welcome Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who returned from his Africa tour.

June 9: When the photos of the leader of the terrorist organization PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, and the organization's so-called flags were unfurled at the rally, tensions arose between the protesting groups.

June 11: The police entered Taksim Square in the morning and removed pictures, banners, inscriptions and posters of parties and illegal organizations in AKM, Taksim Republic Monument and surrounding buildings.

June 12-13: Erdogan accepted members of Taksim Solidarity. Negotiations were held in order to end the ongoing conflict and as soon as possible and to restore life to normal.

June 15: Riot Force gained full control of Gezi Park.

June 16: Erdogan, in his speech at the "Respect for National Will" rally in Kazlıçeşme, said "Currently Taksim Square has been evacuated and handed over to this nation".[2]

During the negotiations, the fact that some of the demands were aimed at preventing mega projects and transportation projects planned to be constructed in Istanbul showed that the protests went beyond Gezi Park and its surroundings. In this sense, stopping of the Third Airport project, nuclear power plants, Istanbul Strait Road Tunnel Crossing Project "Eurasia Tunnel Project", Third Bridge, Canal Istanbul and Istanbul-Izmir highway were among the demands.

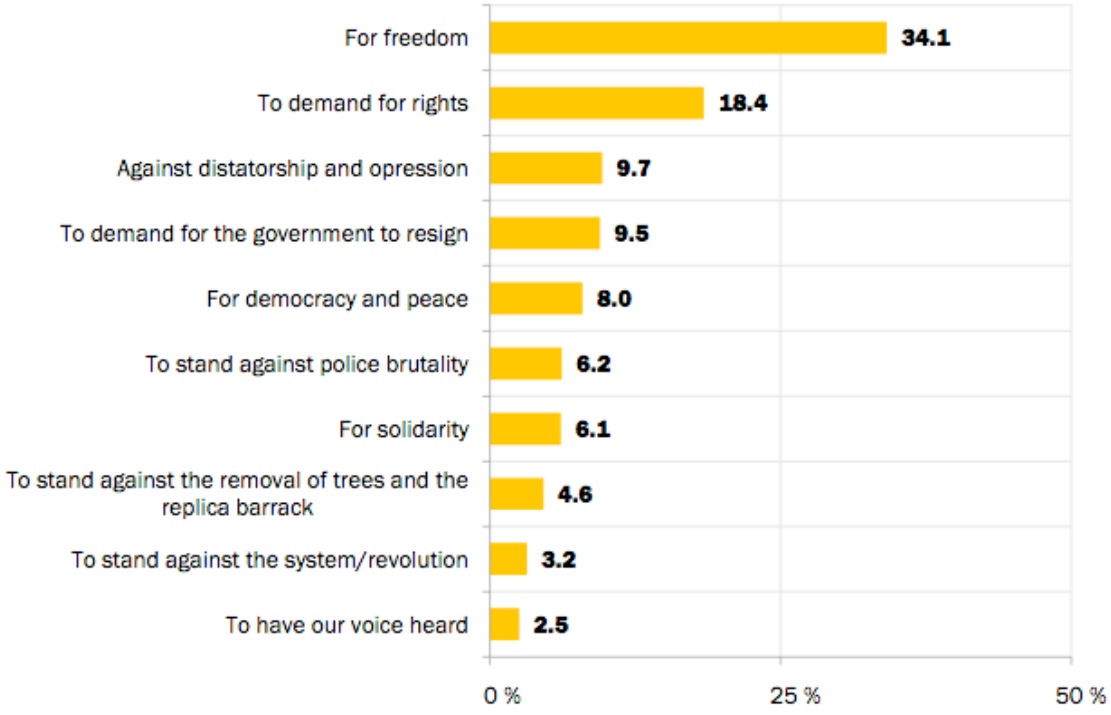
Considering the Gezi Park Protests and the process, the nature of the social demonstrations and the actions in terms of demanding the city right also shows us how civic actions should be managed by demonstrators and how they should not be. In this sense, I think Gezi park protests are both an experiment and an unideal prototype of the right to the city demands in Turkey.

[2] Extracts from various news sources and reports, accessed February 2020

It could be on point to elaborate on the participant profile with statistical data. The protests brought a wide range of identities together. First, they can be named the urban poor youth activism; middle-class youth activism, environmental activists, union of architects, trade unions, radical left parties and groups, Kurd and Alawi associations, football fans, feminists, LGBT activists, secularist organizations, and secular businessmen (Vatikiotis & Yoruk, 2016, p. 9). According to GENAR's survey, a research company based in Turkey, 33.5% of the protestors defined themselves as "Ataturkist," 6.1% secularistic whereas of 19% "libertarian" and 12.4% "social democrat" (Vatikiotis & Yoruk, 2016, p. 4). As for the motivations of the demonstrators, another research company KONDA published a report. With some interviewees stating more than one reason, 58.1% of the protesters decided to participate in the protests on account of restrictions on freedom whereas 37.2% did because of AK Party and its policies, and 30.3% went to the park to voice their resentment with Erdoğan's statements and attitude (KONDA, 2014).

