SPACE PRODUCTION THROUGH GRAFFITI:
UNDERSTANDING THE 2013 APPROPRIATION OF TAKSİM IN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

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This study is about graffiti, an umbrella term for spatial practices such as mural writing and spray-painting. To evaluate their potential as sources in history of space from below, the case of İstanbul is examined from a broad perspective. In 2013, graffiti reached a historic peak in spread with the Gezi resistance, which started in Taksim-İstanbul. With the crackdown, they were erased. Censorship was nothing new to the local collective memory, nor was territorial marking via political slogans and collective signatures. Emerged in the 1960s and widespread in the 1970s, the practice halted following the 1980 coup but re-emerged in the late 1980s. Notwithstanding, the Gezi graffiti were mostly approached as a single case study. To investigate dis/continuity and address the gap in the research on graffiti in Turkey, the study first historicises the practice through an overview starting from the 1960s. Then, it contextualises graffiti drawing attention on space politics in İstanbul in the early 2010s, years of great visibility as global city. Lastly, it visualises how the Gezi resistance resulted in the appropriation of Taksim and turned it into a global street, i.e., space to reclaim the right to the city. Examined through Lefebvrian theory and concepts by Sassen, hundreds of graffiti collected via archival and street ethnographic research suggests two main findings. First, walls speak and echo resistance, especially when silenced. Second, graffiti mocking hegemonic power are historically correlated to graphic satire, and this suggests the need for further, collaborative research on transgenerational aspects of spatial resistance.

Keywords: graffiti, Lefebvre/space production, İstanbul, Gezi/Taksim resistance, global city/global street

ÖZ

GRAFİTİ ARACILIĞIYLA MEKÂN ÜRETİMİ:
TAKSİM'İN 2013'TE SAHİPLENİLİŞİNİ BAĞLAMI İÇİNDE ANLAMAK

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Bu çalışma, duvara yazma ve sprey boyama gibi mekânsal pratikler için kullanılan bir şemsiye terim olan grafiti hakkındadır. Grafitinin mekânın aşağıdan tarihinde kaynak olarak taşıdığı potansiyeli değerlendirmek amacıyla, İstanbul örneği geniş bir perspektiften incelenmektedir. 2013 yılında Taksim-İstanbul'da başlayan Gezi direnişiyle grafitilerin yayılmasında tarihi bir zirveye ulaşılmış ancak uygulanan baskılarla silinmişlerdir. Aslında sansür de, siyasi sloganlar ve toplu imzalar yoluyla yapılan bölgesel işaretleme de yerel kolektif hafıza için yeni değildir. 1960'larda ortaya çıkan ve 1970'lerde yaygınlaşan bu tür mekânsal pratikleri 1980 darbesinin ardından durmuş; fakat 1980'lerin sonlarında tekrar ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Buna karşın, Gezi grafitisi çoğunlukla tekil bir vaka çalışması olarak ele alınmaktadır. Türkiye'de grafiti araştırmalarındaki kesintileri/sürekliliği araştırmak ve eksikliği gidermek için, çalışma önce 1960'lardan başlayarak genel bir bakış aracılığıyla pratiği tarihselleştirmektedir. Sonrasında, küresel kent olarak önemli bir görünürlüğe sahip olduğu 2010'ların başında İstanbul'daki mekân siyasetine dikkat çeken grafitileri bağlamsallaştırılmaktadır. Son olarak, Gezi direnişinin nasıl Taksim'e sahip çıkılmasıyla sonuçlandığını ve bu alanı nasıl küresel sokağa, yani kent hakkını geri alma mekanına dönüştürdüğünü görselleştirmektedir. Lefebvre'in kuramı ve Sassen'in kavramları üzerinden incelendiğinde, arşiv ve sokak etnografik araştırmalarıyla toplanan yüzlerce grafiti iki temel bulguyu öne sürüyor: İlk olarak, duvarlar konuşur ve özellikle susturulduğunda direnişi yankılar. İkinci olarak, hegemonik güçle alay eden grafiti tarihsel açıdan grafik hicivle ilişkilidir ve bu durum, mekânsal direnişin nesiller ötesi yönleri hakkında daha fazla ve işbirliğine dayalı araştırmaya ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: grafiti, Lefebvre/mekân üretimi, İstanbul, Gezi/Taksim direnişi, küresel kent/küresel sokak

To my parents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1UP	One United Power
AKB	Avrupa Kültür Başkenti (European Capital of Culture)
AKM	Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (Atatürk Cultural Centre)
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
AİTİA	Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi (Ankara Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences)
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
CKMP	Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi (Republican Villager Nation Party)
Dev-Genç	Devrimci Gençlik (Revolutionary Youth)
Dev-Sol	Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left)
Dev-Yol	Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path)
DİSK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Trade Unions)
DKD	Devrimci Kadınlar Dernekleri (Revolutionary Women Associations)
DÖB	Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği (Revolutionary Students Union)
ECoC	European Capital of Culture
ESP	Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi (Socialist Party of the Oppressed)
EU	European Union
FKF	Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu (Federation of Debate Clubs)
HKP	Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi (People's Liberation Party)
İGD	İlerici Gençlik Derneği (Progressive Youth Association)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KGÖ	Komünist Gençlik Örgütü (Communist Youth Organization)
LAF	Lise Anarşist Faaliyet (High School Anarchist Action)
MESS	Türkiye Metal Sanayicileri Sendikası (Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries)
METU	Middle East Technical University
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
MKP	Maoist Komünist Partisi (Maoist Communist Party)
MLKP	Marksist Leninist Komünist Parti (Marxist–Leninist Communist Party)
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ÖDP	Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (Freedom and Solidarity Party)
ODTÜ	Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi
SDP	Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi (Socialist Democracy Party)
SFK	Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif (Socialist Feminist Collective)
SYKP	Sosyalist Yeniden Kuruluş Partisi (Socialist Refoundation Party)
SODAP	Sosyalist Dayanışma Platformu (Socialist Solidarity Platform)
TD	Taksim Dayanışması (Taksim Solidarity)
TDK	Türk Dil Kurumu (Turkish Language Association)
THKO	Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu (The People's Liberation Army of Turkey)
TİKKO	Türkiye İşci ve Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu (Turkish Workers and Peasant's Liberation Army)
TİP	Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Workers Party of Turkey)
TKP	Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey)
THKP/C	Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey)
TKP/ML	Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist (Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist-Leninist)
TMMOB	Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects)
TOKI	Toplu Konut İdaresi (Mass Housing Directorate)
TÜSTAV	Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Arastırma Vakfı (Social History Research Foundation of Turkey)
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
ÜGD	Ülkücü Gençler Derneği / Ülkücü Gençlik Derneği (Idealistic Youth Association)
ÜYD	Ülkü Yolu Derneği (Idealist Path Association)
WWII	World War II

AN ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND JARGON

This illustrated glossary is not comprehensive but includes terms relative to the context of Turkey and suggests also new terms for specific genres and sub-genres[1]. The glossary is also annotated and contains cross-references with a twofold purpose: to introduce the subject matter to the unacquainted, and to preliminary show that heterogeneity of terminology results from heterogeneity of style, content, purposes, and actors involved. The listing order is alphabetical.

***Askeri gurur duvar yazıları* (conscription pride wall writings).** Term suggested for a sub-genre of mural writings by male citizens manifesting pride following enlistment for state service in the armed forces (compulsory in Turkey). Recurring elements include: the soldier's name, the sentence "*o şimdi asker*" (he is now a soldier), and the *tertip numarası* (military service number), the latter composed by the year of birth and the number of the service term. See also '*duvar yazıları'* (wall writings)*.*

Figure 1 A conscription pride wall writing.

Bombing [a city]. Tagging as many walls and places as possible for ludic and competitive purposes (e.g., hunting fame with the community of writers). See 'tag', 'tagging', and 'writer'.

Collective signature graffiti. Term suggested for graffiti consisting of names, acronyms and/or symbols of collective actors (e.g., political parties, organisations, and movements). In

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[1] Unless specified, the photographs were taken by the author in Istanbul in the early 2010s.

some cases, signatures can consist only of substantivized adjectives (e.g., "revolutionaries" or "feminists"). Often aimed at territorial marking via replication of the same content.

Figure 2 A collective signature by *Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif* (Socialist Feminist Collective).

Crew. Equivalent of *tayfa* in Turkish**.** A group of (hip-hop) signature graffiti writers who often work together and usually share the same style. See also 'hip-hop', 'tag', and 'tagging'.

Culture Jamming. An awareness raising technique known also as 'subvertising' (from 'subvert' and 'advertising'). Usually, subversion via alteration and/or parody targets advertising messages and logos.

Figure 3 Culture jamming.

Duvar karikatürleri **(mural cartoons).** Satirical cartoons painted on walls.

Duvar yazıları **(wall writings).** Handwritten writings devoid of complex stylistic features. The use of visual elements is limited (e.g., to symbols). Purposes and thus contents vary: left-wing and right-wing political slogans, play on words, jokes, poems, swearwords, football teams' names, and so on. Called also "graffiti" since the late 1980s (e.g., see Metis Publications, 1989). For sub-genres, see '*askeri gurur duvar yazıları*' (conscription pride wall writings), 'collective signature graffiti', 'graffiti for agitprop', 'graffiti for counterpropaganda', 'graffiti for political propaganda', 'perpetrator graffiti', and '*sokak şiiri*' (street poetry).

Figure 4 Wall writing by a revolutionary organisation of the 1970s (Source: TÜSTAV)

Figure 5 Wall writings, one of which signed the circle-A (symbol of anarchism).

Figure 6 A wall writing: "lunatic people shouldn't come".

Graffiti. Term commonly but not exclusively used for text-based tags as opposed to more visual-based street art. In this study, it is however used as an umbrella term for heterogenous traditions (e.g., tagging, street art, wall writings). See the related entries and also the entries of their sub-genres.

Figure 7 Tags.

Figure 8 Street art.

Figure 9 A wall writing.

Graffiti for agitprop. Term suggested for slogans and collective signatures by revolutionary socialists (e.g., political parties' acronyms)[2]. Used also for mural paintings and mural cartoons. See the relative entries.

Figure 10 "Damn America". Likely METU. In the late 1960s. (Source: TÜSTAV)

Figure 11 "Damn Imperialism" signed by *Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi* (People's Liberation Party).

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[2] Agitprop is the abbreviated form of the Russian term *agitatsiya propaganda* (agitation propaganda), a political strategy of the revolutionary socialist tradition aimed at class consciousness raising and mass mobilization via various media, the latter including but not limited to written speech (e.g., slogans) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998; Lenin, 1902).

Graffiti for counterpropaganda. Term suggested for graffiti opposing far-right propaganda. Tradition initiated by the anti-Nazi resistance group White Rose in the early 1940s (Weiße Rose Stiftung e.V. 2018) [3]. Counterpropaganda can involve overwriting.

Figure 12 "Down with Hitler". Munich University façade. 1943 (Source: Weiße Rose Stiftung e.V. 2018)

Figure 13 Swastikas overwritten with the prohibition symbol.

Graffiti for political propaganda. Term used for handwritten or stencilled slogans and collective signature graffiti by ultranationalists. Suggested to differentiate them from those for leftist agitprop although, in Turkey, the term "propaganda" is actually used for visual and written material produced also by the radical left in the 1970s (e.g., see Aysan, 2013: 217)[4]. For sub-genres, see *'intikam duvar yazıları* (revenge wall writings)', and 'perpetrator graffiti'. See also 'stencilling'.

Figure 14 Acronym and symbol of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party)

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[3] For Nazi propaganda, graffiti were also used (O'Shaughnessy, 2009).

[4] With regard to "propaganda", I also acknowledge that the term has lost its original neutral connotation. Nowadays, it is no longer used to describe any material for the promotion of a political view but is commonly understood in its pejorative connotation as synonymous of manipulation (Smith, 1999). However, any more detailed discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this study.

Graffiti for spatial practices of everyday life. Graffiti to influence residents and/or passers-by's behaviour in outdoor space for common usage. For earlier examples, see the case of the so-called hobo graffiti (Abarca, 2018).

Figure 15 Graffiti for everyday spatial practice: "don't throw garbage [here]".

Graffiti of the Gezi resistance. Uncountable wall writings, graffiti for agitprop and street artivism works marking the territories under temporary occupation during the 2013 Gezi resistance. Humorous language is a characteristic common to many of them. See also 'graffiti for agitprop' and 'street artivism'.

Figure 16 Graffiti of the 2013 Gezi resistance.

Figure 17 Humorous graffiti: "the resistance has not finished"; "where are you Batman[?]".

Graffitiing. Umbrella term suggested to refer to practice of marking space for common visibility with textual and/or visual messages whose purposes vary.

Graffiti and street art. Multidisciplinary scholarship on the subject matter (e.g., see Ross et al., 2017; and Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi, 2016).

Greyfication. Term suggested for the censorship of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance, most of which were covered up via grey paint.

Figure 18 Greyfication. Aftermath of the Gezi resistance.

Hip-hop. A cultural and artistic movement born in the 1970s in the U.S. as an urban "Afro-Latin influenced art form" of street culture, by now become "a lingua franca" challenging the boundaries between so-called "high" and "low" art, and featuring a variety of activities: graffiti, rap music, and acrobatic street dance, the latter known as breakdance (Chang, 2007). Besides them, street activities tied to hip-hop (graffiti) include also acrobatic cycling, skating, and skateboarding (the latter extensively discussed by the architectural historian Ian Borden, 2001). See photographs taken at the 2012 edition of the Graffiti festival "Meeting of AllStars" in Gezi Park.

Figure 19 Breakdance.   Figure 20 Skating.   Figure 21 Acrobatic cycling.

***Intikam duvar yazıları* (revenge wall writings).** Term suggested for slogans with nationalist content that security forces forced political inmates to write on prisons' walls during the 1980-1983 military regime (Bozarslan, 2006). See also 'graffiti for political propaganda'.

King (or 'queen' for women writers). A skilled (hip-hop) writer whose reputation is higher compared to others. See also 'hip-hop', 'tagging', and 'writer'.

Legal wall. A large-size graffiti made upon receiving permission from owners or authorities.

Mural. A large, elaborate and often legal wall painting.

Wheatpasting. A street art technique: transferring to walls of paper-based works similar to posters previously produced elsewhere (e.g., in studios). Content can be both visual and textual.

Perpetrator graffiti. Term suggested by Protner (2018) for wall writings with violent content made by the military in urban war zones in Kurdish-majority provinces of Turkey in the period 2015 – 2016. In this study, its use is extended to a sub-genre of graffiti for far-right political propaganda, namely wall writings for territorial marking made by ultranationalists in urban warfare zones in Alevis-majority towns of Turkey in the period 1978 – 1980. See also 'duvar yazıları (wall writings)' and 'graffiti for political propaganda'.

Figure 22 A perpetrator graffiti with intimidating content: "blood touched the tooth of the wolf, be afraid".
(Source: Mekâna Dair, 2022)

Piece. Short for "masterpiece". A large and complex (hip-hop) signature graffiti consisting of stylistically elaborated letters and ornamental details such as arrows, symbols and shadows.

Figure 23 A piece (short for "masterpiece").

Post-graffiti. A synonym for street art used by scholars claiming that street art is the outcome of the stylistic development of signature graffiti (e.g., see Wacklawek, 2011). The term is object of criticism. For instance, it wrongly suggests that signature graffiti known as tagging is something of the past (Blanché, 2015). See also 'signature graffiti', 'tag', and 'tagging'.

Punk graffiti. Handwritten graffiti related to the punk culture (e.g., slogans, bands' names, name of the writer). Emerged in the late 1970s independently from the tagging tradition born in the U.S. (Abarca, 2008b).

Figure 24 Punk graffiti.

Self-authorised. Term suggested by Blanché (2015) to highlight that, often lacking authorisation, street art is free from the taste of authorities such as sponsors, homeowners, or the state. Its use can be extended to any genre and sub-genre.

Signature graffiti. Term commonly used for (hip-hop) graffiti (e.g., see 'tags'). In this study, it is used also for other types of wall writings (e.g., names and acronyms of political organisations). See also 'collective signature graffiti'.

Sokak şiiri (street poetry). Term commonly used in Turkey for wall writings consisting of poems and witty play on words (Bal, 2014; and Çakır, 2015). See also '*duvar yazıları* (wall writings)'.

Figure 25 Street poetry. A verse of a poem by Cemal Süreya: "Life is short, the birds fly". Yalova, date missing. (Source: Wagner, 2014)

Spray-panting. Technique used to write and/or paint on mural surfaces and other surfaces of the built environment with paint under pressure.

Stencilling. Street art technique facilitating repetition. Spray-painting visual and/or textual content with the help of a stencil, i.e., a thin sheet with cut out figures, patterns or letters.

Figure 26 A stencilled street artwork.

Sticker. Adhesive designed and printed beforehand. Used to tag space without having to write. Often, stickers recall the graphic elements of the graffiti writers and street artists.

Figure 27 Sticker by Icy and Sot, renowned street artists from Iran.

Figure 28 Street artwork by Icy and Sot.

Street art. A broad category commonly used for works varying in content, purposes and involved techniques (e.g., painting, spray-painting, stencilling, pasting-up, and stickers) (Wacklawek, 2011; Taş & Taş, 2014; Çakır, 2016; Erdem, 2018). Often but not always, the content is visual. For some, street art is the outcome of the stylistic development of tagging (e.g., Wacklawek, 2011). Yet, this idea is controversial. With an androcentric language recalling the hegemonic masculinity of the graffiti scene argued by Sezer (2016), Abarca (2008), argued that graffiti and street art are not "father and son" but "brothers, both born during the 1960s as a response to the corporate monologue of the society of the spectacle".

Figure 29 A street
artwork.

Figure 30 A street artwork by Cins

Figure 31 A street artwork by
No More Lies.

Street artivism. A sub-genre of media activism, i.e., campaigning for political and social change via various means. The use of street art techniques to spread political views can cross the political spectrum. In this study, the term is however used to indicate graffiti made by civil society actors and activists of new social movements for social justice so as to differentiate them from both graffiti for agitprop by revolutionary socialists[5].

Figure 32 Street artivism vs. police brutality in the case of Abdurrahman Sözen, died under custody in 2009 (İzmir).

Tag. Stylized signature written with markers or spray paint. Pseudonyms and acronyms of individual writers but also of groups (see 'crew'). Size, degree of stylistic elaboration and thus terminology can vary. See 'piece', 'throwie', and 'wildstyle'. Early tags in U.S. cities in the late 1960s and 1970s were combinations of names, diminutives, and street numbers (e.g., TAKI183).

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[5] The reasons for differentiation are two. First, the terms activism and activist are commonly used by and for civil society actors emerged in Turkey in the 2000s (e.g., NGOs). Second, civil society actors and activists of new social movements can but do not necessarily share political views with revolutionary socialists.

| Figure 33 Tags. | Figure 34 A wall filled in tags. | Figure 35 Tag by 'Taki183'. New York, 1970s (Source: Kennedy, 2013) |

Tagging. Signing as many places as possible for ludic and competitive purposes: territorial marking, manifestation of presence, affirmation of identity, and fame, the latter depending on style, risk of the location, and territorial extension (Abarca, 2008b and 2012; Waclawek, 2011; Brighenti, 2010; Halsey and Pederick, 2010; Lachmann, 1988; Nelli, 2012 [1978]; Ley and Cybriwsky, 1974). Since the importance of urban exploration is equal or even greater than graphic design, tagging is closer to activities such as flanerie and parkour than to mural painting (Abarca, 2012). In Turkey like elsewhere, tagging is by now closely associated with the hip-hop movement (Sarıyıldız, 2007; Üzüm Tan, 2010). See also 'hip-hop'.

Figure 36 Collage showing the same signature graffiti in various places.

Throw-Up (or throwie). A tag-like writing with bubble letters and often filled with colour. See also 'tag'.

Figure 37 A throwie. İstanbul. 2012.

Wallscape. Term suggested to refer to a view or scene of walls.

Whole train. Self-explanatory term for trains completely covered in (hip-hop) signature graffiti.

Wildstyle. Highly stylised (hip-hop) signature graffiti type of lettering. Usually difficult if not impossible to be read by the non-acquainted (e.g., non-writers and/or non-aficionados).

Figure 38 Wildstyle. İstanbul. 2012.

Writer. A (hip-hop) signature graffiti performer/artist but the use of the term can be extended to performers of other genres because strict stylistic boundaries can be problematised for reasons explained in the Chapter 1, the Introduction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This cross-disciplinary study in history of architecture and urban sociology is about graffiti, an umbrella term for heterogenous genres including but not limited to wall writings and spray-paintings. The case of Istanbul is examined with the aim of evaluating the potential of graffiti as sources in history of space from below. The ultimate focus in on the grassroots appropriation of the Taksim area during the 2013 Gezi resistance, which has been the longest and most widespread uprising occurred in Turkey to date. The perspective is however multiscalar, namely transepochal and translocal.

In 2013, graffiti reached a historic peak in spread when a protest camp against the top-down transformation of Taksim developed into an anti-government uprising but were then erased with the crackdown. Censorship was nothing new to the local collective memory, nor was territorial marking via political slogans and collective signatures. Emerged in the 1960s and widespread in the 1970s, the practice temporarily halted following the 1980 coup. In the late 1980s, graffiti re-appeared in the streets but, unlike in the 1970s, they mostly consisted of witty writings. Notwithstanding, the Gezi graffiti and even the humorous language characterising many of them were mostly approached as a single case study.

To address the gap in historical research on graffiti in Turkey, investigate dis/continuity, and thus understand the 2013 appropriation of Taksim in context, hundreds of graffiti are here examined through Lefebvrian theory and concepts by Saskia Sassen. First, the local is historicised through a detailed overview that retraces the spatial and political use of graffiti in Turkey from the 1960s to the early 2010s. Then, the global is localised through the context analysis of graffiti whose content draw attention on space production in İstanbul in the early 2010s, years of great visibility as global city. Lastly, the interaction of the global and local dynamics is further deciphered through a visual chronicle of the Gezi resistance and its repression so as to understand how the temporary appropriation of space turned Taksim into a global street, i.e., space to reclaim the right to the city.

The rationale behind the chosen framework and the resulting trajectory of the narrative are explained more in detail in this introductory chapter, which first of all clarifies the use of the term graffiti.

1.1. Graffiti, an umbrella term for both textual and visual practices

In this study, the term graffiti is used to indicate heterogenous practices with distinctive features: graffiti often properly called as such (e.g., tags), street art, *duvar yazıları* (wall writings), and their sub-genres. However, their heterogeneity in form, content, purposes and actors involved is not overlooked. If the context of the discussion requires it, I in fact use various specific terms whose meanings and use were already explained in the Glossary. In this section, the purpose is another: to justify the choice of using of graffiti as an umbrella term by problematising a style-based categorisation that is widely but not unanimously accepted.

Within the so-called scholarship on graffiti and street art, the term 'graffiti' is often used to distinguish the predominantly but not exclusively textual language of tagging from the predominantly but not exclusively visual language of street art, the latter being a broad category under which all that is not tagging is basically grouped (Blanché, 2015; Abarca, 2012; Waclawek, 2011). Besides this, I acknowledge that practices and techniques involved in the making can obviously vary, and that typographic elements such as texture and colour can affect the viewer differently[6]. However, I also acknowledge that strict stylistic taxonomic boundaries are being increasingly crossed (Ross et al., 2017). In support of the idea that a clear distinction between textual and visual practices shall actually be problematised, there are several arguments that can be made. Below, just a few.

- Overemphasis on sharp distinctions entails the risk of oversimplifying complex issues via dichotomies: "tagging = bad/murals = good, illegal graffiti = vandalism/legal graffiti = art" (Lökman & Iveson, 2010, p. 136).
- Definitions of graffiti, street art and wall writings depend on the multiplicity of the actors involved (e.g., writers and street artists but also art galleries, audience, journalists, and institutional authorities)[7].
- The artistic value of various genres has been increasingly acknowledged. As a result, both street art properly called as such and tagging have been increasingly exhibited in art galleries[8].
- Language matters but is not a sufficient criterion of distinction.

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[6] In this regard, see Fraenkel (2007), who argued that the reception and production processes are equally important given that the strength and efficacy of any act of writing depends not only textual content but also on the way it is displayed.

[7] This is an argument made by Reghellin (2007) and Brighenti (2010) with specific regard to tagging but can be extended to any genre.

[8] For an emblematic example, see *Street Art*, an exhibition at the London Tate Modern (2008). For an emblematic example in Istanbul, see *Language of the Wall*, an exhibition at the Pera Museum (2014).

For instance, the language of street art is considered more accessible compared to that of graffiti, which is instead argued to be "conceptually simple" and thus "potentially accessible to everyone" but "cryptic" (Waclawek, 2011, p. 13). However, the language of street art is more accessible only in theory because, for many, it is just "visual noise" (Blanché, 2015, p. 36): More importantly, the accessibility of the language of street art depends on contextual circumstances. Like in the case of wall writings, these are not limited to the accessibility of the site; they can also include language barriers and insufficient knowledge of the spatial and historical context. That is why some "resident foreigners" (Di Cesare, 2020) who are unacquainted with the context might find it easier to comprehend tags with low and medium degree of elaboration than non-elaborated wall writings or street artworks containing references to specific events and issues.

Lastly and most importantly, the use of the terms wall writings, graffiti and street is already flexible since long in the context of Turkey. For instance, the intentional use of wall writings as synonymous of the English term graffiti goes back to the late 1980s (see Metis Publications, 1989)[9]. In the first in-depth academic study on tagging in Turkey, Sarıyıldız (2007) clearly thematised the close association of the term graffiti with tagging and hip-hop. Despite this, the semantic field of the term graffiti was further expanded and it was used also for street art (e.g., see Satıcı, 2009). As for the term street art, see instead Taş & Taş (2014), who for instance used it as a broad category under which they grouped also handwritten wall writings of the Gezi resistance.

In sum, umbrella terms can be used and are already used. In light of the reasoning made so far, I shall explain why I prefer not to use street art as such.

Unlike graffiti and wall writings, the term street art does not describe any of the practices involved in relation to the activity performed in/on physical space (e.g., signing it); rather, it is defined on the basis of symbolic meanings that, as such, may cause controversial debate. For instance, even the art market is slightly taking distance from the initial enthusiasm with the label street art since it has increasingly become a "veritable mark of urban gentrification" (Brighenti, 2016, p. 119). In addition to this, the use of street art as an umbrella term was discarded because this study does not postulate the artistic value of any typology nor aims to evaluate it[10].
Unlike street art, both graffiti and wall writings are instead terms that describe spatial activities. This is self-explanatory in the case of the compound noun wall writings. As for the noun graffiti, it is sufficient to recall its etymology. The English noun graffiti is the plural of the Italian

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[9] For later examples, see: Emiroğlu (2011 [2001]); Kavşut (2005).

[10] At this regard, I rather limit myself to endorse the argument that the definition of an artwork simply depends on the presence of an audience acknowledging and evaluating it as such (Margolis, 1999).

"*graffito*", which derives from the Latin noun "*graphium*" (a scribble) and the Greek verb "*gràphein*" (to scratch, draw, write) (Dizionario Etimologico, n.d.; Etymonline, n.d.). To explain why both the terms graffiti and wall writings could be used as umbrella terms, I am going to recall their common understanding, i.e., that acknowledged also by language dictionaries.

In Turkish, the English noun graffiti can be translated with "*duvar yazısı*" and refers to "writing or pictures painted on walls and public places, usually illegally" (Cambridge Dictionary online, n.d.). According also to the online Turkish-English Dictionary Tureng (n.d.), "graffiti" can be translated as "*duvar yazısı*" (or, in the plural, as "*duvar yazıları*"). As already clarified in the Glossary, the term literally means "wall writing". With regard to the use of the term, the definition accepted by the *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Language Association, TDK) indicates that "*duvar yazısı*" can refer to any kind of writing on walls, including political slogans and including also wall writings made with specific techniques (i.e., graffiti) (Türk Dil Kurumu | Sözlük, n.d.).

Taken together, dictionary definitions suggest that "graffiti" and "*duvar yazıları*" can be used interchangeably. In order to avoid overwriting the local with a term in a foreign language, I could have used the term "*duvar yazıları*" but I discarded this option because of a specific connotation that I remarked in its everyday usage: the term is too closely associated with specific sub-genres, namely wall writings for both revolutionary agitprop and far-right propaganda. Hence, I opted for graffiti.

In conclusion, the common understanding of the English term graffiti and the common understanding of its meaning in the context of Turkey are actually sufficient to justify why it can be used to indicate both textual and visual practices regardless if the examined evidence is written, visual or both. The reasons for the very choice to address graffiti as sources in historical research on urban space are instead explained below.

1.2. Motivation, aim, and objective of the study

The idea of researching graffiti by focusing on the context of Turkey developed from a series of narrative choices and related adjustments:

- choice of a case study to historicise urban space and its relation to social change in the age of global cities;
- choice of İstanbul as a case study during the preliminary phase of the research despite the multiple novelties marking it (i.e., initial unacquaintance with the field of study and also with İstanbul, its history, and the languages spoken by its inhabitants);

- problematisation of the limitations of the abstract and culturalist perspective from which space and social change used to be initially enquired by taking into consideration the instrumentalization of space in the reproduction of uneven social relations of power;
- focus restriction on public space based on assumption that outdoor space for common visibility can provide a window into the attempts at change in power relations occurring also elsewhere (e.g., within domestic walls);
- search for a methodological lens following the suspension of the notion of public space and also of that of urban space in general because "powerful categories […] are invitations not to think" (Sassen, 2014b, p. 464);
- choice of graffiti as methodological lens.

There are multiple reasons for having chosen graffiti even though I am not a graffiti writer nor a street artist, and they are all related to a series of assumptions.

First, graffiti are relevant to the politics of space (especially when containing explicit reference to related issues but not only). For instance, they call into question property-based definitions of outdoor space for common visibility as public or private (especially when unauthorised but not only). Second, graffiti turn mural surfaces and other elements of the built environment into communicative devices. Hence, they provide unfiltered insights into ordinary people's opinions and ideas. In other words, they provide sources for the ethnography of the other based on self-representation. Third, graffiti potentially foster inclusive narratives by opening up room for the voices of the marginalized (Ross et al., 2017).

Hence, the aim of study is precisely this: to evaluate the historiographical potential of graffiti in contributing to reconstruct change in space and society from below. To achieve it, the study fulfils a series of objectives:

- historicising graffiti in the context of Turkey to reconstruct significant changes in their spatial use and thus in the use of walls;
- historicising space in İstanbul by critically examining selected graffiti containing written and/or visual reference to issues related to the politics of space in İstanbul;
- to untangle the relationship of space with social change by examining graffiti related to events of historic significance;
- providing a non-comprehensive overview of the social actors who resorted to graffiti to turn space into a communicative device;
- making distinctions among them by examining graffiti pointing at intersectional issues and struggles such as for instance those related to class and gender;
- addressing the reactions by institutional authorities;

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- highlighting historical dis/continuities in the spatial use of the practice, in the social actors, and in the institutional reactions;
- promoting intercultural dialogue by making the local context potentially accessible to the unacquainted with its language/s (e.g., via translation of textual and symbolic contents).

The trajectory summarised so far is unfolded more in detail in the next section, which explains why I conducted research in Turkey, why I chose İstanbul as a case study to historicise the global, and why I ultimately focus on Taksim in 2013 but the analytical perspective is wider and goes back to the 1960s.

1.3. Dynamic definition of the scope

The scope of the study was defined in accordance with the aim and objectives set by Englobe (Enlightenment and Global History), an EU-funded Marie Curie Initial Training Network lasted from 2010 to 2013[11]. Committed to promoting intercultural dialogue as an alternative to the "clash of cultures" narrative in the management of global conflicts, the transnational research network Englobe set out to critically examine the historical dimensions of globalisation and their transdisciplinary nature. Four working groups focused on as many key interdisciplinary aspects of global history: knowledge, perception, values and evolution. The Architectural History Program of the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara was part of the research group working on values in mixed cultural spaces and trans-European regions. After joining the program and moving to Turkey from Europe, I chose İstanbul as a case study not to evaluate its Europeanness but because its historical in-betweenness had taken on a renewed importance.

In the case of İstanbul, in-betweenness results from multi-layered functionality. As it is well-known, the territory over which the harbour city has spread over the centuries is not only a crossroads of commercial exchanges, migratory flows and thus cultural interactions; it is also object, stage, tool, and product of struggle over political authority. The former capital city of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires is not only the most populous city in Turkey and one of the most populous cities in the world; it is also the economic and cultural capital of the Turkish Republic. Since the neoliberal turn in the mid-1980s, the country's economy has been more and more driven by the real estate sector. Driven by "the fetish of growth" (Akbulut & Adaman, 2013), the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in power since 2002 has been promoting and facilitating İstanbul's re-making into a limitless construction site, which increasingly

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[11] The website of the research network (http://www.englobe-itn.net) is no longer active but information about the project can be found at CORDIS | European Commission (2022).

attracting profit-driven investments and tourists in the 2000s (Keyder, 2005, 2008, 2010). In 2005, two concomitant processes started: the negotiations of Turkey's candidacy to the EU full membership, and the initiative İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture. As briefly discussed below, the designation to European Capital of Culture boosted İstanbul's competitiveness as global city, i.e., a gateway for global flows of financial and human capital (Sassen, 2007; 2008; 2012b; 2013).

1.3.1. İstanbul in the early 2010s: a global city

In 2010, İstanbul held the 41st position in the A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index (Kearny, 2010, p. 3)[12]. As defined in the report, its case is "interesting" because its cultural experience score moved from the 43rd position in 2008 to the 31st in 2010 for reasons including but not limited to change in tourism policy (ibid., p. 11). As stressed in the report, İstanbul appeared "to be well-positioned to resume its historic role as a cultural and economic bridge between East and West" because the European Union enhanced its "global visibility" by designating it as 2010 European Capital of Culture (ibid., p. 13). On the occasion, the multi-layered identity of İstanbul and the metaphor of the bridge connecting the East and the West were both used. See the visuals below, which are photographs published on the İstanbul 2010 – ECoC website.

Figure 39 Constantinian walls and late 20th century skyscrapers. (Source: History – İstanbul 2010 – ECoC, n.d.)

Figure 40 Panoramic view of the Galata Bridge. (Source: Where to Stay – İstanbul 2010 – ECoC, n.d.)

Initiated by civil society actors and supported by state actors, the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture consisted of a mega-event: a year-long programme of cultural events and a years-long plan of tourism-oriented redevelopment aimed at the valorisation of the city's historical and cultural heritage (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Doğan & Sirkeci, 2013; Rampton et al.,

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[12] The A.T. Kearny Global Cities Index is a study conducted every two years since 2008 to ranks cities according to their global engagement across several dimensions (business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement).

2011; Göktürk et al., 2010). The renewal projects that were part of the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture sparked controversies for reasons included but not limited to the role of state actors in the destruction of architectonic heritage[13].

In 2011, the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the controversial project for the redevelopment of Taksim, an area with high symbolic meanings. Besides being the showcase of Republican values, Taksim is also a traditional place for the manifestation of the ideals of the labour movement. In addition to this, the Taksim project sparked controversies because its full implementation would have implied the enclosure of Gezi Park within a shopping centre. In 2012, grassroots mobilisations against the Taksim project led to the establishment of the platform *Taksim Dayanışma* (Taksim Solidarity). Dissent against state-led neoliberal urbanisation reached a historic peak in scale and intensity with the 2013 Gezi resistance. Below I explain its importance in the definition of spatio-temporal framework of analysis.

1.3.2. Taksim in 2013: a global street filled with graffiti

In 2013, Turkey was hit by the global wave of mass protests that had been spreading across countries including but not limited to Egypt, Syria, Greece, Spain and the United States. In late May, actors including but not limited to representatives from the Taksim Solidarity Platform, urban movements and environmental activists stopped the destruction of Gezi Park by occupying it. By early June, the crackdown on the protest camp triggered a countrywide uprising against the increasing authoritarianism of the government.

In spatial terms, the Gezi resistance turned all the urban areas where it spread into "the global street", a conceptual tool that indicates space for transnational action in the struggle of the powerless to make history by reclaiming the right to the city (Sassen, 2011 and 2013b)[14]. In Istanbul, the global street included central areas such as Taksim and the neighbouring district of Beşiktaş but also peripheral neighbourhoods (e.g., Gazi). By Taksim, I do not mean the administrative and I rather refer to epicentre of the resistance, i.e., Gezi Park, Taksim Square, and the surrounding area. As it can be seen from the map below, the surrounding area includes part of Cumhuriyet Avenue, Tarlabaşı Boulevard, İstiklal Avenue, Sıraselviler Avenue, İnönü Avenue, Mete Avenue, Asker Ocağı Avenue, and all the side streets connecting them.

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[13] For a more detailed discussion of the İstanbul 2010 – ECoC, see the second section of Chapter 3.

[14] For a more detailed explanation of the notions of global street and right to the city, see the section of this chapter about the theoretical framework, which is titled "Social production of space in the global age".
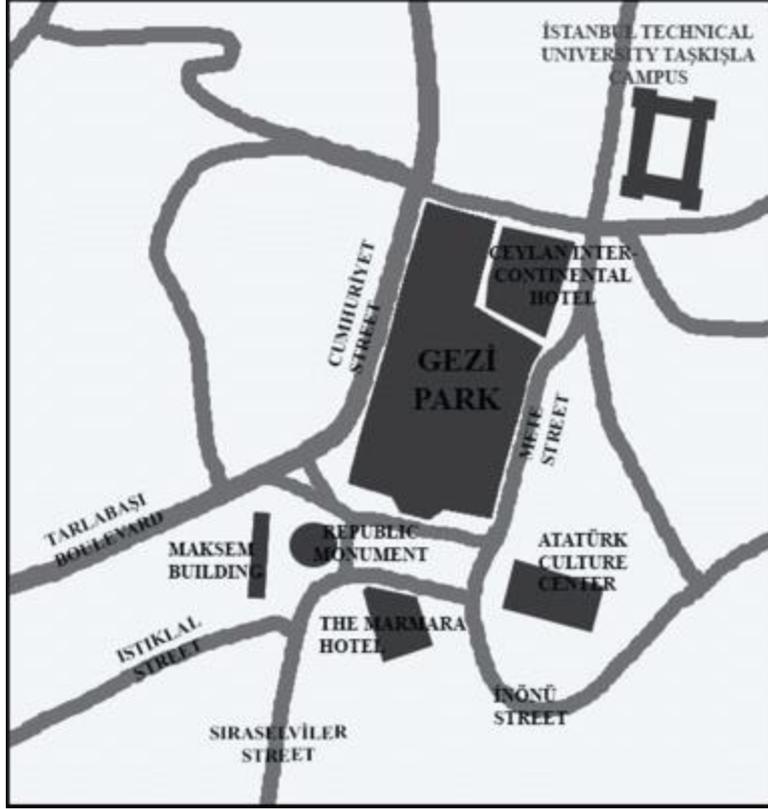
Figure 41 Taksim (Source: Sadri, 2017)

This is also the area where a large part of the graffiti that I had already been documenting were concentrated even before graffiti reached a historic peak in spread with the 2013 Gezi resistance[15]. As the protests developed into an uprising, a myriad of graffiti literally filled the translocal territory where the uprising spread. As it is well-known, many of them consisted of witty writings. As the repression followed to the brutal crackdown on the Gezi resistance started escalating, most of its graffiti were covered up with grey paint by order of authorities, and that is why I use the term greyfication to refer to the censorship measure.

For preliminary examples of the collected material showing the remarkable change in the wallscape, see Figure 42 and Figure 43: (1) a photograph showing a wall filled with graffiti, one of which attests to the irony characterising many of them ("*Fotoğrafçı Direniş Partisi*", Photographer Resistance Party), (2) a grey stripe.

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[15] For more detailed information about graffiti in İstanbul before Gezi, see the last section of Chapter 2.

| Figure 42 Graffiti of the Gezi resistance. Taksim. June 2013. | Figure 43 Greyfication of the Gezi graffiti. Taksim. July 2013. |

In line with the spirit of those days, someone commented on the research I was conducting since before Gezi with a joke: "look, all this mess only for your thesis!". However, the research that I had been conducting until then was actually sufficient to know that neither extensive territorial marking via graffiti nor erasure were novelties of the early 2010s.

1.3.3. Graffiti filling the local collective memory since the 1960s and 1970s

Unstructured interviews conducted before Gezi had already revealed information of particular relevance with regard to the streetscape of the 1960s and 1970s. Asked to share knowledge, facts and suggestions about graffiti in Turkey, interlocutors of various ages emphasised the following facts.

- Graffiti acquired political relevance with the student movement in the late 1960s.
- Walls across the country were filled with political slogans in the 1970s.
- The practice spanned the political spectrum but it was mostly leftists who used walls for political purposes.
- The practice drastically halted with the 1980 military coup.
- The repression following the 1980 coup affected also the archiving of photographic evidence of the previous decades.

In light of the information revealed by oral sources, I had initially thought to include only a few examples of the images found via archival research so as to show that graffiti were not a novelty of the early 2010s nor a prerogative of İstanbul. Following Gezi, I however opted for a more in-depth examination of the archival material to tackle questions related to historical dis/continuity. For instance, I question when laughing at hegemonic power started becoming a form of resistance given that the archival material collected before Gezi had already called for attention on this distinctive feature of the local context. The archives that I consulted are listed in the next section.

1.4. Methodology and literature review

This section is divided in three parts. First, I explain the methods for the collection of the primary sources. Then, I review the concepts and theories that provide the backbone of the analytical framework. Finally, I review the literature on the subject of graffiti in Turkey and, in light of the state of the art, I highlight how this study can contribute to address the gap in the related research.

1.4.1. Archival research and street ethnography

The collection of primary sources relied on two main qualitative methods: (1) archival research; (2) observational documentation via street ethnographic techniques (explorative flanerie and photography).

Archival research was conducted by various means:

- requests to access personal archives;
- non-systematic research at the İstanbul-based Atatürk Library's newspaper archive;
- consultation of periodicals and documentary films under the guidance of the *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı* (TÜSTAV, Social History Research Foundation of Turkey), whose archive was only minimally and non-systematically digitized in summer 2012;
- digital flanerie on the Internet and consultation of online printed media (e.g., newspapers);
- consultation of films (e.g., see Figure 44).

Figure 44 Montage of still frames of the comedy film *Köşeyi Dönen Adam* (The Man Who Gets Rich) (Yılmaz, 1978). Writing at the bottom: "the oppression of the boss and his servants over the workers will be broken".

From March 2012 to September 2012, I conducted a pilot study to assess the feasibility of the research because the topic of graffiti in İstanbul was markedly underexplored at that time[16]. In spring & summer 2012, I observed and documented graffiti in three central districts of İstanbul:

- Beyoğlu on the southwestern side of the Bosphorus;

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[16] For more information, see the literature review section of this chapter.

- Fatih in the historical peninsula;
- Kadıköy on the southeastern side of the Bosphorus[17].
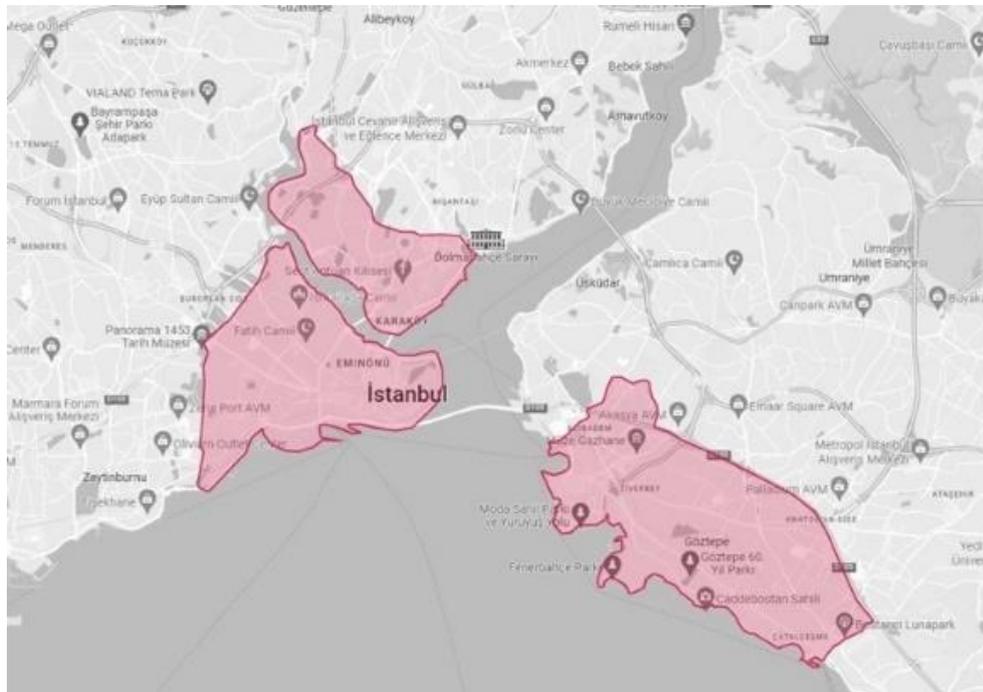
Figure 45 Municipal areas of Beyoğlu, Fatih and Kadıköy districts. (Source: Google Maps, edited by Valentina Ticino)

Without following any content-based or style-based criteria, I basically photographed as much graffiti as I could, and I also attended themed events (e.g., the 2012 edition of the authorised graffiti festival "Meeting of AllStars" in Gezi Park). See the following figures for selective examples of the collected material.