The Gezi Park protests also functioned as a stage for many different demands. According to KONDA (2014), as shown on Table (9), 34.1% were on the scene to demand freedom, while 18.4% for their rights, 8.0% for democracy and peace whereas only 4.6% named protection of trees from the Gezi Park as their demand (p. 21). This brings us to the point aforementioned in the Logic of Action part in Chapter 1, as fragmented demands in such platforms do present a challenge towards uniting the protesters. As Iveson (2013) states, for us to witness real change, participants must display joint motivation out of their diversity as political subjectivisation is essential for the sake of urban space (p.146). To also quote Hatem Ete and Coşkun Taştan,

Table 9. Why are you here and what do you demand?(KONDA, 2014*)*



"As the demonstrations gathered masses and groups with different priorities, the objectives of the protest movement became more comprehensive. A set of political goals has emerged, embodying the environmental emphasis at the center of the events to a certain extent" (Hatem & Çoskun, 2013, p. 27).

It can be argued that the right to the city in that atmosphere of multipolarity was shadowed. The protester's grievances were very centered on the rejection of state policies; particularly government policies and they perceived their democratic rights and freedoms were under threat. Mobilizing around such diverse claims in such mass protests may cause a chaotic atmosphere where real motivation point is missed or overlooked. Depending on the data, diversity in demands and motivations bring up a platform where many interests are in conflict with each other as dividuality which mainly refers to the fragmented entities, may weaken ties and network among participants even the digital platforms ease the gathering and communication, as suggested in the Network Society by Manuel Castells.

Nonetheless the Gezi Park protests succeeded in making a resounding impact. The protests were located at the very center of the city that eased at least practical mobilization, if not theoretical.

The discontent for ongoing mega projects and urban transformation undertakings were already growing before the protests. The Gezi Park was to become a hub for these unconnected neighborhood associations. Moreover, the idea to take part in a walkout inspired by an ecological contestation was an attractive one.

4.4.3. *Media Coverage of Gezi Park*

As an example of the transformation of the civil sphere, the reflection of the Gezi Park protests in the media was different from its social dimensions. Gezi Park protests cannot be explained only by its political dimensions as in the case of Arab Spring-type revolutions but by social dimensions as an example of rapid mobilization in public space. The Gezi Park protests and its mobilization through social media were unprecedented in Turkey. How can this rapid mobilization be explained? Two key terms, network society and civil sphere, will help us understand better Gezi Park protests while considering its sociopolitical dimension because it was not a revolution but rather social uprising. Network society brought about the transformation of civil sphere and the new kinds of social relationships have emerged. Synchronized uprisings occurred in the social media and moved to the street. A number of activist discourses in the literature on Gezi Park protests neglect interpreting the social dimensions of the protests and shadows the reality. It is thus obvious that new approaches are needed to interpret events at domestic and global realms.

As a result of the misinterpretation of changes in civil society, Gezi Park protests cannot be said to have been portrayed accurately all the time by foreign press. The foreign, predominantly American and European, media exaggerated the existing tension in society and the steps taken to protect the civil sphere. Misleading representations that escalate the climate of conflict have undermined social criticism and democratic integration. The name of violence in the media was protest and the name of insult was humor. The social solidarity ground that holds society together has been damaged. Alexandre (2006) states that social solidarity is protected through shared values such as equality, justice and freedom. Because these values can exist in an environment where individuals in society interconnected with one another. A movement that was allegedly born from an environmental awareness and started with the mobilization of the democratic rights of the opposition groups was mobilized very quickly in a globalizing civil society and networked society.

This research shows that the media reflected events differently than what they were which caused protesters and opposition groups to exploit the events. In this sense, most of the news we saw in the local and foreign press, not only escalate tension experienced in Turkey but have also presented it as an Arab Spring-like revolution movement in the country. The effects of the media and the news content that are damaging to the social integration in the civil sphere and the precautions to be taken to protect the civil sphere will be emphasized in this study. Freedom of the Turkish press and the motives to protect social memory and bring ethical values to the society will be evaluated. Examples will be given from the foreign press, especially from America, England and Germany. The steps taken by the foreign press by ignoring the dynamics in the society while producing content need to be argued. The foreign press harshly criticized Erdogan's language and called for reforms while claiming that the people had been forced to an Islamic direction in Turkey. It is open for discussion how these claims as a reflection of the reactions to the government apart from protests against the construction of a shopping mall in Taksim Gezi Park.

US Senator John McCain called the protests as “a rebellion against Erdogan’s push of the Turkish people towards Islam… this was a rebellion against what Erdogan was trying, to push a very modern nation and democracy in a direction which they did not want to go” (Weaver, 2018). Likewise, this discourse has been repeated in both foreign press in USA, UK and Germany and opposition media in Turkey. Foreign press aggravated events in Taksim Square by likening the events of the Arab Spring and claimed that there were no democratic rights for people in Turkey and the protests were presented as proof of that.