Figure 46 Wall writings. Beyoğlu, İstanbul. August 2012.

Figure 47 A throwie. Fatih, İstanbul. July 2012.

Figure 48 Street art. Kadıköy, İstanbul. June 2012.

Figure 49 Graffiti festival. Gezi Park, Beyoğlu, İstanbul. July 2012.

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[17] Via unstructured interviews conducted in summer 2012, I was suggested to explore Gazi and Gülsuyu, two highly politicised peripheral neighbourhoods inhabited by low-class internal migrants and ethnic minorities. According to the interlocutors, there I might have found graffiti for agitprop of particular interest. While acknowledging that I did not explore them, I also acknowledge that this does not affect the validity of the pilot study.

From September 2012 to December 2012, the fieldwork in İstanbu was suspended to be extended to New York and Madrid to attend mandatory parts of the training programme of the Englobe research project[18]. There, I did not conduct archival research but I photographed graffiti, I conducted unstructured interviews, and I observed writers and street artists at work at themed places and events of various types. For instance, see Figure 50, a graffiti to advertise the New York premiere of a film about state persecution against youth and street art in Guatemala (Rosales, 2010).
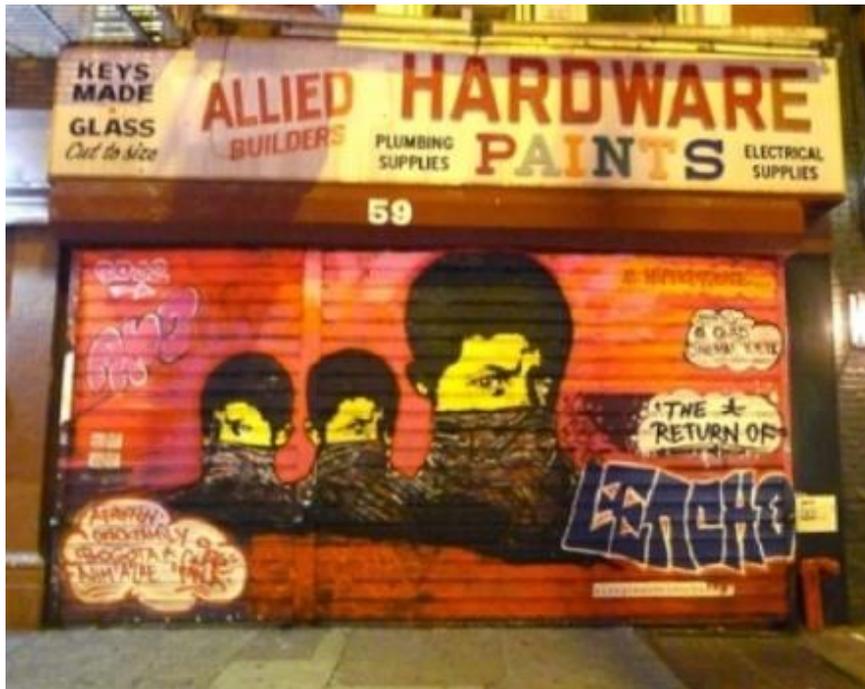
Figure 50 Graffiti advertising the film *The Return of Lencho* (Rosales, 2010). New York. 2012.

In sum, the material collected during the pilot study was sufficient for a comparative study. However, I preferred not to embark in such a project and I rather decided to continue to explore the local context in search for additional material without however losing sight of how global dynamics were affecting it.

In 2013, the fieldwork was obviously strongly affected by the impact of the Gezi event/s, a term I use to stress the dissonance between the Gezi resistance and the repression that followed it. During the uprising, I could have travelled across Turkey to document as much graffiti as possible. Given the extraordinary circumstances, I however preferred not to leave İstanbul nor Taksim (an area that I knew enough to feel safer than elsewhere).

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[18] These included: a three-months Visiting Scholarship at Columbia University in New York, and a one-month research scholarship at the Philosophy Institute of the Spanish National Research Council in Madrid.

After Gezi, I continued to observe the streets of Taksim but not to photograph them with the same continuity and regularity as before. The reasons for feeling less and less comfortable in doing were multiple. Here, I limit myself to recall two of them because they help to understand why scholars used the expression "potential hazards" to claim that researchers might not always feel comfortable in taking pictures of graffiti and conducting interviews on the subject matter (Ross et al., 2017, p. 414).

First, I started feeling less and less comfortable in taking pictures in general for fear of being mistaken for a tourist of and thus becoming a target of criticisms by anti-touristification and anti-gentrification resident activists. More importantly, I overcautiously reacted to the almost paranoid yet enduring fear of being noticed, stopped and questioned about the intents of my activity by police forces patrolling the streets more systematically than previously.

In sum, the Gezi resistance had a crucial impact on the research in various ways including but not limited to a significant increase in primary sources to examine. To examine them, I apply the methodological framework suggested by the expert scholar in cultural and visual studies Ella Chmielewska (2007), who argued that graffiti should be examined in-situ given their site-dependency. The framework is triadic:

- textual and/or visual content analysis;
- spatial and historical context analysis;
- theory linking them.

Both content and context analysis rely on literary, visual and oral secondary sources: academic essays, local and foreign online and printed press, documentary films, information obtained via unstructured interviews, and (auto)ethnographic memories. Content and context analysis are linked with each other mostly but not only through Lefebvrian concepts and theories. Below I explain them and I explain also the concepts borrowed also from other scholars (e.g., Sassen).

1.4.2. Social production of space in the global age

To explain the concepts and theories that I use to examine the primary sources, this section is thought as an annotated glossary but, unlike in a glossary, the listing order is not alphabetical but thematic. First, I briefly recall what neoliberalism is so as to preliminary contextualise the Lefebvrian understanding of space as social product. Then, I move on to review the Lefebvrian theory of the social production of space by clarifying also the non-Lefebvrian concepts that I use to examine hegemonic representations of space (e.g., the global cities network, and public

space). After that, I briefly review the notion of trialectical unity of the space production moments so as to introduce the Lefebvrian theory of the social contradictions of space, whose review is necessary to understand the notion of space appropriation and its centrality in the struggle for the right to the city. Once explained how the notion of global street can help to decipher space appropriation and how it differs from public space, I finally highlight the paradigmatic influence of Lefebvrian theory on spatial studies in order to explain why this study is inherently interdisciplinary.

Neoliberalism. The late 20th century capitalism, when the accumulation of capital has increasingly relied on profit driven investments in property market and real estate financial speculation (Harvey, 1989, 2005, and 2008). It is the ideology and class strategy of hegemonic forces who attain consent to market-driven redevelopment by instrumentalizing the imaginaries and values of the subaltern (Genç, 2014; Jaffee, 2018).

Urban space. A social product and a means of reproduction of uneven power social relations, not a mirror of the society nor a passive site of accumulation of capital (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). It is the contingent result and tool of consensus building strategies, negotiation processes, and political struggle (Genç, 2014). Under neoliberalism, cities have substituted the factories as primary sites for the production of value accumulation of profit (Hardt & Negri, 2010). The major effect of the reduction of urban space to a commodity is the inhabitants' disempowerment, which cannot be solved by retreating to the countryside to find space for rest and leisure but rather reclaiming the right to the city (Lefebvre, 2009 [1968]). See also 'right to the city'.

The social production of space. Lefebvrian theory that has "respatialized Marxism" (Katznelson, 1993). Not a synonymous of construction but a process articulated into three moments linked with each other through a dialectic relationship: spatial practices (material production), representations of space (production of knowledge), and spaces of representation (production of symbolic meanings) (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]).

Spatial practices. The moment of material production and thus called also perceived/physical space (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). The notion applies to all the everyday life activities involving the sensory perception of physical space (Schmid, 2008; Milgrom, 2008). Examples therefore abound and include also building the environment and graffitiing it. However, spatial practices are not all equally relevant in the struggle for a radical change of society: some do not challenge unequal power relations and can even reinforce them whereas others can be addressed as practices of appropriation of space since they oppose representations of space and symbolic meaning by hegemonic powers (Lefebvre, 2009 [1968], p. 50).

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Representations of space. The moment of production of knowledge about space. Conceptualisations of space resulting from the combination of scientific knowledge with language and power, and thus called also mental or conceived space (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). Whether textual or visual, representations of space allow its definition, orientation and organisation (Schmid, 2008). In other words, representations of space do not prescribe only its morphological configuration but also its normative use, which both depend on the symbolic meanings that the urban form is supposed to materialise in order to satisfy the intentions of the designers and their clients (Milgrom, 2008). Examples abound: theories, definitions, descriptions, drawings, maps, plans and signs by philosophers, mathematicians, planners, urbanists, designers and, in some cases, artists (Schmid, 2008). In this study, graffiti containing explicit textual and/or visual references to space are addressed as representation of space, by which I refer to the first of the two meanings distinguished by Spivak (2015 [1988], pp. 70-71), i.e., "re-presentation" as in art and philosophy (*darstellen* in German), and thus to be distinguished from the second sense of the term as the "speaking for" proper of proxies (*vertreten* in German). To stress the difference between the two senses, I would translate it in Turkish as *temsil etmek* so as to differentiate it from *vekil olmak.* In this study, I use the terms hegemonic and counterhegemonic to distinguish between the representations of space by hegemonic power and counterpower but I acknowledge that, within the Lefebvrian framework, the notion is mostly used to refer to representations of space dominating over others. An example of hegemonic representations of space that I examine is the global city.

Global cities. In a nutshell, global cities are cities subordinated to the market-driven logic of competitiveness and redeveloped into gateways for global flows of financial and human capital (Sassen, 2007, 2007b, 2008, 2012, 2012b, 2013, and 2014).

Global cities network. Global cities are not single entities existing outside the realm of the national but space where global processes happening within the national materialise and thus strategic nodes of transnational networks of power connected by the dynamics of economic globalisation (Sassen, 2007 and 2012).

Global patterns of urbanisation. Recurring trends in the neoliberal redevelopment of cities, i.e., re-development driven by market interests (Sassen, 2012b)[19]. Their emergence varies in

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[19] They include: (1) expansion of financial districts via construction of high-rise office buildings, (2) residential high-income gentrification (e.g. via construction of gated communities) and subsequent expulsion of residents living in marginal conditions via land dispossession and forced displacement, (3) commercial high-income gentrification via development of districts for exclusive shopping, (4) construction of entertainment facilities and luxurious hotels, (5) tourism-oriented valorisation of heritage via large-scale events, (6) privatization of collective rights to common goods and resources (e.g. municipal services), (7) large use of the credit system to allow people to purchase commodities (including land), (8) growth of informal economy, and (9) emergence of new type of homelessness. For a more detailed discussion, see: Sassen (2007, 2012b, and 2014); Harvey (2005), and Aksoy (2008).

time and modality from place to place, and the same goes for grassroots struggle in reaction to them.

Global and local. It is not a binary relation but the dual nature of space (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). Also, the global must not be misunderstood for a scale bigger (or smaller) than the national nor is it a scale beyond the national. It is a synonymous of transnational, i.e., crossing the national but happening within the national (Sassen, 2007; 2008; 2012b).

Public space. Its emblematic representation is the square of the European tradition, which is essentially characterised by regularity of the form (Bilsel, 2008). It is traditionally understood as outdoor space for various forms of interaction and socialisation (e.g., representation of power, leisure practices, consumption processes, rituals, expression of political consensus, and civic protests) (Kostof, 1992; Çelik, 1994). Mainstream discourses on public space rely on the legacy of classical abstract definitions of public as inherently related to common visibility (Arendt, 1958) and universal accessibility (Habermas, 1974 [1964]). However, both the principles of common visibility and universal accessibility depend on contextual circumstances that actually limit the possibility of exercising the right to freedom of expression and assembly (Hedva, 2016, Navaro-Yashin, 1998; Cancellieri, 2014). In addition to this, public space has also become a trendy notion used to promote investments in profit-driven and tourism-oriented regeneration projects and, moreover, publica space can be ideologically used to achieve social consensus by disciplining the moral behaviour of citizens in accordance with the moral demands of the dominant class (Delgado, 2011). In short, public space is a representation of space for democracy and free expression but it is historically and culturally constructed. More precisely, the notion is "a historical construction of the West" used to distinguish western cities from of eastern cities (Bilsel, 2008, p. 75)[20]. In the case of İstanbul, it is actually "misleading" because it prevents the understanding of urban development traditionally based on informality (Locci & Yücel, 2011, p. 44). In Turkey, *kamusal alan* and *kamusal mekân* (public space and public domain) are not traditionally understood as referring to the entire community of resident citizens but are closely associated with the notions of *kamu malı* (state domain and property) (Gurallar, 2009). More precisely, public is often understood as what has not been expropriated yet (Tanju, 2008). The reason lies in its history, indeed. The notions of "public interest" and "land resumption for public interest" were introduced in the Ottoman vocabulary in the 19th century with the wave of legal, administrative and economic reforms known as Tanzimat reforms (Gül, 2009, p. 34)[21]. To this day, public space in the context of İstanbul is perceived

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[20] For extensive discussion of East and West as constructed representations without ontological stability, see the seminal work *Orientalism* by Said (2003 [1978]). See also İşin (2005) for the implications of political Orientalism in matters of citizenship definition.

[21] For extensive discussion of the Tanzimat reforms, see Deringil (1993, 2007, 2008 [1998], and 2012). In spatial terms, reforms aimed at the modernisation of the late Ottoman Empire formally introduced principles of rational planning proper of the European architectural language (Çelik, 1993; Tekeli, 1992 and 2010; Gül, 2009). In İstanbul, physical redevelopment of highly symbolic places for representation

by many as the outcome of top-down interventions and this most likely depends on the radical changes in its symbolic meanings occurred in the following decades[22]. For instance, Taksim in Istanbul was turned into *the* space of representation of Republican symbolism.

Spaces of representation. Third moment of the space production process, namely that of the symbolic use of material space, and that is why it is called also social space or lived space (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). The notion applies not only to monuments and buildings but to all spaces resulting from the combination of norms, values and everyday use (Schmid, 2008; Milgrom, 2008). Any space of representation can have both normative and counter-normative symbolic meanings (e.g., state and/or divine power but also grassroots resistance). It then follows that the same place can be reclaimed as space of representation by multiple and even antagonist actors. In this study, graffitied space is approached as space of representation, i.e., space that ends up speaking for someone/something following a textual and/or visual representation of something/someone (including the self, both individual and collective).

Trialectical unity. Spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation are linked with each other through a dialectic relationship but shall not be misunderstood for moments of a progressive model of dialectic. That is to say that physical, mental and lived space shall not be misunderstood for a thesis, an antithesis, and a synthesis. Rather, space is "at once" perceived, conceived and lived (Gottdiener, 1993, p. 131). As suggested by the so-called third wave of Lefebvre's interpreters, the three moments are equally important and the understanding of each of them requires the understanding of the others (Schmid, 2008; Kipfer et al., 2008; De Simoni, 2016). However, the dialectic relationship linking the space production dimensions shall not be reduced to mutual interaction since the three dimensions can be in alliance but also in conflict with each other (Schmid, 2008). For instance, there can be spatial practices that ascribe new symbolic meanings to space by opposing and transgressing the normative use prescribed by dominant representations of space. In other words, the production of space is based on the same contradictions that fuel social change (Milgrom, 2008).

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of power resulted from power struggle and not only from mere emulation of foreign aesthetic models (Gurallar, 2003). However, since the 19th century, the aesthetics of space of representation of power started changing via regularisation of the urban fabric (e.g., via street straightening) (Cerasi, 2005). Meanwhile, squares, pedestrian sidewalks, parks and coffeehouses started being opened so as to foster a new public lifestyle (Çelik, 1993; Denel, 1982).

[22] In the early Republic, public spaces such as parks, promenades and squares were attributed the pedagogic function to educate its users to modern practices of national citizenship (Kezer, 2015; Batuman, 2015; Bozdoğan, 2001). The 1950 saw major changes in the conception and perception of space for representation of renewed power relations (e.g., clearing space make Ottoman monuments visible and constructing high-rise buildings recalling functioning as new monuments) (Akçan, 2015). Since the 1990s, the tourism-oriented redevelopment of İstanbul is strongly centred on the planning of mega-projects for the re-monumentalization of space for representation of political economic power (Batuman, 2016 and 2017).

Contradictions of space. The spatial materialisation of the contradictory interests of antagonist social actors, conceptualised through another triadic figure: (1) quality vs. quantity, (2) appropriation vs. property (use value vs. exchange value), and (3) fragmentation and homogenisation (or local vs. global) (Lefebvre (1991 [1974])). The contradictions of space are of crucial counterstrategic importance insofar as they are cracks in the system and, as such, they indicate the presence of social conflict but also the possibility of space of resistance or resistance already in place.

Space of resistance. Space where contradictions indicate the possibility of moving to, differential space, i.e., space freed from property and exchange value. Such a possibility manifests itself not only in the form of resistance but also of marginalisation, and that is why examples include: "the edges of the city, shanty towns, the space of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], p. 373).

Appropriation of space (and time). Giving new rhythms and symbolic meanings to space (and time) via qualitative use that challenges commodification by challenging exchange value and thus the accumulation of capitalist profit through space (and time) controlled by the state (Lefebvre (1991 [1974] and 2009[1968]). Put it in other terms, appropriation is the contrary of property. While property is founded on the exchange value embodied by space as commodity, appropriation of space means reclaiming it by reclaiming its use value. If needed in order for use value to be reinstated, appropriation can imply occupation, a spatial practice that cannot be understood only as re-semanticisation of symbolic meanings.

Re-semanticisation of space, and limitations for appropriation. Changing the symbolic meanings of space via practices pertaining to the discursive realm of speech. For instance, writing on walls and/or marking them with signs and symbols. In this regard, Lefebvre (1991 [1974], p. 145) raised a question: "is it really possible to use mural surfaces to depict social contradictions while producing something more than graffiti?". Such a criticism is actually not difficult to understand. The dominance of the realm of the visible over the realm of the lived experience is such that it can lead to the erroneous idea that the production of space of speech can be sufficient to achieve radical change in the society, which rather requires action and thus the actual production of space for action (ibid., pp. 131-132, and 403). For this reason, he argued the limitations of discursive practices of spatial territorialisation in "the actual" production of social space as well as in the understanding of the actual production process (ibid., p. 160). In this regard, I surely acknowledge that re-semanticisation matters but cannot be not sufficient to appropriate space; however, the aim of this study is precisely to evaluate whether graffiti can instead be used as historical sources to understand both space production in general and space appropriation in particular.

Appropriated space. In this regard, Lefebvre (1991 [1974], p. 165) made several remarks that are particularly relevant for the subject matter of this study. First, appropriated space resembles a work of art but it should not be mistaken for an imitation of a work of art. Second, appropriated space is often a structure (e.g., a monument, a building) but a square and a street can also be legitimately described as such. Third, in order to evaluate whether space can be legitimately described as appropriated, it must be evaluated "in what respect, how, by whom and for whom they have been appropriated" but this is something that "is not always easy to decide" (ibid., 165, p. 165). The same type of difficulty can concern also the definition of the right to the city.

Right to the city. A twofold right legitimated not by national citizenship but by value production in the everyday life: the right to participation in the decision-making process and the right to appropriate space (Lefebvre, 2009 [1968]). Since the right to appropriate space is oriented and shaped by needs (e.g., housing), claiming the right to the city shall not be reduced to a tool to merely legitimise participatory models of urban governance; rather, it means reclaiming the collective right to occupy and use space in ways that challenge its exchange value as private property (Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014). In other words, the "urban political agenda" developed by Lefebvre was based "on the right of access and possession of the city as a common good and an ongoing collective production" (Shields, 1999, p. 143). By allowing rescaling of the decision-making process and thus facilitating self-determination in the management of the commons, the right to the city is important also to envisage forms of post-national citizenship (Purcell, 2002)[23]. In Turkey, the right to the city started being discussed and used as horizon for multiscalar convergence of urban oppositional groups in anti-capitalist struggle since the late 2000s (Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014). In short, right to the city means reclaiming the city as common (Stavrides, 2022).

Urban commons. Shared spaces and resources to be reclaimed as such (e.g., soil, water, air) (Harvey, 2014).

Common. A twofold notion that does not refer to a new type of property but, first, to material resources and, second, to products produced in common, i.e., based on social cooperation (Hardt & Negri, 2010; Negri, 2016).

Space commoning. An emancipatory political project of re-territorialisation based on commoning practices, i.e., new forms of being together and relating to space such as sharing, collaboration, collective care (of space and its users), and collective performances of self-

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[23] For an example of alternative organisation of decision-making structures, see the model of municipal libertarianism (Biehl & Bookchin, 1998), which was evaluated positively also by Harvey (2015).

government and resistance to top-down management of the use of space (Stavrides, 2022 and 2015).

Common space. Sites for non-hierarchical relations where organisation and regulation does not follow the orders of a prevailing authority. It is not another type of space nor a part of public space but can result from the appropriation of public space (Stavrides, 2022). In other words, it is space that (1) we produce together, (2) we use together, (3) where we get together, and (4) connected to other places where there is also struggle for the commons (Emek Bizim İstanbul Bizim Initiative, 2016). Examples include Gezi Park in İstanbul during the 2013 resistance; the refugee accommodation and solidarity space City Plaza in Athens, self-managed social centers in Italy, etc.).

Global street. It is a representation of space conceived by Sassen (2011 and 2013b) to expand the conceptual field of understanding of the complexity of the dialectic between power and the powerless. It is thought to differentiate spaces for transnational action in the struggle for the right to the city from spaces for more ritualised routines such as the *piazza* of the European imaginary of public space. It is not a street in the literal sense of the term; it can be a square, a border zone, a refugee camp, and so on. It is space where the powerless can make history[24]. Even though it would not be incorrect to catch a glimpse of a rough conceptualization of the notion of global city in Lefebvre's works (De Simoni, 2015), the global street is a conceptual tool that helps to update Lefebvrian notion of space of resistance by pointing at the global as a scale of counterstrategic importance in the struggle for alternatives to neoliberal globalisation.

Absorption of space of resistance. Systemic tendency of the capitalist mode of production to assimilate, take back or violently eliminate whatever transgress (Lefebvre (1991 [1974]). Absorption can take place in various ways (e.g., repression and commodification). Commodification affects not only material but also immaterial resources and products such as for instance knowledge and languages (Negri and Harvey, 2014), and absorption therefore affects the entire life.

Spatial turn. Well-known paradigmatic changes in social sciences and humanities following the acknowledgment of space as both product of social processes and tool mediating political-economic interests: first, rejection of representations of space as a mere stage or container where historical change progressively unfolds; second, acknowledgment of the epistemological importance of space in the understanding of human activity throughout history (Elden, 2004; Warf & Arias, 2009; Soja, 2009). As a consequence of the spatial turn, history

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[24] For more information about the global street, see also Theatrum Mundi / Global Street project (2018).

of architecture and social sciences such as sociology share terminology, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies (Stieber, 2005; Blau, 2003).

Architecture and its history. For centuries, the notion of architecture has been associated to that of art, and that is why the degree of beauty provided the criterion for the selection of the buildings to be studied as examples of artworks (Fernie, 1995). Following a shift in the understanding of architecture as involving the entire built environment, the scope of history of architecture is no longer restricted to issues of authorship, connoisseurship, style and form of buildings evaluated as particularly beautiful artworks according to canonical standards; history of architecture now deals also with the use and symbolic meanings of the built environment in everyday life (e.g., gender-related meanings) (Trachtenberg, 1988; Arnold, 2002; Stieber, 2003).

Built environment and its transdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity in historical research on the built environment is potentially useful for multiple reasons. First, empirical case studies in which the built environment is approached as historical evidence of social processes helps to test the validity of abstract theories of space (Stieber, 2005). Second, combining historical and sociological perspectives of analysis helps to understand how contemporary global processes let emerge specific forms of social and political subjectivity (Sassen, 2008 [2006]). Third, interdisciplinarity is potentially useful to imagine a change for the better in matter of human rights (Soja, 2000).

Transdisciplinarity of graffiti. It is directly related to what Chmielewska (2007) argued and is also common knowledge, namely the increase in artistic recognition of an aesthetic phenomenon that nonetheless continues to be mostly unauthorised (Chmielewska, 2007) or, to better say it, "self-authorised" (Blanché, 2015). In Turkey, it is also a matter of fact emerging from the literature review provided in the next section.

1.4.3. State of the art and contribution

Since its inception in the 1960s, the so-called scholarship on contemporary graffiti and street art has relied on the contributions of researchers from a wide range of disciplines to overcome the biases hindering the academic legitimacy gained by now, when the subject matter is increasingly featured in scientific press and conferences (Ross et al., 2017)[25]. To a certain extent, this is valid also for the context of Turkey, where the Gezi resistance had a significant impact on the production of knowledge about graffiti.

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[25] For instance, see the scientific journal SAUC - Street Art and Urban Creativity (2022). See also Urban Creativity Conference (2023), a Lisbon-based annual thematic conference on graffiti and street art.

Until Gezi, academic research was not extensive nor particularly diversified with regard to the geographical focus. Geographically focused research on places other than İstanbul was limited in number[26]. Research on İstanbul was focused on Beyoğlu and, more specifically, on spots particularly filled with graffiti[27]. Taken as a whole, the contributions available before the 2013 uprising were nonetheless important. For instance, they drew attention on both local characteristics and global dynamics.

Humour is a distinctive feature of the local context. For instance, it was a distinctive feature of the wall writings of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Özünlü, 1991). The hilarious content of wall writings was thematised also in the 2000s. Eluard (2007) argued their thought-provoking criticism of the status quo and remarked also the vulgarity of some, an issue concerning also the graffiti of Gezi (see Chapter 4). In the 1990s and 2000s, the practice initiated in the 1960s in the U.S. and known as tagging spread also in Turkey where, like elsewhere, tagging is also closely related to hip-hop and is a forbidden game that the urban youth play to gain fame within their communities (Sarıyıldız, 2007; Tan, 2010). However, in Turkey, the youth who used the city as a playground in the 2000s were scared of being mistaken for political activists or even terrorists, and that is why took clear distance from the local tradition of political wall writings and sought legitimisation via artistic recognition (Sarıyıldız, 2007)[28]. Similar remarks were made also by a street artist who wrote a thesis on his own work and pointed out the limitations of freedom in the very selection of colour due to the association of specific colours with specific political groups (Küçüksayraç, 2011)[29].

As far as street art is concerned, academic contributions focused on its diversity from advertising and gallery exhibitions (Karaaslan, 2008; Satıcı, 2009; Küçüksayraç, 2011). Given that street art intervenes in public space, it was defined as public art and a tool for social change that can establish a free, uncensored connection with the audience (Erdoğan, 2009 and 2010). Lastly, street art was defined as an urban design element with the potential to counteract the city's loss of city cultural identity due to globalisation (Cansız, 2012).

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[26] See the study on the city of Van by Kavşut (2005).

[27] See: Sarıyıldız (2007), and Erdoğan (2009). In the qualitative research conducted by Sarıylıdz (2007), analytical attention was paid to the Yesilçam Auto Park at the back of Passage Atlas in Beyoğlu (a traditional site for hip-hop graffiti). In the quantitative analysis provided by Erdoğan (2009), the focus is on Yüksek Kaldırım Street in Galata, filled with various types of graffiti including but not limited to hip-hop graffiti. To this day, the characteristics of both places are similar.

[28] The same information emerged also from non-academic work. For instance, see the documentary film by Ersoy (2010), which reveals also how hip-hop writers reclaimed the artistic value of their ludic activity.

[29] This is what Marcella (2015, p. 92) called "politicisation of colours" when referring to "the attribution of political connotations to details that are not political by nature, along with the use of symbols for political purposes, are commonly used devices to touch upon issues of political sensitivity".

With the graffiti of the Gezi resistance, more contributions started being published[30]. In addition to this, the use of traditional style-based categories started becoming more flexible. One year after the uprising, Aksel & Olgun (2014) acknowledged the increase in attention of the early 2010s but Taş & Taş (2014) evaluated the research done until then as little compared with that to be still done.

Since then, the number of articles and theses has increased. Part of them is either entirely or strongly focused on the graffiti of the Gezi uprising[31]. With specific regard to Gezi, the literature gives ample space to graffiti with humorous content arguing that humour is a tool to make fun of hegemonic power (Bernardoni, 2013b; Şengül, 2014; Emre, Çoban, & Şener, 2014; Gurel, 2015; Morva, 2016; Seloni & Sarfati, 2017; Alpaslan, 2018; Evered, 2018). With regard to the contents, it was also argued that the graffiti of the Gezi uprising present strong commonalities in content, language, issues and demands with the ones preceding them, since the protests sparking it were not entirely new but rather a continuation and a peak of the dissent towards the politics of the 2000s (Taş & Taş, 2014; Şengül, 2014; Egemen, 2015; Morva, 2016; Seloni and Sarfati, 2017). Besides being defined a as counterhegemonic tool for the expression of anticapitalist dissent (Egemen, 2015), street art was therefore defined also as a practice of resistance that – by crossing the borders of art, political activism, and communication – provides a medium to disseminate counter-narratives within local and international audience to encourage the audience to engage in political agency (Taş & Taş, 2014; Bernardoni, 2014; Egemen, 2015; Seloni & Serfati, 2017). However, more comparative research on the global connections between the local and other contexts is required since it is limited to an article connecting Gezi to Tahrir Square (Taş, 2017), and to an article connecting it to Athens (Tulke, 2019).

With regard to the political positioning of the actors involved, the literature review revealed that graffiti is practice crossing the political spectrum: it is mostly leftists who write on walls but ultranationalists do it as well (Şengül, 2014; Taş & Taş, 2014, Özdem, 2015; Egemen, 2015; Seloni & Sarfati, 2017; Alpaslan, 2018; Evered, 2018; Uğur, 2019; Karakiraz, 2019; Türkoğlu, 2019).

The literature review revealed also increased sensibility and interest in understanding how graffiti mediate intersecting forms of domination of various origin (e.g., patriarchal). For instance, the need for women-only space of visibility in (street) art history is evident (see e.g.,

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[30] See Bernardoni (2013 and 2013b). For an example of non-academic publications, see the printed photographic collection edited by Erbil (2013).

[31] See: Taş & Taş (2014); Şengül (2014); Bernardoni (2014); Egemen (2015); Özdem (2015); Gurel (2015); Morva (2016); Seloni & Sarfati (2017); Evered (2018), and Tunali (2018).

Melek, 2022)[32]. In addition to this, contributions from a feminist perspective tackled the following issues: hegemonic masculinity in the case of Konya (Kırlıoğlu et al., 2016), and state-backed gender and ethnicized violence in Kurdish-majority provinces of the country (Protner, 2017 and 2018; Şıkgenç, 2021). In turn, this suggests that the lack of systematic research from critical race perspectives argued by Kırlıoğlu et al. (2016) started being filled. However, further research on how gender- and race-related issues intersect with class-issues is nonetheless suggested. For instance, the current validity of the argument by Sezer (2016) about gender discrimination among hip-hop writers could be verified in-depth in light of more than one factor: recent increase in feminist hip-hop artists and writers class belonging[33]. As for this study, I tried as much as I could to stress the intersectionality of issues related to class, gender, and also ethnicity but the material that I collected is vast and I therefore acknowledge that it can be examined even more in-depth to shed light on how space mediate these issues.

Other contributions are focused on various aspects of both graffiti and street art: diversity of the artistic development of the local context compared the West (Bal, 2014; Çakır, 2016); the shift of both graffiti and street art from subculture to pop culture (Sezer, 2016); street art as a civil disobedience and its relations to new social movements (Alpaslan, 2016); the social responsibility of the street artists (Uğur, 2018); the perception of visual characteristics (e.g., colour) (Zünbüloğlu, 2018); stylistic and technical aspects (Karakiraz, 2019; Bozdağ, 2022); educational aspects (Pashayeva, 2018; Kaya, 2022); the use of graffiti art by municipalities for PR work (Kınay, 2021); the audience's mnemonic, affective and emotional perception of the context (Türkoğlu, 2019); the direct relation between street artists and the audience (Balık, 2020); communicative function of walls as media (Yiğiter, 2020); the importance of outdoor visibility (Şakar, 2021; Kaynar, 2021); diversity of the street from gallery and freedom from the art market (Adeka, 2022); and place-making (Gemci, 2022). In light of these topics, I would like to stress an argument by Aksel & Olgun (2014), namely that the local understanding of public as referring to monumental sculptures and buildings symbolising the values of modern life influences the society's reaction to street art.

Over time, diversification of geographical focus also increased. Contributions focused on İstanbul are focused on one or more specific areas of the city including but not limited to Taksim (e.g., Karaköy, Kadıköy, Eyüp, Tophane, Cihangir, Okmeydanı, Başakşehir,

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[32] With regard to the need for women-only space for visibility, non-academic publications revealed that is not a novelty of the 2020s but actually an issue dating back to at least the late 1980s, when one of the first printed collections of wall writings was dedicated entirely to writings written only by women (Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989).

[33] With regard to class belonging of hip-hop graffiti writers, see Sarıyıldız (2007), who deduced that the urban youth practicing hip-hop graffiti in the 2000s in Beyoğlu belonged to the middle class. In addition to this, see also Ersoy (2010), whose documentary revealed class antagonism although the frictions between apparently low-class hip-hop writers and cultural middle-class street artists were not openly declared as such (Ersoy, 2010).

Güngören, and Zeytinburnu)[34]. Contributions focused on areas other than İstanbul are focused on Ankara, Konya, south-eastern provinces of the country (e.g., Diyarbakır), Balıkesir, Şanlıurfa, Eskişehir, and the town district of Urla in İzmir[35]. Taken as whole, the contributions available after the 2013 uprising sketch possible directions for more geographically systematic research from interdisciplinary perspectives[36].

By now, the disciplinary fields crossed by the subject matter also increased. Initially, academic interest was limited to the field of linguistics[37]. Then, it emerged also in other fields and disciplines: media and cultural studies, communication sciences, anthropology, sociology, educational sciences, space-related disciplines such as architecture and urban and regional planning, and even public relations[38]. Both before and after the Gezi event/s, research was however conducted mostly within art-related disciplines (e.g., fine arts and art history)[39]. Clearly, this suggests the increasing acknowledgment of the artistic value of street interventions that often lack authorisation. Another noteworthy trend is the emerging interest in the field of fine arts education[40]. In my opinion, what this trend suggests is that, sooner or later, graffiti might become the subject of monographic courses also in Turkey[41].

In sum, the research done so far shows that a transdisciplinary discussion has begun to take shape and has the potential of being turned into a more articulated debate in the form of a thematic conference or a collection of essays.

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[34] For Taksim, Kadıköy and Karaköy, see Sezer (2016). For Karaköy, see also: Zünbüloğlu (2018), Gemci & Erinsel Önder (2020), and Gemci (2022). For Karaköy, Eyüp, Tophane, Cihangir, and Okmeydanı, see Türkoğlu (2019). For Basaksehir, Güngören, and Zeytinburnu, see Kınay (2021).

[35] For Ankara, see: Taş & Taş, 2015; Özdem, 2015; Alpaslan, 2018. For Konya, see Kırlıoğlu, Kırlıoğlu and Başer, 2016. For the south-east of the country, see: Kavşut, 2005; Protner, 2017 and 2018; and Özcan, 2018. For Balikesir, Şanlıurfa, Eskişehir, see Uğur, 2018. For Eskişehir, see also Kaynar (2021). For the town district of Urla in İzmir, see Koçak (2020).

[36] For instance, continuing to extend the research to non-central neighbourhoods of İstanbul as well as to places other than big scale cities can potentially contribute to find out qualitative connections beyond traditional dichotomies such as centre/periphery and urban/rural, an issue pertaining various fields of study including but not limited to the architectural and sociological.

[37] See: Özünlü, 1991; Kavşut, 2005, and Eluard, 2007.

[38] For studies in the media and cultural fields, see: Sarıyıldız, 2007, and Özcan, 2018. For studies in communication sciences, see: Şengül (2014); Egemen (2015); and Sezer (2016). For an anthropological study, see Üzüm Tan (2010). For a study in educational sciences, see Erdem (2018). For sociological studies, see: Alpaslan (2016); Protner (2017); Türkoğlu (2019); and Sıkgenç (2021). For studies in urban and regional planning, see: Erdoğan (2009 and 2010); Zünbüloğlu (2018); and Kolçak (2020). For studies in other space-related disciplines such as architecture and landscape architecture, see: Gemci (2022), Yıldırım (2013, and Cansız (2012). For a study in public relations, see Kınay (2021).

[39] See: Karaaslan (2008); Satıcı (2009); İnal (2011); Küçüksayraç (2011); Bal (2014); Çakır (2016); Uğur (2018); Karakiraz (2019); Yiğiter (2020); Şakar (2021); Adeka (2022); and Bozdağ (2022). See also Balık (2020), and Melek (2022).

[40] See: Pashayeva (2018); Kaynar (2021); and Kaya (2022).

[41] For an example of a monographic course on graffiti, see *Graffiti y el Arte Urbano* (Graffiti and Urban Art), taught at the Fine Arts Faculty of the Complutense University in Madrid by the expert scholar Javier Abarca, Retrieved 2022, August 15, from https://javierabarca.es/en/university-teaching/ucm/.

However, the literature review revealed also the need for more historical as well as space-focused research. Besides the need for in-depth examination of issues such as commodification and place-branding (Aksel & Olgun, 2014), scholars agued a lack of a detailed historical account of the graffiti of the 1960s and 1970s, which scholars argued to be important for the examination of the historical continuity of the political significance of graffiti (Taş & Taş, 2014). With this study, I start filling the gap.

First, I problematise the idea that the politicisation of graffiti dates back to the 1968 movement (Emiroğlu, 2011 [2001]), and I question whether it actually started before and how. In addition to this, I provide a non-comprehensive yet enough detailed account covering the period mid-1960s – early 1990s, and I also make suggestions for an increasingly comprehensive account since I did not conduct archival research on the 1990s and 2000s. Equally important, I search for traces of humour in the past to enquire whether the humour of the Gezi resistance was a novelty or not.

Unlike the majority of the scholarship, this study does not focus on Gezi as a single case but rather provides a wider perspective in the attempt to identify both continuity and novelties. In other words, I question the dis/continuity between the Gezi resistance and past events rather than addressing it as a single assemblage of events. In addition to this, I expand the conceptual framework: instead of reading Gezi only through the notion of public space, I use the notion of global street so as to stress that the local and the national are intrinsically embedded with other places where the powerless attempt to make history.

As far as the politics of space is concerned, I acknowledge that graffiti and street art were argued to be practices of territorialisation and reappropriation of public space (Erdoğan, 2009 and 2010; Seloni & Sarfati, 2017; Evered, 2018; Küçüksayraç, 2011; Sarıyıldız, 2007). However, I call into question the tendency to claim such arguments by overfocusing on the spatial practice or the visual/discursive content of graffiti rather than on the issues related to the politics of space of which they can potentially provide historical evidence (an approach that characterised also my research for a long time). In other words, I reject the assumption that discursive reterritorialization is equal appropriation of space, and I preliminary argue that applying a Lefebvrian framework of analysis in the study of graffiti might be useful to evaluate their potential as historical evidence of space-related processes, namely production and struggle for the right to the city (i.e., right to participation in decision-making and right to appropriation).

So far, the scholars who applied Lefebvrian concepts and theories to analyse graffiti in the context Turkey are only a few. In a study focused on Ankara, Alpaslan (2016) used the concept of the right to the city and argued that, for new social movements, street art is a way of

reclaiming the city. Melik (2022) drew upon the theory of the social production of space and argued that women street artists reclaim space in art history. In a study focused on İstanbul, Sarıyıldız (2007) used the theory of space production and the notion of everyday life, and she is one of those who argued that graffiti can appropriate space. More precisely, she argued that writing on the city can produce another city and also resistance. While acknowledging the great importance of the study by Sarıyıldız (2007) – a systematic research and a pioneering work in the research on graffiti in Turkey – I however preliminary claim what was claimed by Lefebvre himself (1991[1974]): the notion of appropriation cannot be merely reduced to re-semanticisation.

In sum, this study contributes to the research on graffiti in Turkey not only because it covers a wide historical period from an intersectional feminist perspective but also because it examines a large number of primary sources through a Lefebvrian framework. Even the very structure of the dissertation follows a Lefebvrian inspired framework and, given this, I preliminary acknowledge that this might be one of its limitations. Like most of the works reviewed by Ghulyan (2019), this study is not a systematic and comprehensive contextualization of Lefebvre's theories and is rather a humble application of his concepts. Below I explain how.

1.5. Structure of the study

The structuring of the dissertation relied on a twofold assumption. According to Lefebvre (1991[1974], p. 116), history of space (1) "is to be distinguished from an inventory of things *in space* […] as also from ideas and discourse *about space*", and (2) "it must account for both representational spaces and representations of space, but above all for their interrelationships and their links with social practice". Accordingly, the structure of the dissertation follows a Lefebvrian-inspired triadic framework: spatial practices, representations of space, and temporary appropriation of space for representation of counterhegemonic power. As a result, the chapters follow a loose chronological order, which also depends on three additional reasons: (1) the impossibility of indicating the exact date of the making of some graffiti; (2) the possibility of still finding graffiti on their site long after they were made; (3) the choice of grouping some of them thematically (i.e., according to their common content).

Chapter 2 is titled "Graffitiing (in) Turkey"[42]. It historicises the practice of graffitiing space in Turkey through an overview covering the period from the 1960s to the early 2010s. The overview is not comprehensive but is detailed enough to start filling the aforementioned gap in the research, namely the lack of a historical account. The first section focuses on the use of

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[42] The idea of mentioning the chapters' titles in this section is not original to this work; it is borrowed from the doctoral dissertation by Dinçer (2022).

walls as medium for agitprop in the 1960s. The second section focuses on the use of walls as medium for agitprop in the 1970s. The third section focuses on the 1970s, when both graffiti for socialist agitprop and graffiti for ultranationalist propaganda were extensively spread to mark territories contended by political antagonists. The fourth section first describes how the 1980 military coup affected the spatial use of graffiti and then tackles issues related to archiving. The fifth section focuses on wall writings portraying the post-coup society in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The sixth section identifies major gaps in the research on the 1990s and provides related suggestions. The seventh section provides an overview of the fieldwork observations made in Ankara and İstanbul in the early 2010s (before Gezi). The eight and last section concludes the chapter by highlighting the historic/al changes in the sociospatial use of graffiti.

Chapter 3 is titled "Space Production in İstanbul, 2010-2013". It examines how ordinary people represented space via graffiti before the Gezi resistance by deciphering the space-related content of graffiti documented in the early 2010s in İstanbul, which were concentrated in Taksim and its surroundings. In other words, this chapter examines graffiti that can be considered representations of space themselves because they contain textual and/or visual reference to the production of space and specific places (e.g., via words, sentences, symbols and/or images). For an in-depth contextualisation of the content, each section historicises the representations of space that the graffiti either contest or simply recall. Hence, the first section provides a preliminary overview of the neoliberal redevelopment of İstanbul from the 1980s to the late 2000s so as to explain why, in 2009, local activists opposing global capitalism organised a political festival whose logo was still visible in the streets of Taksim in the early 2010s and was thus also potentially capable to still catch the attention of passers-by. The second section tackles controversial aspects of the initiative İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture to contextualise a graffiti contesting it by representing İstanbul as a bordered zone linking Europe to its East. The third section examines a wall painting consisting of a descriptive representation of the Neo-Ottoman conquest of İstanbul as a successful process strongly centred on urban renewal. The fourth section discusses renewal of historical real estate by focusing on the renewal of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood to contextualise graffiti contesting the project aimed at its gentrification (Tarlabaşı 360, by now renamed Taksim 360 presumably given the proximity of the place to Taksim Square). The fifth section summarises the history of Taksim Square and Galatasaray Square to contextualise the content of graffiti representing them as places whose symbolic meanings largely result from grassroots political activity. The sixth section focuses on the case of the Emek movie theatre to contextualises graffiti that attest to the local struggle for the urban commons against the proliferation of shopping malls. The seventh and last section provides a brief summary of the image of İstanbul as emerged from the graffiti examined in the chapter, namely that of a highly contested city.

Chapter 4 is titled "A Visual Chronicle of the Temporary Appropriation of Taksim, 2013". It is a photo-essay about the dissonant echoes of the streets of Taksim during the 2013 Gezi event/s, i.e., the Gezi resistance and its repression. The first section provides an illustrated and annotated timeline of the various phases of a struggle for the right to the city that led to the temporary appropriation of Taksim: the antecedents, the protest camp in Gezi Park, and its development into an anti-government uprising. The second section examines spatial aspects the global street by describing the empirics of the Taksim case during the uprising: re-territorialisation of public space, multiscalar connectedness, and space commoning. The third section discusses the multitudinous character of the social composition of the Gezi resistance in Taksim by examining graffiti providing evidence of the participation of a multitude of actors moved by a variety of values such as for instance freedom from gendered violence and collective care. The fourth section resumes the timeline and tackles the dialectic between the absorption of differential space and the attempted resistance to its absorption by addressing contradictory dynamics (e.g., the clearing of the square, the subsequent resizing of the territory under temporary appropriation, and the evacuation of the park). The fifth section tackles the dialectic between absorption and resistance as an issue affecting also the walls of dissent, and thus it addresses the following dynamics: greyfication of walls, ironic reaction to greyfication, replication of rainbow stairs as symbol of resistance, and appropriation of symbolic time for representation of resistance (e.g., the year 2013 and the decade 2013-2023). The sixth and last section concludes the chapter by highlighting the importance of spatial dialectics in the attempt at radically change the society.

Chapter 5 is the "Conclusion". Besides drawing the overall conclusions from the findings emerged from each chapter, it includes a self-critical review of the limitations of this study and suggests a few directions for further research on the subject of graffiti in Turkey.

In the Appendices, there are additional images of graffiti. Appendix A is a selection of collective signature graffiti of the late 1970s found via archival research. Appendix B is a selection of humorous wall writings published in printed collections of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Appendix C is a selection of graffiti that I documented in İstanbul in the early 2010s (before Gezi), and it aims to show the heterogeneity of the social actors using walls. Appendix D is a selection of the many graffiti that I documented in Taksim during the 2013 Gezi resistance and is primarily aimed at showing the heterogeneity of the Gezi actors. Altogether, the images in the appendices help to visualise that graffiti is a polyform and polysemantic spatial practice. In this study, I historicise its features in the context of Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

GRAFFITIING (IN) TURKEY

This chapter historicises the practice of graffitiing space in the context of Turkey to start filling the gap in the related research, namely a lack of a detailed account of the tradition of graffitiing it for political purposes. Accordingly, I first examine fictional and non-fictional evidence of the following processes: (1) emergence and spreading of graffiti for left-wing agitprop in the 1960s and 1970s; (2) development of both graffiti for left-wing agitprop and graffiti for ultranationalist propaganda into a practice for territorial marking in the late 1970s; (3) temporary disappearance from the street following the 1980 military coup; (4) reappearance of wall writings and humorous re-politicisation of the contents by the late 1980s. Then, I also discuss the emergence of new types of graffiti by the 1990s and suggest possible directions for further research aimed at an increasingly comprehensive history of graffiti in Turkey. Lastly, I provide an overview of the observations made in the early 2010s for a manifold purpose: to highlight the co-existence of heterogenous traditions, to trace continuities with the past, and to stress also novelties both in terms of actors involved and contents. In short, this chapter lays the ground for the discussion of the use of walls by a variety of social actors and, accordingly, it provides an overview that starts from the 1960s, when graffiti started turning walls into a medium for agitprop.

2.1. A spatial practice turning walls into a medium for agitprop in the 1960s

Agitprop is the abbreviated form of agitation propaganda, a political strategy of the revolutionary socialist tradition aimed at class consciousness raising and mass mobilization via media including but not limited to written speech (e.g., slogans) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998). In Turkey, writing political slogans on walls is a practice entwined with the leftist political movement since the late 1960s[43]. More precisely, Emiroğlu (2011 [2001]) claimed that the content of graffiti started becoming increasingly politicised with the 1968 movement just as it

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[43] This is what emerged from unstructured interviews and also from literary sources (e.g., see Taş and Taş, 2014).

did it elsewhere where both the movement and related graffiti spread[44]. In Turkey, the 1968 movement was driven by a strong opposition to Western imperialism ideals but, before examining graffiti attesting to this, I first problematise the in/accuracy of the periodisation emerging from the literary and oral sources.

2.1.1. Dawn of a tradition tied to graphic satire

When and how did the use of graffiti for agitprop emerged in the context of Turkey? Rather than taken for granted, the validity of the argument that the 1968 marked the beginning of the politicisation of mural writing is here questioned based on the fictional evidence provided by satirical cartoons, the first of which depicts a street filled with anti-Western graffiti before the 1968. See Figure 51.

Figure 51 Anti-Western graffiti. Caption: "from the world – they likely started learning English". (Source: *Yön*, 1965, June 4, 115, p. 10)

This cartoon suggests that local opponents of foreign influence on Turkey's politics started graffitiing walls for agitation propaganda since at least the mid-1960s. It was published in a

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[44] As it is common knowledge, the 1968 marked a historic wave of mass protests but the discussion of the antimilitarist, anticapitalist, antiracist and antipatriarchal ideals sparking mass protests across different geographies falls outside the scope of this study.

1965 issue of *Yön* ("Direction"), a left-wing periodical indeed[45]. The cartoon appeared next to an article about the role of Western petroleum companies in Turkey (e.g., the American Mobil and British Shell) (Feyzioğlu, 1965)[46]. Clearly, the male figure reading the walls represents the foreign/Western investors invited to "go home", i.e., back to their English-speaking countries. The element revealing the irony is the caption since communicates the opposite of what it says: locals opposing foreign influence had not started learning English nor had intention to do it. In other words, the message conveyed by the cartoon is that the country's political economic independence depended also on its cultural independence.

As for the historiographical potential of the source, only further research can reveal whether the wallscape and streetscape of the mid-1960s represented in the cartoon was a representation of the real-present or rather a representation of the imagined-future. In both cases, the findings would be of crucial relevance.

In case the cartoon was a representation of the reality of the street, interviews with cartoonists and journalists with first-hand experience of the mid-1960s could also reveal the degree of spreading. For instance, a question that it would shed light on space-related dynamics is the following: were graffiti first concentrated in the neighbourhoods where foreign companies were headquartered as the high-rise building in the cartoon seems to suggest or they rather emerged elsewhere?

Conversely, further research attesting to the fictionality of the cartoon's streetscape representation would raise a different but likewise relevant question about the relationship between graphic satire and the use of walls for agitprop, namely whether representations of space by cartoonists influenced its use and thus lived experience.

The same type of questions applies also to the content of the next cartoon, which also provides fictional evidence of the emergence graffiti for agitprop prior to the mass protests of 1968 movement and, in addition to the previous one, the cartoon in Figure 52 suggests that even mainstream media coverage of the criminalisation of dissent expressed via graffiti preceded the 1968.

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[45] Published from 1961 to 1967, *Yön* was not committed to any political organisation and proposed a rather eclectic understanding of socialism but its contributors included leftist intellectuals and even leaders of the TİP (Labour Party of Turkey), which is probably the reason behind the popularity of the periodical among leftist student leaders (Landau, (2017 [1974]).

[46] To read the full article, see the digitalised copy of the full issue that is now available on the TÜSTAV online publications archive https://filedn.eu/lpwTKmJuSKCLNjzDCWvh2dm/yon/Yön%20Dergisi%20-%20C-3%20-%20Sayi%20-%20114.pdf.
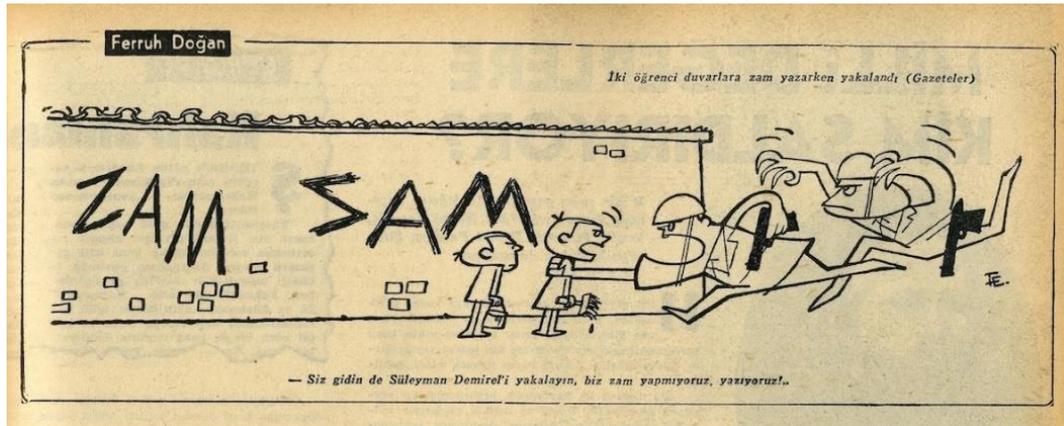
Figure 52 Cartoon about media coverage of attempted repression of graffiti expressing economic dissent. Wall writing: "[price] raise, raise". Top caption: "two students were caught writing [price] raise on the walls (Newspapers)". Bottom caption: "go and catch Süleyman Demirel, we don't increase the prices, we only write it!". Author: Doğan, F. (Source: *Ant*, March 1967, 12, p. 7)

The cartoon depicting security forces catching students expressing political and economic dissent via graffiti provides evidence of the initial reactions to the practice. It was published on a 1967 issue of *Ant* ('Pledge', 'Oath'), another left-wing periodical of the time[47]. Like the previous cartoon, this also appeared next to an article against foreign influence but, in this case, the specific target of criticism was the cooperation of national and foreign pharmaceutical companies (Naci, 1967)[48]. While the bottom caption points at the discontent caused by the policies of the then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's policies, the top caption suggests that the repression of dissent expressed by students via graffiti had started acquiring visibility on mainstream newspapers. In other words, it suggests that it was not a one-off event but rather a growing phenomenon. Hence, the cartoon suggests also the need for further research to first verify the degree of media coverage in the mid-1960s and then eventually evaluate whether mainstream media supported the criminalisation of graffiti for agitprop, an issue emerging also from the examination of non-fictional evidence of its spreading with the 1968 movement.

2.1.2. Spreading (with) the 1968 movement

In the late 1960s, the local society was highly politicized and graffitiing space was a way to spread the revolutionary ideals of the 1968 movement by ensuring their visibility. By

[47] Published from 1967 and closed down by the military in 1971 as part of the crackdown on the radical leftists, Ant proposed an editorial line that, compared with that of *Yön*, advocated socialism in more radical way as result of the political affiliation of its contributors: members or sympathisers of the Labour Party of Turkey sharing the idea that leftist university students engaged in urban guerrilla activities had to play a leading role in the anti-imperialist struggle for the independence of the country (Landau, (2017 [1974]).

[48] To read the full article, see the by now digitalised copy of the full issue that is now available on the TÜSTAV online publications archive: https://www.tustav.org/yayinlar/sureli_yayinlar/ant-haftalik/Ant%20-%20Haftalik%20-%20C-1%20-%20Sayi%20-%20012.pdf

suggesting this, the archival evidence examined in this section corroborate the scenario depicted by various historians and political scientists: radicalism started materialising into widespread unrest and repression materialised instead in interventions such as the 1971 military memorandum, which was supposedly aimed at restoring order but failed in preventing leftists often self-identifying as revolutionaries from manifesting political and economic discontent by various means (e.g., street protests, strikes, and urban guerrilla activities) (Zürcher, 2005 [1993]; Ahmad (1993); Bozarslan, 2006 [2004]; Nocera, 2011; Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Landau, 2017 [1974]; Benlisoy, 2018). More precisely, graffiti of the late 1960s reveal that, in Turkey, the 1968 movement was inspired by hostility towards Western influence on Turkey's politics. To begin with, see the anti-NATO writing in Figure 53, which does not depict a static wall but a communicative surface in motion: a boat.

Figure 53 "No to NATO". (Source: *Ant*, 1968, June 11, 76, p. 2)

Published on a 1968 issue of *Ant* (issue 76, p. 2), the picture appeared next to a short yet important commentary providing detailed information not only about the author of the writing and the purpose of his propaganda activity but also about the authorities' reaction: the fisherman who wrote "no to NATO" on his own boat was taken to the police station for interrogation, where he explained that he wrote it to give voice to labourers who needed unity to succeed in class-struggle (Ant magazine, 1968). In short, writing on his own means of production was an individual act of dissent but was also a call to action. In addition to this, it was a way to express (working) class pride. As reported by *Ant*'s editorial team, the fisherman had in fact made another writing on the other side of his boat, one reading "*proleter*" (proletarian). Lastly, the commentary by the editorial team informs us that the proletarian fisherman lived in a peripheral district of İstanbul (Büyükçekmece). At first glance, this detail might not seem relevant but is actually of great importance to question if and eventually why his boat differed from walls. Compared to a static wall of a peripheral neighbourhood, a boat

on the move throughout the sea space allowed the content of the fisherman's writings much greater visibility[49].

Since the United States played a leading role in the functioning of the intergovernmental military alliance NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) during the so-called Cold-War decades of the mid-20th century, the slogan against the NATO can be clearly interpreted as a slogan against them. In other words, the feelings of anti-Americanism vehiculated by the graffitied boat through the Bosphorus can be interpreted as dissent against the reduction of Turkey to a military base amid Cold War tensions[50]. Further evidence of the spreading of anti-imperialist ideas as characteristic feature of the 1968 movement in Turkey is provided by the photograph below.

Figure 54 Slogan likely written by university students: "no to imperialism". (Source: *Ant*, October 1968, 93, p. 10)

The slogan "no to imperialism" appeared on a 1968 issue of *Ant* (93, p. 10) next to an article about the student movement in İstanbul and its revolutionary activities (e.g., occupations and boycotts) (Arolat, 1968). Given this, I would like to make three remarks. First, we can assume that the authors of the graffiti were university students. Second, we can also assume that the picture was taken in İstanbul even if no specific information about the exact location was given. Third, İstanbul was not the only place in Turkey where the global movement of the 1968 spread. For an almost self-explanatory proof of the activities of the student movement in

[49] At this regard, I consider it important to stress that the boat can be comparable to the trains signed with a combination of nicknames and street numbers by youth living in peripheral neighbourhoods of US cities since the late 1960s. See Nelli (2012 [1978]) for a detailed discussion of the graffiti in the same period in the US.

[50] For a detailed discussion of the hostility towards the US and, more precisely, against American imperialism, see Bilgiç (2015), who argued that it was not a novelty of the 1960s but it was in this decade that it became the ideological attitude of leftist groups who perceived US influence on Turkey's domestic and foreign policies as a threat to national identity and sovereignty.

Ankara, see Figure 55, which depicts the iconic graffiti "*devrim*" (revolution) at the METU campus.

Figure 55 Iconic "revolution" graffiti at the METU stadium. Late 1960s. (Source: Yancı, 2019)

In the autumn of 1968, the 33-meter-high graffiti made its appearance on the steps of the METU stadium by hand of socialist students who were also leaders of the anti-imperialist movement: Hüseyin İnan, Taylan Özgür, Alpaslan Özdoğan, Mustafa Yalçıner, Mete Ertekin, and a friend of them (Yancı, 2019). To this day, it is still on its site because, in the following decades, METU students ensured the permanence of the revolutionary ideals inspiring its authors, three of which were murdered in the following years under circumstances recalled later in this section. To give an idea of the street violence marking the late 1960s in Turkey, it is here sufficient to recall the events of Sunday 16 February 1969, known also as *Kanlı Pazar* (Bloody Sunday) because the protests of revolutionary socialists against US imperialism reached a peak in attendance but the counter-revolutionary responses to the protests reached a peak in brutality: thousands of students rallied together with workers from Beyazıt Square to Taksim Square to contest the anchoring of the American Sixth Fleet in İstanbul but Taksim Square was turned into a proper battlefield where two protesters were killed and hundreds were injured (Nisan online newspaper, 2019). Despite events like this, and presumably precisely because of events like this, the student movement carried on with its activities. For evidence of this, see Figure 56, published a month and a half after the Bloody Sunday in *Ant* (1969, April 15, 120, p. 5).

Figure 56 Graffiti and posters on the entrance façade of the METU Architecture Faculty building. (Source: Ant, 1969, April 15, 120, p. 5). Caption: "Slogans at the entrance of the university – Struggle for a democratic university". Writing on the left: "This building was liberated". Writing above the glass door: "We rule". Poster on the left: "permanent revolution".

The graffiti on the glass façade of the METU Architecture department are slogans conveying the ideal of autonomy inspiring the students who had occupied it: "*bu bina kurtarıldı*" ("this building was liberated") and "*yönetim bizimdir*" ("we rule"). As for the posters, it must be noticed that only the content on one of them is readable (the first from the left): *'sürekli devrim'* (permanent revolution). Besides calling for critical attention on the aforementioned notion of permanence, this slogan showing the influence of the international(ist) debate about the so-called permanent revolution theory on the student movement activities[51].

To better contextualise the content of the photograph above and thus the anti-imperialist character of the 1968 movement in Turkey, the content of the article to which it provided visual support must be also briefly summarised (Ant, 1969). First, it reports that revolutionary students occupying educational facilities created participatory decision-making structures (e.g., forums). Besides this, the article was a statement of solidarity with them since they were struggling against cultural and economic imperialism. *Ant*'s political stance on the issue was summarised in the title: "*Amerikan eğitim üslerinde işgal ve CHP'nin ihaneti*" ("American

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[51] In line with the Marxist tradition of thought and struggle for a classless society, acclaimed leaders of the local revolutionary left of the time also contributed to the international(ist) debate about the so-called permanent revolution theory. As I learned via unstructured interviews, Mahir Çayan was one of them. For a brief discussion of how different organisations reclaiming his ideological leadership, see the section "Extensive territorial marking" of this chapter. For visuals, see also Figure 308 in Appendix A. .

training bases under occupation and the betrayal of the CHP"). In Turkish, the term "*üsler*" is usually accompanied by the term "*askeri*" and, combined together, the term "*askeri üsler*" means "military bases". By replacing the term "*askeri*" (military) with the expression "*Amerikan eğitim*" ("American education"), the title of the article expresses criticism against cultural and economic imperialism by comparing universities in Turkey where English is the language of instruction with US military bases. For instance, this was the case of METU, established in 1956 with the support of representatives of American institutions, who played a crucial role in its planning and, more specifically, in conception phase (Tekeli, 2006).

Besides occupying educational facilities and graffitiing their surfaces, METU students leading the movement at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s co-founded *Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu* (People's Liberation Army of Turkey, THKO), an armed struggle organisation engaged in urban guerrilla activities (e.g., targeted protests, armed conflict, bank robbery, and kidnapping)[52]. To both put an end to street violence and crack down on the leftist movement, state armed forces arrested, tortured and murdered leftists both before and after the so-called memorandum of 12 March 1971 (Ahmad, 1993, Zürcher 2005[1993], Benlisoy, 2018; Landau, 2017 [1974]).

Among them, there were also three of the authors of the iconic graffiti 'revolution' at the METU campus stadium. Renowned for having burned the car of a US ambassador in front of METU Rectorate building, Taylan Özgür was killed in September 1969 in İstanbul, where he had gone to attend a student congress (Evrensel, 2018). Alpaslan Özdoğan was murdered in March 1971 amid a clash on the mountains in Adıyaman (in the southeast of the country), where he had gone together with other militants to raid an American radar base shortly after the coup (Birgün, 2021). Hüseyin Inan was murdered in May 1972 together with two other leading militants of THKO – Yusuf Aslan and Deniz Gezmiş. As it is common knowledge within the leftist movement in Turkey, the three died in May 1972 in the Ulucanlar prison in Ankara following the sentence to death by hanging on charges of having attempted to overthrow the constitutional order. With regard to the historic punishment, Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan (2012) argued that it was disproportionate compared to the activities that they had engaged in and, besides this, they stressed that it did now have the deterrent effect it was supposed to have.

In the following years, revolutionary leftists did not lose the momentum and rather carried on with political organisation and mobilisation. Evidence of this is provided in the next section, which focuses on the second half of the 1970s because none of the sources I was able to collect referred to the first half of the 1970s and only further and more systematic archival

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[52] See the third subsection of this section for more details about Dev-Genç (Devrimci Gençlik, Revolutionary Youth), the organisation from which THKO and several other organisations also engaged in urban guerrilla activities came out.

research can reveal whether the 1971 coup affected the propagandistic use of graffiti by for instance silencing the walls of dissent.

2.2. Giving voice to the labour movement in the 1970s

In the second half of the 1970s, the working class took the lead of the revolutionary movement and led the struggle against labour exploitation to a historic peak in intensity in 1977 despite the brutality of counter-revolutionary attempts. By attesting to this, the walls examined in this section corroborate the argument by Benlisoy (2018), who claimed that, together with the 1960s, the 1970s can be considered the "heyday of the Turkish left" because both the student and labour movements engaged in intellectual debates and led a mass mobilisation that indeed resulted in intense political struggle. Given the massive scale of political organising and mobilisation, Bora (2021) also argued against the dark age narrative of official historiography and defined the 1970s as "a period of political maturing" but, besides this, he suggested to avoid any mythization of the golden era of the Turkish left as patriotic and heroic. In light of these preliminary remarks, I am going to examine a series of photographs attesting to the rising wave of strikes that marked the second half of the 1970s. The order of their examination is not rigorously chronological because thematic arrangement helps to draw attention on how graffiti for agitprop inevitably mediated space-, class- and gender-related issues.

2.2.1. A rising wave of strikes

In this subsection section, the focus is on walls suggesting that the leading actors of the labour struggle in the second half of the 1970s were male actors. For instance, see the figure below for a call for visibility attesting to the proactive role of revolutionary unionism in the mine industry, a sector in which women are traditionally invisible but actually not entirely absent[53].

The picture 57 is a still frame of a documentary film by about a 23-days strike organised in May 1976 at the Yeni Çeltek coal mine in the Black Sea region (Akçam, 2004) The slogan is signed by *Yer Altı Maden-İş* (Underground Mining Work), the short name of *Türkiye Yeraltı ve Yerüstü Devrimci Maden İşçileri Sendikası* (Turkish Underground and Surface Revolutionary Mine Workers' Union). Founded in 1975 and forcibly closed following the 1980 coup, Yer Altı Maden-İş coordinated various strikes in the Black Sea region. The Yeni Çeltek strike is however considered an exemplary case of the union's revolutionary approach, which can be

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[53] With regard to women's labour in the mining sector in Turkey, see Özkan (2020).

summarised as follows: occupation, self-organisation, self-management, solidarity networking, and self-defence[54].

Figure 57 Slogan: "There is the strike of those who entered the grave before dying – *Yeraltı Maden-İş* (Underground Mining Work)". Yeni Çeltek coal mine, Black Sea region. 1976. (Source: Akçam, 2004)

For reasons whose discussion falls outside the scope of this overview of the leading actors of the second half of the 1970s, the revolutionary unionism approach proposed by Yer Altı Maden-İş differed from that proposed by a union that is still active to this day: DİSK, the acronym of *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (Revolutionary Workers Union Confederation)[55]. Below its logo.
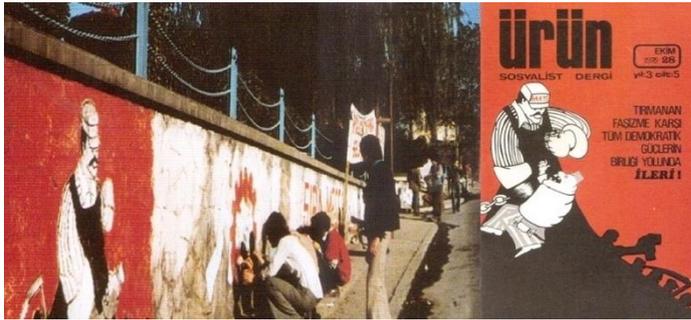
Figure 58 Painting of DİSK logo (Source: Şafak, 2015)   Figure 59 DİSK logo (Source: DİSK, n.d.)

The photograph showing the painting of the logo of DİSK was published on the October 1976 issue of the socialist periodical *Ürün* (Product/Produce) (Şafak, 2015). By then, the list of DİSK's activities was already long since the confederation was founded in 1967 by *Maden-İş* (Mining Work) and other unions that split from *Türk-İş* (the Confederation of Workers Unions

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[54] For an overview of the activities of Yer-Altı Maden-İş, see: Bütün (2015) and Birikim (1977). See also DİSK Etkinlikler Dizini (1964-1996) (n.d). Lastly, see Göktaş (2019) for a detailed discussion of the close relationship between the autonomy model emerged during the occupation of the quarries at the Yeni Çeltek coal mine in 1976 and the autonomy model implemented by *Devrimci-Yol* (Revolutionary Path, an organisation to be discussed later on in this chapter).

[55] For the discussion of the different understanding of revolutionary unionism proposed by *Yer Altı maden-İş* and DİSK, see Şafak (2018).

of Turkey founded in 1952)[56]. The acronym DİSK reappears in the photograph below, inside the flower.

Figure 60 DİSK acronym inside a flower and slogans: "long live international solidarity!", and "fascism shall not pass". Place and date missing. (Source: TÜSTAV)

On the wall, there are also two slogans that reinforce each other. One is a call for international solidarity of the working class; the other is an antifascist slogan. The latter echoes the internationalist stance evoked by the former. *"Faşizme geçit yok"* (fascism shall not pass) is in fact the translation of "*no pasarán!*", the worldwide famous slogan of the Spanish Civil War. The acronym of DİSK reappears in the banner in one of the two pictures below, which depict the same wall on different occasions.
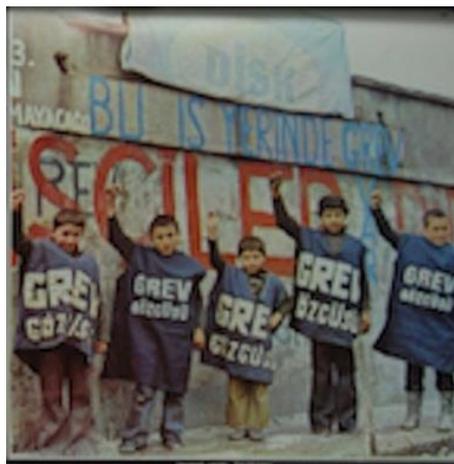
Figure 61 In blue: "strike at this workplace". In red: "[i]şçiler b[irliği). Great Strike, likely 1977. (Source: DİSK).

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[56] See DİSK (n.d.) for a list of the activities from 1967 to 1996.

Figure 62 Theatre group performing in a factory during the Great Strike. (Source: Şafak, 2012, p. 87)

In Figure 61, there are two writings. The one in red is not entirely readable but the missing part can be read in the picture on the right. The slogan in blue signals a strike and, even if the picture does not contain any specific information about place and date, some information can be inferred from Figure 62, which was published in a monographic book about the so called *Büyük Grev* (Great Strike) (Şafak, 2012). Between 1975 and 1977, thousands of workers in tens of factories went on strike against MESS (*Türkiye Metal Sanayicileri Sendikası*), the Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries (Şafak, 2007 and 2012). All the pictures of the series below contain the acronym MESS and, altogether, they also attest to the proactive role of DİSK and *Maden-İş* (one of DİSK's founding organisations).

Figure 63 Slogans and imagery of the Great Strike. Late 1970s. Writings on the left: "Our working class will defeat MESS – Mine-work – DİSK". Writings on the right: "strike at Aykim", "down with fascism", "there is a strike in this workplace". (Source: TÜSTAV)

Besides slogans attesting to the presence of a strike and condemning fascism, the wall contains a male figure breaking a metal chain whose symbolic meaning is self-explanatory: it stands for the liberation from labour exploitation in the metal industry. The chain reappears in the mural painting below.

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Figure 64 A mural and banners of the Great Strike. Late 1970s. Bottom right writing: "There is no liberation alone, from the fist and the chain, either all together or nobody". Banner on the left: "we are with you in the war against MESS, we defeated DGM, it's MESS' turn". Banner in the centre: "'we defeated MC, it's MESS' turn". Banner on the right: "workers are united, MESS' is finished". (Source: DİSK magazine, August 1977, Yilmaz Aysan's personal archive)

Besides the chain, the mural above contains other elements worthy of attention. First, the slogan at the bottom right of the mural, below the logo of DİSK, is a verse of the poem *All of Us or None* by Bertolt Brecht (1945) and no wording was ever so apt to evoke class solidarity and unity in the metallurgic sector: *kurtuluş yok tek başına, yumruktan ve zincirden, ya hep beraber ya hiç birimiz* (there is no liberation alone, from the fist and the chain, either all together or nobody) [57].

In addition to this, the snakes used to write the letters 's' of the acronym MESS and the fist crushing them must be also noticed. Since I could not find information clarifying if there is any specific relationship between MESS's imagery and the symbolism of the snakes (e.g., the logo), I can merely interpret them based on meanings of traditional symbolism: the snakes stand for the evil while the fist stands for the strength needed by unionised workers to defeat it. Given this, further research to find out if they used to have specific symbolic meanings is suggested all the more so as their symbolic relevance is confirmed also by the image below, in which both the snakes and the fist reappear.

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[57] Field observations made in the 2010s revealed its transgenerational use. The slogan continues to be used in street protests in its shortened version: "*kurtuluş yok tek başına, ya hep beraber ya hiç birimiz*" (there is no liberation alone, either all together or nobody). However, there is no picture of graffiti in my collection.

Figure 65 A mural cartoon during the Great Strike. Slogan: "Our working class will make MESS give up". (Source: Şafak, 2015)

This image was published in 2015 on the leftist online newspaper *Sendika* (Trade Union) together with an interview with Canol Kocagöz, the 1975-1976 General Secretary of the *Karikatürcüler Derneği* (Cartoonists Association) (Şafak, 2015). In the interview, Kocagöz clarified why it was the working-class and its struggle that had a political and practical impact on art (and not the other way round). Besides remarking that *Maden-İş* did not tell cartoonists what to draw and how, he defined mural cartoons as result of the cooperation between workers and cartoonists. In the next images (Figure 66 and Figure 67, photographs published with the same interview), we see cartoonists at work and the written document issued by *Maden-İş*, the latter granting them access to the factories under strike.

Figure 66 Cartoonists at work amid the Great Strike (Source: Şafak, 2015)

Figure 67 Strike visit document (Source: Şafak, 2015)

As remarked by Kocagöz, written permission to visit factories under strike was a safety measure against the risk of fascist infiltration and police sabotaging the strikes. As specified by Şafak (2012, pp. 86 – 87), the written permission was needed by all kind of visitors: members of leftist associations and unions other than *Maden-İş* but also by workers of other factories. To contextualise the importance of precautions against provocatory attempts, it is sufficient to recall the historic events of May Day 1977, known as Taksim Square massacre.

2.2.2. May Day 1977, Taksim massacre, and censorship

During a highly participated rally organised on the occasion of the International Workers' Day, a never identified gunman fired into the huge crowd gathered in Taksim Square from the newly built Intercontinental Hotel (later Marmara Hotel) (Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Batuman, 2015; Köseoğlu, 2021)[58]. The brutal intervention of the security forces made the crowd panic, more than thirty participants were crushed to death, many more were injured, many others were detained, and the perpetrators were never held accountable (Nocera, 2011; Mavioğlu & Sanyer, 2007). Self-evidently, the picture below relates to the events.

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[58] For a brief history of the May Day celebration in Taksim, see Chapter 3.

Figure 68 Slogan related to the Taksim Square massacre: "we call the oligarchs to account for the May Day massacre". İstanbul. 1977. (Source: Newspaper *Günaydın*, 1977, month, date, and page missing)

The writing is a slogan calling the oligarchy to account for the responsibility of the May Day massacre. The picture was published in 1977 on the print newspaper *Günaydın* together with an article entitled "*Duvarlarındaki sloganları silmeyen 85 ev ve dükkan sahibine para cezası verildi*" (85 home and shop owners who did not erase the slogans on their walls were fined). Since I did not archive properly the source, I cannot specify month and day of the publication nor the exact page[59]. That said, I can nonetheless contextualise the content of the picture above based on the information I could retrieve from the part of the photograph of the newspaper page that I instead did not fail to archive. As stated in the newspaper article, the man indicating the wall writing – a doorman living in the neighbourhood of Fatih (İstanbul) – declared: "We clean up, they write. Shall we pick up a gun and wait at the door?". Besides giving an idea of the violent climate of the time, the story of this picture reveals that the repressive apparatus exerted censorship also by means of pecuniary coercion. Censorship is the issue on which the figures below also draw attention.

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[59] To be more precise, I did not photograph the article in full but I am almost sure that it dated back to 1977 because I focused the non-systematic research in newspapers archive of the Atatürk library on 1977 based on the assumption that it marked a peak in spread of graffiti for agitprop, indeed. Clearly, my lack of accuracy in taking care of the collected evidence calls for attention on archival-related issues but a more detailed discussion is postponed to the section of this chapter about the aftermath of the 1980 coup.

Figure 69 May Day slogan: "long live May Day" (Source: Yılmaz, 1978)

Figure 70 Erasure of a May Day slogan (Source: Yılmaz, 1978)

Figure 71 A verse of the May Day anthem: "May 1st, celebration of workers, laborers" (Source: Yılmaz, 1978)

The images are still frames of the film *Köşeyi Dönen Adam* (The Man Who Gets Rich) directed by Atıf Yılmaz (1978). Censorship is self-evident when reading the first two images together. As far as the third image is concerned, a few preliminary remarks must be made. The graffiti in the third image is a verse of the *1 Mayıs Marşı*, the anthem of the International Workers' Day in Turkey (still played and sung for the occasion)[60]. The anthem was used as soundtrack of the final scene of the film but the scene was censored since the protagonist (the popular actor Kemal Sunal) attends the May Day rally at Taksim Square (Birgün, 2017). To explain why, it must be recalled that, after the massacre, May Day demonstrations at Taksim Square (and elsewhere in Turkey) were banned[61]. Over the years, both the ban and the collective memory of the 1977 events have contributed to strengthen the symbolic meanings of both the square and May Day to the point that, in the early 2010s and actually to this day, leftists continue to reproduce and circulate the iconic imagery of the 1977 such as the logo and the main banner[62].

The logo and the banner respectively depict the hands of a worker lifting up the world and the male worker intent on breaking the chain of labour exploitation that we have already seen in more than one picture. Given the male-dominance self-evidently emerged from the imagery examined so far, I consider it crucial to shift the focus to graffiti calling for attention on the role of women within the labour movement and, more precisely, on the ways of (not) seeing their productive and reproductive labour.

[60] Both lyrics and music are by the composer Sarper Özaslan, who was commissioned to prepare the soundtracks for a theatre play in Ankara (Bertolt Brecht's "Mother", adapted from Maxim Gorky's the homonymous novel). For more information, see Gazete Duvar (2017).

[61] To be more precise, it shall be also preliminary recalled that May Day demonstrations in Taksim Square were banned until 2010 and were banned again in 2013, right before the Gezi uprising's outburst.

[62] For a more detailed discussion of the transgenerational legacy of May Day 1977, see Chapter 3.
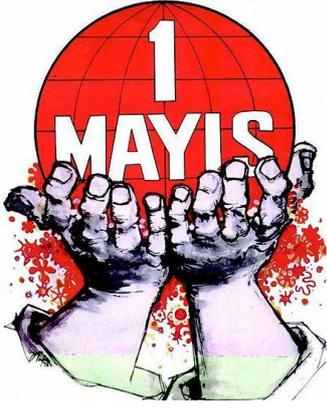
Figure 72 Logo of May Day 1977 (Source: *Eğitim Sendikası*, 2019)

Figure 73 Taksim Square, May Day 1977 (Source: Umut Sendikası, 2019)

2.2.3. Women's labour and ways of (not) seeing it

The walls examined in this subsection urge the viewer for critical attention on both "ways of seeing" (Berger, 1972) and ways "how not to be seen" (Steyerl, 2013). More precisely, the ways of (not) representing women on walls urge us to tackle gender- and class-related issues as intersectional. To read the sources in chronological order, I am going to start from fictional evidence of women's struggle against traditional gender roles in the mid-1970s.See Figure 74.
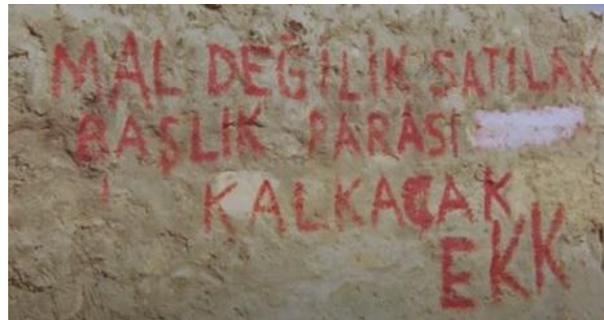
Figure 74 Still frame of the film *Evde Kalmış Kızlar* (Duru, 1975) depicting a slogan for the bride price abolition. (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

The picture above is a still frame of the comedy film *Evde Kalmış Kızlar* (Maidens) (Duru, 1975)[63]. The film focuses on major issues and transformations sweeping through the country in the 1970s: migration from rural to urban areas in search for work, mobilisation against landlordship in rural areas, and the rising struggle for the liberation from patriarchal traditions such as the bride price (the money or goods given to the family of a bride-to-be). Given this, I argue the historiographical potential of the graffiti even though they are mere elements of a

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[63] The literal translation of the film title is "Girls Remained at Home" but the idiom "evde kalmış kızlar" is used to indicate maidens.

scenography set but, once again, I also suggest the need for further research to verify their validity in attesting to the women's struggle for economic independence. For non-fictional evidence, see instead Figure 75

Figure 75 Slogan for wage equality during a strike: "[…] equal salary!!! […] all strikers […])". Date and place missing. (Source: TÜSTAV)

Place and date of the events are missing but, unless I misinterpret the content of the picture and that of the not fully readable slogan, these women were workers on strike for wage equality, one of the core principles of feminist struggle. Another element of remarkable importance is the presence of a child, most likely the daughter of one of the striking workers. Her presence raises questions about the un/equal distribution of reproductive work and also about its in/visibility, issues emerging also from the mural cartoon in the picture below if we look at it with a critical eye.

Likely made and documented in 1980 during a strike at the Paşabahçe glass factory in İstanbul, this mural cartoon visualises the conflict of interests between the working-class and the middle-class but failed to represent working-class women doing both productive and reproductive labour. To explain why, I am going to decipher the content of the mural cartoon in detail so as to explain also why I argue that even the spatial positioning of the various elements composing it can be interpreted as a narrative choice aimed at visualising the relationship between social inequality and political stance.

Figure 76 Making of a mural cartoon during a strike. Likely at the Pasabahçe glass factory, İstanbul,1980. Slogan in bigger font in the placard: "there is a strike in this workplace". Slogan in smaller font: "Kristal İş - Hürcam İş" (crystal work is free glasswork). Speech bubble: "Is now the time for a strike? The economic situation of our country is very bad, brother, we expect sacrifice from you…". (Source: TÜSTAV)

On the left, there is a male figure dressed in his patched working cloths and, clearly, he represents the working class. Low in wage but high in rage, he stood up for his rights and went on strike. The element attesting to this is the slogan in bigger font on the placard that the worker holds with his left hand: *"bu iş yerinde grev var"* ("there is a strike in this workplace"). Place and year of the events are missing but the placard contains a second slogan that allows to infer them. The slogan in smaller font is a word pun that gives clear indications about the line of business and also about the specific events: "*kristal iş hürcam iş*" ("crystal work is free glasswork"). Both Kristal-İş and "Hür-Cam İş were in fact trade unions of the glass industry established in the 1960s but, in the late 1970s, they got together and, in 1980, they co-coordinated a 120-days-long strike at the Paşabahçe glass factory in İstanbul (Kristal-İş Sendıkası, n.d.)[64]. With the right hand, the worker holds his son. The child has no shoes but a toy car, one of the various elements in stark contrast with the ones on the opposite side of the mural cartoon.

On the right, there are well-dressed figures sipping drinks on a luxury car to represent the middle-class enjoying privileges granted by the working-class labour's exploitation. The male figure is probably the factory owner. The writing in the speech bubble explains his self-interested reaction to the ongoing strike and also the sardonic smile on his face. He asked the

[64] For more detailed information about the 1980 strike and also about the previous strikes, see Kristal-İş Sendıkası (n.d.).

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working-class representative whether it was the proper time for a strike and mocked him twice. Besides demanding sacrifice for the benefit of the country's economy amid a critical period, he dared to address him with an expression proper of the traditional jargon of class solidarity such as *işçi kardeş* (brother-worker). Compared to the graphic details used to give voice to the working-class, the font size of the writing in the speech bubble is bigger. Whether intentional or not, this helps to visualise the authoritarian tone of the owner of the factory, which is not the only thing he owned.

On the right side of the factory owner, there sits a woman. Clearly, she is represented as a luxury item he shows off just like he does with the car. Moreover, she is represented as having blonde hair, a detail of particular importance to question whom she represents. Since blondness in Turkey is often considered a symbol of western, modern, secular, and urban identity, the woman in the mural painting can be interpreted as a symbol of Turkish women who feel to belong to an enlightened elite and differentiate themselves from headscarved women, especially those of lower class, the latter often criticised for being uneducated and thus ignorant[65].

In the light of the observations made so far, it must be lastly noticed that the picture does not include any female figure representing working class women. Her absence may suggest that no women were employed at the Paşabahçe glass factory in the 1960s but this was not the case. This is for instance attested by a report published in the feminist periodical *Kadınların Sesi* (1980, June-July, p. 8), which gave voice to women employed in glass factories and striking to reclaim their rights to better working conditions and salary[66]. Given this, the invisibility of the barefoot child's mother must be not only noticed but also explained. Even in the case that she was not working there or elsewhere (e.g., in another factory), she must have probably been at home taking care of reproductive work (e.g., housekeeping) and, even in this case, her body was denied space for visibility and representation.

It can be therefore concluded that the cartoon somehow turned the wall of the factory into an extension of domestic walls. Moreover, we can also assume that this was due to a lack of consciousness of the inequality and exploitation resulting from the traditional gender-based division of labour in productive and reproductive. The reason behind this assumption is easily

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[65] These are remarks that I made based on impressions collected throughout my years-long lived experience between cities such as Ankara and İstanbul. Similar remarks can be found in literary source. For instance, see Altinay (2013, p. 93), who made more than one argument in this regard. First, being able to afford to pay the labour of a professional hairdresser to get the hair dyed is a class privilege and, second, blondness can the willingness to look differently from "Turkey's ethnic Others", i.e., Arabs and Kurds. Any further discussion of issues related to the (re)ethnicization of the body and, more specifically, to the polarisation of socio-cultural values directly related to the discriminatory differentiation between so-called 'white Turks' and 'black Turks' is however out of the scope of this discussion.

[66] For a digitalised copy of the full article, see the TÜSTAV online archive at the following link: https://tustav.org/yayinlar/sureli_yayinlar/kadinlarin_sesi/ks_059_60.pdf.

explained when we look at the next picture, which shows that the authors of the mural cartoon were men.

Figure 77 Male authors of the mural cartoon. Likely İstanbul, 1980. (Source: TÜSTAV)

In light of the remarks made so far, it is even more important to stress the visibility that progressive women movement instead gave to the rising wave of strikes in sectors including but not limited to the glass one. For instance, see next picture, which was published together with *"Grev Meydanlarından Yükselen Sesler"* (rising voices from the strike squares), the aforementioned report on the periodical *Kadınların Sesi* (1980, June-July, 59-60, pp. 8-11).

Figure 78 Mural attesting to the presence of a strike and imagery of May Day (Source: *Kadınların Sesi*, 1980, June-July, 59-60: 11)

Since the strikes mentioned in the report are many and no captions were provided, I am not able to discern the specific event depicted in the photograph nor to say with certainty whether all the women in Figure 78 were striking workers and/or members of a delegation of women organisations visiting a strike to manifest solidarity. Given this, and given the in/visibility issues discussed so far, I limit myself to recall two of the women organisations mentioned in the report: *TİP Kadın Seksiyonu* (Women Section of Turkish Workers' Party) and *Demokratik*

Kadınlar Birliği (Democratic Women's Union)[67]. For further evidence of women's active presence within the leftist movement of the second half of the 1970s, see the picture below, which depicts the graffitied acronym of *Devrimci Kadınlar Dernekleri (*Revolutionary Women's Associations, DKD), an organisation founded in the late 1970s (Keşoğlu, 2007).

Figure 79 Still frame of the film *Derdim Dünyadan Büyük* (Gören, 1978) depicting a signature graffiti by *Devrimci Kadınlar Dernekleri* (Revolutionary Women Associations, DKD). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

The picture is a still frame of *Derdim Dünyadan Büyük* (My Problem is Bigger than the World) (Gören, 1978), a film banned precisely because of the graffiti it contained (Politikhane, 2020). For contextualisation purposes, it is important to recall that, by the late 1970s, the practice of marking space with political organisations acronyms had acquired more and more visibility in cinematographic representations of the highly politicised climate of the time. The next section explains why.