As a result of the misleading reflections from media coverage on protests that failed to understand both new type of social networks and civil sphere. Those who supported Taksim Gezi Park protests claimed that social media has become an important medium for the protests that started with the reaction to the trees being cut down in Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul and spread to many cities of the country in a short time. According to the protesters, the mainstream media’s stance led to an increased use of social media channels in order to bypass the mainstream media and to refrain from transferring the development of information flow on the first day of protests in Turkey. This understanding play into the hands of those who wants to manipulate events in Turkey through echoing a new version of Arab Spring in Turkey. The transmission from mainstream media to social media occurred rapidly and caused unpresented results and changes in society.

The unfounded criticism that Erdogan was an elected dictator is an attempt to cast a shadow on the legitimacy of democratic practices in Turkey. By associating Gezi Park events with the Arab Spring, the attempt to portray the government as an authoritarian government elected in Turkey stands before us as the consequences of an ideological orientation. Before the 2014 elections, in June 2013, the Economist covered Erdogan on its front cover and portrayed him as an Ottoman sultan that fuelled debates of authoritarianism (The Economist, 2013). An article entitled "Democrat or Sultan" depicts Erdogan with a rosary in his hand and refers to orientalist symbols. On the other hand, it tries to create the impression of authoritarianism by displaying it with a gas mask.

Below are a few of the headlines in the foreign press during the Gezi Park protests from USA, UK and Germany:

Guardian:	"Istanbul park protests sow the seeds of a Turkish spring" (Seymour, 2013)
Observer:	"Turkish police storm protest camp using teargas and rubber bullets"(Beaumont, 2013)
New York Times:	"Peaceful Protest Over Istanbul Park Turns Violent as Police Crack Down" (Arango & Yeginsu, 2013)
Washington Post:	"Turkish protests show depth of anger against Erdogan" (Vela & Sullivan, 2013)
Der Tagesspiegel:	"Das ist Krieg gegen die Menschen (This is war against the people)" (Seibert, 2013)

Figure 7. Randomly selected newspapers published during the Gezi Park Protests

Gezi protests were in the meantime also interpreted as an embodiment of the political dimension of the right to the city. However, in a more general sense, the legal dimension of the right to the city should not be overlooked between the city-human, human-society and community-local government. In this sense, when city right actions become a legal right, but turn into a

movement that will disrupt the social order, it deviates from its purpose and enters into a process where the problems of the city are ignored.

From urban transformation to transportation projects in Turkey, many projects have been the subject of criticism after 2000, on the grounds that they have damaged the city's texture. The Taksim Pedestrianization Project, on the other hand, was a project that collectively opposed social groups and neighborhood associations that resisted the previous urban transformation and renewal projects.

It was observed that the urban activism carried out by the neighborhood associations in previous years gained a spatial dimension in Gezi Park protests and the protests were repelled after weeks of conflicts. These protesters continued to express their reactions on social media. However, they were withdrawn from the squares after the demonstrations were limited by the government.

Protesters taking violent actions played a major role in the disappearance of the demonstrations. As a result, taking a legal claim to the streets and subsequent developments, it grew further with the political parties' support of the protests. Thus, political conflicts have undermined the civility, and the expected results from the demonstrations have not been achieved.

With the implementation of mega projects in Istanbul, a sprawl towards the periphery of the city has been observed. Some groups, such as Northern Forest Defense, Labor is Our initiative, Life Instead of the Third Bridge Platform, and Istanbul City Defense have tried to show their reactions primarily through social media and small-scale demonstrations due to the destruction of forests and water resources in the northern part of the city.

4.4.4. *The Aftermath of the Gezi Park Protests*

The activism witnessed in the Gezi Park protests has quickly faded away, let alone turning into a movement. Much can be said as to why the legal and political spirit for civic activism has declined after the Gezi protests. Especially given more and more large-scale construction projects that would entail the right to the city has not sparked even half what the Gezi did at the time, this inactivity is all the more remarkable. The cycle of terrorist attacks unfurling in the summer of 2015 and lasting until 2017, as well as suspension of some constitutional rights in the aftermath of the 15 July Attempted Coup and of the following state of emergency rule had

weakening effects on civic activism undoubtedly. However, the nature of the Gezi Park Protests itself can be raised to explain what has happened to the activism in Turkey.

First of all, what was witnessed during the protests as the most characteristic was mobilization via online social networks in the absence or lack of coverage of the events in mass media. Social media emerged as the platform channeling voices, concerns and directives of the protestors but most importantly it challenged to replace the conventional media for a while. This digitality served not only for propaganda and communication but also as a sense of euphoria of self-sufficiency against the establishment in terms of using media tools. Yet this euphoria of, say, self-containment of outdoing the established media would not bring about an "undistorted communication" as some have come to claim it did. And this alternating of digital networks with the mass media has also led to a dividual non-movement. That is, instead of taking to the streets or occupying space, digital activism has come to arise. Hashtags, trend topics, likes and dislikes have come to be tools of this new activism. Although one cannot deny how important the social network tools have become in terms of exercising influence, a certain degree of risk of illusion accompanies them too. Services like Twitter and Facebook are algorithms that customize flow of information based on the patterns of the users that always pose the risk to lead to distorted communication, which has actually occurred.