2.3. Extensive territorial marking in the late 1970s

In the late 1970s, revolutionary socialists fiercely responded to the attacks by far-right militants backed by state forces so that street violence for territorial control escalated and caused thousands of casualties (Zürcher, 2005 [1993]; Ahmad, 1993; Bozarslan, 2006 [2004]; Nocera, 2011; Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Landau, 2017 [1974]; Benlisoy, 2018; Gourisse, 2022). Within such a highly politicised climate, major changes in the use of walls and graffiti occurred.

First, writing slogans became a form of protest in itself (*eylem*) (Can, 2011). Second, "*yazıya çıkmak*" (going out to write [on walls]) became an important step in the education process of cadres with the beginning of the chase between police and political movements (Emiroğlu (2011 [2001], p. 481). Third, graffitiing space was no longer a prerogative of the radical left

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[67] For more information about socialist women organisations of the second half of the 1970s, their legacy on the 1980s movements, and the reasons why women would deny their legacy, see Keşoğlu (2007).

and rather started crossing the political spectrum. For instance, streets were filled with slogans during and after funeral ceremonies no matter if the students killed were militants of the radical left or militants of the far-right (Can, 2011). As a result, graffiti were widely spread across the country and visibly marked the territory contended by antagonistic actors (Emiroğlu, 2011[2001].

Evidence of this is provided not only by the referred literary sources; unstructured interviews with first-hand witnesses of the streetscape of those years confirmed the same scenario and actually provided additional insights into it. One of the interlocutors defined it a form of anarchy and, to my request for explanations, he told me that, by anarchy, he meant disorder as result of refusal of systemic order. Someone else specified instead that walls filled with wall writings were not limited to central areas of big cities but were spread also in peripheral areas and small-scale towns[68]. To help me get an idea of the scale of the extension and thus visibility, a third interviewee told me that the graffiti of the Gezi resistance in 2013 were nothing compared to those of the 1970s[69].

Besides slogans properly called as such, the streets were filled with collective signatures graffiti. As clarified in the Glossary, the term is here suggested to refer to graffiti consisting of names, acronyms and/or symbols of political parties, organisations and movements. Evidence of this is examined in the following pages, which are divided into three parts. First, I examine selective examples of graffiti by revolutionary socialists and slogans that were popular among them. Then, I examine graffiti showing that the educational facilities retained their territorial centrality but territorial conflict was extended way beyond their precincts. Lastly, I examine graffiti for political propaganda by militants of the ultranationalist movement to show that, by the late 1970s, the propagandistic use of space via graffiti was no longer a prerogative of the radical left.

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[68] This is something that will emerge also from the evidence examined in the next section of this chapter.

[69] Having documented the rapid and extensive spreading graffiti of the 2013 Gezi resistance in Taksim, I could easily imagine that the quantity of the graffiti of the second half of the 1970s was really high as people recall it but, not having experienced the 1970s in Turkey nor elsewhere, I can only suggest the need for comparative research aimed at in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences with the streetscape of New York in the same period, which Nelli (2012 [1978], p. 25) described as a "jungle of colourful writings" because there were no trains and private cars where there were no tags consisting of combinations of street numbers and nicknames.

2.3.1. Revolutionary socialists and popular slogans

Figure 80 Collective signature: "revolutionaries". Place and date missing (Source: TÜSTAV)

Figure 81 Slogan: "one solution – socialism". Place and date missing (Source: TÜSTAV)

The writing on the left can be considered a collective signature; it shows how the substantivized adjective "*devrimciler*" (revolutionaries) was used for self-identification purposes. The writing on the right is a slogan: "one solution – socialism". This is how it can be translated even if the expression "*tek yol*" literally means "the only path" and has clear connection with "*yoldaş*" (comrade)[70]. For the purpose of this discussion, it is important to stress that, although revolutionary socialism was claimed to be the one and only solution for a classless society, the socialist-inspired organisations into which the Turkish left had split by the late 1970s were actually (too) many[71]. With regard to internal division, it has been argued that it resulted in organisational fragmentation, which is why it is considered one of the overlapping issues hindering its development along with counterrevolutionary attacks and institutional repression (Benlisoy, 2018, Landau, 2017[1974]). With regard to graffiti, archival research revealed that many were the organisations resorting to them for territorial marking purposes. See the Appendix A for a sufficiently large sample of photographs published in printed books, still frames of comedy films and still frames of documentary films showing it, which altogether show that there was no remarkable diversity in form and content nor in their spatial use. Most of the graffiti were slogans signed with handwritten names, acronyms,

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[70] "*Yoldaş*" is the term used by leftists as the equivalent of the English, Spanish and Italian words "comrade", "companera/o" and "compagna/o". Etymologically, all three terms refer to the practice of sharing but they differ from each other because of the metaphorical object shared by revolutionary leftists who do not share the same language: comrades share a room, *companeras/os* and *compagne/i* share bread, and *yoldaşlar* share a path indeed. An interesting question to answer would be whether the term *yoldaş* preceded the expression *tek yol* or whether the opposite is true but answering it is not relevant for the examination of the picture.

[71] See Family tree of the Turkish radical left. (n.d.).

abbreviated forms and symbols of political organisations or entirely consisting of them. However, this does not diminish their relevance; on the contrary, it suggests that collective signatures had had become slogans themselves. In other words, signing space had become a form of protest in itself. For a selective example, see Figure 82, which depicts the collective signatures of two organisations: *Devrimci Genç* (Revolutionary Youth) and *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path).

Figure 82 Signatures by *Devrimci Yol* and *Dev-Genç*. Still frame of the film *Taşı Toprağı Altin Şehir* (Aksoy, 1979). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Dev-Genç is the abbreviated form of *Devrimci Gençlik* (Revolutionary Youth), which is how the socialist students who founded it in 1969 renamed the Marxist-Leninist organisation of which they were previously members, *Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu* (Federation of Debate Clubs, FKF, 1965)[72]. *Dev-Yol* is instead the abbreviated form of *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path), an antifascist movement of revolutionary struggle that emerged in 1977[73]. An informal interview with a first-hand witness of the late 1970s revealed that one of the slogans used by Dev-Yol was "*tek yol devrim*" (the only solution is the revolution). The slogan appears in the picture below and, although it is not signed, it was likely written by members of *Dev-Yol* since the picture is a still frame of a documentary film about the self-administration experiment followed to Dev-Yol's victory of the 1979 local election in Fatsa, a town in the Black Sea region (Akçam, 2007)[74].

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[72] For detailed information about *Dev-Genç*, see Yıldırım (2008). Here, it is sufficient to recall that, besides fascism, *Dev-Genç* opposed capitalism and western imperialism, which is why it strongly opposed economic policies hindering national independence (e.g., aid of institutions like the International Monetary Fund to face crises) (Bozarslan, 2012; Bozdoğan S. & Akcan E., 2012).

[73] For detailed information about *Dev-Yol*, its funding principles, organizational structure, and strategy, see Morgul (2007).

[74] For more information about the self-administration project in Fatsa, see Morgül (2017). See also Figure 310 in Appendix A, which shows that the same slogan was used also by founded Dev-Sol, the abbreviated form of *Devrimci Sol* (Revolutionary Left), an organisation found in 1978 by a group splitting from *Dev-Yol* due to factional infighting (Teyhani, 2020).

Figure 83 Slogan by Dev-Yol: "No to price rises, revolution is the only solution". Fatsa. Late 1970s
(Source, Akçam, 2007)
A

Another informal interview revealed that another popular slogan of the 1970s was "*kahrolsun*

faşizm" (damn fascism). Besides attesting to this, the photographs below show also that i t
was used by different collective actors.
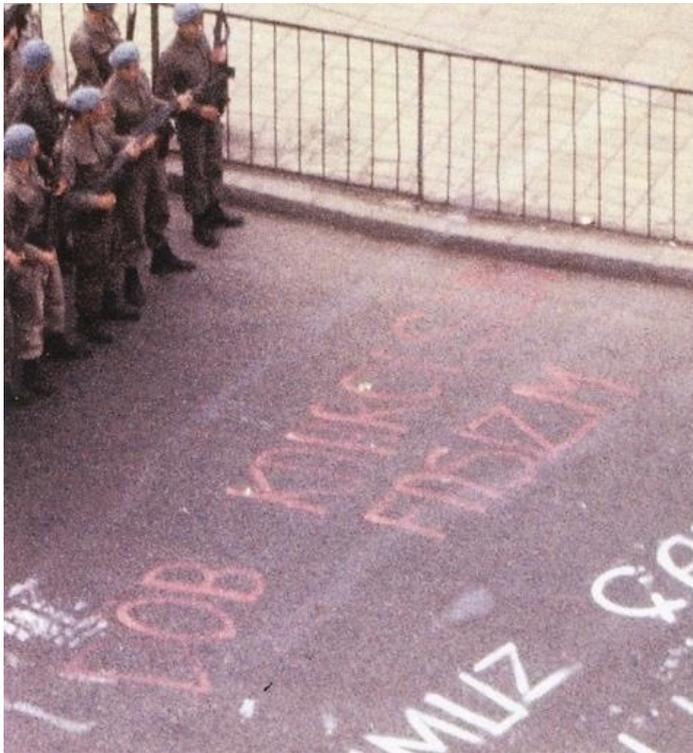
Figure 84 (In red) "Damn fascism", signed by DÖB. Taksim Square. 1978. (Source: Can, 2011, p. 201)

Figure 85 Antifascist slogan signed by CHP (Source: Akçam, 2004)

58

In Figure 84, the popular antifascist slogan is signed by DÖB, the acronym of *Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği* (Revolutionary Students Association), an organisation founded in 1968 by militants of the student movement with the aim of sustaining and spreading revolutionary thought and action (Yıldırım, 2008). In Figure 85, the same slogan is instead signed by CHP, the acronym of *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party), founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923 in concomitance with the foundation of the Turkish Republic and still active as a mass party to this day, when it continues to reclaim the principles adopted in the 1920s and 1930s (republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, statism, and revolutionism)[75]. For further evidence of graffiti in the form of antifascist slogans, see the next subsection.

2.3.2. Educational facilities and beyond

In the late 1970s, the clashes of the leftists with counterrevolutionary actors became particularly harsh (Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Benlisoy, 2018). With regard to space to be (re)appropriated, it shall be stressed that educational facilities retained a certain centrality. To explain why, it is here sufficient to recall that young militia of far-right organisations trained to physical culture, military aesthetic and religion regularly engaged in armed aggressions and bombings in university campuses to intimidate leftist militants (Gourisse, 2022). For a graffiti attesting to the reaction of leftist students self-identifying as revolutionaries, see Figure 86.

Figure 86 "We'll break the fascist occupation in A.İ.T.İ.A. - revolutionaries". Wall of a carpark in Kolej / Kurtuluş, Ankara. 1977. (Source: Aysan, 2013, p. 10)

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[75] For images attesting to the influence of socialist ideals on the CHP in the 1970s, see Figure 311 and Figure 312 in Appendix A, in which the party acronym is combined with the hammer and sickle, the well-known symbol of agricultural and industrial workers' solidarity. See also Bertuccelli (2013) for detailed info about the relationship between the Kemalist tradition and the revolutionary youth.

Most likely, the revolutionaries who signed the slogan were students because A.İ.T.İ.A. is the acronym of *Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi* (Ankara Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences). For further evidence of the highly conflictual atmosphere dominating the space of educational facilities, see also the next photograph, which attests also to the conflict between revolutionary students and state security forces and thus retains crucial relevance even if the wall writing is not entirely readable[76].

Figure 87 Traces of clashes between students and police in İstanbul. Late 1970s. (Source: Can, 2011, p. 114)

By the late 1970s, conflict for territorial control was no longer restricted to university facilities (e.g., campuses); the clashes had rather expanded throughout cities and towns with the aim of achieving territorial control over entire neighbourhoods (Zürcher, 2005 [1993]; Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012). For evidence of this and the related escalation of street violence, see the next picture.

Figure 88 Bomb attack signed with a graffiti. Fatih, İstanbul. Late 1970s (Source: Newspaper *Günaydın*, 1977, month, date, and page missing)

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[76] The image was found on the book by Can (1980, p. 115), who remarked that the picture was taken at Galatasaray High School but, since the writing surely contains the word "university", one might wonder whether the authors were high school or university students.

Since the content of the writing in Figure 88 is not readable, it is not possible to say whether it contains the signature of a specific organisation but, most likely, the authors were members of the revolutionary left. As reported in the newspaper where it appeared, the bomb attack depicted in the picture occurred in fact in the neighbourhood of Fatih in İstanbul and targeted *Ülkücü Esnaflar Derneği* (Idealistic Shopkeepers Association), an ultranationalist organisation[77]. With regard to the term *"ülkücü"* (idealistic), it is important to stress that several organisations of the ultranationalism movement used it for self-identification purposes. Evidence of this and also of the use of walls by militants of the ultranationalist movement is discussed more in detail below.

2.3.3. The ultranationalist movement

Militants of the ultranationalist movement also resorted to mural writing for both propaganda and territorial marking purposes. For fictional evidence of this and also of graffitiing space for counterpropaganda, see the writing in black overwritten with red paint.

Figure 89 MHP signature graffiti (in black, erased with red painting). Still frame of the film *Çöpçüler Kralı* (Ökten, 1977). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

The writing in black overwritten with red paint is the acronym of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party), which is the name given in 1969 to *Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* (Republican Villager Nation Party, CKMP, 1964). By the end of the 1970s, the MHP led an ultranationalist movement composed by paramilitary youth organisations and was strongly linked to the state's repressive apparatus (Gourisse, 2022). See the picture below for non-

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[77] Since I did not archive properly the source, I cannot specify month and day of the article publication nor the exact page.

fictional evidence of a graffiti for political propaganda signed by the ÜGD, the acronym of two youth organisations that succeeded one another as a result of restructuring in the late 1970s: *Ülkücü Gençler Derneği* and *Ülkücü Gençlik Derneği* (both translatable as Association of the Idealist Youth)[78].
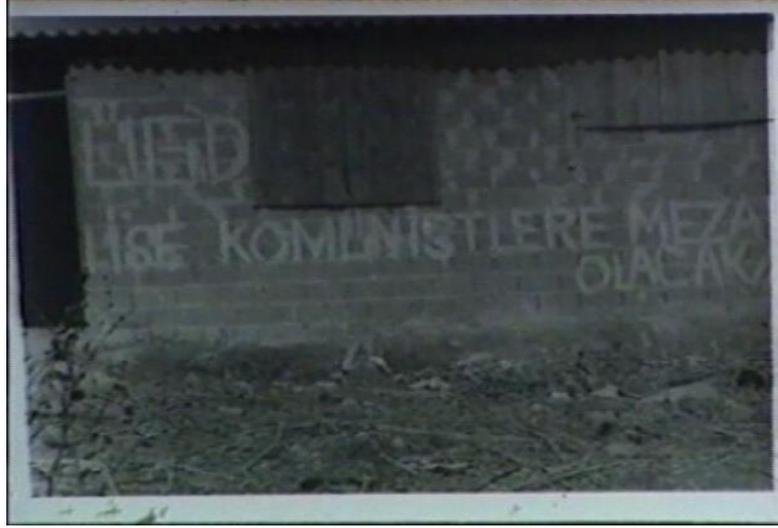
Figure 90 "The ÜGD will be the grave of high school communists" (Source: Akçam, 2004)

The slogan is a death threat providing clear evidence of the hate speech that far-right militants used against radical leftist youth. The intimidating character of the message must be explained in the light of what Gourisse (2022) remarked, namely that the far-right militias of the ultranationalist movement felt entitled to use violence since they were indoctrinated to claim that they were defending the state against the communist threat but their violence went beyond ideological extremism and escalated into ethnicized violence. Below, I discuss the crucial function that graffiti had in its perpetration.

2.3.3.1. Ethnicized violence and perpetrator graffiti

According to various sources, both militants of the radical left and militants of the far-right regularly engaged in violent actions for territorial control but the violence that ultranationalists perpetrated against leftists and ethnic minority groups affiliated with leftist politics was greater both in intensity and scale (Gourisse, 2022; Bozdoğan S. and Akcan E., 2012; Benlisoy, 2018; Bozarslan, 2006 [2004]; Ahmad, 1993; Zürcher, 2005 [1993]). For instance, in December 1978, militants of the ultranationalist movements massacred the Alevi Kurdish community of

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[78] For more information, see the website of *Ülkü Ocakları Eğitim Ve Kültür Vakfı*.

the southern city of Kahramanmaraş[79]. Until the belated arrival of tanks, armed assaulters shouting anti-communist and jihadist slogans looted and burned down hundreds of properties, injured more than a thousand people, and brutally slaughtered more than a hundred (children and pregnant women included) (Akçam, 2007b). See the figure below for written evidence of a jihadist slogan attesting to the politicisation of identarian and communitarian divisions for propaganda rhetoric.

Figure 91 Jihadist slogan: "To war for Allah". Maraş massacre. 1978. (Source: Akçam, 2007b)

In the case of the Maraş massacre, the function of graffiti went far beyond propaganda purposes and that is why I address them as "perpetrator graffiti" (Protner, 2018)[80]. The houses of Alevis to be murdered had been in fact marked in advance while houses and workplaces marked with the acronyms and symbols of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) or the Idealist Youth Association (ÜGD) were not destroyed (Akçam, 2007b). See the next figures.

Figure 92 Acronym of the MHP. Maraş massacre. 1978. (Source: Akçam, 2007b)

Figure 93 Acronyms of ultranationalist organisations. (Source: Akçam, 2007b)

Figure 94 Triple crescent moon. (Source: Akçam, 2007b)

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[79] Affiliation of Alevis community with the left was confirmed by Fabio Salomoni, scholar expert in the persecution of Alevis in Turkey (informal interview).

[80] As mentioned in the Glossary, Beja Protner (2018) suggested the term "perpetrator graffiti" for wall writings with violent content made by military forces in urban war zones in Kurdish-majority provinces of Turkey in the period 2015 – 2016. Here, it is suggested that the use of the term can be extended to the graffiti of the Maraş massacre.

In the aftermath of the massacre, martial law was declared both in Kahramanmaraş and other provinces but ultranationalist militants carried on with the organisation of violent attacks motivated by ethnic hatred. For instance, between May and July of 1980, they launched a pogrom against the Alevi Turkish population of the northern Anatolian city of Çorum following the spreading of rumours that the 'infidels' were planning to bomb Sunni mosques (Bulut, 2016). For a slogan against the Alevi population of Çanakçı (a village in the city of Çorum), see the picture below, which shows also the signature by the ÜYD, acronym of *Ülkü Yolu Derneği* (Idealist Path Association)[81].

Figure 95 "Çanakcı out - ÜYD". Çorum massacre. Spring-summer 1980. (Source: TÜSTAV)

With regard to the Alevi/Sunni conflict and, more generally, to the violence for territorial control that caused thousands of casualties by the end of the 1970s, there is a widely held opinion, namely that the state allowed their escalation so as to prepare the terrain for an authoritarian regime able to resolutely crackdown on revolutionary politics (Benlisoy, 2018; Akçam, 2007b; Bulut, 2016; Bora, 2021). For reasons explained below, the change followed to the 1980 coup is of particular relevance in the historicization of graffiti and their spatial use.

2.4. Aftermath of the 1980 coup: overpainting, prison walls, and archival damage

Violence culminated in the coup of 12 September 1980, which put an end to the Second Turkish Republic proclaimed after the 1960 coup with the 1961 Constitution. Besides suspending the Parliament and extending martial law to the whole country, the military junta that governed the country for three years took harshly repressive measures aimed at

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[81] Founded in 1980 and headquartered in Nevşehir, the ÜYD was not affected by the state of emergency enacted in many cities and acted as representative for the Nationalist Movement until the 1980 military coup (Ülkü Ocakları Eğitim Ve Kültür Vakfı, n.d.).

depoliticising the society and making it obedient by frightening it: all political parties and trade unions were banned, professional organizations and associations were closed, universities lost their autonomy, censorship became extreme, and the leftists who had given rise to the animated political atmosphere of the previous years were purged, charged, arrested, tortured, killed, sentenced to death or made to disappear (Benlisoy, 2018, Bozarslan, 2006 [2004] and 2012; Nocera, 2011; Bozdoğan and Akcan, 2012; Landau, 2017 [1974]; Gourisse, 2022; Ahmad, 1993; Zürcher, 2005 [1993]).

Repression affected also graffiti in more than one way. First, it caused their disappearance from the street. As pointed out by Emiroğlu (2011 [2001]), the first task of the coup was forcing residents to clean up their neighbourhoods from wall writings but they could not be easily erased, which is why residents had to cover them up. See Figure 96.

Figure 96 Military forcing residents to clean up walls. (Source: TÜSTAV)

The picture above was found through research the TÜSTAV digital archive but both location and date are missing. Following the remarks of an expert in visual culture on the military's physical outlook and uniform, I searched on the Internet to double check if the picture really dates back to the aftermath of the 1980 coup in Turkey. Since it appears also on the episode 39 of the TV-Series *Çemberimde Gül Oya* by Gül (2005), I assume that it was taken in Turkey after the 12 September coup. The next pictures are still frames of the same episode and, despite providing fictional evidence of the reality, they altogether help to further visualise both the wallscape and the streetscape.

Figure 97 Fictional evidence of walls erasure after the 1980 coup (Source: Gül, 2005)

Figure 98 Army watching over people cleaning up walls (Source: Gül, 2005)

Figure 99 Men covering up wall writings (Source: Gül, 2005)

While the streets were being cleaned up, political inmates continued to write their own slogans on the prison cell walls but were forced to clean them up from there, too. Fictional evidence of this is provided by selective still frames of *Duvar* (The Wall), a film by Yılmaz Güney (1983).
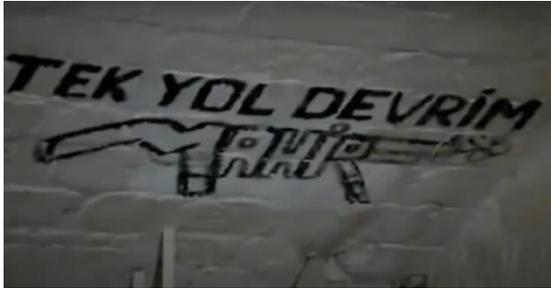
Figure 100 Revolutionary slogan in prison. Still frame of the film *Duvar* (The Wall) (Güney, 1983)

Figure 101 Erasure of a revolutionary slogan in prison. Still frame of the film *Duvar* (The Wall) (Güney, 1983)

At the same time, wall writings that I suggest to call "*intikam duvar yazıları*" (revenge wall writings) started also appearing on the walls of the prison cells. As pointed out by Bozarslan (2006: 76), political prisoners were in fact obliged to write slogans of the military regime that ruled from 1980 until 1983 (e.g., "Turkey: bigger than anything else", "Whoever touches the prayer mat with his forehead is my brother").

In addition to this, the consequences of the 1980 coup on graffiti supposedly included also archival damage, an issue that requires critical examination. In reply to informal requests for visual material relative to the graffiti for political propaganda of the 1960s and 1970s, I was more than once told that photographs are hard to find because of the archival damage followed to the coup. At this regard, it is obviously not my intention to question the objectivity of a commonly emphasised fact discussed also in the literature (e.g., see Marcella, 2015). However, I claim that lack of historical research and archival issues cannot be too quickly dismissed as effect of the military repression. In other words, the archival damage followed to the coup cannot be considered neither the sole nor the main reason underlying the alleged difficulties in finding evidence of the propagandistic use of walls via graffiti in the years

preceding the coup. Furthermore, I argue that lack of documentation of graffiti, archiving and related research rather depend also on a lack of sufficient recognition of their historical value and historiographical potential, which in turn depended on a lack of artistic recognition. To explain why, I am going to make a series of self-critical and critical remarks.

First and foremost, I acknowledge the shortcomings of the archival research I conducted for this study, namely a lack of systematic approach that resulted in the aforementioned inaccuracy in archiving written and visual sources (e.g., missing date and place of events depicted in photographs found at the Atatürk newspaper archive). Moreover, I also acknowledge that I did not enquire about the degree of diffusion of photographic cameras at that time, which might be in turn related to reasons including but not limited to high costs. However, even the scarce diffusion of tools for recording visual material would not be enough to explain why the high quantity of wall writings filling the local collective memory were not well documented. As stated by the (mural) cartoonist Canol Kocagöz, archiving was not a common habit in those years (Şafak, 2015)[82]. However, published works provide evidence of better documentation of other types of visual material (e.g., posters) (see for instance Aysan, 2008 and 2013). The disparity in care given to wall writings and other types of visual material might be best explained by recalling a series of statements made by an expert in visual propaganda of the period 1965-80 in reply to my request for visual material (July, 2012):

> [*Duvar yazıları*] is the least documented part of propaganda activities during 70s […] some people kept the posters, flyers, magazines...but they did not care to shoot photos of the walls […] I find it very hard to call them 'graffiti', they were just quick wall writings without any graphic or typographic concern.

However, during the late 1970s, not long before the coup, the perception of wall writings seems to have started changing. For instance, the still frames of contemporary films included in the selection of images examined so far provide evidence of increased interest of the artworld in integrating wall writings in visual representations of the highly politicised climate of the time[83]. For further evidence, see the image below, which depicts musicians posing with their back to a wall full of writings.

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[82] "*Açık olarak söyleyebilirim ki o yıllarda hiç birimizin arşivcilik diye bir alışkanlığı olmadığından karikatürlerimizin peşinde olmadık*" (Kocagöz interviewed by Şafak, 2015)

[83] In turn, Increased interest in archiving still frames of Yeşilçam films depicting wall writings is attested by the recent online publication of an article entirely dedicated to the topic (see Politikhane, 2020).
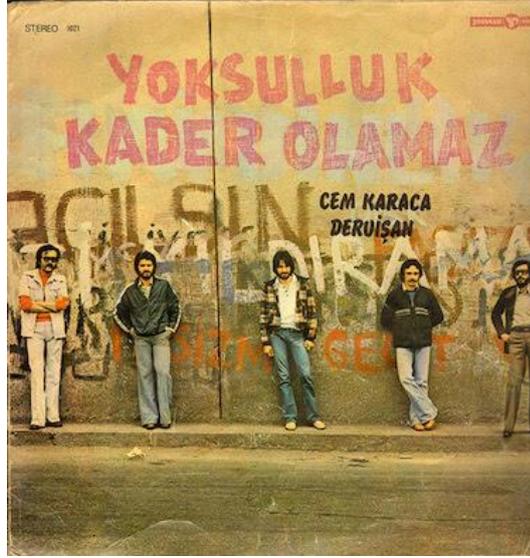
Figure 102 Cover of the LP album *Poverty Can't Be Destiny* by Cem Karaca & Dervişan (1977)
(Source: Aysan, 2013, p. 441)

Following the 1980-1983 military regime, the political economic landscape of contemporary Turkey changed paradigmatically as a result of the rise of neoliberalism and conservatism. From a spatial point of view, one of the visible effects of the adoption of the neoliberal model of development in the 1980s was the large spreading of commercial billboards mentioned by more than one scholar (Taş & Taş, 2014; Keyder, 2005, p. 128)[84]. As for *duvar yazıları* with political content, literary sources attesting to their relatively long-lasting disappearance from the street also attest to their reappearance (Taş & Taş, 2014; Emiroğlu, 2011 [2001]). Besides providing evidence of this, the written evidence examined in the next section helps also to speculate on another question, namely whether walls were completely silent or not until the late 1980s.

2.5. From walls to books of jokes: the post-coup society in the late 1980s / early 1990s

In the late 1980s, mural writing entered a new phase, one that Emiroğlu (2011 [2001], p. 480) defined as *moda* (trend, fashion) because of the following reasons: printed collections accompanied with theoretical explanations started being published, humorous writings (mostly handwritten on walls) started acquiring media visibility on newspapers, and mostly handwritten stickers spread and started being sold in bookstores, stationery stores, and souvenir shops. Similar yet more detailed is the overview of the changing scenario provided by Ünsal Özünlü (1991) in *Türk gülmecesinde duvar ve kaldırım yazıları* (Wall and sidewalks writings in Turkish

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[84] However, a still frame of the film *Köşeyi Dönen Adam* (The Man Who Gets Rich) (Yılmaz, 1978) showed a large billboard of Coca-Cola, probably to draw attention of the viewer to American imperialism and is not enough to say anything about the scale of spread of commercial billboards by then.

humour), which might be one of the very first academic contributions on the subject matter in Turkey. With regard to the new phase entered by political satire, Ozünlü also stressed that slogans, jokes, puns, thought-provoking words, and riddles written on walls, sidewalks and other places (e.g., toilet walls) began to be increasingly collected in books.

In light of these preliminary remarks, I consider it important to briefly review some of the books of jokes into which walls were turned. The purpose is to show that diversity in content from the graffiti from the previous years does not diminish the historiographical potential of the humorous wall writings of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which altogether provide a portrait of the post-coup society. Hence, I am going to start from the very first printed collection: *Biz Duvar Yazısıyız* (We are Wall Writings) (Kutal, 1988). Figure 103 is a picture of the book cover.
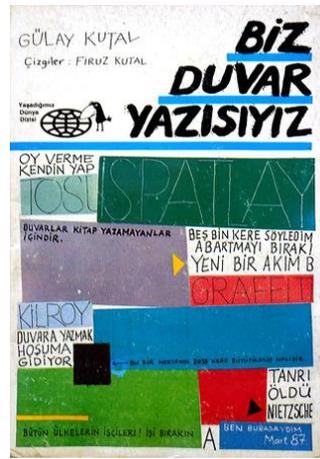
Figure 103 First printed collection of wall writings in Turkey (Kutal, 1988)

Published in 1988, the book is a collection of writings but includes only few photographs since most of them were taken from other printed collections. In terms of content, the selection varies. Topics include discontent with the economic situation, women related issues, anti/racism, etc. Most of them were from Oslo (the city where the author was living) but the collection includes also writings from other places (Paris, UK, New York, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Taşkent, and Tbilisi). Given this, the book can be considered an attempt at looking at the space of the street from a global perspective. For instance, selecting writings with humorous content, the author showed that laughing at the society in which one lives to complaint about it was not a prerogative of Turkish context but rather a transnational attitude.

More importantly, the book was an attempt at drawing attention on the global connections between different geopolitical and cultural contexts. Besides indirectly emerging from the title, this was somehow even stated in the book since it ends with a call for contributions. Readers were invited to record wall writings found in various places and send them to the İstanbul-based Metis publishing house. The outcome of this editorial project is *Biz De Duvar Yazısıyız:*

Türkiye'den Graffiti (We Are Also Wall Writings: Graffiti from Turkey) (Metis Publications, 1989), the first printed collection of wall writings from Turkey. Figure 104 is the book cover.

Figure 104 First printed collection of wall writings from Turkey (Metis Publications, 1989)

The book contains letters and wall writings from all over Turkey but mostly from big cities (İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir). The reason is best explained in a letter: *"duvar yazısı bizim toplumumuzun hiç te yabancı olmadığı bir halk edebiyatı türüdür"* ("wall writing is a kind of folk literature that is not foreign to our society") (Metis Publications, 1989, p. 16). To a certain extent similar, another letter claims that "*graffiti son zamanlarda oldukça yaygın bir sanat"* (graffiti has recently become a pretty common art), and that *"herhalde bütün halkın yarattığı, katıldığı tek sanat dalı"* (probably is the only art branch created and participated by the whole people) (Metis Publications, 1989, p. 79)[85]. In terms of content, few selected writings provide evidence of the humorous re-politicisation of the contents.

For example, one reads: "*Türküm, çalışkanım, işsizim, doğruyum, solcuyum, hapisteyim*" (I'm Turkish, I'm a hard worker, I'm unemployed, I'm honest, I'm leftist, I'm in prison) (Metin Publications, 1989, 42). Clearly, the writing is an adaptation of the first verse of the oath that primary school students recited daily since the early Republic to 2013: *Türküm, doğruyum, çalışkanım* (I am Turkish, I am honest, and I am a hard worker). The author resorted to self-irony to point at the contradictions between the nationalist values it glorifies and the reality of the time: industriousness vs. unemployment, and honesty vs. repression face by leftist militants.

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[85] However, not all were positive. For instance, the following excerpt of a letter reveals sharp criticism against the practice not only because of aesthetic reasons but also because of its allegedly foreign origin: *"duvara yazı yazmak hakkındaki görüşlerinize katılmıyorum. Ne olursa olsun duvara yazmak duvarı kirlemektir. […] Kitabınızıdaki yazıların tamamı Avrupa'dan, umarım bu akım Türkiye'ye gelmez".* Translated, it means: "I do not agree with your opinions about writing on walls. No matter what, writing on walls is making walls dirty […] All the writings in your book are from Europe and, hopefully, this trend will not reach Turkey"). (Metis Publications., 1989, p. 19).

A second selected example is reads: "*ODTÜ'lüler şanslıyız çünkü kafeteryamızı işgale karşı 2 jandarma koruyor*" (At METU, we are lucky because there are only 2 gendarmes to protect our cafeteria from occupation) (Metin Publications, 1989, p. 142). Besides attesting to the humorous re-politicisation of walls, this writing bear crucial historiographical relevance since, if its content was real, it informs us that, in the post-coup era, state security forces prevented students from occupying the METU campus again by manning it in.

In the late 1980s, a third printed publication of humorous wall writings was also published. As discussed below, it provides evidence of the self-irony with which women of the second wave of the feminist movement faced gender-related issues.

2.5.1. Women's self-irony

A third printed publication of wall writings published in the late 1980s is *Women Wall Writings: God is dead, long live the goddess* (Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989). As the title itself suggests, it is a collection of writings by women only. See Figure 105 for a picture of the book cover.
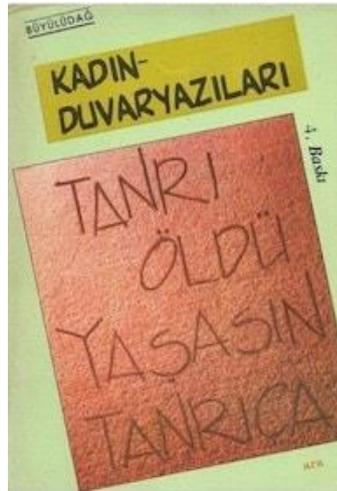
Figure 105 Printed collection of wall writings by women only (Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989)

It goes nearly without saying that the main target of the humour of the writings in this collection is in fact one: patriarchy. While the publication itself attests to the safe space of visibility that women had been carving out by the late 1980s, an analytical scanning of the content of the humorous writings revealed growing consciousness in areas opened up by the so-called second-wave feminism[86]. As it can be seen from selective examples included in Appendix B,

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[86] In Turkey, the second wave of feminism emerged with the campaign No to Beating (Dayağa Hayır) in the early 1980s (Düzkan, 2021).

topics included in fact freedom of sexual orientation, self-determination over the body, fear of gender violence disguised as love, right to divorce, birth control methods, and right to abortion. Although the content of the writings in the book do not contain specific reference to urban space, their historiographical significance for the understanding of the politics of space is crucial since they attest to the following fact: gender issues and feminist struggle had reached everyday visibility at the street level by the late 1980.

In the early 1990s, walls continued to be turned into books of jokes and, as discussed below, selected examples call for attention on how both militaristic nationalism and collective memory of the revolutionary left affected the wallscape.

2.5.2. Laughing at militarism

In the wake of the growing interest for documentation and dissemination, the number of printed collections of wall writings increased. For instance, the figures below are the covers of two of the several printed collections that were edited by professional humourists of the time (Ustundağ, 1990; Özdemiroğlu, 1990).

Figure 106 Printed collection of wall writings by Üstündağ (1990)
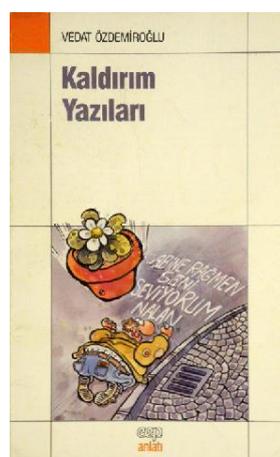
Figure 107 Printed collection of wall writings by Özdemiroğlu (1990)

For selected writings appearing in these printed collections, see also Appendix B. The reason for including them in this study is to argue their historiographical potential in attesting to the use of walls to make fun of the post-coup society. In fact, as it emerges from the sample, the writings touch upon interrelated topics: corruption, repression, fear of another coup, torture, and militarist nationalism. With regard to militarist nationalism, see also the writing in the figure

below, which makes fun of the writings that I suggest to call *"askeri gurur duvar yazıları* (conscription pride wall writings)"[87].

Figure 108 Humorous writing about conscription: "he is soldier now…tomorrow maybe President of the Republic" (Source: Özdemiroğlu, 1990, p. 17)

The historiographical relevance of the writing above is twofold. First, it suggests that, by the early 1990s, conscription pride wall writings must have been widespread enough to make fun of it. In addition to this, it suggests that the conscription pride wall writings I later documented in the early 2010s are a tradition in itself worthy of further research, aimed for instance at finding out whether their emergence precedes the 1980 coup or not.

In the latter case, their emergence could be added to range of consequences of the 1980 coup on the graffiti history in Turkey and, more precisely, the hypothesis to verify is that, with the temporary disappearance of graffiti for agitprop, the post-coup walls were not silent but rather vehiculated militaristic nationalism. In the figure below, another writing suggesting that conscription pride wall writings were widespread enough to attract attention and inspire jokes.

To a certain extent, this graffiti is similar to culture jamming[88]. To clarify why, a series of remarks shall be made. First, the writing consists of a short conversation between two revolutionaries or, to better say, to alleged revolutionaries given that they are referred to as "*dönek*". In *argo* (slang), the term is used to indicate someone changing views too often and therefore not to be trusted (Pulur, 2008). That said, the writing is too short to infer whether disclaiming the revolutionary experience of the pre-coup era was a widespread attitude among revolutionary socialists. Another possible interpretation is that the author of the writing simply

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[87] See the Glossary for a brief explanation of their recurring content.

[88] As explained in the Glossary, culture jamming is awareness raising technique known also as 'subvertising' and based on alteration and/or parody.

wanted to react to the repression climaxed under the military regime by making fun of it via anagogical language. To clarify this, it shall be explained that the expression "*devrimciliğini nerede yaptın*"? (Where did you do your revolutionary service?) is a parody of "*askerliği nerede yaptın*?" (Where did you do your military service?), an expression of the jargon related to the military service (to this day, compulsory in Turkey).
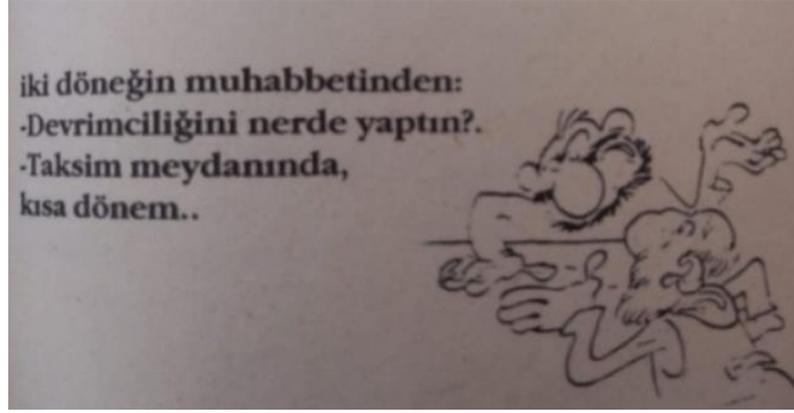
Figure 109 "From two renegades' chat: - Where did you do your revolutionary service? - In Taksim Square, short term…" (Source: Özdemiroğlu, 1990, p. 71)

That said, it is difficult to say whether it was about irony or rather self-irony. What is instead uncontroversial is that the writing attests to the symbolic meanings of Taksim Square. More precisely, it suggests that they were already rooted in the collective memory of the local left by the early 1990s. By then, novel traditions of graffitiing space had reached Turkey.

2.6. Emergence of tagging, street art, and possibly punk graffiti in the 1990s

By the early 1990s, novel traditions of graffitiing space had reached Turkey. One of them is the individual signature graffiti tradition initiated in the U.S. working class neighbourhoods in the late 1960s and known in jargon as tagging, i.e., signing space (Sarıyıldız, 2007). As mentioned already in the Glossary, early tags were a combination of textual and numeric elements: the writers' pseudonyms and the number of streets where they lived[89]. Systematic research on tagging in Turkey started in the 2000s and revealed its close relationship with the hip-hop movement (Sarıyıldız, 2007)[90]. Given this, further research on the 1990s would surely add information of valuable importance in view of an increasingly comprehensive history of graffitiing in Turkey. However, the hypothesis that early writers in Turkey were not affiliated with the hip-hop movement is most likely to be excluded given the findings of the systematic

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[89] See Nelli (2012 [1978]) for a pioneering study on the subject matter.

[90] See the glossary for a brief explanation of what the hip-hop cultural and artistic movement is.

research on the history of tagging conducted by the expert scholar Abarca (2012), who argued that the linkage between tagging and hip-hop dates back to the 1980s.

In the late 1980s, the punk movement also reached Turkey. The research on the collective memory of it done so far does not provide information about the spread of graffiti within the local scene yet it revealed an interesting detail: the first hard-core punk festival in Turkey (1992) took place in a bar in Ankara named *Graffiti* (De Sanctis, 2022). See the figure below for the poster advertising the event.
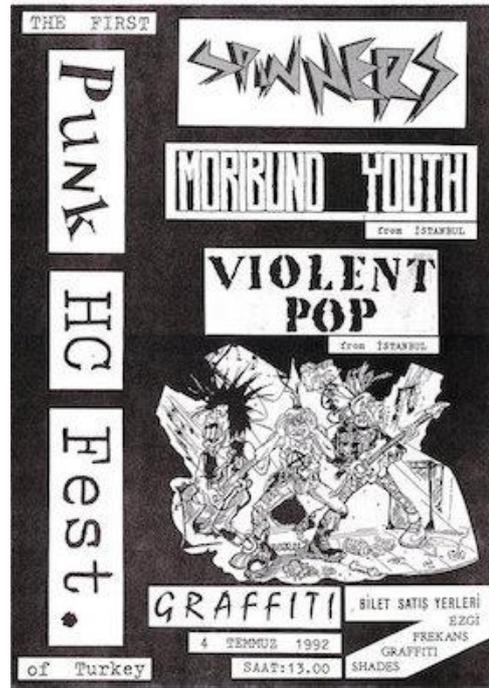
Figure 110 Gig poster, Graffiti Bar, Ankara, 1992 (Source: De Sanctis, n.d.)

For an increasingly comprehensive history of the practice of graffitiing space in Turkey, this poster clearly provides a good starting point for further research, which could help to find out if the emergence of punk music implied also the emergence of "punk graffiti" (Abarca, 2008b), indeed. See the figure below for a graffiti documented in the early 2010s and suggesting that further research starting from the 1990s could shed light on the relationship between punk ethos and the representations of space by social actors self-defining as anarchists.

Further research on the 1990s is suggested also for what concerns the emergence in Turkey of so-called street art. In this case, a starting point is the little yet precious information provided by Taş & Taş (2014), namely that it started emerging and spreading in the 1990s, indeed. If evidence of this could be found, it would be interesting to evaluate the findings in light of the findings of the research by Abarca (2021), who argued that, in the late 1980s, street art

popularity faded away and, as consequence, the 1990s saw a widespread reduction in activity except for few exceptions (e.g., street artists such as Reve and Shepard Fairey).

Figure 111 Punk graffiti and anarchy symbol. İstanbul. 2012.

In the 1990s, mural writing for political propaganda also continued although the writings were not comparable to the ones of the previous years (Emiroğlu (2011 [2001]). Given this but given also the aforementioned lack of adequate documentation of this genre of graffiti, I doubt that further research on the 1990s could be fruitful. However, it might be still worthy to give it try precisely because of the findings of the research on mural writing done in and on the 2000s, namely that wall writings were mostly to be found not in city-centres but in peripheral neighbourhoods (Eluard, 2007). If archival research of photographic and/or evidence of mural writing in the 1990s and 2000s could prove fruitful, it would be important to carry out content analysis to find out whether walls of large- and/or small-scale cities in Turkey contained writings expressing dissent on themes of particular relevance for space-focused research on graffiti (e.g., real-estate development). I say so because the relevance of mural writing and other traditions to the politics of space was evident in the early 2010s. The overview of the fieldwork observations provided in the next section is ultimately aimed to highlight this.

2.7. Overview of the fieldwork observations made in the early 2010s (before Gezi)

In the early 2010s, I documented graffiti in all the cities where I stayed or travelled within the scope of the research project Englobe: Ankara, İstanbul, Buenos Aires, New York, Madrid, and Belfast[91]. The quantity of the material collected was sufficient for a comparative study with

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[91] As discussed in the Introduction, Englobe (Enlightenment and Global History) was a 3-year Marie Curie initial training network committed to the examination of the historical dimensions of globalisation.

the graffiti documented in Turkey in the early 2010s[92]. However, I preferred not to embark in such a project[93]. As already explained in the Introduction, I rather decided to continue to explore the local context in search for additional material without however losing sight of how global dynamics were affecting it. For instance, in the early 2010s, the urban vector İstanbul-Ankara was evaluated as one among the most significant even before Gezi because it was "rapidly becoming a major global policy nexus" (Sassen, 2012)[94]. In this section – the last of this chapter – I therefore provide an overview of the observations made in Ankara and İstanbul in the early 2010s (before Gezi)[95].

2.7.1. Ankara

At the beginning of the 2010s, there were little to no graffiti in the central areas of Ankara that I had observed via explorative flanerie out of personal interest (e.g., Kızılay, Kolej, Sıhhiye, and Ulus). Right after my arrival, I however noticed the political use of graffiti. In Figure 112, the very first slogan that I documented in Turkey: a writing appeared in June 2010 on a wall of the Iranian embassy in Ankara during a street protest (the latter in Figure 113).

Figure 112 Slogan vs. the then President of the Islamic Republic of Iran: "Shame on [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad". Tahran Avenue, Çankaya, Ankara, 2010.

Figure 113 Street protest near the Embassy of The Islamic Republic of Iran. Tahran Avenue, Çankaya, Ankara. 2010.

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[92] In addition to the material collected in the period 2010-2013, I could have also used material collected before the beginning of the Englobe project, when I had documented graffiti out of personal interest in various cities (e.g., Berlin, London, and London Derry).

[93] Since the selection of images included is in this chapter is very large, I even discarded the idea of including selective examples of the many photographs that I took in these cities in an additional Appendix.

[94] However, to this day, Ankara is not yet ranked as a global city but is defined as "a global future city". See Global Future Cities Programme (n.d.).

[95] Unless specified, the photographs were taken by the author. The date in the captions refers to year when they were taken.

In addition to this, I observed a remarkable increase in spread of graffiti for agitprop on the occasion of the International Workers' Day 2011. See for instance the slogan in Figure 114.

Figure 114 May Day slogan. Ankara. May Day 2011.

With regard to slogans documented during May Day 2011, a transgenerational continuity of language must be stressed. For instance, a clear example is provided by slogans containing the term "*katil*" (murderer). Below evidence of this[96].

Figure 115 "The murderer is the state". Ankara. May Day 2011.

Figure 116 Slogan of the 1970s: "Oligarchy is the murderer" (Source: Can, 2011, pp. 208-209)

As for novelties, see instead the stencilled graffiti below, which attests to participation to the May Day rally by LGBT+ rights activists and to their efforts to give visibility to the

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[96] Slogans containing the term "*katil*" were also observed and documented during the Gezi uprising. As mentioned in Chapter 4, slogans of the Gezi resistance containing the term were mostly addressed to the police.

intersectionality of gender and class issues (e.g., trans/homophobia can hinder the possibility of finding a job).

Figure 117 Pro-LGBT+ stencilled graffiti. Ankara. May Day 2011.

Lastly, it was in Ankara that I first noticed graffiti that I suggest to call conscription pride wall writings (see the glossary). See the figure below for an example signed with the three crescent moons (the symbol of the ultranationalist movement).

Figure 118 A conscription pride wall writing and three crescent moons. Ankara. 2011.

As it emerged from the examination of graffiti of the late 1980s, the tradition of turning walls into a medium for the propaganda of militaristic nationalism is not a novelty of the early 2010s. Given this, I suggest the importance of further research on this specific sub-genre of graffiti from both a translocal and global perspective. First, to find out where it is widespread across the whole country. Second, to find out if it is widespread also in other contexts (e.g., in countries where there have been military coups).

In sum, walls in Ankara were not filled with graffiti before Gezi but the observations made in 2010 and 2011 are nonetheless sufficient to argue: (1) continuity with the past in terms of both language and events of particular political relevance for the leftist movement (e.g., May Day); (2) heterogeneity of techniques (e.g., handwriting and stencilling); (3) heterogeneity of actors (e.g., revolutionary leftists, nationalist youth, and LGBT+ rights activists). As it emerges from the overview provided below, these were characteristics observed also in İstanbul.

2.7.2. İstanbul

Compared to Ankara, there were more graffiti in the central areas of İstanbul that I had observed via explorative flanerie: Beyoğlu, Fatih, and Kadıköy. Compared to Fatih and Kadıköy, there were more graffiti in Beyoğlu. To be more precise, it was in the southeastern area of the district that I observed the highest concentration in graffiti (not measured with quantitative analytical methods but perceptible to the naked eye). Besides Taksim and its immediate surroundings, the area in which graffiti were mostly widespread included the whole İstiklal Avenue, Tünel Square, and the neighbourhoods of Tarlabaşı, Cihangir, and Galata. See Figure 119.

Figure 119 Southeastern area of Beyoğlu district (Source: Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017)

Within this area, I also observed a higher heterogeneity of graffiti's form, content and stylistic elaboration compared to Kadıköy and Fatih. Except for perpetrator graffiti, revenge wall writings and mural cartoons, there were all the genres and sub-genres listed in the glossary: conscription pride wall writings, collective signature graffiti, culture and politics jamming, wall writings, tags of various size and elaboration degree (e.g., throwies and pieces), graffiti for revolutionary agitprop, graffiti for counterpropaganda, graffiti for right-wing political propaganda, graffiti for spatial practices of everyday life, legal walls, punk graffiti, sokak şiiri (street poetry), street artworks, and works of street artivism.

To get an idea of the wallscape of the time, see the selection of collective signatures and slogans in Appendix C, which is primarily meant to show the heterogeneity of the social actors turning walls into communicative media for political propaganda and activism: anarchists, antiracists and no border activists, left-wing political parties, ultranationalists, Ataturkists (*Atatürkçüler*), feminists, and LGBT+ rights activists. Although I did not analyse the collected material with quantitative methods, I can say that, in large part, graffiti were made by leftists and activists of social justice movements, and – to a lesser extent – by other actors (e.g., ultranationalists, and Ataturkists). Given the scope of the study, I also consider it important to

stress that one of the issues on which graffiti drew attention was police brutality (an issue that, as discussed in Chapter 4, triggered the development of the Gezi protest camp into an uprising). For instance, see the graffiti below, a street artivism work related to the case of Festus Okey, a refugee from Nigeria murdered by a police officer at the Beyoğlu police station in 2007[97].

Figure 120 Stencilled portrait of Festus Okey and a slogan: "Festus Okey rest in peace". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

Other issues on which graffiti drew attention include the right to self-determination and gendered violence. Below a few remarks aimed to highlight the street visibility achieved by the development of the gender equality movement in Turkey.

2.7.2.1. Renewed ways of seeing women's bodies

In the early 2010s, before Gezi, the walls of Beyoğlu bared evidence of the rising of the so-called third wave feminism in Turkey. Since the 1990s, the debate started being strongly centred on identity politics and, to this day, it is animated by issues related to the right to the difference[98]. For instance, Muslim women started reclaiming the right to freedom of expression of religious identity in public space. However, I do not know whether the graffiti below was made by a woman street artist and I actually think that, most likely, this was not the case for two reasons: it appeared in Atlas Pasajı, a meeting place for hip-hop writers (Sarıyılıdız, 2007), and the hip-hop writers' scene used to be characterised by gender discrimination (Sezer, 2016)[99].

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[97] For another example, see Figure 32 in the Glossary, a street artivism work related to the case of Abdurrahman Sözen, died under custody in 2009.

[98] For more information, see for instance Diner & Toktaş (2010).

[99] As stressed in the Introduction, things might have changed recently given the increasing role of women artists in the hip-hop cultural movement.

Figure 121 Veiled woman. Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

For evidence of increased awareness of the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity related issues, see instead the slogan below, which attests to the feminist movement reaction to the anti-abortion agenda of the then Prime Minister Tayyıp Erdoğan following his comparison of abortion to the Uludere massacre (2012)[100].

Figure 122 Feminist slogan vs. anti-abortion propaganda: "abortion is a right; Uludere is a massacre". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

Lastly, for evidence of increased awareness of women's struggle to end gendered violence as intrinsically linked to the struggle of LGBT+ subjectivities, see the slogans below, which clearly shows the commonality of the slogans' language[101].

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[100] The Uludere airstrike killed Kurdish civilians near the Iraq-Turkey border in late 2011, and is known also as the Roboski massacre. For more information about Erdoğan's statement and the feminist movement reaction, see for instance Bianet (2012).

[101] Like elsewhere, there is also an animated debate about TERF (trans exclusionary radical feminism) but, in the early 2010s, I did not find graffiti explicitly pointing at the issue. For data about male violence
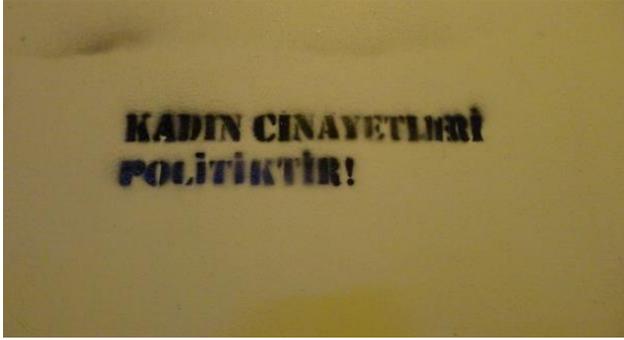
Figure 123 "Femicides are political". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2013, March 8.

Figure 124 "Murder of transgender persons are political". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2013.

For further evidence of the use of walls by feminists, see also the stencilled graffiti below, a stylised Cinderella waiving a flag and calling women to appropriate both the streets of Beyoğlu and its everynight life no matter how stressful issues such as moralisation and harassment can sometimes be[102].

Figure 125 A feminist Cinderella waving a flag and a slogan: "after midnight the magic does not vanish". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2010.

The historiographical relevance of the feminist Cinderella reclaiming the streets and the right to freedom in the everynight life must be stressed for interrelated reasons. First, it calls for attention on time of representation and its symbolic values in the struggle for the appropriation

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in Turkey, see the reports by Bianet (2011). *Bianet is monitoring male violence.* Retrieved December 31, 2022, from https://m.bianet.org/bianet/gender/134394-bianet-is-monitoring-male-violence.

[102] This is the interpretation that I suggest based on my personal experience as woman often walking alone in the streets of Beyoğlu at night.

of space. Second, it attests to one of the novelties of the early 2010s, namely the presence of graffiti with textual and/or visual reference to issues related to the politics of space in general and public space in particular. Further examples attesting to this are very briefly examined below because they called for attention on the multiscalar dimension of issues related to the politics of public space.

2.7.2.2. Local and global dynamics

In Turkey, public space is often understood as state domain (Gurallar, 2009)[103]. Several were the graffiti attesting to this in the early 2010s (before Gezi and not directly related to the Taksim project). The most emblematic example is probably the case of Taksim Square, which leftists have never stopped reclaiming as ground for the celebration of the International Workers' Day despite bans temporary lifted in the early 2010s. Below a preliminary example but, given the relevance of the case to trace the transgenerational continuity of its symbolic meanings, a more detailed discussion is postponed to Chapter 3.

Figure 126 Call to action for the International Workers' Day: "To Taksim on May Day". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

Other graffiti pointing at local dynamics are those vehiculating the pedagogic function that public space is given since the early Republican period, namely contributing to strengthen feelings of nationalistic belonging (Kezer, 2015; Batuman, 2015). Below only one selective example of the several graffiti depicting the Turkish flag[104].

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[103] As recalled in the Introduction, this depends on the very history of public space in the local context, where top-down interventions in the both the planning and regulation of open space affect ordinary people's ways of perceiving it and reclaiming it.

[104] In this regard, it must be stressed that, like tagging, the presence of graffiti reproducing the symbolism of the Turkish flag was not a prerogative of Beyoğlu and was actually more visible in Fatih since, in

Figure 127 Turkish Flag. Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

For further evidence of how graffiti attested to the perception of public space as state domain, see the one below, which provides evidence of the reaction to the order of removing outdoor tables and chairs from sidewalks bars in the Asmali Mescit area of Beyoğlu starting from 2011[105].

Figure 128 Reaction to the tables' removal in Beyoğlu. İstanbul. 2012.

Lastly, see also the graffiti below, that provide evidence of dissent against surveillance in public space but, it goes without saying that CCTV cameras are not a prerogative of the local context and rather a global trend.

Beyoğlu, small-size graffiti reproducing the crescent moon and the star were less visible given the higher quantity of graffiti. For this, reason, I selected a big-size example.

[105] According to rumours, the then Prime Minister Erdoğan ordered the tables removal after someone raised the glass to him when he once transited in the area by car. See Chapter 4 for evidence of how the moralisation of public space via restrictions on alcohol consumption was one of the top-down interventions against which ordinary people who participated in the Gezi uprising expressed dissent. For the discussion of moralisation of public space by the dominant class, see instead Delgado (2011), and see also Genç (2022) for what concerns moralisation as one of the issues characterising the politics of public space in the local context.

Figure 129 Dissent vs. street surveillance. Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

Figure 130 Dissent vs. street surveillance: "don't watch me". Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012.

Like in other global cities, I observed also in İstanbul the increasing tendency of graffiti to be absorbed in the neoliberal production of space via both normalisation and commodification. By normalisation, I refer to the enclosure of a practice commonly lacking authorisation within space regulated by state actors. For instance, in July 2012, I observed and extensively documented the "Meeting of Allstars", an authorised graffiti festival held in Gezi Park and organised by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Youth Assembly in cooperation with a local graffiti writer and joined by both local and foreign writers[106]. Below three photographs: the billboard advertising the event in Taksim and, more importantly, the boards and security checks that turned Gezi Park into a temporary open-air gallery and securitised space.

Figure 131 Poster of the "Meeting of Allstars" Graffiti Festival. Siraselviler Avenue. 2012.

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[106] For more information, see the blog of the festival ("Festival Hakkında," 2012).

Figure 132 Painting boards. "Meeting of Allstars" Graffiti Festival. Gezi Park. 2012, July 15.

Figure 133 Security checks at the entrance of "Meeting of Allstars" Graffiti Festival. Gezi Park, Beyoğlu, İstanbul. 2012, July 15.

The most emblematic case attesting to the tendency to tolerate street art in Taksim so as to transform it into an open-air gallery is however another, namely that of the yellow fists filling the Galata neighbourhood, which are to this day easy to spot especially when walking from Tünel Square down to the Galata neighbourhood via Galip Dede Avenue. As found out later on, via unstructured interviews, the graffiti writer Kripoe together with the Berlin-based crew 1UP (One United Power) had "bombed" Beyoğlu with personalised signature in 2009 as they did elsewhere[107]. Below three selected pictures.

Figure 134 Yellow fists. Galip Dede Avenue, Galata, İstanbul. 2012

Figure 135 Yellow fist by Kripoe and tag by 1UP. Galata, İstanbul. 2012.

Figure 136 Kripoe's signature. Galata, İstanbul. 2012.

Below, selective examples of the signature graffiti by the same crew (1UP) but documented in cities other than İstanbul to show how the yellow fists provide a remarkable case calling for attention a series of intersecting issues: free mobility of transnational actors marking translocal territories by means of symbolic signatures, hierarchies of mobilities preventing others from doing it, and tolerance of graffiti as an aesthetic component of global cities' place branding strategies.

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[107] In jargon, "bombing" means marking with the same signature graffiti as many as possible territories (see the Glossary).

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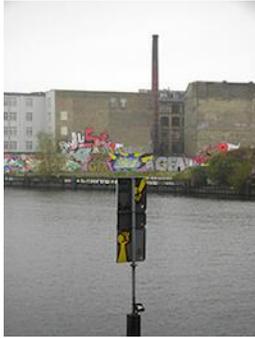
Figure 137 Yellow fists, Warschauer Strasse, Friedrichshain, Berlin, 2004.

Figure 138 Tag by 1UP crew. Madrid, 2012.

Figure 139 Tag by 1UP crew. Athens. 2014.

In short, the yellow fists do not merely indicate the global connectedness of Beyoğlu to other places via signature graffiti that are by now acknowledged as street art; they rather show that, given absorption via commodification, street art may indicate ongoing gentrification. This was also the controversial case of graffiti that were actually intentioned to express dissent against the gentrification of the Tarlabaşı, a neighbourhood adjacent to Taksim Square. Below two examples of the street artworks that started appearing in the area: Figure 140 is a wall painting that most likely was made by someone educated in fine art, and Figure 141 is a writing supposedly aimed at influencing people to mobilise against gentrification.

Figure 140 Street art within a demolished building in Tarlabaşı. 2012.

Figure 141 Street artivism supposedly aimed at anti-gentrification. Tarlabaşı. 2012.

Given the importance of the case for the understanding of space production in Taksim, the discussion about Tarlabaşı is however postponed to the next chapter, where I examine graffiti selected for their explicit reference to space via words, symbols and/or images in light of the findings emerged in this chapter.

2.8. Concluding remarks

In this long chapter, I have attempted to provide a historical overview covering the period mid-1960s – early 2010s. The aim was to retrace the distinctive features of graffiti in the context of Turkey. Besides showing an increase in heterogeneity of social actors, contents, purposes, and reactions, the chapter has shown that writing the history of graffiti in Turkey allows to retrace milestones in the country's history and thus provides preliminary evidence of their historiographical potential. In spatial terms, the account provided so far has shown that, in Turkey, using walls and graffiti as media for left-wing agitation propaganda is not a novelty of the 2010s but a tradition dating back to the 1960s.

In the mid-1960s, graffiti for left-wing agitprop were closely tied to graphic satire and it is therefore possible to claim that walls and leftist periodicals were extensions of each other. In 1968, the leftist movement reached a peak in activity, and graffiti were used to grant wide visibility to the anti-imperialist ideals inspiring its leading actors (i.e., socialist students self-identifying as revolutionary socialists but also workers).

In the 1970s, walls were used to give voice to the intense struggle of the labour movement and bared evidence of the proactive role of revolutionary trade unions in leading it to historic peaks in participation despite the brutality of counter-revolutionary attempts such as the Taksim Square Massacre on May Day 1977. With regard to women's proactive participation to the labour movement, it is important to distinguish between images that attest to their struggle for economic independence and images that instead attest to the underrepresentation of their productive and reproductive labour, the latter attesting also that the walls of some factories on strike were the extension of domestic walls.

In the late 1970s, graffitiing space was no longer only a practice to propagandise a particular political cause or point of view; signing it with slogans and/or acronyms of political organisations became a practice to mark territories violently contented by antagonist actors (e.g., revolutionary socialists and ultranationalists). In short, graffiti became an indicator of the power struggle for territorial control. Such a change in their spatial use occurred in concomitance with a change in the scale of the contented territories, which continued to include educational facilities (e.g., schools and university campuses) but were no longer limited to them and were rather extended to entire neighbourhoods and towns. Some slogans and collective signatures attesting to this are here addressed as perpetrator graffiti because they attest also to the escalation of ethnicized violence perpetrated by militants of the ultranationalist movement against ethnic minorities.

In the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, the repression affected graffiti in more than one way. First, it caused their temporary disappearance from the street: the military forced ordinary citizens to clean up the walls. Second, political inmates who continued to write slogans on prison cell walls were also forced to erase them and, besides this, they were forced to write graffiti that I suggest to call "*intikam duvar yazıları*" (revenge wall writings) because they consisted of slogans of the military regime that ruled the country from 1980 until 1983. In short, the walls of dissent were silenced. However, archival evidence suggests that walls were not completely silenced and rather spoke the language of militaristic nationalism via for instance graffiti that I instead suggest to call conscription pride wall writings.

In the late 1980s and in the early 1990s, mural writing entered a new phase, one that confirmed that the connection between walls as media for political activity and the printed media giving visibility to them as such. Besides showing this, the first printed publications of collections of wall writings attest also to the self-irony through which the post-coup society reacted to both repression and power in general. For instance, slogans and writings written and published by women only provide instead evidence of how they used humour as a tool to grant street visibility to issues tackled by the second wave of feminism (e.g., right to abortion, and freedom of sexual orientation). In the 1990s, new genres of graffiti reached Turkey: tagging, street art and, most likely, also punk graffiti.

As a result, the wallscape of central İstanbul in the early 2010s was high in stylistic heterogeneity. As for contents and actors involved, observations made before the 2013 Gezi resistance revealed both historical continuities and novelties. On the one hand, walls were used as medium for political activity by both leftists and ultranationalists. On the other hand, the presence of new actors and the development of social movements were both evident. For instance, selected graffiti attest to rising of the third wave of feminism in Turkey by attesting to the street visibility gained by issues such as LGBT+ rights and intersectionality of gender- and ethnicity-related issues.

In the early 2010s, most of the graffiti that I documented in İstanbul were concentrated in the southeastern area of Beyoğlu, i.e., the area spanning from Taksim Square to the Galata neighbourhood. In this area, I observed noteworthy developments such as assimilation and commodification. Besides the emergence of authorised graffiti festivals, I observed that graffiti started turning the streets into open-air art galleries, a crucial component of the aesthetics of global cities. Besides this, I observed the remarkable presence of graffiti with explicit reference to the politics of space (e.g., graffiti expressing dissent against top-down interventions).

In sum, this chapter has shown that, in Turkey, the relevance of graffiti in the understanding of the social production of space is high while their relevance to the actual production of space

is ambivalent. For instance, graffiti attesting to the struggle against heteropatriarchal capitalism indicate space of resistance. On the other hand, graffiti attesting to the absorption of difference via either violent repression of dissent or commodification indicate the need for spatial resistance.

In the next chapter, I elaborate further on the notion of resistance in and through space based on the examination of selected graffiti whose content call for critical attention on the social production of space in İstanbul before the outburst of the Gezi uprising.

CHAPTER 3

SPACE PRODUCTION IN İSTANBUL, 2010-2013

This chapter contextualises graffiti with space-related content that appeared in the streets of İstanbul in the early 2010s and, more precisely, in Taksim and in its surroundings[108]. The focus is on decades-long processes that were not selected a priori but indicated by graffiti containing visual and/or textual reference to space politics issues and specific places: (1) grassroots resistance to the neoliberal redevelopment of İstanbul into a global city; (2) attempted Europeanisation and its limitations in light of its implications for low-class migrants; (3) neo-Ottomanisation of space and its symbolic meanings via urban renewal; (4) controversial renewal of Tarlabaşı (a neighbourhood adjacent to Taksim Square); (5) grassroots placemaking of Taksim Square and Galatasaray Square; (5) struggle for the urban commons such as the Emek movie theatre vs. the proliferation of shopping malls such as the Demirören mall in İstiklal Avenue. Each of these processes is going to be briefly retraced starting from the re-making of İstanbul into a global city with the purpose of laying the ground for the understanding of the 2013 appropriation of Taksim in context.

3.1. Neoliberal redevelopment into a global city

In the early 2010s, İstanbul was officially ranked as a global city[109]. As recalled in the Introduction, the global city and the global cities network are hegemonic representations of space of the neoliberal age. Aimed at attracting transnational flows of financial and human capital, neoliberal urbanisation follows global patterns (e.g., gentrification and tourism-oriented valorisation of historical heritage via large-scale renewal projects). The emergence and development of these redevelopment trends varies from place to place.

In İstanbul, neoliberal urbanisation consisted of a multistage process started in the 1980s. Both its beginning and development must be understood in light of the rapid large-scale growth

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[108] Unless specified, the photographs were taken by the author. The date in the captions refers to the year when they were taken. In few cases, the year of the making is certain and is indicated in square brackets.

[109] In 2010, İstanbul held the 41st position in the A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index (Kearny, 2010, p. 3). In 2012, it held the 37th position (Kearny, 2012, p. 3).

of population caused mainly by internal migration. In a nutshell, this is the information emerging from a wide range of literary sources[110]. Below, I am going to provide a brief account of salient events and implementation phases[111].

In the years following the 1980-83 military regime, the political economic landscape of contemporary Turkey was redefined by two concomitant paradigmatic changes: the neoliberal turn and the rise of political Islam. Since then, the model of modernity proposed by neoliberal conservatives started winning general and local elections against the secularist and Europe-oriented model of modernity proposed by the Kemalists[112]. Electoral success of the neoliberal conservatives relied on the support of an emerging entrepreneurial class but also on the support of low-income migrants from rural Anatolia. The latter had been massively flocking to İstanbul in search for employment opportunities since the mid-20th century, when they had also started squatting land of public property that was de facto ownerless[113]. The spread of informal settlements called *gecekondu* (meaning constructed overnight) resulted in unplanned and disordered urbanisation but was indeed tolerated in exchange of political consensus[114].

In 1984, circumstances started changing. In the alleged attempt at facing large housing demand, the state founded TOKİ (*Toplu Konut İdaresi* – The Directorate of Mass Housing). Over time, the agency responsible for mass housing development turned out to be a key actor of neoliberal speculation. Besides privatisation of the housing sector, other processes of neoliberal urbanisation started in the 1980s include: (1) privatisation of municipal services (e.g., transportation and gas); (2) gentrification and construction of gated communities, planning and implementation of piecemeal restructuring (e.g. opening of the Tarlabaşı Boulevard, an axis connecting Taksim Square to the Golden Horn); (3) change in the legal and administrative framework to facilitate investments in the real-estate sector.

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[110] For instance, see: Aksoy (2008); Candan & Kolluoğlu (2008); Keyder (1999, 1999b, 1999c, 2005, 2008 and 2010); Zürcher (2005 [1993]); Bilsel & Arıcan (2010); Göktürk et al. (2010); Islam (2010); Ünsal Ö. & Kuyucu T. (2010); Nocera (2011); Bozdoğan S. & Akcan (2012); Rodriguez & Azenha (2014); Akcan (2015); Kezer (2015); Batuman (2015, 2016, and 2017); Batuman et al. (2016); Esen (2009); Bilsel (2017); Can (2020), and Arıcan (2020).

[111] Except for specific arguments or information that were made or given by specific scholars only, I am not quoting the sources so as to avoid repetition and thus facilitate the reading of the historical overview, which retraces the development reached by the late 2000s starting from the mid-1980s.

[112] Kemalists are promoters of political, economic, and social policies inspired by the six principles that the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk advocated to build a new nation state after the fall of the Ottoman Empire: republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism, and revolution. For more information, see for instance Zürcher (2021), and Bozarslan, 2006 [2004]. See also the section of this chapter about Taksim Square for a brief overview of how Kemalism affected public space.

[113] For a Lefebvrian reading of squatting (in Turkey), see Rittersberger Tılıç (2015).

[114] Many of the migrants moving to İstanbul were Kurds of Turkish citizenship forcedly displaced from the war in the eastern and southeastern provinces of the country, where the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, founded in 1978) would have otherwise benefited from their political and logistic support (Keyder, 2008; Genç, 2014).

In the late 1980s, İstanbul began to be rediscovered as a touristic destination by upper-income visitors including but not limited to Middle Easterners. Profit-driven investments were primarily aimed at meeting their needs: bank offices, office towers, shopping centers, and luxury hotels offering not only spectacular views over the Bosphorus but also a postmodern, self-orientalised interpretation of the traditional architectural identity of the Anatolian region.

In the 1990s, the tourism-oriented redevelopment of İstanbul entered a new phase. Planning started being more comprehensive as result of greater commitment by a multi-actor. Beside the direct contribution by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (elected mayor in 1994), the agency of major international institutions regulating the global economy shall also be recalled. For instance, in a 1995 report, the World Bank recommended Turkey to turn one or two cities into metropolises for interrelated reasons: first, they would have attracted labour force for service industry and, second, they would have become easy consumer markets (Yapıcı in Azem, 2011)[115].

In the second half of the 1990s, two parallel processes started as result of the local political willingness to fulfil the dictates of global financial capital. The first was the planning of mega-projects of Neo-Ottoman re-monumentalization of space for representation of political economic power, a topic discussed later on in this chapter. As highlighted by Bozdoğan and Akcan (2012), one of the first proposals made by Mayor Erdoğan right after his election was the construction of the Taksim Square Mosque right across from the Atatürk Cultural Centre – one of the modernist icons of the Kemalist-inspired secularism of the Republic[116].

The second process started in the second half of the 1990s is the larger scale implementation of residential redevelopment. Amid the increase in gated communities' construction, investments were mostly directed at the eradication of the *gecekondu* phenomenon. Urban renewal projects were however conceived to accommodate the demands of competitive markets – and not to meet the needs of the internal migrants who had supported Erdoğan in the election. In 1997, the military attempted at restraining the rise of political Islam with a memorandum but did not succeed in stopping the process. Moreover, urban politics of neoliberal conservatism also continued. Following the 1999 Marmara earthquakes, the upgrading of informal areas pursued by this urban politics started being legitimised as the natural disaster mitigation strategy[117].

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[115] This was remarked by Mücella Yapıcı in an interview for the documentary film Ekümenopolis (Azem, 2011). As it is well known, Mücella Yapıcı is a member of the İstanbul Chamber of Architects and one of the leader figures of the Taksim Solidarity Platform. Currently, she is under arrest following the 2022 sentence in the Gezi trial.

[116] See Chapter 4 for more information about both the Taksim Square Mosque and the AKM.

[117] In August 1999, a catastrophic magnitude 7.6 earthquake hit the Kocaeli Province of Turkey causing enormous damage and thousands of deaths. The earthquake hit also İstanbul, where seismic risk continues to real and depends on the city's location major active fault lines. However, seismic risk mitigation provides also investment opportunities. E.g., see Ay & Demires Ozkul (2021) for an empirical

By the end of the 1990s, the change in the urban fabric gave great visibility to new forms of social inequality, which is why İstanbul looked like a "divided city" (Keyder, 1999c, p. 23). On one hand, there were bankers and young professionals who segregated themselves in gated communities and drove luxury cars to reach business towers built in latest architectural styles. On the other hand, there were the urban poor who were unable to prove property rights and therefore started being expelled from the central areas and displaced to high rise housing blocks newly built by TOKİ[118].

The 2000s began with a severe economic crisis and the AKP's rise to power. Following the victory of the 2002 general elections under Erdoğan's leadership, the party could bring about the change needed to speed up urban renewal. With the support of the central government and the emergence of powerful actors including but not limited to large developers and the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the scale of the liberalisation programme increased even further and superseded the previous populist approach to housing provision.

On one hand, building amnesties aimed at gaining loyalty from lower-class residents in search of affordable housing were abandoned. Moreover, in 2004, informal settlement construction (of *gecekondu*s) became a criminal offence punishable with five years in prison. On the other hand, in 2005, district municipalities officially became market facilitators. Their role shifted from managerial to entrepreneurial as a result of significant increase in their decision-making power in matters of urban transformation (*kentsel dönüşüm*)[119]. The new Law for Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through Protection by Renewal (Law No. 5366) and the Municipality Law (Law No. 5393) authorised local municipalities to expropriate and demolish in urban renewal areas. By then, urban renewal areas included not only informal settlements areas but also historical and cultural heritage sites[120]. Like the former, the latter were also mostly inhabited by the urban poor and, with their expulsion, TOKI's power and profit

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analysis of how centralized and non-transparent earthquake risk mitigation approach in İstanbul makes room for speculative real estate development sponsored by international development funding. See also the case of the case of the earthquake in Kahramanmaraş in 2023.

[118] The image of İstanbul as a divided city is not a novelty but rather an effect of uneven development and residential zoning in accordance to social stratification. E.g., see Çelik (1993) for the increase in visibility of old forms of social inequality and the disparity in development between Beyoğlu and the historic peninsula in the late Ottoman period. See also Cerasi (2005) for what concerns the disparity internal to the historic peninsula in the same period.

[119] Strong state-leadership in matter of urban transformation must not be misunderstood for a disruption of the global city model for various reasons. First, to accommodate the markets' interests, nation-states promote neoliberal policies and reorient their agendas but they retain their role as guarantor of the proper functioning of the market (Harvey, 2005). Second, neoliberal urbanisation is a context embedded process (Peck et. Al., 2009). Three, adjustments in the functions of state are not limited to deregulation but can include also the transfer of power to sub-national governmental actors (Purcell, 2002).

[120] For instance, see the section of this chapter about Tarlabaşı.

further increased since many have been displaced to mass housing newly built by the government-backed agency.

In 2005, two further processes of historic importance began: (1) the negotiation of Turkey's candidacy to the European Union full membership, and (2) the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture. As discussed more in detail, the ECoC started as a civil society initiative aimed at placing İstanbul within the cultural map of the European Union and was strongly centred on the tourism-redevelopment of cultural and historical sites (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Doğan & Sirkeci, 2013)[121].

By the late 2000s, the restructuring summarised so far had turned İstanbul into a mega-city overcrowded with people and crowded with cultural venues and events aimed at pleasing the tourists' gaze. Renewed regional and global strategic importance is further attested by the fact that, in October 2009, İstanbul hosted the annual meeting of the Executive Boards of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, two of the major international institutions that regulate the global economy by boosting competition, innovation, and growth. Developing countries in need for loans to implement the structural adjustment programs recommended by them are forced to enter a debt spiral. That is why local activists of urban social movements contested their meeting (Özcan, 2009). Below I recall how they contested it to show that the interaction of global and local processes can generate geographies of resistance (Sassen, 2008).

3.1.1. Local resistance to global capitalism

To contest the 2009 İstanbul meeting of the IMF and World Bank, local activists opposing global capitalism and self-identifying as anti-authoritarian organised a *Direnİstanbul* (Resistİstanbul), a weeks-long "Festival of the Resistance" (*"Direnişin Şenliği"*) (Direnİstanbul, 2009). As argued by Lefebvre (2009 [1968]; 1991 [1974]), the festival is the most emblematic example of qualitative consumption of space, and use value is mostly reinstated via political use of space. Direnİstanbul fits the case.

Besides street demonstrations, the programme of *Direnİstanbul* included film screenings, interviews, and panels on interconnected issues related to neoliberal urbanisation: urban renewal projects gentrifying residential and non-residential space, ecological destruction,

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[121] For a detailed discussion of the ECoC, see the second section of this chapter. Here, it is sufficient to recall that, at that time, the climate of the debate about EU full membership was relatively positive. Major political issues that the full membership negotiation was about and still waited for resolution included: the military occupation of Northern Cyprus and the Armenian question.

education, gender, urban poverty, and labour struggle. Their organisation and coordination provided an occasion to experiment participatory democracy practices (e.g., bottom-up decision-making mechanisms). Below the logo of the festival.

Figure 142 Stencilled logo of Direnİstanbul. İstanbul. 2012 [2009]. Caption: "days of resistance against the IMF and the World Bank".

Figure 143 Direnİstanbul logo on a banner. İstiklal Avenue, İstanbul. 2009. (Source: Çakır & Özcan, 2009)

In 2012, the logo of Direnİstanbul was still visible in the streets of the Taksim area in the form of a stencilled graffiti – a fact to be stressed not merely to claim that graffiti can turn the wall into space for collective memory but to claim that they can continue to call for attention and even action even in case they relate to specific events that belong to the past. In this specific case, symbolism of the flag raised over Galata Tower conveys hope in the possibility of successfully appropriating the whole city by appropriating Beyoğlu, of which the tower seems to be a symbol[122]. Besides being a monument offering tourists a stunning view of İstanbul, the Galata Tower is "the most prominent landmark on the northern side of the Golden Horn" (Freely, 2000) and, as such, it is used as the symbol of the Beyoğlu municipality but, in this case, Galata Tower is also a synecdoche: the part stands for the whole. To me, the idea of resistance is somehow conveyed by the condensed font of the letters, which gives the idea of the compactness needed to pull the emergency brake vis a vis the unsustainability of further growth.

At the end of the 2000s, it was the urban poor who were primarily paying the human costs of the massive increase in scale of tourism-oriented restructuring that followed the recommendations made by the World Bank to Turkey in the mid-1990s. By then, the implementation of regeneration projects that were part of the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital

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[122] Whether hope is a scientific category or not is a relevant question. For instance, Mike Davis argued that it is not (Dean, 2022). However, any more detailed discussion of this specific question falls outside the scope of this study. Here, it is sufficient to stress that, in the late 2000s, there must have been hope in the possibility of defeating neoliberalism by appropriating Beyoğlu as attested by the symbolism of the tower.

of Culture initiative had already caused demolitions and further marginalisation of the low-income internal migrants who were inhabiting historical neighbourhoods with low-quality housing. Some of the controversial aspects of the 2010 event are discussed more in detail below with the purpose of laying the ground for the interpretation of a graffiti criticising the representation of İstanbul promoted with the initiative.

3.2. A European Capital of Culture in 2010

The European Capital of Culture is a mechanism for promoting Europeanness through a chain of benefits (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Rampton et al., 2011; Doğan & Sirkeci, 2013). First, cities of member and non-member states compete for a year-long title whose designation grants socioeconomic support to development via large-scale cultural programmes. Second, large-scale programmes for the spectacularization of culture impact city branding to boost investments, media resonance, and international profile of the awarded cities. Third, large-scale cultural programmes help increase also the very recognition of how important it is to compete for such a title.

For all these reasons, I interpret the European Capital of Culture as a mechanism through which the European Union promotes itself by promoting and supporting the neoliberal redevelopment of the cities that it designates as its cultural capitals.

The process for the initiative İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture started in 2005 in concomitance with the beginning of the European Union full membership negotiation. Initiated by local civil society actors and supported by governmental and private actors, the mega-event consisted of two parts: (1) a year-long programme of cultural events (e.g., concerts, theatre performances, conferences or seminars, workshops, exhibitions, publications, literary readings, festivals, and films); (2) a years-long tourism-oriented redevelopment plan aimed at the valorisation of historical and cultural heritage sites and venues in decay (Doğan & Sirkeci, 2013; Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Rampton et al., 2011).

As it emerges from the information summarised so far, the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture initiative served as a point of convergence between the interests of the different actors involved: Turkey, civil society actors promoting the initiative, and the European Union.

Seen from Turkey's perspective, it provided a profitable opportunity to benefit from the economic support by the European Union to boost investments and tourism. With the support of the funding by the union, the country's largest metropolis was in fact being redeveloped into a city as attractive as the capital cities of neighbouring Europe and, as such, into the showcase

of renewed power relations. As already stressed in the Introduction, the designation to European Capital of Culture contributed in fact to increase its global engagement, visibility and thus competitiveness as a global city (Kearny, 2010).

Seen from the perspective of the civil society actors initiating it, the İstanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture provided a historic opportunity to persuade the local public opinion of the advantages in placing İstanbul on the cultural and political map of the European Union with the social and economic support by the very union itself. It could be therefore interpreted as an attempt at reorienting the country's largest metropolis towards the European Union to curb the rise of political Islam.

Seen instead from the perspective of the European Union, the İstanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture provided an investment opportunity to promote itself while supporting the upgrade of the largest metropolis of a candidate member state to European standards, compared to which it was considered underdeveloped despite the richness of its historical and cultural heritage[123].

As highlighted in the report funding the redevelopment of İstanbul to showcase it as bridge connecting Europe to its East did not merely aim to boost tourism (all the more so as İstanbul was already a well-known touristic destination even before the 2010 initiative). The aim was rather to boost the flourishing of a cultural scene, industry and policy adequate not only to the dynamicity of the local young population but also to European standards of a city worthy to be included within the social and cultural map of Europe.

As clarified in the evaluation report, the main problem with architectonic heritage left throughout the centuries by ethnic and religious minorities included sites at risk of losing their designation as UNESCO World Heritage; their decay was also caused by the improper use of residents, i.e. internal migrants who had left their villages in rural areas of Anatolia in the second half of the 20th century to became part of İstanbul's urban poor (Rampton et al., 2011; Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010)[124].

The solution plan proposed by the established European Capital of Culture Agency envisioned change not only in the form and structure of space but also in the very use of space. Besides

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[123] In this regard, I consider it important to stress that this is not my opinion but what is stated in the evaluation report for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture, the European Capital of Culture (Rampton et al., 2011).

[124] As listed in the evaluation report, the list of ethnic and religious minorities who have left the long and rich historical and cultural heritage includes: Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenian Christians, Catholic Levantines, Ashkenazi Jews and Sephardic Jews (Rampton at al., 2011, p. vi and p. 66). Other ethnic minorities were instead excluded from the evaluation report. For instance, Muslim minorities such as the Romani and Kurdish.

the conservation, restoration, refurbishment or regeneration of areas in need for rehabilitation, the agency proposed a participatory model of urban transformation; in turn, this was supposed to foster change in the feelings of communitarian belonging of their residents (both to İstanbul and to the sociocultural geography of the European Union) (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010)[125]. That is why urban renewal with educational purposes attracted criticism and was argued to be comparable to civilisation projects aimed at teaching internal migrants "how to live in an apartment-building" (Baysal, 2013: 83).

As highlighted in the evaluation report, the outcome of the solution plan did not turn out to the one wished by the non-governmental actors proposing it since strong control of governmental actors hindered their independency (Rampton et al., 2011).

Besides the failure of the participatory model, the controversial consequences of urban regeneration projects led by district municipalities included the demolition of historic buildings to be replaced with far more expensive housing, and the forced displacement of former residents (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Azem, 2011). For instance, this was the case of the Romani community of residents of the Sulukule neighbourhood in the Fatih municipality[126].

In sum, the regeneration projects that were part of the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture resulted in human costs, which were actually being primarily paid by the urban poor, i.e., the internal migrants who used to inhabit historical buildings before their demolition. As discussed in detail below, the issues of internal migration brought to the fore by the 2010 initiative urged for a forward-looking action perspective on external borders, which is likely why it was represented as a bordered zone linking Europe to its East.

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[125] The active participation of the residents in decision-making was in fact supposed to affect their feelings of belonging and thus their attitude towards architectonic heritage being used in ways "incompatible" with its universal value (including sites at risk of losing their designation as UNESCO World Heritage Sites), reason for which the initiative has been defined a "social project of citizenship" (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010, p. 225 and p. 216).

[126] Supported by civil society organisations, industry professionals and activists, the residents of Sulukule got organised as Sulukule Platform to resist against dispossession and expulsion, but neither protests nor solidarity succeed in avoiding neither their forced eviction nor the destruction of historical and cultural heritage needed by neoliberal urban development to open up space for speculative construction. For more information, see the related entry on the blog Reclaim İstanbul (2011).

3.2.1. Represented as a bordered zone linking Europe to its East

Figure 144 Culture jamming of the İstanbul 2010 – ECoC initiative. İstanbul. 2012 [2010].

Figure 145 Logo of the European Capital of Culture Initiative (Source: Wikipedia, 2010)

The stencilled graffiti provides an example of culture jamming[127]. In the specific case, the target of the 'subvertising' technique the logo of the initiative "İstanbul 2010 - European Capital of Culture". In my opinion, the graffiti was not only intended to criticise the Eurocentric assumptions underlying the representation of İstanbul promoted by the initiative; it was rather an invitation to be wary of the very Europeanization project promoted through the European Capital of Culture mechanism. Below, I explain why.

The wording "İstanbul 2010" and the vertical curved lines of the original logo were replaced with the wording "İstanbul ZONE" and barbed wire. As it is well known, barbed wire is a symbol of both border regime and border control, i.e., the system trying to control migratory flows and the measures taken by national and supranational states to monitor and regulate the free movement of both goods and people across borders. Given this, the graffiti is first of all a reminder of the reality of the borders delimiting the territories under different sovereignties, i.e., Turkey and the European Union. In other words, it draws critical attention to the Eurocentric assumptions underlying the representation of İstanbul promoted through the mega-event: a bridge connecting Europe to its East[128].

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[127] As explained in the Glossary, culture jamming is an awareness raising technique known also as 'subvertising' (from 'subvert' and 'advertising'). Used to call for attention on the problematicity of the assumptions underlying advertising messages or logos, the technique relies on the subversion of their content via alteration and/or parody.

[128] The wording is not mine. As stated in the evaluation report for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture, "functioning as a bridge connecting Europe to its East" is precisely how one of the objectives of İstanbul's original application was formulated (Rampton et al., 2011, p. 79).

The criticism visualised by the graffiti was expressed also by various scholars, whose arguments are analogous and complement each other. For instance, Doğan & Sirkeci (2013) argued that the image of the bridge connecting Europe to its East made İstanbul appear almost stateless and argued also that the branding strategy relied on the romanticisation, spectacularization and commodification of its Orientalist and self-Orientalist representation as encounter of opposites (East vs. West, old vs. new, traditional vs. modern, past vs. contemporary). Similarly, Göktürk et al. (2010, p. 5) argued that the image of İstanbul "as Turkey's gateway to Europe" relied on "a paradoxical split imaginary": on one hand, it was officially acknowledged by the European Union as "as a key part of its own heritage" but, on the other hand, it was perceived, conceived and represented as separated from the rest of Turkey, whose Europeanness was instead object of debate.