Secondly, the mobilization exhibited during the Gezi presented a total opposite of the conventional mobilized movements in recent history. Such a large and colorful chorus of participation did not produce a leader or group to assume leadership. As Castells (2012) puts it when describing Gezi-like phenomena, "Horizontality is the norm, and there is little need for leadership because the coordination functions can be exercised by the network itself through interaction between its modes" (p.129). Even though the collective action was achieved through this horizontality, it was going to prove something of a handicap especially in Turkish politics, a setting in which the powerful and charismatic leader figure matters.

4.5. Istanbul Airport Project and Different Logic of Action: Inaction

Taksim Pedestrianization Project was planned to cover an area of 98.000 m². The project, which was a kind of square arrangement, was small-scale and regional. Therefore, it can be said that this project, which covers a central part of Istanbul, Taksim, is local in terms of land. However,

Istanbul airport project is a global scale mega project. These two projects, which are compared in this research, have one thing in common at this point, that is, they have a global impact from their discursive practices that are produced during and after projects by both participants and the media.

The legacy of the Gezi has got implications not only in relation to itself but also to contemporary and subsequent projects and activisms. After all Istanbul is still the same Istanbul and investments at the expense of citizens have not decelerated since 2013, on the contrary, one can claim, it has accelerated. Almost a year after the Gezi Park protests, the construction of new Istanbul Airport started on 7 June 2014. Istanbul Airport is important to note in many aspects, as the news of a new airport was one of the catalysts of the protests a year ago. Much was to put into test such as determination and deterrence of the Gezi demonstrations over the government as well as how much the government drew back. However, the Gezi Park protests turned out to be ephemeral as it was the protestors, one can say, who apparently drew back because the objection for the new airport stretching for over 76.500.000 m^2, 61.720.000 m^2 of which is forested lands, remained sparse and local. But saying simply the protestors recoiled would only help us explain one facet. With social networks fortifying their position as an effective shelter and alternative for voicing contention, we would be safe to assume the activism in general had already metamorphosed to a certain degree. Logic of action of June 2014 in Istanbul was not going to be demonstration or hitting the streets though as logic of action now seemed to have changed in Istanbul over a year into inaction. Location, timing and scale all can be named as reasons as to why the construction and following uprooting of trees did not trigger a Gezi-like outrage. The answer should in part be looked for within the Gezi itself as it had its own unique implications for the participants, Istanbul and Turkey. Theoretically speaking, the participation in a crowd action first of all brings about individual empowerment but "achieving the initial goal of the collective action is not the most important factor in determining whether it is seen as empowering" (Uluğ & Acar, 2018, p. 45).

Another aspect, independent of the Gezi, is certainly related to the right to the city in Istanbul. As similar to the Taksim Pedestrianization Project, Istanbul Airport project too has different dimensions with regard to rule-takers, stakeholders and citizens. First of all, as depicted on Figure 3 above, all top-down intentions and practices over the city entailing right to the city boomerang on the city by passing through certain stages but hit at the wall of urban politics, which implies some sort of vicious circle. Assuming this has become a norm in Istanbul, it is

only unexceptional that the construction of the airport had not faced a serious challenge from the very beginning. What separates the airport from the Taksim project though, besides location, timing and scale, is that it might have entailed other forms of slogans more actuating. That is, in addition to connotations the right to the city should bring about, green activism has also been leveled and even surpassed regarding the airport project. This is partly because environmentalist rhetoric in recent years itself has become so substantial that cases that normally should equally concern the right to the city can be shadowed by green activism.

4.6. Canal Istanbul Project

Canal Istanbul Project, which is an alternative waterway project to the Bosphorus that will connect the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, has been one of the most controversial mega projects in recent years challenged by planners, residents and the political parties. While the disagreement continues between the government and the opposition parties on the project, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization has accepted the final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the Canal Istanbul Project.

Great importance is attributed to the project in line with Presidency of The Republic of Turkey's Eleventh Development Plan covering the period 2019-2023, the first development plan of the presidential government, and with the 2023 economic targets (The Grand National Assembly Of Turkey, 2019). However, the project has been very controversial since its introduction. There are mainly two opposite views regarding the construction of the Canal project.

The supposed necessity of Canal Istanbul has been reflected in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports published in recent years. In the relevant section of the EIA report, which responded to the debates about whether the Canal project was necessary emphasized that

> The increase in the economic activities in the world every year has caused the number of ships passing through the Bosphorus to increase in parallel. (…) With the planned project, it is aimed to minimize ship traffic that threatens life and cultural assets in the Bosphorus, and to provide alternative access to ships exposed to heavy traffic at both entrances of the Bosphorus (Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019).

Another point put forward by experts who support the construction of the project to ensure security in the Bosphorus is that it is a prestigious transportation project, similar to Istanbul Airport that will serve Istanbul's vision of becoming a global city,.

The other group opposes the project on the grounds that it is not in line with public interest and scientific justification. For this reason, experts and some political parties react to the EIA positive decision on the construction of Canal Project.

Environmental concerns about the project are at the forefront compared to other issues. The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), which is known to form the biggest opposition on the subject, also claims that the project will harm the environment. TMMOB warned that it would destroy water reservoirs such as Küçükçekmece Lake, Sazlıdere and Terkos Dam (TMMOB, 2019).

The group, which advocates that the Canal is not a transportation project, is still raising their objections that it is a new annuity (rentier) and real estate project to make Turkish and foreign businessmen with close links to the ruling party which will provide access and opportunity to build new commercial projects to uninhabited green regions in the north if Istanbul and Thrace Region together with the Istanbul Airport, the 3rd Bosphorus Bridge and the Canakkale Bridge.

In addition to professional chambers, forums and groups such as Northern Forest Defense, Istanbul City Defense continue to publish leaflets and make their voices heard mostly on social media and forums in order to oppose the project. While expressing opinions and criticisms about the project, it is seen that political parties and municipal members often confront each other in this process. Although the development plan of Canal Istanbul project was approved, debates about the project continue.

As mentioned previously, the Gezi did not produce leaders, which might have played a role on why it was short-lived. What we have seen since then though, especially as in the case of the canal project, as the logic of action is the opposition to another mega project seems to be a patronage of the political establishment, namely politicians and parties. To put it another way, the everyday politics of self-expression seen against the Taksim project seems to have been replaced or undertaken by the established media and mainstream opposition. Furthermore, the urban resistance against the canal project, if any, does not appear in daily actions and practices. The communication in the canal case is mediated unlike that of the Gezi. Surveys and polls

have emerged as a means of not only checking the pulse of the public opinion, but also of another logic of action. For instance, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, at a time when the canal debates intensified in 2020, launched an online survey in August of the same year in which 64.2% of the 606,317 participants voted against the canal (IBB Kurumsal, n.d.).

4.7. Logic of Action and Neighborhood Unions

In May 2013, demonstrators arrived at Taksim Square to demonstrate the rebuilding of the Topcu Barracks into shopping malls, hotels and residences in Gezi Park, which is located next to the square, by extending the square by taking the vehicle traffic of Taksim Square into the tunnel. First impression of the authorities was that the protests broke out due to environmental concerns. The logic of action was to demonstrate and occupy. It looked rather cross-ideological and was more of a notion of front. Many people from different backgrounds participated in Gezi Park at the very early stages and then it split after the protests turned into a violent occupy-style movement. A minor group that called itself anti-capitalist Muslims and supporters of the ruling party pulled out from the square gradually. They were not a part of the movement anymore because of the clashes with the police and the attacks of the protestors. Those who continued accelerating were extremist groups who were demanding further rights for themselves and critics of the government's policies.

Gezi Park was likened to the Arab Spring by foreign media. Media reported Gezi Park as a big event, movement and showed similarities with other movements happening in many countries of the world such as Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. However, the media ignored that all these civic actions have different motivations. People and authorities have focused more on the Gezi Park protesters rather than the groups and the neighborhoods demanding city right. The most important point during the protests was neglected by the mainstream media channels which is right to the city. It is both because of the violent actions of protesters and the lack of interest in right to the city demands. This resulted in the securitization of discourse.

Presidential elections and local elections were held in Turkey in 2014, which represented a shift in the logic of action. There seemed to be a shift from mobilization to representative politics. A state of chaos seen in the first week of the riots back in May and June 2013 prompted sociopolitical concerns across the supporters of the ruling party invoking unpleasant memories

from “ancien règime’s” discriminating practices against themselves, the trauma of which was still fresh at the time, as the rhetoric among the protestors not only looked to be anti-AKP but also to be opposed to the followers of the party. These concerns translated into even more consolidation among the ruling party voters and constituencies as March 2014 local elections would prove from which AKP emerged victorious with more votes than in previous election.

2015 and 2016 saw a wave of terrorism in Turkey; bombings, clashes, mass killings and a military coup attempt. This whirlpool Turkey had been drawn into would decimate activism further together with the government-imposed restrictions on public gatherings and protests later on.

Apparently, securitization of the discourse is needed. For this reason, more laws have been passed to restrict demonstrations on grounds of terrorism. While all this was happening, mega projects and urban transformation activities proceed in the city. Istanbul faced more building projects in neoliberal policies of construction. The right to the city itself has been localized and urban activism was fragmented in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and security threats.