Similar criticism can be addressed also to the separation of İstanbul from the rest of Turkey that İstanbul contains in itself. The polarisation between a modern, Western/European urban identity of certain areas of İstanbul and the traditional, local urban identity of other areas is not a novelty of recent years but rather a longstanding issue affecting both urban planning and the debate about it. However, the novelties of the second half of the 2000s were more than one. First, self-Orientalist and Orientalist representations of in-betweenness increased the attractiveness of İstanbul, which had started being perceived as "cool" precisely for being an underdeveloped, dense, disordered, chaotic city on the verge of becoming a global city in all respects (Özkan, 2010). In addition to this, upgrade to European standards was being formally tackled for the first time as a European issue, i.e., as an issue requiring the social and economic support of the European Union. Lastly, redevelopment was supposed to be planned together with the end users but, as aforementioned, it resulted in further marginalisation of the urban poor and, I argue, one of the controversial aspects that the graffiti above seems to address is exactly this.

Hence, it is here claimed that the problematic aspect of the participatory model of urban transformation proposed by the İstanbul 2010 Agency lies precisely in its assumption, namely that change in decision-making would have been potentially sufficient to change both beliefs and everyday behaviours of the urban poor. In other words, the claim I would like to make is that understanding the limitations of culturalist approaches to urban planning is of crucial importance, especially when the poor conditions of a place are strongly dependent on the improvement of the living conditions of the urban poor inhabiting it.

To explain why, I would like to start by reminding something almost obvious: strong dependence of the everyday use of space on the cultural identity of its users must not be mistaken for determination. This is why I acknowledge the crucial importance of intercultural placemaking models promoting the inclusion of resident communities in the design process

through consultation procedures (Wood & Landry, 2008) – such as, for instance, the one proposed by the İstanbul 2010 Agency. However, mere inclusion is not sufficient to improve democracy, since social antagonism arising from space-related issues is caused by uneven power dynamics and exclusionary practices (Amin, 2008). In other words, issues related to the use of space are not only a matter of culture nor of aesthetics but also issues related to ethnicity and social class.

In sum, the outcome of the redevelopment plan proposed by the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture must be understood in the light of the political economic interests of all the actors involved in the process of the social production of space, who are not limited to architects, planners and resident communities but include also public and private investors (e.g., governments, municipalities, real estate developers and real estate agents). Hence, criticism must be not only addressed to culturalism in urban planning but also the very Eurocentric belief in the supremacy of the European model and in imitation as the best way to keep up with it.

Based on this reasoning, the stencilled graffiti subverting the symbolic meanings of the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture initiative's logo can be interpreted as an invitation to be wary of re-peripheralization of İstanbul from the West of the Middle East to its own East long before the 2016 refugee-deal[129]. In other words, the graffiti's author(s) called passing-by viewers to look at Europeanisation from above vehiculated via the 2010 initiative for what it was: a project of socio-cultural hegemony. The resulting representation of İstanbul as a bordered zone connecting Europe to its East must be then understood as a multi-layered image.

First, it refers to İstanbul from where internal migrants were expelled by being forcedly displaced to the peripheries as a consequence of state-led gentrification. Second, it refers to İstanbul where Turkish citizens willing to travel or move to Europe were trapped if non-sufficiently wealthy to be granted a travel visa. Third, it refers to İstanbul where refugees denied of the rights granted by legal status and migrants from poor countries were also trapped but under conditions often worsened by informality[130]. As a result, the content of the graffiti can be considered a combination of the self-explanatory content of the following two graffiti.

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[129] Signed in 2016, the refugee deal committed Turkey to accept the refoulement of asylum seekers who managed to cross the EU border in exchange of two promises: billions of euros for the support of the system of temporary protection of Syrian refugees, and the not yet implemented lifting of the visa requirements preventing Turkish citizens to freely travel to the EU and within the Schengen area.

[130] Turkey does not guarantee the recognition of refugee status to any non-European citizen and hosts the millions of people escaped from the dreadful war in Syria under a special temporary regime of protection that treats them as "guests" (misafir) and not as asylum seekers, while asylum seekers from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran wait for years for the resettlement in third countries. This is

Figure 146 Anti- Europeanisation slogan. Ayazma, İstanbul, 2008 (Source: Azem, 2011)

Figure 147 Subvertising of the EU flag located in a main gateway from Africa to EU. Melilla, Morocco/Spain. Author: Blu (Source: Blue, 2012)

The wall writing in the first picture was documented in Ayazma, an informal neighbourhood in the Küçükçemece district (İstanbul). The Kurdish community that used to inhabit it was forcedly expelled and displaced to make space for a regeneration project aimed at the construction of luxury housing, which was not part of the İstanbul 2010 - European Capital of Culture, and started earlier (Baysal, 2013). The mural in the second picture is a famous mural completed in 2012 by the street artist Blu near the border fences separating Morocco and the Spanish city of Melilla. Read together, they suggest that global financial capital crosses borders but the urban poor are excluded from the possibilities opened up by the global economy.

In conclusion, the graffiti subverting dominant ways of seeing and representing İstanbul promoted as a European capital in 2010 can actually be interpreted as a call for a longer-term and multiscalar perspective to counteract their very strategic use. To my eyes, it was a call for critical attention on the urgency to converge political grassroots struggle in the fields of urbanism and migration insofar as dialectically related. It pushed the viewer to question whether Europeanisation-from-above was the only alternative to Neo-Ottomanisation, a likewise hegemonic project already in the making by 2010 and by now largely implemented. Albeit uncontroversial heterogeneity, what attempted Europeanisation and Neo-Ottomanisation of the country shared for a while is precisely the same focal point: the (re)conquest of İstanbul.

in fact the main reason why the Turkey-based movement of solidarity with migrants and asylum seekers advocates the modification of the geographical limitations of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

3.3. Neo-Ottoman conquest via urban renewal

Figure 148 Neo-Ottoman conquest of İstanbul. 2012. (Photo: Emiliano Bugatti)

This wall painting does more than pointing at the cumulative effects of rapid population growth and the subsequent rapid urbanisation; it is a descriptive representation of the Neo-Ottoman takeover of İstanbul as a pyramid-shaped process of coming to power crowned with success. As represented on the wall, the strategy to win power relied on the monumentalization of the renewal of an urban sprawl into a showcase of renewed power relations. To explain why, we need to pay attention to all the elements composing the wall painting: the white and colourful buildings piled on top of each other, the transport means and a fist popping out from them, two different crowns, one decorated with a crescent and a star painted in red, and the white and green drape wrapping the whole.

The buildings piled on top of each other draw attention on residential space, and they give an idea of the scale of the huge construction site into which İstanbul was turned to generate profit and increase multiscalar power. The diversity of their colour is a clear invitation to make a distinction. The larger buildings painted in white are reminiscent of TOKİ residential complexes of the peripheral areas where the urban poor expelled from renewal areas to be gentrified via forced eviction are usually relocated[131]. The thinner buildings with colourful façades are instead reminiscent of historical housing of central areas turned into luxury aparthotels or Airbnb

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[131] As discussed above, TOKİ is the Housing Development Administration of Turkey. Since the early 2002, it develops mass housing projects on behalf of local municipalities that act as contractor and, in turn, makes deals with further contractors (İzem, 2011; Genç, 2014).

vacation rental flats. One of the central areas hosting foreign tourists is precisely Galata, where the graffiti appeared in 2012. At that time, the gentrification of the neighbourhood was progressing and, in time, it nearly overshadowed the traditional "street-courtyard-sofa-room" pattern typical of residential areas, an expression that I borrow from Denel (1982, p. XIII).

From the mass of white buildings, there emerge cars and trucks. By recalling İstanbul's traffic congestion, they point at the unsustainability of the increase of transport issues resulting from the inherent relation between infrastructural and urban development. In other words, cars and trucks can be interpreted as a sort of reminder and even warning in that they visualise what has been claimed by Mücella Yapıcı: "*bir yolu götürürseniz, o yol oraya gelişmeyi çağrır*" (if you build a road, it'll attract development) (Azem, 2011).

With regard to the crowned fist popping out from the heap of colourful buildings, there is more than one remark to be made. First, it is a quotation. It clearly recalls the yellow fists and tags with which the graffiti writer Kripoe and the Berlin-based crew 1UP (One United Power) had "bombed" the narrow streets of Galata at the end of the 2000s[132]. More precisely, the crowned fist is a way to pay tribute to their authors by addressing them as "kings"[133]. Lastly, the crowned fist is a sort of signature. It functions as a sign indicating the spatio-temporal positioning of both the viewer and the author(s) of the wall painting. By somehow telling the passer-by "You are now here, in Galata in the early 2010s", it suggests that graffiti was no longer a "liminal" practice confined to "liminal sites" of peripheral areas (Waclawek, 2011, p. 212 and p. 215) but had rather become an essential component of the aesthetics of the gentrified space of global cities in the making, following a shift in their perception: from ugly to cool.

On top of the buildings, there stand the Galata Tower. As in the case of the logo of *Direnİstanbul*, the Galata Tower is the symbol of both Beyoğlu and the whole of İstanbul. Once again, both İstanbul and Beyoğlu are represented as contested space for representation of political power. But, in this case, Beyoğlu is represented as the stronghold of a struggle over political authority that seems to have been won by hegemonic power. To explain why, it must be first deciphered how the symbolism of the drape in the background and the crown over the tower dialectically relate to each other.

The drape in the background is painted in white and green, which clearly recall Ottoman and Neo-Ottoman imagery. As pointed out by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu, Neo-Ottomanism is the popular term used both in Turkey and abroad to describe

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[132] As specified earlier, tag and bombing are terms used in jargon to refer to territorial marking: "tag" means signature graffiti and "bombing" means tagging many surfaces in the same area.

[133] As explained in the glossary, "king" is the term used among signature graffiti writers to address skilled writers with reputation higher than others.

Turkish foreign policy that, according to him, could be better described as "zero problems with neighbours" in order not to make them fear expansionism (Palabıyık, 2010). But Neo-Ottomanism is not only about the international nor soft power; it is about soft power and monumentalization of space-time as dialectically related to each other at various scales: the international, the global, the local, and the national.

As defined by Bülent Batuman (2016 and 2017), Neo-Ottomanism is a negotiation strategy oriented both inwards and outwards. On one hand, the neoliberal conservatives adopting it aim to strengthen nationalist feelings of belonging to a collective identity renewed in accordance with the demands of political Islam; at the same time, they aim at strengthening regional and global influence through the branding of İstanbul into a city easy to sell to new gentrifiers, namely middle class and rich Muslims from both Turkey and other countries. The implementation of both inward- and outward-oriented objectives rely on the exploitation of a self-orientalist and nationalistic nostalgia for the grandeur of the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire (i.e., the golden age of Nation and Islam), of which the classical Ottoman mosques' architecture is for instance a symbol to imitate[134]. However, Neo-Ottomanisation is not merely a matter of form and style; it is also a matter of size and above all spectacularization.

At this regard, the crown over the Galata Tower in the wall painting reminds us that nostalgic spectacularization of the imperial legacy must not be misunderstood for mere commemoration. Rather, the superimposition of the neo-Ottoman imperial imaginary over the Republican nation-state resulted in a "highly nationalistic" mentality inherently related to the very "popularisation of the conquest mentality" (Eldem, 2013). However, Republican structures and imaginary were not merely rejected but rather englobed via re-semanticization of both space and time. In other words, neoliberal conservatives grounded their legitimacy mainly on the legacy of the imperial past but also incorporated the nationalism of the Republican period. In fact, the crown that in the wall painting above stands for victory (although most of the Ottoman sultans did not wear any) is decorated with the crescent and the star featured in the late Ottoman and Turkish flags but both the crescent and the star are painted in red, which symbolises the Turkish flag, not the Ottoman one.

In addition to this, it must be remarked that the shape of the process is represented as pyramidical. As such, it visualises İstanbul as stratified space, i.e., an assemblage of old and new layers of symbolic meanings in dialectic relation with each other. Besides this, it visualises that progressive conquering by neoliberal conservatives relied on decades-long tourism-oriented re-monumentalization. Lastly, the pyramidal shape clearly represents the re-

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[134] In this regard, it is important to compare the radically different narrative proposed by Tekeli (2010, p. 39), who addressed the neoliberalization of İstanbul and Turkey as a period of decay since it implied what he called the Postmodernist "erosion of modernity".

monumentalization of the city as a whole as strongly focused on the Galata Tower, which stands for Beyoğlu, a centre of touristic attraction and place for the representation of values of both hegemonic and counterhegemonic power.

In the early 2010s, most of the mega-projects meant to perform a monumental function in the area were not yet completed with the exception of a 50.000 m² shopping mall on İstiklal Avenue named Demirören (2011), a mega-project that will be discussed more in detail in the last section of this chapter. That is why, I suppose, the wall painting above does not depict minarets, bridges or any other symbol recalling any of the mega-projects completed in the following years[135]. At that time, the Galata Tower still used to be the most prominent landmark and touristic attraction of the Taksim area and also one of the most prominent ones of İstanbul together with the Bosphorus Bridge (the latter completed in 1973 and now called 15 July Martyrs Bridge following the 2016 attempted coup).

In sum, the wall painting examined in detail in this section visualises that the tourism-oriented re-development of İstanbul occurred in recent decades relied on two main strategic areas of intervention: architectural projects concerning the re-development of the urban fabric and monumental mega-projects, the latter including also infrastructure projects (Akcan, 2015). In the next section, the focus is on a specific mega-project aimed at the renewal of historical real estate in the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood.

3.4. Renewal of historical real estate: the case of Taksim 360 [Tarlabaşı 360]

Several of the graffiti with space-related content documented in İstanbul in the early 2010s contained explicit reference to Tarlabaşı 360, an urban renewal project by now renamed Taksim 360. For instance, see Figure 149.

When the project started in 2010, the late 19th century buildings of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood were mainly inhabited by the urban poor. To this day, the construction of a brand-new luxury mixed-use complex is not fully completed nor has managed to completely fulfil the long-term aim suggested by its new toponym, namely wiping away the previous identity of a neighbourhood whose central location is invaluable. As described on the project

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[135] Emblematic examples completed in the 2010s include the Third Bridge over the Bosphorus (2016), The Grand Pera shopping and performance complex (2016) located also on İstiklal Avenue and, more precisely, on the site of the historic movie theatre Emek (completely demolished in 2013), the Third Airport (2018), and the Çamlıca Camii (a giant mosque completed and opened in 2019). Besides being the largest in Turkey, the latter is visible from everywhere in İstanbul. Its construction as well as its peculiarities were announced in 2012 by the then Prime Minister Erdoğan on the anniversary day of the Ottoman conquest of the former Byzantine capital city. For a complete list of mega-projects, see http://megaprojelerİstanbul.com. To this day uncompleted projects include the opening of Canal İstanbul or Second Bosphorus, a 45 km long canal connecting the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea (started in June 2021).

website, "Taksim is the heart of İstanbul and the heart of Taksim is Taksim 360" (Taksim 260, n.d.). As discussed more in detail later on, Taksim is in fact *the* space for representation of power in İstanbul and, as it is well-known, it is also an area full of entertainment, cultural and commercial facilities[136]. Below visuals showing the proximity of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood to Taksim Square and the area of the renewal project.

Figure 149 Dissent vs. the megaproject Tarlabaşı 360 (renamed Taksim 360). İstanbul. 2013.

Figure 150 Tarlabaşı's location. (Source: Tsavdaroglou, 2020)

Figure 151 Tarlabaşı renewal area. (Source: Bianet, 2017)

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[136] See the next section.

Due to pull and push factors of inner-city, internal and external migration, Tarlabaşı has historically sheltered the whole world, a rhetorical hyperbole that I use to emphasize that urban renewal targeted a neighbourhood inhabited by a multi-ethnic community of dwellers since its formation. Tarlabaşı became a neighbourhood in the 19th century, when it became the residential quarter of middle- and upper-income professionals of Armenian and Greek ethnicity (Tsavdaroglou, 2020, Can, 2020; Ozil, 2015; Unsal & Kuyucu, 2010)[137]. In the same period, the area started also becoming a place for job opportunities for low-class workers who were living nearby: petty merchants, shop owners, tailors, waiters, and sex-workers (Ozil, 2015).

In the 20th century, non-Muslim minority residents of Tarlabaşı had to sell or abandon their properties as consequence of historic events such as the introduction of the wealth tax in 1942 and the pogrom of 6-7 September 1955. The *varlık vergisi* (wealth tax) was one of the nationalist policies that discriminated non-Muslim minority residents of non-Turkish ethnicity (Mills, 2006). Defined by Erdemir (2015) as the Turkish *Kristallnacht*, the 1955 pogrom was a series of attacks that nationalists perpetrated primarily against the Greek community of İstanbul following the spreading of a fake news (Greeks had bombed Atatürk's birth house in Thessaloniki).

Over the decades, non-Muslim minority residents were replaced by low-income newcomers who squatted, bought or rented their former properties for cheap prices (Tsavdaroglou, 2020, Can, 2020; Genç, 2017; Islam, 2006 and 2005; Unsal & Kuyucu, 2010). In the 1960s and 1970s, the neighbourhood was mostly inhabited by migrants from rural Anatolia who had been attracted by the employment opportunities opened up by the industrialisation of the 1950s but, as pointed out by Islam (2005), they were unable to afford the maintenance needed to avoid deterioration.

Physical decay contributed to ghettoization of Tarlabaşı but, as argued by Unsal & Kuyucu (2010), the process was triggered also by state-led long-planned change in the urban fabric. In the 1980s, Tarlabaşı and the İstiklal Avenue area were physically split from each other following the demolition of hundreds of multi-storey buildings to open up a boulevard

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[137] Referring to these social groups by using the category of non-Muslim native minorities is not uncommon, but Amy Mills (2006) remarked that the very category of ethnic minority is actually the product of the 20th century transformation of subjects of the Ottoman Empire into citizens of the Turkish Republic. Hence, addressing them as Ottoman citizens is appropriate as citizenship shall be understood not only as the formally institutionalised status of being a citizen of a nation-state but also as the sets of practices of being political in and through urban space (İşin, 2005). The plausibility of such a conceptual and linguistic adjustment is supported by the very history of the mahalle, an Ottoman Turkish word of Arabic origin that is commonly translated as neighbourhood.

connecting Taksim to the Historic Peninsula (Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008; Unsal & Kuyucu, 2010; Gül, 2009)[138].

Figure 152 Tarlabaşı Boulevard. (Source: Google Maps)

To this day, Tarlabaşı Boulevard still marks the neighbourhood's southern boundary, a term adequate to describe its ambivalent physical relationship with the neighbouring Taksim Square and İstiklal Avenue area: disjunction albeit proximity. Over a few decades, proximity to Taksim attracted many newcomers in need for both cheap housing and jobs, respectively provided by deteriorated housing and by the pool of opportunities to access the informal economy networks provided not only by the İstiklal area but also by the neighbourhood itself.

By the late 2000s, members of various communities joining migrants from rural Anatolia already there since the 60-70s include: (1) internally displaced Turkish citizens of Kurdish ethnicity escaping civil war in the south-eastern parts of the country in the 1990s, (2) members of the Romani community, (3) members of the LGBTQI+ community, and (4) migrants and refugees from Sub-Saharan African countries (Tsavdaroglou, 2020, Can, 2020; Genç, 2017; Islam, 2006 and 2005; Unsal & Kuyucu, 2010)[139].

With their progressive arrival, Tarlabaşı had grown in what I suggest to describe as homogeneity-in-heterogeneity: increase in ethnic/cultural heterogeneity and increase in class homogeneity. Based on fieldwork observations conducted in the early 2010s, I can say that, for the most part, the mixed-used neighbourhood was mainly inhabited by low- and very low-class residents: (1) petty traders (e.g., grocers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, barbers, hairdressers, and wigs makers); (2) workers employed in the informal sector such as waist collectors, construction workers, textile workers, street vendors (e.g., mussel, watch, and rag

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[138] The opening of the boulevard was one of uncompleted projects of Haussmannian nature proposed by Henri Prost, a French urbanist commissioned to prepare a masterplan for the re-making of İstanbul in the 1930s. More detailed information is going to be provided later on in this chapter.

[139] In the early 2010s, Tarlabaşı started providing a shelter also to refugees from the neighbouring Syria who were increasingly escaping the war sparked by the repression of the 2011 attempted revolution.

sellers), sex-workers (trans and cisgender), musicians, and drug dealers; (3) unemployed people. In addition to all of them, I consider it important to recall also the unwaged housewives who hanged the laundry depicted in the many realistic yet stereotypical images circulating in the early 2010s. Below two examples, one of which is a graffiti.

Figure 153 Graffiti depicting the streetscape of Tarlabaşı. 2012.

Figure 154 Streetscape of Tarlabaşı. 2013.

Both the images depict the physical texture targeted by urban renewal: historical multi-storey apartment buildings with a *cumba* (bay window), a distinctive feature of the local architectural language consisting of an extension of the house towards the street. As it can be seen from both the graffiti and the photograph, the boundaries between outside and inside were not fixed since public and domestic space were to a certain extent overlapping. The fluidity of space was the product of tradition but it was not the product of a traditional way of building the environment alone; it was rather the product of the combination of traditional architectonic features and traditional practices of the everyday life. In other words, the street was commonly shared for domestic work, which in Turkey (but not only) is still unwaged and is traditionally performed by women workers.

Seeing Tarlabaşı as a place where gender and class related issues intersect means also acknowledging the heteropatriarchal authority dominating its space. Based on participant observation, I can say that the atmosphere of some of its streets was and continues to be polluted on a regular basis by toxic masculinity[140]. For instance, the graffiti below epitomises the macho behaviour described by the slang expression that it contains: "*gider yapmak*"

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[140] Tarlabaşı is the place where I have lived most of the time that I have spent so far in İstanbul but, since 1 July 2022, the area is included in the list of neighbourhoods closed to foreign residents.

(harassing in a domineering manner to incite a confrontation aimed in turn at defending reputation with verbal and/or physical violence)[141].

Figure 155 "Nobody can affront anyone in this neighbourhood". Tarlabaşı. 2013.

As it can be clearly seen from the picture, the graffiti appeared within the area evacuated and demolished as part of the renewal project. Both the expulsion of the residents of Tarlabaşı and the demolition of the architectural heritage had aroused the dissent of various actors who tried legal ways to suspend the project but in vain (Can, 2020; Arıcan, 2020; Tsavdaroglou, 2020; Türkün, 2011; Türkün & Şen, 2009; Islam, 2006 and 2010; Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010)[142]. Dissent against gentrification was expressed also via graffiti. See Figure 156, 157, and 158.

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[141] Unable to find an accurate equivalent in English slang, I suggest to translate it in English as "to affront [someone]", "to mess up [with someone] or "to fall afoul [of one another]".

[142] In 2008, the Chamber of Architects filed a lawsuit on the grounds that both the aforementioned Law 5366 and the renewal project collided with the public interest and the local legislation. In the same year, owners, landlords, renters and volunteer lawyers came together and formed the Tarlabaşı Association with the purpose of defending the rights of residents under the threat of expropriation if unwilling to sell their properties at very low prices. In 2010, the Tarlabaşı Association joined the lawsuit filed by the Chamber of Architects yet the first evacuations and dismantling of historical buildings began.

Figure 156 Dissent vs. the expulsion of the Tarlabaşı residents: "where are these people?". 2012.

Figure 157 Dissent vs. the destruction of Tarlabaşı architectonic heritage: "demolition Street". 2012.

Figure 158 Dissent vs. property speculation in Tarlabaşı: "unearned income blind-alley".

2012.

Like the previous and many others, these graffiti also appeared within the demolition area, whose derelict atmosphere attracted many street artists. In 2012, the demolition area became a "*kamuya açık sanat galerisi*" (art gallery open to the public) (Fırat, 2012). The events that organised within a short time were various: *VJ FEST İstanbul 2012*, *Renovation Tarlabaşı*, and *Division Unfolded: Tarlabaşı Intervention*. See the visuals below.

Figure 159 Poster of VJ Fest İstanbul. Tarlabaşı, June 2012 (Source:VJ Fest İstanbul, 2012)

Figure 160 Advertising material of the street art event "Renovation Tarlabaşı". September 2012 (Source: Street Art Festival İstanbul, 2012)

Figure 161 Art event "Division Unfolded: Tarlabaşı Intervention".

With regard to these events and even to the graffiti aimed at giving visibility to Tarlabaşı's issues, Fırat (2012) argued that, no matter if their authors were well-intentioned, their interventions were the result of political ingenuity because, in the end, they contributed to the aestheticization of the ruins in the demolition area. Endorsing her argument, I consider it important to stress that, besides showcasing demolition, the graffiti turning the area into an open-air gallery contributed also to the objectification of the remaining residents. Practically, their poor living conditions were also being showcased and actually reduced to an attraction to satisfy the curious gaze of an increasing number of visitors. Given this, the content of graffiti below is self-explanatory.
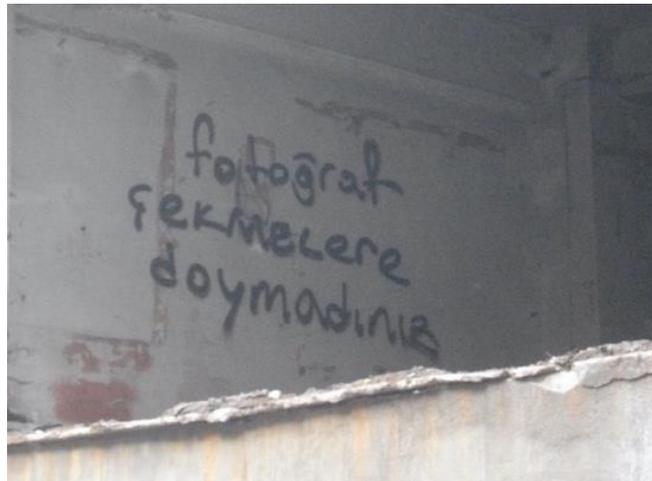
Figure 162 "Still not enough photos?". Tarlabaşı. 2012.

In sum, the case of renewal of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood shows that the understanding of urban issues as inherently related to issues of class, gender, and ethnicity. In addition to this, it shows also the ambivalence of graffiti in the production of space insofar as it shows that

interventions aimed at calling for attention on grassroots struggle against gentrification can actually end up fuelling it. Grassroots placemaking is also the topic of the next section.

3.5. Grassroots placemaking

By grassroots placemaking, I refer to the process through which ordinary people add layers of symbolic meanings to already meaningful places. Graffiti documented in Taksim before Gezi call for attention on two cases that differ from each in terms of design but were both given symbolic meanings via ritualised political use and collective mobilisation: Taksim Square and Galatasaray Square.

By now, the term "square" is commonly used to translate *"meydan"* but the spaces that two terms traditionally indicate is not exactly the same. *Meydan* is a Turkish word of Arabic and Persian origins that traditionally indicates open space whose distinctive feature is in-betweenness[143]. Until the introduction of rational planning and regularity as guiding principle in the late 19th century, *meydan* indicated free-access space whose boundaries were not formally designed but informally defined via practices of social interaction (Bilsel, 2008; Locci & Yücel, 2011).

The English square derives instead from the Latin "*ex*" (out) and "*quadrare*" (make square-shaped), and indicates an area geometrically defined by the buildings surrounding it[144]. In the European tradition of building the environment, the square is the typical and most emblematic representation of public space, i.e., space whose multiplicity of functions includes but is not limited to representation of power (Bilsel, 2008).

In light of these preliminary remarks, I am going to first focus on the case of Taksim Square and, depending on the historical period, I am going to use both the terms (i.e., square and meydan). Unlike Galatasaray Square, Taksim is space turned into a square not only as result of everyday use and ritualised spatial practices but also as result of urban planning.

3.5.1. Taksim Square

In the 2010s, before pedestrianisation, Taksim Square functioned as a major transportation hub given the presence of both the metro and bus station but the geography of place was

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[143] See the etymology of *meydan* in the online dictionary *Etimoloji Türkçe* (n.d.)

[144] See the origin and meaning of square in Etymonline (n.d.). See also the current meaning of square in English language dictionaries. For instance, see the online Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.).

much more complex than a highly transited square. The physical elements composing it included: Gezi Park, the *Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (*Atatürk Cultural Centre, AKM), the Marmara Hotel, the open space between, the Republican Monument, and the roads connecting them. See Figure 163.

Figure 163 Aerial view of Taksim Square. (Source: "The Geography of Taksim Square", 2013)

With regard to its symbolic meanings, it was claimed that Taksim Square became "a space of visibility, rupture and conflict for the three prevailing climates of thought in existence in Turkey for the past 200 years", namely political Islam, westernism, and socialism (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b). To explain why, I am going to provide a brief account of its development.

Since the eighteenth century, Taksim is the site of the *maksem*, the water distribution chamber from which the word Taksim derives (Köseoğlu, 2021, p. 41), and the physical element marking the boundary of Cadde-i Kebir (Grand Avenue, later Grand Rue de Pera and İstiklal Avenue) (Yalçın, 2020). In the area, there were also several cemeteries that, like all major cemeteries in İstanbul, were used also as recreation areas for practices such as picnics (Yalçın, 2020). In the early 19th century, Taksim continued to be a peripheral area but was turned into a military district with the construction of the Artillery Barracks (Batuman, 2015)[145]. See the figures

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[145] In 2011, the then Prime Minister Tayiip Erdoğan proposed the reconstruction of a replica of the barracks. As it is well known, the controversial project sparked dissent. See Chapter 4.

below, which visualise the *meydan*, i.e., open and free-access space and middle ground (*açık alan* in Turkish).

Figure 164 Maksem. 18th century. (Source: Arabaci, 2021)

Figure 165 Taksim Barracks. Late 19th century. (Source: Yiğit & Çetin, 2022)

In the courtyard of the barracks, there was a mosque (Kırbaş, 2014). See the map in Figure 166.
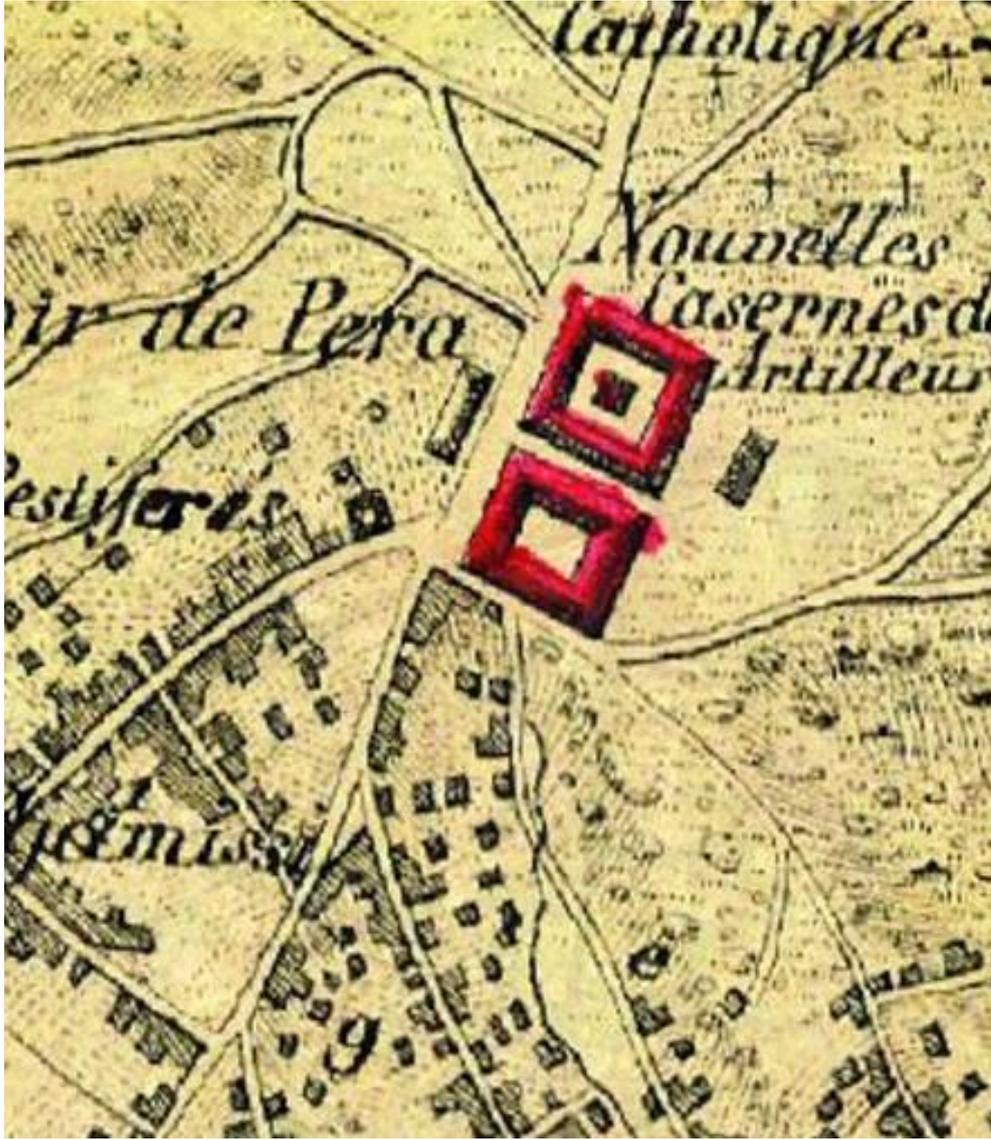
Figure 166 Taksim Artillery Barracks in Kauffer Map, 1807 (Source: Kırbaş, 2014, p. 92)

In the late 19th century, the function of *Taksim Meydanı* changed. It started marking the northern boundary of the new business and residential district of upper-middle class non-Muslim subjects of the modernising Empire and thus became also the centre of the urban life in the district (Köseoğlu 2021). Besides the *meydan*, the area included Galata, Pera, and *Grand Rue de Pera* (the new toponym of *Cadde-i Kebir*). In 1869, the first public park of the area was opened: *Taksim Bahçesi* (Taksim Garden). It was opened following the relocation of Christian cemeteries and, according to Çelik (1993), its atmosphere must have been considered immoral since the police prohibited to non-Muslim women to walk in the park, which was used for leisure activities mostly by the non-Muslim residents of the area. See Figure 167.

Figure 167 Taksim Garden. 1902. (Source: Librakons, 2021)

In 1880, the symbolism of the Taksim area as space of representation of non-Muslim subjects of the Empire further increased with the construction of Hagia Triada, a church of the Greek community that, until the completion of the construction of the Taksim Mosque in the early 2020s, was the religious building with highest visibility in the *meydan* area. Below a postcard depicting it.

Figure 168 *Hagia Traida* probably in the late 19th century. (Source: Toucan, 2022)

In 1909, the Taksim military barracks were bombed during the military repression of an anti-Westernisation uprising that lasted 13 days (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b). In the following year, the tradition of celebrating the International Workers Day May in the Taksim area started. In 1910, hundreds of workers and socialist leaders gathered in the garden of a beer factory where speeches were made in Armenian, Turkish, Greek and Ladino so as to emphasize the multilingual essence of İstanbul's working class (Benlisoy, 2017). In 1923, year of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, May 1st became a public holiday under the name of *Amele Bayramı* (Labour Day) but, in 1924, the government banned mass celebrations (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b).

In the early Republican period, the erection of a highly symbolic element such as the Independence Monument in 1928 Taksim mediated the spontaneous making of Taksim into a traffic node and a square (Batuman, 2015). Commissioned to the Italian sculptors Pietro Canonica and Giulio Mongeri by the Municipality of İstanbul, the sculpture is a twofold representation: on one side, it depicts the Turkish War of Independence and, on the other side, it depicts the founding of the Republic of Turkey[146]. The monument and the area surrounding it started becoming the site of ritualised practices such as public ceremonies and recurring commemorations that, together with the sculpture, were aimed to create a new collective memory (Köseoğlu, 2021). Below one of the first ceremonies at the Taksim Republican Monument in the late 1920.
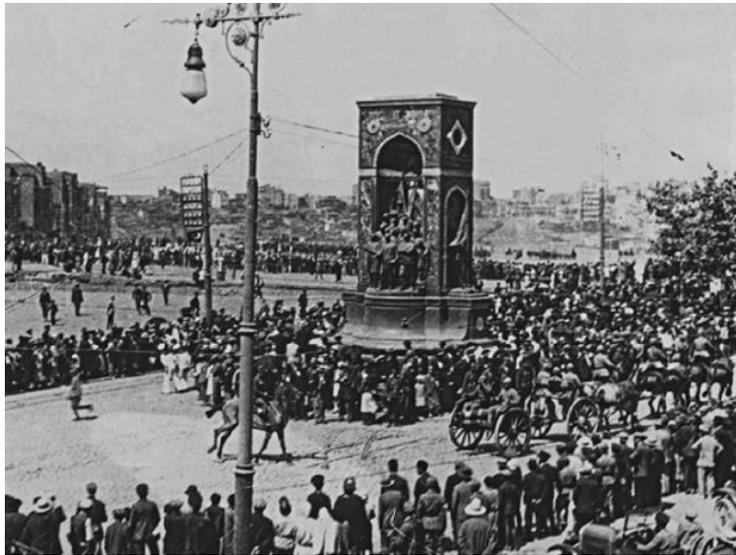
Figure 169 One of the first ceremonies at the Taksim Republican Monument. 1928. (Source: Yalçın, 2020)

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[146] For more detailed information about the sculpture, its making, and the figures it represents, see Günal & Çelikkan (2019b).

With the implementation of the masterplan that the French architect and urban designer Henri Prost was invited to prepare in 1936, Taksim turned into the Republican Square (Batuman, 2015), i.e., "a monumental public square" (Bilsel, 2010: 354). Following the destruction of the semi-ruined military barracks and the opening of Gezi Park as one of the free, secularised spaces to be used for recreational and cultural activities also by Muslims (both men and women), Taksim has been turned into a symbolic battlefield for conflicting ideals of modernity (Akpınar & Gümüş, 2012)[147]. Below a sketch of Taksim Square by Prost, who conceived it as the main public square of the Republican İstanbul, a place designed to stage large-scale military ceremonies and celebrations (Köseoğlu, 2021; Bilsel, 2007 and 2010; Akpınar, 2010).
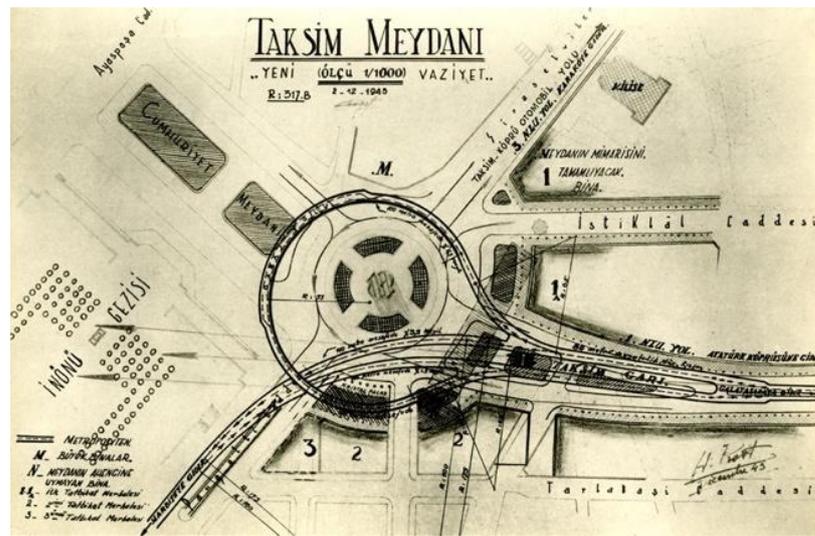
Figure 170 Sketch of Taksim Square by Prost. 1945. (Source: Kiricioglue, 2012)

In 1946, the foundations of an opera house in the Republican square were laid but the construction works progressed at a slow pace due to funding issues[148]. In the 1950s, the nearby construction of the Hilton Hotel marked the monumentalization of high-rise buildings as space of representation of renewed power relations (e.g., the Turkish-American alliance) (Akpınar & Gümüş, 2012; Akpınar, 2014; Gül, 2009; Bozoğan, 2001; Bozdoğan & Akçan; 2012). In the same period, the Taksim area became a meeting place and a space for consumption and leisure activities (Köseoğlu) but it became also the stage of nationalist rallies, including rallies against ethnic minorities (Batuman, 2015). As aforementioned in this chapter, ethnicized violence escalated and reached a historic peak with the pogrom of 1955. In the 1960s, nationalist rallies started being substituted by anti-imperialist rallies (Batuman, 2015;

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[147] For more detailed information about the Prost Plan, see Bilsel (2010); Akpınar (2014); Bozdoğan & Akçan (2012); Batuman (2015); Sezer (2015); Akpınar & Gümüş (2012); Bilsel (2017).

[148] See Chapter 4 for more information about the history of the *Atatürk Kültür Merkezi* (Atatürk Cultural Center, AKM).

Köseoğlu, 2021)[149]. As mentioned in Chapter 2, anti-American rallies reached a historic peak both in attendance and brutality with the events of Bloody Sunday in 1969, when Taksim Square was turned into a proper battlefield where two protesters were killed and nearly two hundred were injured (Nisan online newspaper, 2019).

Figure 171 Bloody Sunday. Taksim Square. 1969. (Source: Nisan online newspaper, 2019)

In 1976, DİSK organised the celebration of the International Workers Day in Taksim Square and the participated rally marked the beginning of mass May Day celebrations in Turkey (Bianet, 2001). In 1977, too thousand people joined the May Day rally in Taksim Square, which they reached via the routes visualised in the map below.
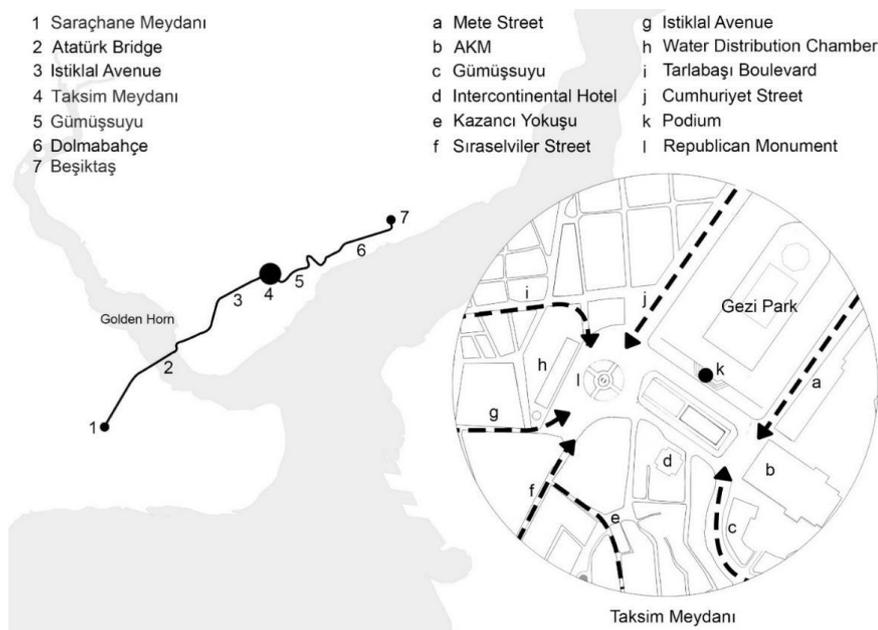
Figure 172 May Day march to Taksim. (Source: Köseoğlu 2021, p. 119)

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[149] Despite historiographical mistakes, the popular Netflix series *Kulüp* (The Club) (Tan, 2021 and 2022) provides fictional evidence of the use of İstiklal Avenue for this purpose.

As I already recalled in Chapter 2, a never identified man fired into the crowd and, as result of panic, more than 30 people were killed and hundreds were injured (Köseoğlu, 2021; Bozdoğan and Akcan, 2012; Batuman, 2015; Nocera, 2011; Mavioğlu & Sanyer, 2007). Below, a picture of the rally and a picture of the victims of the massacre, for whom no monument has ever been erected neither in Taksim Square nor elsewhere in İstanbul.

Figure 173 May Day 1977. Rally in Taksim Square.
(Source: Küper, 2012)

Figure 174 Taksim Square massacre. 1977.
(Source: Küper, 2012)

In 1978, the May Day celebration in Taksim Square was highly participated (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b). One of the slogans of the protest was "*1 Mayıs'da, 1 Mayıs Alanında* (On May Day, at May Day Arena) (Köseoğlu, 2021). Below a photograph showing a banner with another slogan, one calling the responsible of the 1977 massacre to account[150].

Figure 175 Taksim Square, May Day 1978 (Source: SALT Galata, 2018b)

In 1979, May Day was celebrated in the streets, which were filled with people despite a ban and a curfew but, in 1981, May Day was revoked the status of public holiday and, until it officially regained it in 2009, leftists did not stop trying to reclaim Taksim as the place for the

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[150] For a similar slogan, see Figure 68 in Chapter 2.

May Day rally (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b). By then, the agency who promoted the İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture also reclaimed Taksim. Below, an image appeared on the website of the mega-event and, besides providing visual support to a list of places to visit, it seems to be a clear political statement: it reclaims Taksim as *the* square of İstanbul, a European Capital (of Culture) and the capital city of the Republic of Turkey.

Figure 176 Panoramic view of the area between Taksim Square and the Bosphorus. (Source: Places to Visit – İstanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture, n.d.)