In 2018, Atatürk Airport was shut down and its aviation traffic was transferred to new Istanbul Airport. Before, during and after the construction of the new airport, for which millions of trees, according to The Northern Forests Defense, were cut down without any serious noteworthy public uproar quite strikingly (BIA News Desk, 2019). On one hand, this begs the question of what has become of the legacy of the Gezi Protests, while on the other it should perhaps not, given the listed developments leading up to the construction of the new airport, to be blamed rather than the Gezi itself. After all, the Gezi Park activists themselves in the first place were charged with having tried to overthrow the government, let alone restrictions on urban activism resulting from domestic political reasons. However, the political background alone should not suffice to prove why the cutting of millions of trees did not received enough resistance similar to what was seen in Taksim a few years ago. Location, scale of the project, amount of media coverage and fragmentation of the activism can be named too as to why the environmentalist spirit and contention of the Gezi did not find its way to the new airport. But more importantly, logic of action which saw shift-of-axis in that right to the city was replaced or shadowed by relevant yet different sentiments such as labor rights especially with the impact of work accidents at the construction area.

As mentioned above, the legacy of the Gezi Park spirit withered away long before the opposition resumed on social media and on-field activism proceeded with micro-scale. One immediate offspring of the Gezi was the initiative called the City Defenses that emerged in 2014. Yet it was going to suffer the same fate, namely, having faded away as also uttered by their followers (Zihnioglu, 2019, p. 13). The Gezi Party was also another legacy of the protests whose registration was approved by the Ministry of the Interior in October 2013. But that was going to turn out to be ephemeral too as it failed to leave mark and became defunct in 2017. One last noteworthy failed initiative was the United June Movement embarking on in 2014. What all these failures had in common was that their logic of action focused more on structural problems, irrelevant of the right to the city, such as unemployment, inequality of income, even foreign policy of the government, despite the fact that they spun off the Gezi Park protests. The right to the city seems to have proved a means rather than an end. The logic of action in the right to the city was "politicized."

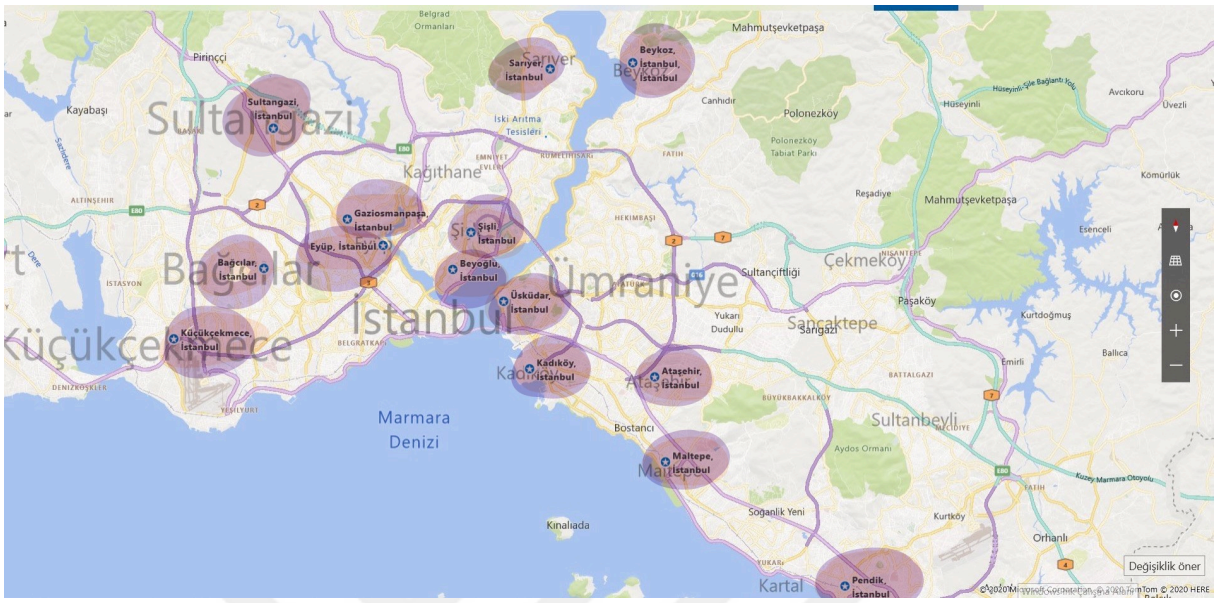


Figure 8. Neighborhood Unions in Istanbul (Yazici & Adanalı, 2016)

34 associations and 9 neighborhood cooperation are members of Istanbul Neighborhood Association and facilitated by the One Hope Association, a voluntary solidarity organization which aims to maintain their struggles in law and planning solidarity with the neighborhoods, primarily against investors, municipalities and TOKI's initiatives in the city.

Neighborhood unions already existed prior to May 2013 as already mentioned above, for which reason it will not be apt to treat them as a byproduct of the Gezi Park protests.

> Before this uprising, occasional mobilizations and campaigns had taken place, dealing with topics such as the over-exploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation, the destruction of historic buildings, forced displacement due to large-scale development projects, labour issues in different sectors, and human rights. These protests, however, were barely visible in the media, despite their regular presence in the public space. None of these protests seemed to find significant supports in society. They remained limited to intellectual circles and specific professional groups,… (Erdi, 2016, p. 284)

Activism-wise, one can rightly claim these initiatives had preceded the Gezi demonstrations; yet the latter should not be considered a bottom-up development, as the former as just quoted was neither contentious nor popular in essence. But the fact that they had kept a low profile without getting involved with contentious politics make these organizations noteworthy in the

post-Gezi context, particularly to what extent they have gained “contention” and “mobilization” from the Gezi example.

Neither of these concepts has been unusual for Turkish political activism culture but from 1980’s military coup onward, one can easily come to claim that the contentious activism has been hibernating, especially following deliberate apoliticism exerted by the state. What the Gezi did was to revive both political activism and civic activism before the Turkish public opinion. This has become tangible for the first time ever. Thus, post-Gezi neighborhood activism deserves scholarly attention as to whether 2013 activism managed to set an example for the former as well as whether it contributed in terms of making the state behaving more reflexive towards the neighborhoods to impede or take seriously their actions.

4.8. New Post-Gezi Strategies

Turn of events causing languishment of the Gezi dynamism later on also necessitated new activism strategies to pursue. However, the Gezi quickly started, it equally fragmented to that extent. This fragmentation can be true for the cacophonous yet united vista the Gezi protests presented during the incident. But it also, ironically, fragmented into veins of Istanbul, namely the neighborhoods. The irony of this comes from the fact that mobility progressed outward, that is from macro to micro, post-Gezi, but after the fragmentation, as one can say the shift should have been vice versa.

In accordance with this new shift, the post-Gezi activists, some of whom were named already, undertook different strategies to push on with the Gezi spirit, urban activism and contentious politics; not always at the same level of contention though with that of the Gezi. The strategies can be summarized as follows: first of all, speaking of contention, the Northern Forests Defense resumed organizing protests. Interestingly though, the group excessed its boundaries and coordinated demonstrations against hydroelectric plants in Izmir and the Thrace region and even held a protest against a lignite mining project in Germany in front of the Germany Consulate in Istanbul (Cherif et al., 2019, p. 13). This may point to a raised environmental awareness towards similar environment-threatening cases on a macro level, but it actually also points out a disorder of attention, that post-Gezi activism had suffered most.

Other strategies came in the form of cooperation between different civic groups as activists had to cooperate with each other in the face of decrease in the number of people actively participating in the campaigns; coordinating community gatherings and activities such as trekking in the forests in Istanbul; and voluntary monitoring against electoral fraud in the general and local elections (Zihinoglu, 2019, p. 14). According to some studies, emergence of new spaces such as urban forums, guerilla gardens, and collectivist businesses that are alternative to neoliberal capitalism were among other initiatives which emerged after the Gezi protests but they were going to be short-lived too. (Tanulku, Basak, 2019,)

Taking these into consideration, neighborhood unions and strategies pursued since May-June 2013 have amounted to even more politicized mosaic of discourse and rhetoric similar to the "Gezi platform" but to also everyday action from activism yet having failed to make the impact that the Gezi had in a very short span of time. In other words, this new post-Gezi era has also suffered from the dividedness of priorities, among which the right to the city has remained on the sidelines.

But all this is partly because of contentious politics itself, because it is not immune to interventions of the state. That is to say, activism out of the contentious politics can be interrupted with bans and restrictions. Thus, the contentious politics may fail bringing about change. Secondly, there was no ideology in this post-Gezi shift. Rather, the shift itself was ideological. And there was no ideology to make the shift.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Today, the question of who owns Istanbul has never been as relevant as before. As one of the fastest growing cities, and one of the central financial hubs in the Middle East and Black Sea in recent years, Istanbul has witnessed a huge, unparalleled amount of construction, expansion in urban space, rising number of inhabitants and dwellers, as well as waves of globalism and neoliberalism. This brought many questions related to urban activism, urban space, urbanity, urbanization; changing notions of citizenship, civicness, and civility to the attention of researchers. What the outbreak of the Gezi protests did was to draw attention to the right to the city in Istanbul, and the politics of spatiality.

The research on Gezi Park Protests produced a voluminous literature since summer 2013 with regard to both, nature of the protests and rise of social activism, as well as the right to the city and urban politics in Istanbul. The event developed beyond one central leadership or dominant discourse, and this translated into the academic literature around being so diverse in its approach. Despite an abundance of scholarly standpoints that are all valuable in their own rights, the majority of the scholarship has neglected, if not failed, to handle the protests and its aftermath in terms of addressing shifting rationales. Scholarly and journalistic debates seem to have united in revolving around addressing the incident as a social movement engaged in contentious politics. The logic of action and its change over the subsequent years in Istanbul as well as emergence of "everyday life politics mobilization" was not examined beyond one event. More specifically urban activism in Istanbul in terms of its changing logic in response to the government and neoliberal stakeholders needs to be more studied, hence this was the focus of this study.