In 2010, 2011 and 2012, Taksim Square became once again the stage of the rallies for the May Day celebrations (Günal & Çelikkan, 2019b). The next figure is a selective example of the several graffiti found in the Taksim area in 2012 and indicating Taksim as the ground for the celebrations of the International Workers Day.

Figure 177 Taksim as May Day ground (*alan* in Turkish). Taksim area, İstanbul. 2012.

In support of such a representation, another picture, which shows the wallscape on the eve of May Day 2013, when various political actors called passers-by to join the rally in Taksim

despite a ban allegedly due to the construction works for the pedestrianisation of the square, a controversial project discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 178 Wallscape on the eve of May Day. Taksim. 2013.

In sum, Taksim is a contested place whose multiple layers of symbolic meanings depend not only on top-down planning but also on grassroots placemaking. As argued by Köseoğlu (2021), the symbolic meanings given to the place by the labour movement overshadowed its Republican symbolism. Based on street and digital ethnographic observation, I argue also a nostalgic component oriented towards the past and the unrealised future that tends to its fetishization as the May Day ground. However, I am not intent on reducing Taksim to a place of collective remembrance and space of representation of a collective trauma. As far as I have understood, Taksim is more than this. It stands not only for the ideals of the labour movement and the memory of the martyrised victims but also for the new, differential space that movements for social justice seeks to commonise. In other words, it is space of representation of the right to freedom of assembly and May Day is a *vakit*, i.e., an opportunity to reclaim it. In addition to this, the symbolic meanings of Taksim go beyond the local scale since before the Gezi resistance in 2013. For evidence of this, see the graffiti below, which appeared in the Taksim area in 2012.

Figure 179 Graffiti connecting Taksim Square to Tahrir Square. İstanbul. 2012.

The textual content of the street sign above indicates *Tahrir Meydanı* (a major square in Cairo and the most symbolic of the locations of the 2011 uprising that led to the overthrow of the then President Mubarak and was followed by several waves of protests). However, the shape,

size and colours clearly recall the street signs used within the İstanbul municipality to indicate the name of the locations where they are placed. Hence, I argue that the possible interpretations of the textual and visual content of the graffiti are at least two. First, the graffiti was a call to reflect on the possible effects of an uprising in Turkey and, as such, it was an anticipatory sign of what came shortly thereafter (i.e., the Gezi uprising). In other words, it suggests that Taksim – the Republican Square and the place reclaimed by the labour movement – had the potential of being turned into transnational space for political action aimed to reclaim the right to freedom of assembly. As discussed below, Galatasaray Square is also space for representation of the right to freedom of assembly.

3.5.2. Galatasaray Square

Galatasaray Square is not a square conceived and designed as such but a junction used as a meeting point before being turned into a square following a progressive accumulation of both use and symbolic value. Located almost halfway between Taksim Square and Tünel Square, it is the relatively small area where İstiklal Avenue crosses Yeni Çarşı/Boğazkesen (a steep avenue connecting the seaside to the throbbing Taksim). The reason for stressing that the area is relatively small is because İstiklal Avenue is crossed by many side streets but this is the main crossroad along the whole avenue.
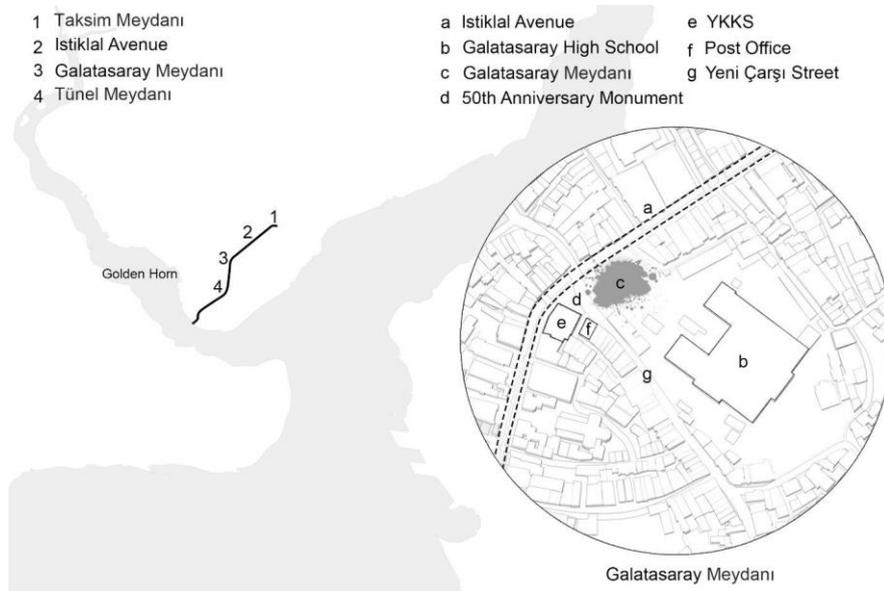
Figure 180 A map of İstiklal Avenue and Galatasaray Square. (Source: Köseoğlu, 2021, p. 162)

As it can be seen from the map, there are several landmarks in the area: the *Galatasaray Lisesi* (Galatasaray High School), the Monument for the 50th Anniversary of the Republic, the *Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat* (Yapı Kredi Culture and Art centre, YKSS), and the Post Office. All of them contribute to add use value to the area but they vary in use value. Compared to the other

landmarks, the Galatasaray High School stands out for both its historical value and traditional function as a meeting point.

The Galatasaray High School is one of the buildings contributing to give a European character to İstiklal Avenue (Independence Avenue), the former *Grand Rue de Pera* renamed as such after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic "with a gesture to seize the space" (Batuman, 2015, p. 4). As recalled in the collective memory project *Arafta Bir Beyoğlu* (Yiğit & Çetin, 2022), the Galatasaray High School is known as such since 1924 but the building is actually a palace whose function as educational facility dates back to the 15th century: it was first used as a training school for bureaucrats, then it was temporary used as a medical school and a military barrack before being turned into a symbol of westernisation in the late 19th century. In the everyday life, both residents of the area and visitors regularly meet in front of the building of the Galatasaray High School because its big scale makes it easy to meet someone in the middle of a highly crowded commercial throughfare such as İstiklal Avenue[151]. Below a picture of the monumental gate of the school.

Figure 181 Gate of the Galatasary High School. (Source: Yiğit & Çetin, 2022)

Unstructured interviews with regular users of the area revealed that meeting in front of the monumental gate of Galatasaray High School precedes the pedestrianisation of İstiklal Avenue In 1990[152]. The area is filled not only with foreign consulates and historic arcades but also commercial, cultural and entertainment facilities filling both historic arcades and more recent buildings, and that is why people used to regularly meet there even before İstiklal Avenue became the major pedestrian axis of the Beyoğlu district.

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[151] On average days, İstiklal Avenue is filled by 1.5 million people (Arslanlı, Dokmeci, & Kolcu, 2017). The flow of people can however vary. In recent years, variables affecting it include not only the early 2020s lockdown during the covid-19 pandemic but also a series of bomb attacks (e.g., in 2016 and 2022).

[152] The pedestrianisation of the 1.4 kilometres long axis connecting Taksim Square with Tünel Square was one of the urban renewal projects implemented by the city municipality following the neoliberal turn and resulting in the gentrification of the area (Islam, 2005).

On May 27, 1995, the area in front of the Galatasaray High School was used for the first time as meeting point by the *Cumartesi Anneleri* (Saturday Mothers), an organisation comparable to *The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina. Composed mainly but not only by women and mothers who were also internal migrants, the group started a sit-in to protest against the impunity of state violence and demand justice for relatives and friends disappeared under the custody of security forces in the 1990s, when Kurdish cities and organisations were subjected to large-scale military operations (Cruciati, 2018). Except for a long phase of repression in the 2000s, the group has met for years on the same day of the week, at the same hour, and at the same place. In other words, the sit-ins started in 1995 became a ritualised form of assembly. To explain why, I am going to recall all the space and time related details highlighted by Köseoğlu (2021).

First, the sit-ins consisted in a peaceful and silent occupation of space (e.g., the protesters held placards with photographs and names of the *desaparecidos* but no slogans were chanted). Second, silence as a form of protest in front of the Galatasaray High Schools gate was preferred over others for various reasons (e.g., rallies in Taksim Square would have made it difficult to keep a low profile and avoid repression; rallies in İstiklal Avenue would have interfered with the pedestrian flow of İstiklal Avenue). Third, the decision to meet regularly on Saturdays at 12 was however related to the peak in pedestrian flow.

Figure 182 Aerial view of the Saturday Mothers' sit-in in front of Galatasary High School. June 1995. (Source: Bianet, 2009b)

Figure 183 Saturday Mothers' sit-in. 1996. (Source: Bianet, 2009b)

In the second half of the 1990s, the sit-ins gained international visibility thanks to various transnational acts of solidarity that took place both abroad and in Galatasaray (Köseoğlu, 2021). It is therefore not surprising that, in 1999, the sit-ins were suspended after repeated attacks by the police and resumed only in 2009 (Bianet, 2022). Since then, the Saturday Mothers received the support of various actors including but not limited to politicians, journalists and artists. See the graffiti below for a heart-centred call to act in solidarity documented in the area in 2012.

Figure 184 Call to join the Saturday Mothers sit-in in Galatasary Square. İstanbul. 2012.

As defined by the author(s), the stencilled graffiti is an act of "*yaratıcı direniş*" (creative resistance). This is what the last line of the graphic composition reads. The rest of the text reads: "*Cumartesi Anneleri hesap soruyor; cumartesi saat 12'de Galatasaray Lisesi önünde*" (the Saturday Mothers call [the responsible] to account; on Saturday at 12:00 in front of Galatasaray High School). A detail worthy of attention is that the graffiti does not call people to meet in Galatasaray Square but in front of Galatasaray High School indeed. As explained by Köseoğlu (2021), the media that covered the Saturday Mothers' action also used to refer to the site of the sit-ins by using similar expressions but, at the turn of the 2000s, media covering not only their sit-ins but also other events started calling the Galatasaray corner as *meydan* suggesting that the it was their ritualised protests that turned into a contested public space for collective remembrance and thus into a square. In a similar manner, Günal & Çelikkan (2019) also argued that the square of the Galatasaray High School it owes its place in the social memory to the Saturday Mothers and that is why it is also called Saturday Square.

To further clarify the importance of the assemblies initiated by the Saturday Mothers in attaching symbolic space to the Galatasaray corner, it must be also stressed what has already been mentioned, namely that their sit-ins were not the first nor the only ritualised protest occurring in İstiklal Avenue. Examples of other protests are several and are not limited to the

aforementioned nationalist rallies of the 1950s. In the early 2010s, Galatasaray Square was used for non-silent protests also by various rights organizations, initiatives and political groups (e.g., press statements in support of refugees' rights). Moreover, the square was also crossed by rallies taking place along the whole İstiklal Avenue (e.g., the LGBT Pride March in June and the Feminist Night march on March, 8).

Based on ethnographic memories, I can however say that, in 2013, the area started being increasingly militarised following the increase in demonstration bans that preceded that outburst of the Gezi uprising in late May. Since before the uprising, Galatasaray Square is basically used as a police station (e.g., armoured water cannons started being regularly parked there and armed forces patrolled the corner). However, I can no longer remember the exact year since when the Republican Monument was also enclosed within police barricades (nor I could manage to retrieve this information on the Internet). Since 2018, the square is banned also to the Saturday Mothers and all the people demanding justice together with them (Bianet, 2022). The reason is best explained by recalling what the Saturday Mothers managed to do: giving visibility to an issue affecting the periphery of the country by reclaiming the city centre of its cultural and economic capital.

In sum, use value and symbolic value turned a junction of a major pedestrian axis into a square. In the case of Galatasaray, square is then a term referring to multifunctional space. Traditionally used as a meeting point, it became the meeting point of ritualised protests that turned it also into counterhegemonic space for collective remembrance and resistance. To a certain extent, this applies also to the case of the Emek movie theatre.

3.6. Urban commons: the Emek movie theatre vs. the Demirören shopping mall

The contradiction between the Emek Movie Theatre and the nearby Demirören shopping mall is the last of the series of issues on which graffiti with space-related content documented in İstanbul before Gezi draw attention[153]. In Figure 185 and Figure 186, a slogan and a map attesting that their interconnectedness is intrinsically related to their close distance on İstiklal Avenue.

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[153] For an extensive discussion of the shopping mall as hegemonic representation of space during the AKP era, see Batuman (2017).

Figure 185 Slogan vs. the demolition of the Emek movie theatre: "let the cinema open, let the shopping mall be demolished". İstanbul, 2013. (Source: İMECE - People's Urbanism Movement)

Figure 186 Location of the Emek movie theatre (left) and Demirören shopping mall (right). İstiklal Avenue. (Source: Megaİstanbul, n.d.)

To contextualise the slogan, it must be recalled that the Demirören large-scale building was supposed to be demolished and reconstructed according to the zoning regulations that its size violated (it was not compatible with the historical building next it) (Megaİstanbul, 2015). To get an idea of its scale, see Figure 187.

Figure 187 Aerial view of the Demirören shopping mall (Source: Megaİstanbul, 2015)

However, the Demirören was never demolished and is instead open since 2011. Conversely, the large architectural complex that, over time, contained various facilities including but not limited to the Emek movie theatre was destroyed in May 2013 despite three years of protests against its disassembling and conversion into the Grand Pera, another shopping mall [154].

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[154] The ceiling and walls decorations were moved to the top floors of Grand Pera, the shopping mall that is by now in the place of the old Emek despite criticism about the controversial restoration practice.

Figure 188 Building of the Emek movie theatre before destruction. (Source: MegaİStanbul, 2018)

Figure 189 Construction works inside the building of the Emek movie theatre. (Source: MegaİStanbul, 2018)

The Emek was the oldest and largest movie theatre of the Republican period but its cultural and historical value was not only related to this. As it emerges from a film documentary by the Emek Bizim İstanbul Bizim Iniative (2016), the reasons behind the protest for its conservation included nostalgic memories but were not limited to them (e.g., the Emek was the place where some used to go but it was also the place where the May Day celebration was held after the 1980 coup). Besides this, the film documentary reveals that, for some, the so-called struggle for the Emek was part of the local urban movements' struggle against the neoliberal enclosure of public space in the sense of space to be reclaimed because belonging to all. See the slogans below.

Figure 190 Slogan: "Emek is ours, İstanbul is ours!!!', İstiklal Avenue, Demirören façade. 2011 (Source: İMECE - People's Urbanism Movement)

Figure 191 Protests slogan: "Capital, get your hands off the Emek". 2011. (Source: İMECE - People's Urbanism Movement)

Given the twofold narrative – one centred on the individualisation of the heritage via personal nostalgic memories of the use of the place and the other centred instead on its significance in the collective memory – Genç (2022) argued that the Emek struggle contributed to the redefinition of the very notion of public. In other words, the aim of the protesters who drew upon the historical and cultural memory of the Emek was to reclaim the right to the city by opening up space for commoning practices, i.e., non-market-oriented practices of spatial

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collective care (e.g., see Fırat, 2022)[155]. However, as Fırat (2022) also recalled, the Emek struggle differed from others because it was not focused on a space of vital importance for the urban poor. Unlike struggles against the demolition of historical buildings in low-class neighbourhoods such as Tarlabaşı, the Emek struggle was rather aimed to arrest the neoliberal absorption of entertainment facilities used mostly by the urban cultural middle class. That said, its value in the struggle for the right to the city is not deniable for at least two reasons.

First, the Emek protests attempted to counteract the proliferation of shopping malls, whose access in Turkey is usually granted only upon previous security controls[156]. In Lefebvrian terms, the proliferation of shopping malls is an example of neoliberal absorption of leisure and consumptions practices commonly performed also in outdoor spaces for mixed access (street markets included)[157].

The second reason why the value of the Emek struggle in the struggle for the right to the city cannot be denied is also related to neoliberal absorption. The importance of the protests is in fact attested by the very fact that state actors ensured their repression to guarantee the smooth functioning of the market. For evidence of this, see the pictures below. The one on the left (Figure 193) attests to violence that absorption can imply; the one on the right (Figure 194) shows once again that, as far graffiti are concerned, absorption materialises as erasure of the right to visibility that traces of dissent are supposed to be granted in space that is supposed to be public.

On the armoured vehicle in Figure 192, there is a sticker with one of the slogans of the Emek protests: "this is only the beginning, the struggle goes on". For a better visualisation, see Figure 194.

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[155] As stressed in the Introduction, reclaiming the right to the city does not merely mean reclaiming the right to participate in decision-making about space but it means also reclaiming the collective right to appropriate it so as to challenge its exchange value as private property (Lefebvre, 2009 [1968]; Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014). In the Introduction, it was also stressed that space commoning does not refer to the production of a third type of property but to an emancipatory political project of re-territorialisation based on cooperative use of space (Stavrides, 2022 and 2015).

[156] Although I acknowledge that, in Turkey, the shopping mall is a representation of space rooted in the tradition of covered markets (Tokman, 2011), I do not endorse the argument that shopping malls represent space for democratization simply because Muslim women can freely stroll and shop (Erkip, 2003), and I do not endorse it even though I can empathise with the resentment towards Kemalist representations of public space as space where the visibility of the identity of Muslim women used to be unwelcome.

[157] As clarified in the Introduction, absorption is a notion suggested by Lefebvre (1991[1974]) to conceptualise the systemic tendency of the capitalist mode of production to assimilate, take back or violently eliminate whatever transgress.

Figure 192 Armoured water cannon used to disperse protests. April 2013. (Source: İMECE - People's Urbanism Movement)

Figure 193 Censorship. Erasure of graffiti of the Emek protests. İstiklal Avenue. March 2013.

Figure 194 Sticker with a slogan of the Emek protests: "this is only the beginning; the struggle goes on". April, 2013. (Source: IMECE - People's Urbanism Movement)

As clarified in the film documentary about the Emek struggle (Emek Bizim İstanbul Bizim Inisiyatifi, 2016), the slogan is the translation of a slogan of the Parisian 1968 ("*continuons le combat, ca c'est le debut*"). Besides this, it shall be also recalled that "this is not the end but only the beginning of the struggle" is actually a sentence of the speech given by Eleanor Marx – Karl's daughter – on the occasion of the celebration of the 1890 May Day rally in Hyde Park (London) (Socialist Worker, 2021). Like other slogans of the Emek protests, this also was massively used during the 2013 Gezi resistance and actually became *the* slogan of the Gezi resistance[158]. However, questioning to what extent the Emek protests and the Gezi resistance overlapped is a task that falls outside of this study. Here, my intention is to simply underline a

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[158] Another slogan of the Emek protests repertoire that were used in the Gezi resistance included "*Taksim bizim, İstanbul bizim*" ("Taksim is ours, İstanbul is ours"). Variations shall also be recalled. For instance, "*Gezi bizim, İstanbul bizim*" ("Gezi is ours, İstanbul is ours").

continuity in the language that the streets of Taksim resounded to claim that the Gezi resistance did not come out of the blue but from accumulated dissent against the decades-long processes examined in this chapter, namely neoliberal urbanisation and the subsequent reduction of İstanbul to a showcase of renewed power relations.

3.7. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have examined the social production of space in İstanbul by focusing on the dialectics between hegemonic and counterhegemonic representations of space. The findings show that in the early 2010s, the image of İstanbul portrayed on the walls of the Taksim area was that of a highly contested city. Graffiti documented in Taksim and its surroundings before Gezi provide in fact evidence of the centrality of urban space in the power struggle over political authority.

In the first section, I have provided a summary of the decades-long tourism-oriented redevelopment of İstanbul into a global city for a twofold purpose: to show that neoliberal urbanisation is a contextually embedded process (Peck, Theodore and Brenner, 2009), and to ultimately show that the interaction of global and local dynamics can give rise to geographies of resistance (Sassen, 2008[2006]). For instance, the walls of the Taksim area in the early 2010s still carried the traces of the resistance that local activists had organised before Gezi to context the uneven development that global capitalism implies: the logo of the political festival Dirİstanbul (2009). As represented in the logo, Istanbul was a city urged to resist and capable of resisting.

In the second section, I have first highlighted controversial aspects of the initiative İstanbul 2010 - European Capital of Culture (e.g., the demolition of historical buildings in neighbourhoods inhabited by very low-income internal migrants). Then, I have deciphered the content of a graffiti subverting the initiative logo and representing İstanbul as a bordered zone linking Europe to its East. As I have interpreted it, the subverted logo was a call to approach urban and migration issues as intersectional fields of struggle. Moreover, I have argued that the subverted logo invited the viewer to be wary of the possible development of the relations between the European Union and Turkey with regard to migration policies long before the 2016 refugee deal.

In the third section, I have examined a wall painting that did not call to action against the transformation of İstanbul into a Neo-Ottoman city nor contested it but simply depicted it as a successful process centred on urban renewal and the monumentalization of the very renewal. My aim was to show that the re-making of İstanbul into a global city did not take place outside

the national nor it implied a decrease in nationalist feelings but rather renewal in the interpretation of national heritage. In other words, what I wanted to highlight is that neoliberal urbanisation must be understood in the light of multiscalar patterns of urbanisation (i.e., global, national, and local).

In the fourth section, I have tackled the issue of the renewal of historical heritage by examining the case of Tarlabaşı, a neighbourhood adjacent to Taksim Square and historically inhabited by ethnic minorities. From upper-middle class neighbourhood, Tarlabaşı turned into a shelter for both internal and external migrants who searched for job opportunities in the nearby area but were unable to face the costs of housing maintenance. Against this backdrop, the implementation of the state-led gentrification aimed not only to expel the urban poor from the city-centre but also to change the collective memory of the place via erasure of its representation as the shelter of the urban poor.

In the fifth section, I have focused on the cases of Taksim Square and Galatasaray Square to show that the symbolic meanings of the city centre are not only those superimposed by top-down interventions but also those resulting from grassroots placemaking. First, I have retraced the development of Taksim into a square functioning as space of representation of both power and counterpower to explain that the symbolism of the area as place for the celebration of the International Workers Day precedes its symbolism as place for the celebration of Republican values. Then, I have retraced the development of Galatasaray into a square and space of representation of the right to freedom of assembly as result of ritualised assemblies.

In the sixth and last section, I have focused on the contradiction between the use value and exchange value of space by examining the contradiction between the Emek movie theatre and the nearby Demirören shopping mall. The Emek case shows that multiple narratives can overlap in the struggle against the commodification of both historical heritage and collective memory. The struggle against the enclosure of the symbolic meanings of the Emek movie theatre within the space represented by a shopping mall showed in fact that nostalgic memories and future-oriented memories can both contribute to turn public space into the object of political struggle for the urban commons.

In sum, in this chapter, I have shown the historiographical potential of graffiti drawing attention on space politics in Istanbul in the early 2010s. Approached as historical sources, selected graffiti suggest in fact that the counterhegemonic resistance that reached an unpredictable peak in scale and intensity with the Gezi uprising did not come out of the blue but rather developed from accumulated dissent towards decades-long processes. In the next chapter, I retrace the development of a struggle against the top-down transformation of Taksim into the longest and most widespread uprising occurred in Turkey to date.

A VISUAL CHRONICLE OF THE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATION OF TAKSIM, 2013

This chapter is a photo-essay of the dissonant echoes of the streets of Taksim during the 2013 Gezi event/s, i.e., the Gezi resistance and its repression. The visuals include some maps and a few posters but mostly consist of photographs, and most of them depict graffiti[159]. The first section of the chapter chronicles the development of an uprising out of a struggle for the right to the city. Then, the second section visualises how the resistance turned Taksim into a global street, i.e., space for the exercise of the right to the city. After that, the third section emphasises the heterogeneity of the ordinary people who appropriated space with the purpose of reclaiming the right to decision-making both about space and personal freedoms. Finally, the fourth section examines the dialectic between absorption of differential space and attempts of resistance to its absorption while the fifth section examines graffiti mediating it.

4.1. The Gezi resistance

In late May 2013, the brutal crackdown on a protest camp against a controversial urban renewal project sparked an anti-government uprising. In early June, the uprising led to the temporary appropriation of the urban areas where it rapidly spread. To refer to this assemblage of spatial practices, I use the term Gezi resistance (*direniş* in Turkish). To reconstruct them, this section consists of an illustrated and annotated timeline[160]. Divided into three parts, the timeline first recalls the antecedents; then, it focuses on the protest camp; lastly, it reconstructs the outburst of the uprising sparked by the eviction of the protest camp.

4.1.1. Antecedents

June 2011 – The then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan announced the Taksim project during the general elections campaign. In a nutshell, the controversial project involved: (1) the reorganization of vehicular traffic via an underground tunnel system; (2) the pedestrianization

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[159] Unless specified, the photographs were taken by the author.

[160] For the most part, the timeline is based on ethnographic memories and the timeline edited by Mat (2013), which is part of a collaborative publishing project that I also joined.

of the square; (3) the construction of a replica of the nineteenth-century Ottoman military artillery barracks in Gezi Park to make room for yet another shopping mall[161]. See the figures below.

Figure 195 Traffic underground system.
(Source: Erkut & Shiraz, 2014, p. 123)

Figure 196 Square pedestrianization
(Source: Megaİstanbul, 2020)

Figure 197 Barracks. (Source: Source: Erkut & Shiraz, 2014, p. 125)

The project sparked controversies because of the symbolic value of Taksim. Since the destruction of the military barracks and the opening of Gezi Park in the early Republican period, Taksim is a symbolic battlefield for conflicting ideals of modernity (Akpınar & Gümüş, 2012). As officially defined by the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in 1999,

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[161] For technical details about the Taksim Project, see İstanbul'un Mega Projeleri (n.d.), Retrieved January 15, 2023, from http://megaprojeleriİstanbul.com/. For information about the history of Taksim and also about the Taksim project, see also Akçan (2015), Akpınar (2014); Bilsel (2017); Erkut, G., & Shiraz, M. (2014); Batuman (2015); Bozdoğan & Akçan (2012); Gül (2009); Gül, Dee and Cünük (2014); and Akpınar & Gümüş (2012). For a study entirely focused on the military barracks, see instead Kırbaş (2014).

Gezi Park is not only one of the most important green areas of the city but cultural heritage to be preserved for its symbolic value as monument of the Taksim Republican area (Altan & Omay Polat, 2018). As discussed later on in this section, the same is valid also for the *Atatürk Kültür Merkezi* (Atatürk Cultural Centre, AKM). For this reason, the restoration of the AKM was also considered part of the Taksim renewal project. See the map below.
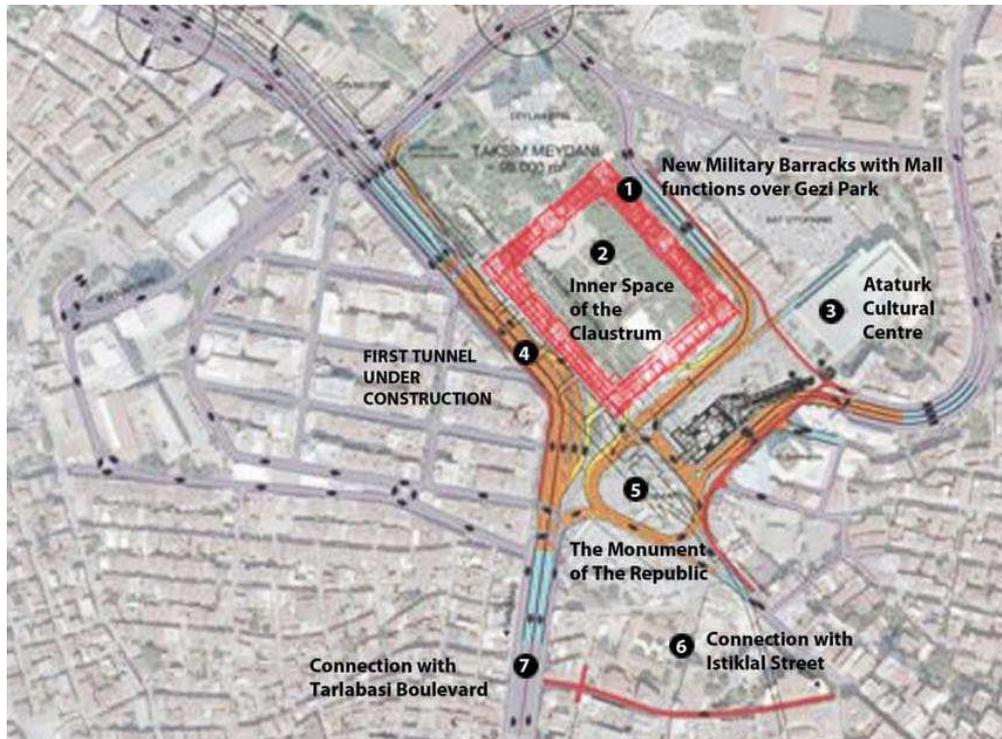
Figure 198 Taksim project. (Source: (Erkut & Shiraz, 2014, p. 122)

February 2012 – A call to an assembly was launched by the Union of Chambers of *Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği* (Turkish Engineers and Architects, TMMOB). The assembly formalised the establishment of the platform *Taksim Dayanışma* (Taksim Solidarity). The collective actor was formed with the coming together of autonomous and independent organisations that were mobilised against neoliberal urbanisation even before getting organised as platform to react to the municipality's approval of the Taksim Project[162]. The reasons why the Taksim Solidarity contested it were multiple: (1) partial destruction and enclosure of a public park within a private structure; (2) lack of participation in the decision-making process as result of the top-down attitude of the Prime Minister to bypass legal processes so as to transform Taksim into space for representation of his party's power. As

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[162] Among the initial components, there were: trade unions (e.g., DİSK and KESK), *İstanbul Tabip Odası* (İstanbul Medical Chamber), parties (e.g., TKP, ÖDP, BDP), and community centres known as *Halkevleri* (People's Houses) (Sol, 2012). For a full list of the organisations composing the platform, see Taksim Dayanışması (2013). For a more detailed information about the background of the Taksim Solidarity, see also Salomoni (2013).

clearly stated in a joint declaration, the Taksim Solidarity (2013b) reclaimed Taksim because of its overlapping symbolic meanings as space of representation of both Republican values and revolutionary ideals of the labour movement[163].

Since February 2012 – The Taksim Solidarity organised a series of initiatives (e.g., a petition and a stand for collecting the signatures in the square).

November 2012 – The works for the new Taksim Square project started.

April 7, 2013 – The police intervened against protesters gathered on İstiklal Avenue to demand the demolition of the historic movie-theatre Emek to be stopped.

Figure 199 Police intervention vs. the Emek protests. 2013, April 7. (Source: İMECE - Toplumun Şehircilik Hareketi)

April 13 – Gezi Park hosted a music festival organised to protest the planned re-development of the area. The festival was organised by the *Taksim Gezi Parkı Koruma ve Güzelleştirme Derneği* (Taksim Gezi Park Conservation and Beautification Association). On the occasion, few hundred people gathered together under the slogan "*ayağa kalk*" (stand up). Among them, there were also artists and representatives of oppositional political parties[164]. No violent intervention of the police occurred. In Figure 200, the poster.

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[163] See an excerpt from a joint declaration by the Taksim Dayanışma (2013b): "*Taksim Meydanı, Cumhuriyet dönemi kent düzenlemelerinin ilki ve belki de en önemlisidir. Taksim, tüm bayramlarımızı, şenliklerimizi, sevinçlerimizi, tepkilerimizi ve hak taleplerimizi dillendirdiğimiz emek ve demokrasi meydanımızdır. Taksim Meydanına hep birlikte sahip çıkıyoruz. Çünkü Taksim hepimizin!*". Translation: "Taksim Square is the first and perhaps the most important of the Republican period urban arrangements. Taksim is our labour and democracy square where we express all our holidays, festivities, joys, reactions and demands for rights. Together, we protect Taksim Square. Because Taksim is ours!" (Taksım Dayanışması, 2013b)

[164] For instance, the CHP and the BDP.

Figure 200 Poster of the first Gezi Park festival. (Source: *Taksim Gezi Parkı Derneği*, 2013)

May 1 – The police heavily intervened against protesters who gathered for the May Day celebrations not in Taksim but in the Beşiktaş district given a ban preventing them from marching on Taksim Square allegedly due to the ongoing construction work for its pedestrianization. To hinder the protesters and prevent the rally, the whole area going from Taksim to Beşiktaş was highly militarised (e.g., via checkpoints, long fences, cuts in transportation routes).

May 25 – The police intervened against a group protesting against the decision to ban demonstrations from the Taksim area and prevented them from marching from İstiklal Avenue to Taksim Square.

In hindsight, some of the antecedents can be interpreted as warning signs of the forthcoming escalation in repression of the right to freedom of expression of dissent and freedom of assembly in public space. However, it is a widely held opinion that no one could have foreseen the outburst of a countrywide uprising out of the eviction of a protest camp aimed to reclaim the park.

4.1.2. Reclaiming the park

Figure 201 Aerial view of Gezi Park in 2013. (Source: CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, 2022)

May, 27 – Late in the evening, the works for the construction of the replica of the Ottoman military barracks in Gezi Park started: a bulldozer demolished part of the wall at its northern end and started uprooting trees. A small group of protesters gathered in the park, began a sit-in, and spent the night there. Among them, there were representatives from the Taksim Solidarity Platform, urban movements, and environmental activists.

May 28 – Police forces escorted the bulldozer in the park and intervened to disperse the protest camp that activists had organised at the north end of Gezi Park. The activists did not leave and managed to halt the works also with the help of the intervention of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, deputy of the *Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi* (Peace and Democracy Party, BDP). After that, a growing number of protestors started flocking to the park (MPs, representatives of civil society organisations, famous artists, and ordinary people).

May 29 – The then Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that, regardless of what those in Gezi Park were doing, the Taksim Project will have been implemented. In the evening, the park was much more crowded than during the day. See Figure 202 and Figure 203.

Figure 202 Protest camp in the northern end of Gezi Park. 2013, May 29.

Figure 203 Crowd filling Gezi Park on the evening of May 29.

Clearly, the placard in the picture on the left attests to the immediate emergence of self-irony in reaction to the statements by Erdoğan. As it is well-known, he often referred to the Taksim project opponents who first reclaimed the park as marginals, a definition that actually precedes the onset of the Gezi protest camp[165]. Whether the implicit demands of some of the activists involved in the protests camp included or not Erdoğan's removal from power is a question that falls outside the scope of this timeline. Here, I limit myself to stress that none of the graffiti that I could document in late May contains anything against Erdoğan nor the government. On the contrary, graffiti of the late May protest camp suggest that, for some, the Gezi resistance was a struggle for the urban commons. In other words, they suggest that their authors reclaimed the park because of its use value as such, which strongly contradicted the exchange value of space to be converted into a shopping mall. See for instance the example in the next photograph.

Figure 204 (In red) "We want trees, not a shopping mall". (In brown) "Get used to it, we are not leaving". Gezi Park, 2013, May 29.

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[165] For instance, see Saymadi (2013).

For further evidence of the correlation between the initial protest camp and the environmental justice struggle against speculative urbanism, see also the graffiti below.

Figure 205 Environmental justice slogan: "Long live our ecologist revolution". Gezi Park, 2013, May 29

Figure 206 Slogan: "not concrete, park". Gezi Park, 2013, May 29

Figure 207 Slogan signed with a circle A: "Ecologist revolt", Gezi Park, 2013, May 29.

Obviously, not all the protesters made use of graffiti. For this reason, I claim that the relatively little number of graffiti that I could document in late May are not sufficient sources for a comprehensive reconstruction of the initial phase of the Gezi resistance and its social composition, which must therefore rely on other sources[166]. However, the graffiti of late May provide invaluable evidence of both the use of space and initial demands by some of those who first defended the park by physically occupying it[167].

May 30 – Very early in the morning, the police intervened to disperse the protest camp. Footage of the police setting fire to the activists' tents and belongings started circulating mainly via social media. As a result, thousands of people showed up in the evening, when the atmosphere resembled that of a festival. Activities contributing to create it included but were not limited to speeches and film screenings.

May 31 (daytime) – The police intervened once again at dawn and took control of the park by forcing those who had remained overnight to leave. Police interventions continued in both Taksim Square and the surrounding streets, where protesters continued instead to gather. Meanwhile, the Sixth Administrative Court of İstanbul issued a sentence in favour of the interruption of the construction works of the barracks. Instead of ordering the withdrawal of the police, Erdoğan reacted to sentence by mentioning the possibility of using the barracks as a museum rather than transforming it into a shopping mall. Throughout the day, an increasing number of people started gathering in Taksim following calls to action by various actors (e.g., the *Çarşı*, the supporter group of the football team Beşiktaş). As a result, the protests developed into an uprising by late evening.

4.1.3. Reclaiming Taksim

May 31, 2013 (evening) – The protests reached a massive scale in Taksim while they started spreading to Ankara, Izmir, and several other cities. To listen to the echo of that night in Taksim, I suggest to look at two pictures: one taken on that evening and showing the crowd

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[166] For a taxonomy of the social actors of the Gezi resistance, see for instance Salomoni (2013).

[167] The term occupation (*işgal* in Turkish) can evoke dreadful meanings (e.g., the land occupation my military forces). Aware of this, I consider it important to preliminary clarify that, by occupation, I refer to the act of reclaiming a public park to free it from the state actors tasked with destroying it to open up room for a shopping mall. In other words, I refer to a collective act aimed at reclaiming space with the purpose of giving it back to the wide community of people to whom it belongs (Emek Bizim İstanbul Bizim Initiative, 2016).

that literally filled İstiklal Avenue; the other depicting one of the slogans chanted by the crowd filling it: *"hükümet istifa"* (government resignment)[168].

Figure 208 Massive crowd of protesters in İstiklal Avenue. 2013, May 31.

Figure 209 Slogan to call the government to resign. Resonating in İstiklal Avenue since May 31 but picture taken in İstiklal Avenue in early June.

On the same evening, the part of İstiklal Avenue that flows into Taksim Square became the site of heavy clashes, which continued also in the surroundings of Taksim Square (e.g., on Tarlabaşı Boulevard). For evidence, see a writing complete with date and time.
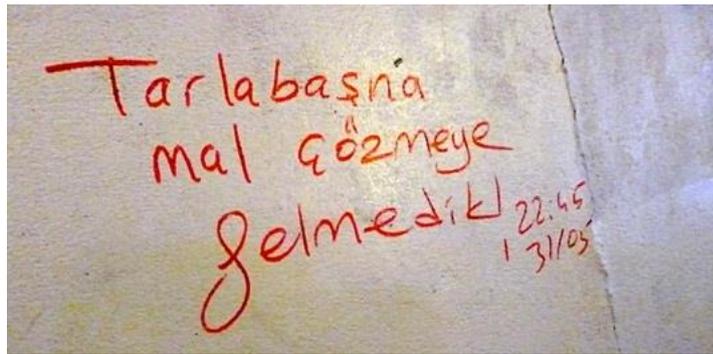
Figure 210 A writing complete with date and time: "we did not come to Tarlabaşı to get the stuff!". Zambak Street, sidestreet between İstiklal Avenue and Tarlabaşı Boulevard, very close to Taksim Square. 2013, May 31.

The writing reads: "we did not come to Tarlabaşı to get the stuff" (i.e., drugs)[169]. Half-jokingly, it attests not only to the inflow of people to Taksim from other areas of the city but also to the spatial and psychogeographic relationship of proximity binding Taksim and Tarlabaşı[170].

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[168] While the first picture was taken on the evening of May 31, the second one was taken in the following days but, based on ethnographic participant observation, I can say that the crowd started chanting the slogan calling the government to resign on the evening of May 31.

[169] *"Mal çözmek"* is an idiom but I was not able to find the exact meaning via online dictionaries and I therefore translated it as "to get stuff" assuming that the author referred to the drug dealing activities for which Tarlabaşı was mostly renown.

[170] For questions such as why and when people decided to flock to Taksim, see the third section of this chapter.

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June 1 – Clashes across the country intensified as the protests further spread and escalated while the development of the events in İstanbul reached turning points. Thousands of protesters from the Asian side reached the central areas of the European side crossing on foot the Bosphorus Bridge (normally closed to pedestrians). In the Taksim area, thousands of people were continuously tear gassed until mid-afternoon, when the police retreated. The police's withdrawal from the Taksim area was preceded by a sign visible to the protesters gathered in the side-streets of the square: black smoke coming from the barricades at the southern entrance of the park. The crowd re-occupied the park and, as a result, June 1 turned into time for representation of victory. See the pictures below.

Figure 211 Black smoke from Gezi Park preceding the police's retreat from Taksim. June, 1.

Figure 212 Writing in green: "June 1 - our victory". Taksim Avenue. Night between June 1 and 2, 2013.

June 1 […continues] – Police interventions and clashes in areas of İstanbul other than Taksim did not stop (e.g., in Beşiktaş). The same occurred also in Ankara, where Ethem Sarısülük was shot in the head with live ammunition in Kızılay Square and died two weeks later (on June 14, on the day that 14-year-old Berken Elvan was hit on the head by a tear gas canister). In Figure 213, a graffiti calling the AKP to account for his murder[171].

Figure 213 Graffiti consisting of a statement and a slogan: "Ethem Sarısülük was killed by the AKP in Ankara - it will be called to account". Taksim. Early June.

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[171] I apologise for the poor quality of my photograph.

June 1 […continues] – The local CNN aired a documentary on penguins rather than giving visibility to the uprising. Since then, penguins became a symbol of resistance against censorship. Below two selective examples of graffiti showing how ordinary people reacted to censorship: Figure 214 attests to the self-ironic self-identification with penguins while Figure 215 attests to the rageful reaction against non-independent media's embedded journalism[172].

Figure 214 Witty reaction to censorship: "Antartica is resisting". July 2013.

Figure 215 Reaction to censorship. Taksim. Early June 2013.

June 2 – While Gezi Park started becoming an experiment in self-management and the atmosphere resembled once again that of a festival, clashes continued both in Beşiktaş and other cities. For instance, in Eskişehir, police officers and a group of civilians brutally beat Ali İsmail Korkmaz (who died on July 10 after weeks in coma). This explains the call for solidarity expressed with the graffiti below, which is completed with date and time.

Figure 216 Call for solidarity with other cities in Turkey: "Gezi, don't sleep!!! Izmir, Ankara [and] Adana are resisting – June 2 – 18:00". Gezi Park.

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[172] The notion of "embedded journalism" is commonly used to refer to the practice of attaching journalists, reporters and photographers under the control of one military side during armed conflict in war zones (Löffelholz, 2014).

June 2 […continues] – The then Prime Minister Erdoğan participated in a TV program and made a series of statements. He defined social media "*baş belası"* (the scourge of society)[173]. In addition to this, he called the protesters "*çapulcular*" (looters), a neologism anglicized as "chapullers" due to the international resonance of the self-ironic appropriation of the term by the Gezi protestors[174]. Figure 218 is a selective example of the many graffiti attesting to the self-ironic appropriation of the term "*çapulcu*" but, to listen to the dissonant echoes of those days, I suggest to read it together with the graffiti in Figure 217, which instead attests to the rage against police brutality and attests also to the continuity of language between the early 2010s and the 1970s[175].

Figure 217 Slogans vs. police and state violence: "murderer police" and "murderer state". Side wall of the French Institute. Taksim Avenue. Early June.

Figure 218 self-ironic appropriation: "Chapullers are resisting". Taksim. Early June.

June 2 […continues] – Via mainstream media, Erdoğan also announced two projects: (1) the construction of the Taksim Square Mosque; (2) the demolition of the Atatürk Cultural Centre and the construction of a new opera house on its site[176]. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, Erdoğan had actually announced the construction of the Taksim Square Mosque right after his victory of the 1994 local elections. With regard to the debate that controversial project sparked, two remarks. First, the debate about the project is highly significant of the debate about the

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[173] With regard to communication and organisation through social media as common practices of global protests, different claims were made. For instance, Sassen (2006) argued that new forms of communicative interaction involving global connectedness (1) redefine public space and (2) destabilize the nation–state's order proper of the modernity, which is why she argued also that their popularity indicate a countertrend to the debated decrease of participation in public life (Sassen, 2006). In a similar manner, Castells (2007 and 2008) praised the "from-many-to-many" structure of social media for enabling the formation and articulation of the opinion of the global civil society debating affairs of common interests in the cyberspace. On the other hand, Dhawan (2015) warned about the romanticisation of the effectiveness of protests that are allegedly as horizontal as the structure of social media is supposed to be, and she therefore suggested to look at the reproduction of uneven relations of power that affects also popular uprisings.

[174] For instance, see Agence France-Presse (2013).

[175] Among the graffiti that I documented, many were the ones denouncing police brutality and state violence. As already shown by Figure 116 and 117 in Chapter 2, slogans vs. hegemonic power including the term *katil* (murderer) are not a novelty of Gezi and rather date back to the 1970s. For the effects of globalisation on the linguistic repertoire of the protests, see instead Figure 259, which attests to the use of the acronym "a.c.a.b." (all cops are bastards) as a slogan.