Theses, articles, essays and books concentrate on legal, economic, political dimensions and systemic reaction as a whole, without giving more attention to shifting logics of action in the last 7 years.

By contextualizing different types of urban activisms and logics of action that have been manifesting in the urban space in Istanbul since May 2013 and how the government responded, in other words urban politics took shape, this thesis attempted to explain: 1) why the Gezi Park

Protests started that big but quickly fragmented 2) why projects that are larger in scale than Taksim plan such as 3rd Istanbul Airport have attracted less opposition 3) What happened to the right of the city in Istanbul during the past years.

It is noticeable that Gezi Park protests neither started as nor evolved into a political movement akin to the Arab Spring. Yet the attention it attracted politicized it over its original motives related to environmental towards urban activism. It was rather a platform and unsurprisingly it collapsed not only because of failure of decoding it by the traditional political establishment and of the subsequent government pressure, but also of what the location and project meant to people's life. The protests cut a more cross-ideological horizon that struggled to translate into unified coordination therefore fully-fledged urban activism which poses the most important challenge regarding the Gezi Park protests the writer of this thesis argues. What is overlooked is that there was more than one logic of action: demonstrating, occupying, sit-in namely contentious politics was one facet but within the right to the city. Thus, there are different logics of action. Another thing to note is the notion of the right to the city is very holistic but it actually manifests itself in very different manners.

A shift is one of the most dramatic yet overlooked outcomes of the Gezi events. That is to say, there was a shift from activism to everyday politics, and more towards a non-movement. There are not big demonstrations anymore in Istanbul. Circumstances do not make it easy for urban activism. Housing is not anymore a neighborhood ideal but it is habitat, which is more new type of neighborhood in a city with rising mobilities and globalization. Rapid securitization of discourse in the wake of terrorist attacks and crackdowns on terrorists in bureaucracy was another significant factor that curbed activism and led to the quick demise of the legacy of the Gezi in actual politics of Turkey. The wider political context shed shadows on such type of "politics of the street" and made the tone of national interest and national security higher.

The thesis also aimed to look into the construction of the 3rd Airport and imminent Canal Istanbul in the context of post-Gezi urban activism in Istanbul as these two cases play an important role in testing the legacy of the Gezi Park activism. In addition to restrictions on demonstrations based on rising securitization in Istanbul, strict laws and increasingly national political rhetoric as well as locational facts, it can also be said that the argument of changing logic of action gives also the answer as to why the closure of long-serving Ataturk Airport and its replacement with a much bigger one in the forests of northern Istanbul by cutting down huge

green spaces and destroying lakes and lagoons, draining swamp all of which were once home to a substantial bio diversity did not spark off a Gezi-like popular uprising. That logic was not mass demonstrations or sit-ins is only one explanation of the situation. What is more important is the right to the city is not strong and visible on the civic agenda anymore. Discourse was now more of a high politics and focused rather on rights of the workers, high expenditures, or even possible aviation setbacks. What's more, these factors are mostly taken and expressed now by the established media and mainstream opposition, or even some streams within the ruling party.

What this dissertation sought to contribute is to analyze somewhat unique journey of collective action and urban activism in Istanbul noticed in post-Gezi. Bottom-up progression that we are usually familiar with social movements and Gezi-like events followed a slightly opposite course. In other words, the Gezi Park protests did not develop out of micro and local level collective actions, but it developed into them afterwards. It may be said that Istanbul has had miniature Gezis undertaken by neighborhood unions, in addition to ones that already existed prior to summer 2013. On one hand, activism lost momentum as activists retreated to backstage and on the other hand miscellaneous neighborhood and zonal organizations such as Northern Forest Defense came to prominence but with lacking political force and effectiveness.

The making of everyday life and production of urban space by the residents were also issues examined in the thesis by analyzing post-Gezi activism in terms of neighborhood unions and non-movement. What is important is, no matter what and how ineffective, existence of neighborhood unions somewhat keep urban activism potentially vivid. This assertion actually carries two aspects: one is related to modest campaigning organizations kindled with the effect of the Gezi Park protests, and two is to long-running social non-movement in Istanbul that were produced by rural migrants who flocked to the city from the mid-20th century onward, namely gecekondus as mentioned previously. Both realities amount to everyday neighborhood activism and what makes them crucial is the fact that the more people's everyday life is touched, the more urban activism can be sustainable. By reason of ever-changing habitat and urban fabric with for example gated communities mushrooming over Istanbul and its suburbs, the number of people engaging in the shift from everyday life to contentious politics is getting increasingly scarce now which is why current non-movement cases in the city are not evolving into contentious politics. But urban activism occurs bottom-up if people share more interests linked to their lifeworld. These neighborhood unions and gecekoundu non-movement can potentially ascend to contentious politics if an ideology is added to make their formations more

complicated. The morphology as well as the frames of meaning can alter logics of action, and always carry a potential of shifting social maps and power relations. More exploration over longer periods of time might lead us to more accurate results and allow better anticipation of the dynamic of the urban space that will develop in the future.

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