[176] For the full version of the video, see Habertürk. (2015 [2013]).

interpretation of Turkishness in a society strongly polarised along the divide between secularists and Islamists (Bozdoğan & Akçan, 2012)[177]. Second, the debate concerned not only the symbolic value of the square but also physical aspects including the changing function of the square following the construction of the mosque (started in 2017 and completed in 2021). For instance, it was claimed that protesting in Taksim Square turned into a mosque courtyard would not have been as protesting in a public square (Acar, 2017). For evidence of the relevance of both the dimensions of the debate, see the image below, which attests to the conversion of Taksim Square into the courtyard of the mosque after the opening in 2021 and attests also to the contradictory spatial symbolism of both the mosque and the Republican monument.

Figure 219 Taksim Square turned into the courtyard of a mosque. 2021, May 28 (opening of the mosque) (Source: Daily Sabah, 2021)

In this regard, I consider it important to point out that none of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance that I have documented contains anything related to the Taksim Square Mosque project[178]. Different was instead the protesters' reaction to Erdoğan's announcement that the AKM would have been demolished and a new opera house building would have been constructed in its place without getting permission from the looters in Taksim. The protesters climbed up the roof of the AKM and hang the first of many banners that were to be hung on the AKM façade shortly thereafter: "*Boyun Eğme*" (don't give up). See Figure 220.

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[177] For *"A brief history of the insistence on a mosque in Taksim Square"*, see also Bianet News Desk (2021).

[178] Actually, none of the graffiti that I have documented since 2010 to this day contains anything against mosques in general, something that I interpret as respect of the right to the freedom of religious expression in public space without this meaning that the project did not raise dissent among Erdoğan's opponents.

Figure 220 First banner on the AKM façade. 2013, June 2.

Like Gezi Park, and actually together with Gezi Park, the Atatürk Cultural Centre was also officially defined by the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board as cultural heritage to be preserved since both are monuments that are inseparable from each other as elements and symbol of the Taksim Republican area (Altan & Omay Polat, 2018)[179]. The controversial plan for the restoration of the AKM had been object of debate for years. Salient events of a multistage process can be summarised as follows: (1) the Culture and Tourism Minister's first announcement of its demolition and replacement with a convention centre, hotel and a car park in 2005; (2) grassroots reaction since 2007 and subsequent removal of the demolition provision from the "İstanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Law" (of which it used to be part); (3) closure to visitors in 2008; (4) block of projects from 2008 – 2012 due to a series of lawsuits; (5) beginning of the restoration works in 2012 (Altan & Omay Polat, 2018; Megaİstanbul, 2019; Köseoğlu, 2021; Akm İstanbul, 2021)[180].

[179] Following Prost's proposal for the construction of an opera house in Taksim Square, the AKM was designed by August Perret as an opera house, updated by Feridun Kip and Rükneddin Güney, and inaugurated in October 1977 following more than thirty years after that its foundations were laid in 1946 (Altan & Omay Polat, 2018). Besides contributing to the promotion of "the Republican corporeality", the monumental structure "was to provide context for the sociospatial practices of the new lifestyle with its grand hall, spacious entrance foyer, concert hall, theatre, and a small cinema" (Köseoğlu, 2021, p. 46).

[180] For the timeline provided on the official website, see AKM İstanbul (2021). As mentioned in the fourth section of this chapter, after the crackdown on the Gezi uprising, the AKM was first used as police station and then was basically left to rot. In 2017, Erdoğan announced the rebuilding and this caused another wave of reaction (e.g., by TMMOB). In 2018, the demolition works started and, in 2021, the new AKM was inaugurated with monumental ceremony on October 29 (Megaİstanbul, 2019). Since October 29 is the Republic Day, it is important to stress Erdoğan's move to re-signify symbolic time for representation of power. See the last section of this chapter for a more detailed discussion of time of representation.

June 2 […continues] – First unsuccessful attempts at erasing or covering up the many graffiti that were filling the streets by then. In the following days, graffiti reached a historic peak in spread.

Figure 221 First attempts at censorship via greyfication. İstiklal Avenue. June 2.

Figure 222 First attempts at censorship via greyfication. Meşrutiyet Avenue. June 2.

June 5 – The Taksim Solidarity platform communicated its demands to the then Deputy Minister Bülent Arınç. The demands included: (1) the conservation of Gezi Park and the cancellation of the redevelopment project of the Taksim area; (2) the end of the brutal repression; (3) the dismissal of the authorities responsible for it and of the ones who implemented it; (4) the release of the detainees and the safeguard of their impunity; (5) the lifting of all the bans that were limiting the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly in public space[181]. Below the infographic.

Figure 223 Taksim Solidarity demands. (Environmental Justice Atlas, 2022)

June 6 – An open forum was organised in Gezi Park. Many occupiers joined it and intervened[182].

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[181] For the full press statement, see *Taksim Dayanışması* (2013c).

[182] With regard to forums, I consider important to recall these decision-making structures were not a novelty of Gezi. As emerged in Chapter 2, in Turkey, they date back at least to the 1968 student movement.

June 8 – It was one of the busiest days in the square. Suspending the traditional rivalry, fans of İstanbul's three major football clubs of Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray gathered in Taksim. As known, football fans played a major role in the resistance against the police interventions, especially the *Çarşı* (the fun club of Beşiktaş). Below selected examples of the several graffiti attesting to their presence and use of walls.

Figure 224 Collective signature by football fans. İstiklal Avenue. Early June.

Figure 225 Collective signature by Çarşı (the fanclub of the Beşiktaş football team). Galatasary area,Taksim. Early June.

June 9 – The Taksim Solidarity platform organized a meeting where it declared its demands and commemorated the protestors who had been murdered during the uprising. It is claimed that hundreds of thousands participated in the meeting and that it was the "the largest crowd the square has ever seen" (CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, 2022). See the photograph below, which shows the crowd and also the façade of the AKM full with banners of various political organisations. Clearly, the square recalled May Day 1977 and, most likely, many of the participants must have also thought of the possibility that counterinsurgent events like the 1977 massacre could have also occurred.

Figure 226 The most crowded meeting in Taksim Square. June 9.

June 10 – The then President of the Republic Abdullah Gül approved the law restricting alcohol sale and consumption that had been announced a few weeks earlier. The new regulations prohibited sales between 10pm and 6am, and banned the opening of bars within 100m of schools and mosques. For an example of the several graffiti attesting to the reaction of ordinary people to this kind of interventions affecting everyday lifestyles, see the writing in red in Figure 227[183].

Figure 227 Dissent vs. alcohol sale restrictions. Taksim. Early June.

In sum, the Gezi resistance began before various actors including but not limited to environmental activists blocked the work for the conversion of a public park with high symbolic and use value into a shopping mall with high symbolic and exchange value. In early June, the resistance spread across the country marking the widest and long-lasting uprising in the history of social movements in Turkey. In addition to this, the resistance turned Gezi Park, Taksim Square and the surrounding area into a temporary self-managed zone, which some of those who contributed to its self-organisation called a commune. For evidence of this, see Figure 228.

Figure 228 "Taksim commune". Early June.

In this study, I suggest to call it global street. In the next section, I explain why the notion can help to decipher the complexity of its spatial features, and thus to evaluate the historiographical potential of graffiti in contributing to reconstruct change in space and society from below.

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[183] In this regard, see also the next section for the political use of graffiti to promote conscientious use of alcohol in the common space.

4.2. Gezi/Taksim, a global street

The global street is not a street in the literal sense of the term. As clarified in the Introduction, it is a conceptual tool to differentiate public space for ritualised practices from space for direct and transnational action in the struggle to the right to the city (Sassen, 2011). As also clarified earlier, the right to the city is here understood in the twofold meaning suggested first by Lefebvre (2009 [1968]): the right to participate in decision-making about space, and the right to appropriate it if needed. In light of these preliminary remarks and with the help of visuals, this section deciphers what kind of space was the global street in the case of Gezi/Taksim, i.e., Gezi Park, Taksim Square, and the surrounding area[184]. Accordingly, I first explain why it was not merely public space but re-territorialised public space.

4.2.1. Re-territorialised public space

Since late May and throughout early June, Gezi Park first and then the whole Taksim turned into a global street as result of an assemblage of spatial practices: re-territorialisation of public space with high symbolic value via appropriation and resistance to repression. Read together, the graffiti in Figure 229 and Figure 230 help to visualise the empirics of the specific case.

Figure 229 Global Street in Taksim: occupied public space. Taksim Square.

Figure 230 Global Street in Taksim: resistance. İnönü Avenue.

As for the practices of appropriation of public space, it must be recalled that the protest camp started in the park late May 2013 was a relatively novel form of protest in the context of Turkey (e.g., see the case of the 2009 Tekel resistance in Ankara)[185]. However, novelties must also be stressed. For instance, the young age of many of the participants who contributed to keep

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[184] All the photographs included in this section were taken in Gezi/Taksim in early June 2013.

[185] Tekel is a privatized former state factory of tobacco. For information about the Tekel resistance, see Kuryel & Fırat (2013).

Gezi Park alive and lively[186]. Below a photograph that visualises a few of them and also the atmosphere of a quiet moment.

Figure 231 Protest camp in Gezi Park. Writing on the tent: "those who are tired should sleep".

The tents were mainly located in the park but the extraordinary use of space was not limited to the park. For evidence of this, see first Figure 232, which depicts the Republican Monument filled with political banners and flags.

Figure 232 Republican Monument filled with flags and banners.

For further evidence of the extraordinary use of public space, see also Figure 233, which depicts people sleeping on the area around the Republican Monument, normally prohibited.

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[186] According to the field survey conducted by KONDA (2014), the average age of the people who were in Gezi Park was 28.

Figure 233 People sleeping in the Republican Monument area.

Given the observations made so far, I consider it important to stress that this study does not aim to evaluate whether experiences in self-management resulting from large-scale occupation of public space such as in the case of Taksim are effective or not to reclaim the right to the city and thus to achieve radical change for the better. In this regard, I rather limit myself to recall the warning by Bookchin (1995), who advised not to exchange projects for radical change in society with temporary experiments "in which disorganization is conceived as an art form and graffiti supplants programs". That said, the remarkable function of graffiti in visually marking re-territorialised space cannot be overlooked and must be rather explained.

The reason behind the undeniable significance of graffiti in marking re-territorialised space are multiple. First, a large quantity of graffiti was not only a distinctive feature of the global street in Taksim but in all the rest of the global street into which the uprising in Turkey turned space (e.g., the neighbouring district of Beşiktaş, all the urban areas where the uprising rapidly spread). In addition to this, increase in graffiti is not a prerogative of the local context but indeed a distinctive feature of the global street[187]. Lastly, graffiti do not merely increase; their afterlife via for instance social media rather contributes to increase the global visibility of the global street[188].

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[187] For instance, for graffiti of the Tunisian uprising, see Lacquaniti (2015). For graffiti of the attempted revolution in Egypt, see instead Gröndahl (2013). As for graffiti of the attempted revolution in Syria, see the invaluable archive Idlib Walls – Creative Memory (2023).

[188] In this regard, emblematic is the case of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US in 2020 because re-semanticisation of space also via graffiti led to the tearing down of statues of colonizers.

In sum, I do not claim that the global street is something good nor bad; I simply claim that graffiti are by now part of its aesthetics as media for political activism and territorial markers. Precisely because of this, I also argue their historiographical potential in contributing to the deciphering of the spatial characteristics of the global street. In this case-study, graffiti clearly suggest that the re-territorialisation of public space in Taksim into a global street was a multiscalar process.

4.2.2. A node of a multiscalar network

The global street is space that must be understood from a systemic perspective. It is not a single entity nor it exists outside the realm of the national. It is rather an assemblage of places turned into strategic nodes of networks of counterpower connected to each other on multiple scales. One of them is indeed the global one, which is a synonymous for transnational. To clarify how the space reclaimed with Gezi resistance was transnationally connected to others, it would be sufficient to recall how images from İstanbul propitiated the mobilisation and its forms in Brazil, which was also crossed by an uprising by early June 2013. For instance, extinguishing tear gas in large plastic bottles full of water in the middle of the street turned into a common practice that the youth in Brazil learned by looking at the images of the protesters in İstanbul (Cocco & Cava, 2013). Here, I however prefer to decipher the global by looking at its traces in the local and, in this regard, some of the graffiti that I could document proved helpful. For instance, see the selective examples below whose content is nearly self-explanatory: one is a writing claiming that Taksim would have become like Tahrir, and the other is instead a solidarity message connecting the Gezi resistance to the 15-M (the anti-austerity movement leading the uprising that crossed space Spain in 2011[189].

Figure 234 Taksim-Tahrir connectedness.

Figure 235 Gezi/15-M connectedness.

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[189] A graffiti comparing Taksim to Tahrir was already examined in Chapter 3. See Figure 179.

Obviously, the contextual circumstances of the global street in Taksim differed from those in places such as Tahrir or Puerta del Sol in Madrid[190]. Precisely because of contextual diversity, reading the graffiti above together helps to understand an argument by Sassen (2011: 574), namely that the global street is a conceptual tool that goes "beyond the empirics of each case". As for the transnational solidarity that can be expressed via graffiti, it must be instead stressed that, in this specific case, it is discursive only to a certain extent since the author of the graffiti referring to the 15-M was physically present in Taksim Square. The same is valid also for the graffiti below, which show that the solidarity connecting İstanbul and other places composing the global street in Turkey was also translocal.

Figure 236 Solidarity with the city of Balıkesir.   Figure 237 Solidarity with the Dersim province.

As it can be seen from the examples above, the concepts that help to decipher space for the struggle for the right to the city is not only that of "rebel cities" (Harvey, 2012) but also that of resistant cities. By resistant cities, I here refer to cities bound by a solidarity relationship that goes beyond the empirics of each case and rather depends on contingent circumstances: the outcome of the resistance in one of the various nodes of the network influences its outcome in others. Seen from a systemic perspective, the resistance among various nodes of multiscalar networks can be then understood as a sort of mutual aid. Given this, solidarity messages expressed via various means including but not limited to graffiti cannot be merely reduced to a form of discursive support. As I interpret them, they are rather calls to withstand repression and their historiographical importance is high precisely because they help to grasp why resistance is a crucial concept to decipher what kind of space the global street is. For further evidence of the importance of urban vectors of resistance, see selective examples of solidarity messages calling Ankara to continue with direct action.

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[190] For instance, Tayyip Erdoğan was an elected prime minister while Hosni Mubarak was a former military who was first appointed as vice-president and then assumed the presidency. In addition to this, the Gezi uprising was not triggered by austerity policies as in the case of Spain.

Figure 238 (In yellow) Solidarity message from Taksim to Ankara.

Figure 239 Solidarity message with Ankara and call to resistance.

It is then possible to claim that, to a large extent, the global street is the space epitomised by one of the popular slogans of the 2013 resistance: "*her yer Taksim, her yer direniş*" (everywhere is Taksim, resistance everywhere"). For written evidence of its use, see the selective example below.

Figure 240 Popular slogan of the Gezi resistance signed by students: "everywhere is Taksim, everywhere resistance".

With the slogan above, Taksim is represented as a node of a to-be-decentralised geography of resistance. However, representations of space of resistance orienting its use according to centralised geographies must be also taken into account and actually require further research[191]. Here, I nonetheless limit myself to draw attention on how Taksim was represented via graffiti orienting its use as space of resistance, namely as centre of the revolution and the uprising. See selected examples.

Figure 241 Graffiti indicating Taksim as the centre of the revolution. Scaffolding of the Emek/Grand Pera building. İstiklal Avenue.

Figure 242 Graffiti indicating Taksim as the centre of the uprising. Tarlabaşı Boulevard.

In İstanbul, one of the distinctive physical features of the epicentre of the uprising was fortification via ephemeral structures for self-defence. The barricades were erected by making use of various material including but not limited to the debris from the Taksim project construction site. See Figure 243 and Figure 244 for selected examples showing it.

Figure 243 Barricade in Taksim Square, Gümüşsuyu side, corner Siraselviler Avenue. / Tak-ı Zafer Avenue.

Figure 244 Barricade in Inonü Avenue.

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[191] For instance, it would be interesting to evaluate how the Gezi resistance increased not only the global visibility of İstanbul but also of the urban vector İstanbul-Ankara. In addition to this, it would be important to examinate also inner-city vectors of resistance such as for instance the vector Taksim-Gazi, a peripheral and highly politicised neighbourhood of İstanbul where the uprising also spread but that did not attract the same transnational and translocal solidarity that Taksim instead attracted. In other words, it would be interesting to find out whether it is possible to speak of an unbalanced solidarity relationship binding resistant places with different symbolic meanings and functions.

See Figure 245 for a map visualising the series of barricades marking the boundaries of the area under temporary appropriation.

1. Gezi Park
2. Taksim Square
3. Istiklal Street
4. Barricade Road (South)
5. Barricade Road (North)
6. Atatürk Cultural Centre
7. Technical University
8. German Embassy
9. Hyatt Hotel
10. Demirören Shopping Mall
11. Galatasaray High School
12. Beşiktaş Stadium
13. Valide Sultan Mosque
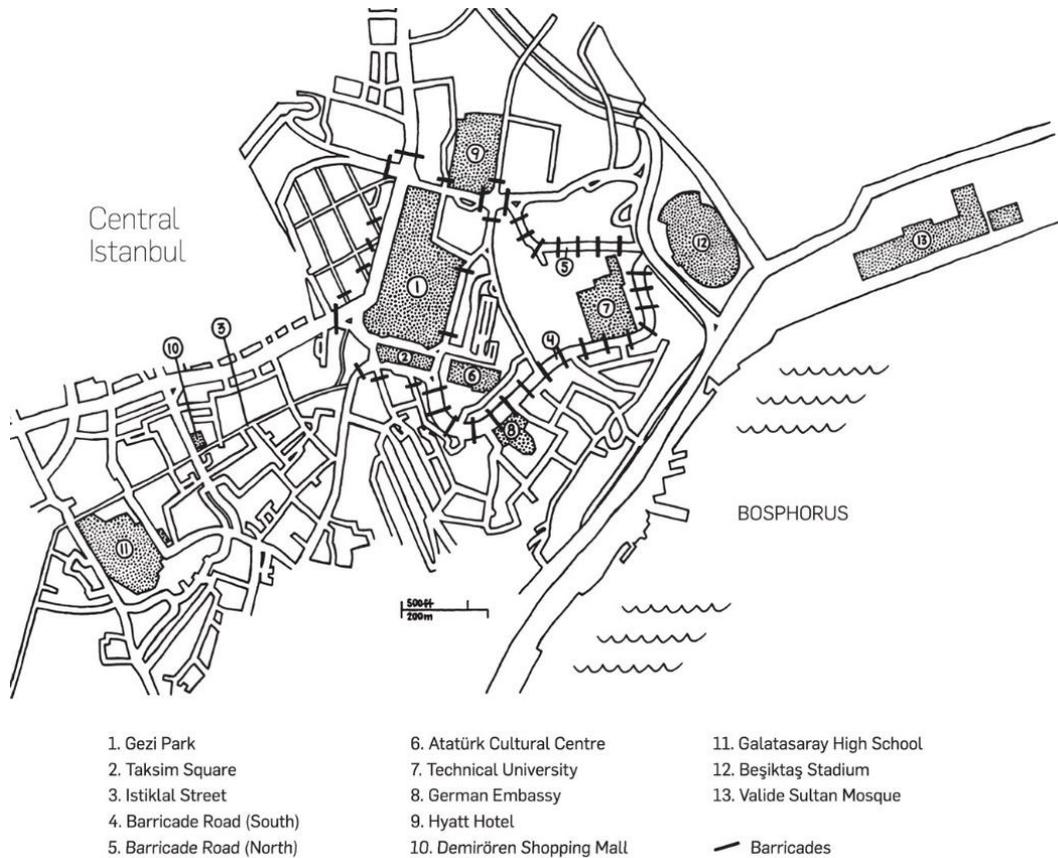
— Barricades

Figure 245 Map of the area within/around the barricades (Source: CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, 2022)

As a result of fortification, the global street was also space temporarily not accessed by police vehicles nor patrolled by uniformed police. Besides this, it was common space.

4.2.3. Common space

Common is not another way to name public space nor a new type of property. As clarified in the Introduction, common space is here understood as the way in which new space is produced, namely based on social cooperation (Hardt & Negri, 2010; Negri, 2016). In other words, common space is the space resulting from commoning practices (e.g., sharing and collective care) (Stavrides, 2022).

Within the park, examples of commoning practices included but were not limited to everyday practices for collective maintenance (e.g., garbage collection). Other practices that contributed

to commonise Gezi Park were for instance collective healthcare, food sharing, collective childcare, knowledge sharing, and so on. As a result of both material and immaterial production of new space, the park turned into a mixed-use area with new temporary facilities, which included but were not limited to branch offices of political organisations in the form of umbrella tents and info points. For instance, other temporary facilities included: an urban garden, the Gezi library, a free grocery-alike corner, media production corners such as that of Gezi Radio, a child workshop area, an open-air university class room, soli-kitchens, free tearooms, space for film screenings, a stage for concerts, and an infirmary (the latter being the most important in terms of response to collective needs shaped by the emergency circumstances). Below pictures attesting to the physical change in the use of the park's space.

Figure 246 Urban Garden.

Figure 247 A free grocery-alike corner.

Figure 248 Gezi Park library.

Figure 249 Kids workshop.

In addition to change in use, change in immaterial meanings must also be recalled. For instance, collective commemoration became one of the important practices that contributed to commonise space. To refer to ephemeral spaces for both collective commemoration and collective self-identification, I am going to use the oxymoron temporary monuments and I am going to provide several examples showing their importance in changing both function and symbolic meanings of space.

The most striking example is probably the aforementioned re-semanticisation of the AKM façade filled with banners of leftist parties and organisations for two reasons: first, it was an

evident quotation of the 1977 May Day and, second, there is "not yet" an official monument in Taksim in memory of the victims of the square massacre.

Figure 250 Banners on AKM façade.

Another interesting example of temporary re-monumentalization of space of resistance is the installation with the candles lit every evening in the middle of the park to remind passers-by that *"Taksim halkındır"* (Taksim belongs to the people).

Figure 251 Temporary monument of the Gezi resistance in Gezi Park.

A third example is the barricade in memory of Abdullah Cömert (one of the protesters killed by the police)[192].

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[192] Cömert was killed in Hatay. Wounded in the head by a tear gas canister, died in the Antakya State Hospital.

Figure 252 Barricade in memory of Abdullah Cömert, killed by the police in Hatay on June 3. İnönü Avenue.

To a certain extent similar is the case of renaming of a street inside the park in memory of Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of Agos (a weekly newspaper published in Turkish and Armenian), and a proactive advocate of peaceful dialogue who was assassinated in İstanbul in 2007.

Figure 253 A street inside Gezi Park named in memory of Hrant Dink.

As argued earlier, discursive re-semanticisation of space is obviously not sufficient for a radical change in both space and society. However, the issue emerges in all its relevance if we think of toponyms as "symbolic monuments" (Grounds, 2011, p. 289). As such, toponyms have the

potential to shape collective memory. This is evident in striking cases of re-semanticisation of space for representation of power.

One of them is the case of the Third Bridge over the Bosphorus, named after the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim. Known also as Selim I, the Sultan was responsible for the persecution of Alevis during his military campaigns in the 16th century (Vardar, 2013). Besides the deforestation of the area, Neo-Ottoman toponomy was one of the reasons behind the controversy that the Third Bridge project also sparked. Written evidence of this is provided by the graffiti in Figure 254, appeared on the rear wall of an Armenian Church in Taksim a few days after Erdoğan inaugurated the construction works on May 29. In other words, the historiographical importance of the graffiti below in attesting to the struggle for the right of ethnic minorities to reclaim space in Turkey is particularly high because of its site-dependency.
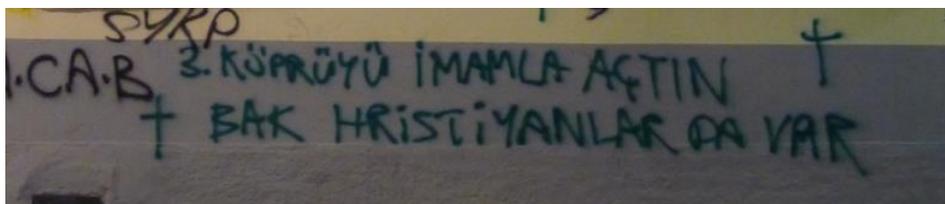
Figure 254 (In green) Dissent vs. Neo-Ottoman toponymy: "You inaugurated the third bridge with the imam, look there are also Christians". Rear wall of the Vosgeperan Armenian Catholic Church. Ana Çeşmesi Street, Taksim.

In sum, the case of Gezi / Taksim suggests that the global street can become common space not merely because large open public spaces can be shared by many people. In the specific case, public spaces with high symbolic meanings turned into common space because a plurality of social actors changed its symbolic meanings by enriching its functions. Below a brief overview aimed at highlighting the complexity of the social composition of the global street.

4.3. Whose space? Whose values?

Tackling these questions means tackling a cluster of interrelated questions: what sparked the development of the occupation of the park into an uprising, who were the social actors that reclaimed Gezi/Taksim and why, and what kind of social and spatial practices contributed to temporary commonise the park. As discussed below, police brutality played a crucial role in triggering the development of the protest camp into an anti-government uprising[193].

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[193] All the photographs in this section were taken in Gezi/Taksim in early June 2013.

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4.3.1. Costantinopolis, the city of the police?

Figure 255 A word pun: "the city of the police?". İstiklal Avenue. June 1.

'Constantino-polis?' is a word pun questioning whether İstanbul – the former Constantinople – turned into 'the city of the police'. A field survey conducted by the research and consultancy company KONDA (2014, p. 20) revealed that the reasons moving thousands of protesters interviewed in Gezi Park were various; however, it revealed also that the majority them decided to participate in the protests after seeing police brutality, which was therefore defined "a turning point for half of the protesters". See Figure 256.
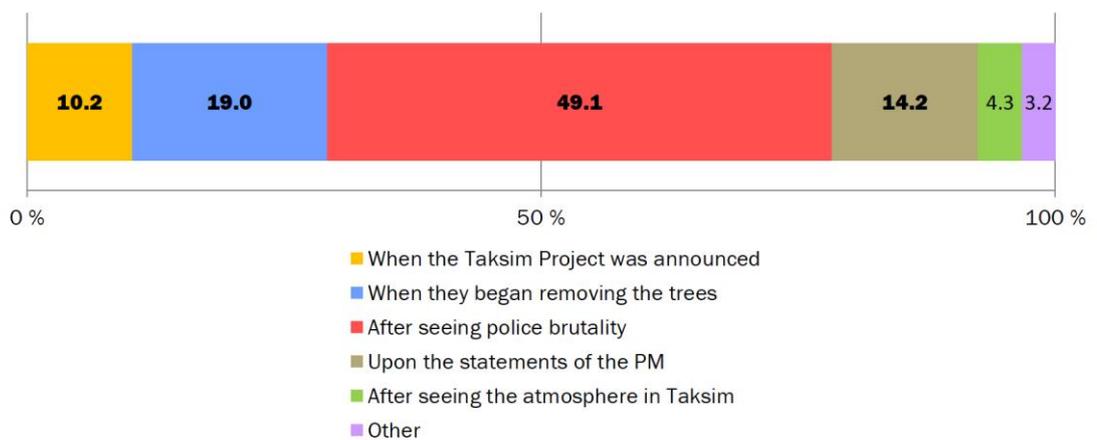
Figure 256 Answers to the question "at what point did you decide to participate in the protests?" (Source: KONDA, 2014, p. 20)

As emerged earlier, graffiti were used to contest police brutality even before Gezi (e.g., see Figure 120 in Chapter 2, and see also Figure 32 in the Glossary). During the uprising, many were the graffiti attesting to the rage of ordinary people against police brutality. Like the graffiti in Figure 217, the one in Figure 257 is another selective example.

Figure 257 Acronym/slogan vs. police: "All cops are bastards". Barricade in İnönü Avenue.

Moreover, selected graffiti provide also evidence of the other reasons that moved ordinary citizens to flock to Taksim. As it can be seen from the following series of images, these included: the destruction of a public park, the reduction of İstanbul to a construction site for urban speculation, and the increasing authoritarianism of the government.

Figure 258 Bulldozer uprooting a tree.

Figure 259 A bulldozer painted in pink. (Photo: L. Manunza)

Figure 260 Slogan vs. urban renewal: "İstanbul, don't become [a city of] concrete!".
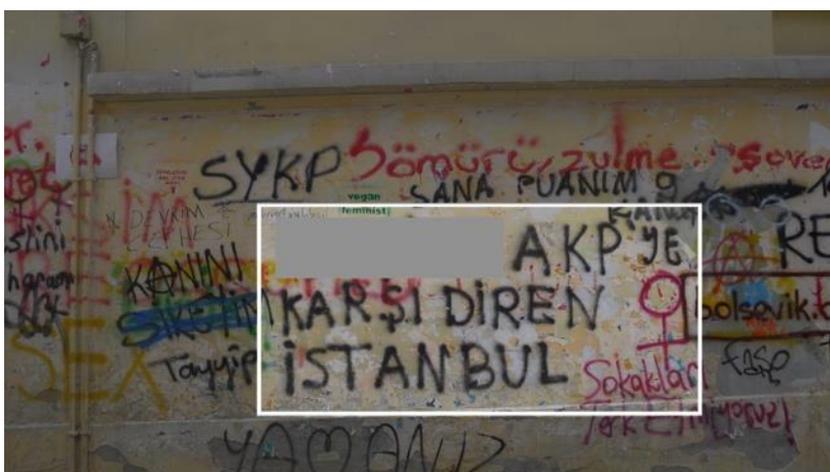
Figure 261 Slogan: "İstanbul, resist the fascist AKP"

As attested by the graffiti highlighted in Figure 261, the walls of Taksim during the uprising bared evidence of dissent against the AKP government. In this regard, it is often claimed that the protests against the Taksim Project developed into an uprising as result of accumulated dissent against the growing interventions of the government in the domain of personal freedoms (e.g., life style and its expression in public space)[194]. This is for instance the case of limitations on alcohol consumption. As attested by the graffiti in Figure 128, reaction to this precedes Gezi but, during the uprising, the number of graffiti related to the issue comprehensibly increased given the aforementioned approval of the new regulation restricting the sale of alcohol at night and in the proximity of schools and mosques (see Figure 227). For another example of graffiti providing written evidence of dissent against the prohibitionist agenda of the government, see also Figure 262.

Figure 262 Reaction to anti-alcohol agenda: "Cheers, Tayyip ☺".

Among the triggering factors, the government's anti-abortion agenda must also be stressed. A well-known topic of the pronatalist agenda is the "at least three kids" propaganda rhetoric ("*en az üç çocuk*" in Turkish)[195]. As argued by Dildar (2022), Turkish capitalism under the AKP leadership is making a choice in terms of the way it seizes women's labour: it prefers to keep women in the free, invisible space of reproduction. For written evidence of self-ironic and serious reactions by feminists against the reduction of women bodies to means of reproduction

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[194] For instance, see Parla and Özgül (2016), Sezer (2015), and Batuman (2015).

[195] For the 2008 declaration by Erdoğan, see for instance Çetin et al. (2008).

of labour force see the graffiti below, which are only two selective examples of the several documented during Gezi.

Figure 263 Witty graffiti vs. the AKP's women reproduction labour policy: "do you want three kids like me?".

Figure 264 Dissent vs. the reduction of women bodies to means of reproduction of labour force: "we are women, not incubators".

However, this was not a novelty of Gezi either. As already emerged in Chapter 2, reactions of the feminist movement against the government's attempts to limit the right to self-determination preceded the outburst of the 2013 uprising (see the graffiti in Figure 122 in Chapter 2, and see also Figure 336 in Appendix C for an additional example).

In sum, the graffiti examined in this section clearly shows that the manifestation of dissent climaxed with Gezi did not come out of the blue. In other words, they provide evidence of historical continuity with the previous years. In addition to this, they also provided preliminary evidence of the   complexity of the social composition of the global street in the case of Gezi/Taksim, a distinctive feature discussed more in detail below.

4.3.2. The right to the city-centre, space belonging to all of us

As conceptualised by Lefebvre (2009 [1968]), the right to the city-centre is of crucial significance in the struggle for a radically different society. However, it should not be misunderstood with the right to visit the city-centre nor with the right to return to a traditional use of the city since the Lefebvrian notion is rather a call to counteract the discriminatory and exclusionary use of space of central importance (Ergin and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2014). In this regard, I then endorse the argument by Tsavdaroglou (2020) that the right to the city-centre is for instance central in anti-gentrification struggle, especially when it is the urban poor who are denied the right to live in Taksim as already discussed in Chapter 3. On the other hand, I also acknowledge that rethinking the city from a non-centric perspective could actually help to commonise space (Hilal & Petti, 2021). However, this was not the case of the Gezi resistance. The written and visual evidence examined so far is in fact sufficient to claim that Taksim was reclaimed precisely because of its symbolic meanings as *the* city-centre of İstanbul. This

explains also the slogan by the Taksim Solidarity Platform, which stands out for the inclusivity of the language: *"Taksim hepimizin"* (Taksim belongs to all of us). For a graffiti showing its use during the uprising, see Figure 265.

Figure 265 Taksim Solidarity slogan: "Taksim belongs to all of us".

To explain who the collective self who reclaimed Taksim was, the notion of *halk* (the people) was widely used during the uprising. See Figure 266, an emblematic example attesting to this.

Figure 266 Overwriting of police barriers: "the people".

To explain graffiti providing evidence of the use of the Turkish word/notion *halk* during Gezi, Egemen (2015) argued that it is more frequent than the use of its English equivalent "the people" and, more importantly, he argued that it attests to the unity of the protesters in reacting against conspiracies claiming that they were marginal, chapullers or foreign backed. However, I argue that the notion of the people is not adequate to best decipher the complexity of the social composition of the global street in the case of Gezi/Taksim. Thus, I argue that the collective meta-subject often self-identifying as "we, the people" can be better described as "multitude", a notion suggested by Hardt & Negri (2010) to refer to the effect of the merging of different sociocultural groups with no distinction based on social status and that, as such, is

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therefore mixed, open, inclusive, heterogeneous, plural and quite different from the people as identitarian subject shaped by the sovereign power of (supra)nation-states. For evidence of the heterogeneity in question and thus of how a struggle for the right to the city functioned as catalyst for the alliance of oppositional groups, see the selection of collective signatures in Appendix D. Here, I limit myself to stress once again the historical dis/continuity in terms of social actors by drawing attention on the diversity of language between the slogans by LGBT+ movement and slogans by revolutionary socialists appealing to the transgenerational memory of the 1960s and 1970s. Below two examples.

Figure 267 Slogan of the LGBT+ movement on the scaffolding around the AKM: "love shall be organised".

Figure 268 Old actors of Gezi Park. Slogan signed by DÖB on the wall of the Maksem in Taksim Square: "the ones of Deniz [Gezmiş] are alive; the Leninists are fighting".

Further evidence of the importance given to issues of language is provided also by graffiti that were used for a feminist campaign aimed at promoting gender sensitivity given that a significant portion of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance in Taksim consisted of insults (e.g., to Erdoğan and the police). See Figure 269 and Figure 270, the latter showing the overwriting of a swear-word.

Figure 269 Feminist campaign for gender-sensitivity in the use of language: "Resist with determination, not swearing!".

Figure 270 Feminist campaign vs. widespread sexist swearing.

In this case, the novelty was not the foul language nor the machismo characterising some of them[196]. The novelty of Gezi was another. Streets interventions of queers and feminists proved successful against the manifestation of patriarchy via slogans and chants with sexist and homophobic contents: the aforementioned Çarşı football fan club visited the office of an LGBT organisation and apologised (CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, 2022). Below another example of the political use of graffiti in the feminist struggle for freedom from gendered violence and collective care.

Figure 271 Feminist campaign vs. harassment.

This graffiti provides evidence of the feminist movement campaign against harassment (physical but also visual and verbal). To contextualise the great importance of such a campaign, it is sufficient to recall the case of Tahrir Square, where gendered violence in the form of sexual assaults was an issue that had been drawing the attention of international mainstream media[197]. For further evidence of the political use of graffiti to raise awareness of the need for collective care during the extraordinary circumstances of the uprising, see also Figure 272.

Figure 272 "Don't drink, donate blood".

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[196] As emerged through an unstructured interview, the graffiti for agitprop emerged in the 1960s were in fact preceded by "*tosun edebiati*" (bullshit literature), i.e., toilet walls and doors writings with sexist content.

[197] For instance, see an article on the Guardian (Associated Press, 2012).

To briefly contextualise the campaign against alcohol abuse and the need for blood donation during the uprising, it is sufficient to recall the data about police brutality provided by the Turkish Medical Association: thousands were injured and dozens of them severely (Amnesty International, 2013; İnsan Hakları Derneği, 2013)[198]. The right to life of eight people was violated as direct consequence of police brutality or of the worsening of the severe injuries it caused (Yaman, PEN International, 2014).

For these reasons, Amnesty International (2013) evaluated the authorities' response and the use of force by police officers as disproportionate, arbitrary, excessive and abusive due to the regular, indiscriminate and large-scale use of various means such as: tear gas, pepper spray, water cannons, plastic bullets, live ammunitions, beating, sexual assault, and detention. In short, the absorption of differential space occurred by all means, including coercion and killing. Below I briefly discuss the dialectic between hegemonic absorption and counterhegemonic resistance by focusing on space mediated it.

4.4. Absorption of differential space and attempts of resistance

Absorption is a notion that I use to refer to the repression of the Gezi resistance. "Sooner or later" – wrote Lefebvre (1991 [1974], p. 373) – the existing centre and the forces of homogenization must seek to absorb all such differences". If self-defence does not turn into a counterattack, "centrality and normality will be tested as to the limits of their power to integrate, to recuperate, or to destroy whatever has transgressed" (ibid.). To provide evidence of this, I am going to resume the timeline from where I suspended it in the first section of the chapter, and I therefore start from the clearance of Taksim Square[199].

June 11 – Police interventions restarted in Taksim contrary to one of the demands that the Taksim Solidarity platform had officially communicated both to the then Deputy Minister Bülent Arınç on June 5 and to the Gezi crowd during a massive meeting on June 9, namely the end of the police brutality. Besides dismantling the barricades, the police cleared Taksim Square by attacking the crowd with a huge amount of teargas. The scene depicted in Figure 273 is fixed in the local collective memory of many but, unlike in 1977, none of the participants was crushed to death.

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[198] These are not data specific to the Gezi/Taksim area but overall data relating to the whole country.

[199] Like for the previous part, this part of the timeline is also non-comprehensive and is largely based on both the timeline edited by Mat (2013) and ethnographic memories.

Figure 273 Clearance of Taksim Square. June 11 (Source: CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, 2022)

June 12 – Both the AKM and the Republic Monument were manned by the police. The symbolism of the square was radically different from the previous days. There were no longer banners of leftist organisations on the AKM façade but two giant Turkish flags and a flag with a portrait of Atatürk. Flags, banners and also graffiti had been removed also from the Republic Monument.

Figure 274 AKM turned into a police station after Taksim Square clearance. Mid-June.

Figure 275 Republican Monument manned by the police and greyfied graffiti. Mid-June.

With the police's occupation of the square, change concerned not only the symbolism of the Square but its function. With the restart of the clashes, it turned into a battlefield. To call for an end of police brutality, nonviolent direct actions were also organised (e.g., a human chain). As consequence of re-territorialisation, there occurred also a re-scaling of the structures aimed at self-defence and also at defence of the park. As can be seen in the images below, two barricades were erected on either side of the park.

Figure 276 Barricade in defence of the park on Cumhuriyet Avenue. Mid-June.

Figure 277 Barricade in defence of the park in Mete Avenue. Mid-June.

June 12 – A spokesman of the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, AKP) announced the possibility of holding a referendum to decide about the future of the park.

June 13 – The European Parliament approved a resolution condemning the disproportionate and excessive use of force by the Turkish police and the repression of freedom of expression and assembly[200]. Meanwhile, the İstanbul province governor Avni Mutlu called on mothers to withdraw their children from Gezi because they could not guarantee their safety. Below a picture of the nonviolent direct action by the mothers who reacted to the statement by physically being present in the square and forming a chain[201].

Figure 278 Mothers' chain in solidarity with Gezi. Taksim Square. Mid-June.

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[200] For the full text, see "European Parliament Resolution of 13 June 2013 on the Situation in Turkey" (2013).

[201] The first chain was performed on June 13 but I took a picture on June 14.

June 14 – Representatives of the Taksim Solidarity platform met with the Prime Minister Erdoğan. The government announced compliance with the court order to suspend the works and also the possibility of a referendum on the park redevelopment plan. Gezi Park hosted several forums organised to decide on how to proceed. In the figure below one of the forums.

Figure 279 An assembly in Gezi Park. June 14.

June 15 – The Taksim Solidarity Platform communicated the decision to remain in the park with a small sit-in and without party flags but this proved impossible. Early in the evening, the park was evacuated and closed to the public following an unexpected and brutal intervention of the police. The whole Taksim area exploded once again.

June 16 – Both protests and repression continued both in Taksim and in other areas of İstanbul. still continue across the city. Revolutionary trade unions had called a strike but the participation was low most likely due to tiredness and fear (the police had started detaining people in the streets).

June 17 – In the evening, an artist initiated the *duran adam* (standing man), a non-violent, silent form of protest. Very rapidly, many others joined him but several of them were detained.

June 18-22 – Open assemblies like the ones organised in Gezi Park started being organised in the parks of various neighbourhoods both in İstanbul and other cities. In other words, decision-making structures for participatory democracy initiated in Gezi Park were brought to the neighbourhoods.

June 24 – Erdoğan defied criticism shifting the blame on protesters. On the occasion of a graduation ceremony at the Police Academy, he congratulated the police for their self-sacrifice and patriotism, evaluated their interventions as *"kahramanca"* (heroic), and described the use of teargas and other means as *"en doğal hakkı"* (the most natural right) (Hürriyet Daily News,

2013; Bianet News Desk, 2013). By mid-July, the death toll was actually higher than five and, in the following months, increased even further.

June 30 – The LGBTQI+ Pride March on İstiklal Avenue registered a historic peak in attendance.

Figure 280 LGBT+ Pride March. Taksim Square. June 30. Photo: Serra Akcan, NarPhotos. (Source: Günal & Çelikkan, 2019)

July 2 - The sixth administrative court of İstanbul rejected the appeal of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism against the suspension of the works planned for the Gezi Park.

July 8 – Gezi Park was reopened to the public and hundreds of people quickly filled it. The police intervened to disperse them and close the park once again. Clashes in the Taksim area continued until the dawn of the following day.

July 9 – Taksim Square hosted the *iftar* dinner organised by the then AKP-led municipality of Beyoğlu on the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan[202]. İstiklal Avenue hosted instead the *iftar* dinner organised by the Anticapitalist Muslims (an organization that actively participated in the resistance). Joined by variegated social and political actors, the iftar in İstiklal Avenue turned into a peaceful ritual and a form of protest (it was repeated throughout the month in

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[202] *Iftar* is the term used to refer to the breaking of the fast after sunset during Ramadan.

various places across the city and in various cities across the country). For the diversity in the streetscape between to events at very close distance, see the pictures below.

Figure 281 *İtfar* dinner organised by the AKP Beyoğlu municipality in Taksim Square. July 9.

Figure 282 *İftar* dinner organised by the Anticapitalists Muslims and joined by many as a form of ritualised protest. July 9.

July 26 – The Ankara Prosecutor's Office delivers the first indictment on the Gezi demonstrations.

By then, absorption had been affecting also the walls of dissent. Below I briefly discuss how and also how people reacted to it.

4.5. Greyfication, exceptions, reactions, and appropriation of symbolic time

Greyfication is the term I use to refer to the censorship of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance. Most of them were covered up via grey paint except for portraits of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk[203]. Below two examples.

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[203] For the non-acquainted with the local context, it must be briefly explained that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is national hero whose figure must be respected according for instance to the Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Hence, the fact that portraits were not greyfied is not something of particular relevance with regard to the history of graffiti in Turkey. Seen instead from a Lefebvrian perspective, the fact that Atatürk's portraits were not absorbed via censorship can be simply interpreted as a sign that his legacy constitutes no danger for the capitalist mode of production and, more specifically, for neoliberal urbanisation. What is instead interesting to remark is that, in Taksim, several of Atatürk's portraits were identical to each other. Via digital ethnography, it was easy to find pictures of the author who "bombed"

Figure 283 Greyfication, censorship of the Gezi graffiti. Taksim. Early July.

Figure 284 Exception to absorption. Atatürk portrait. İstiklal Avenue. Early July.

Unlike in the aftermath of the 1980s coup, the walls of dissent were not overpainted by ordinary citizens forced by the military but by municipality workers. Another difference worthy of being remarked is also the humorous language of the initial reactions to censorship. See for instance the example below.
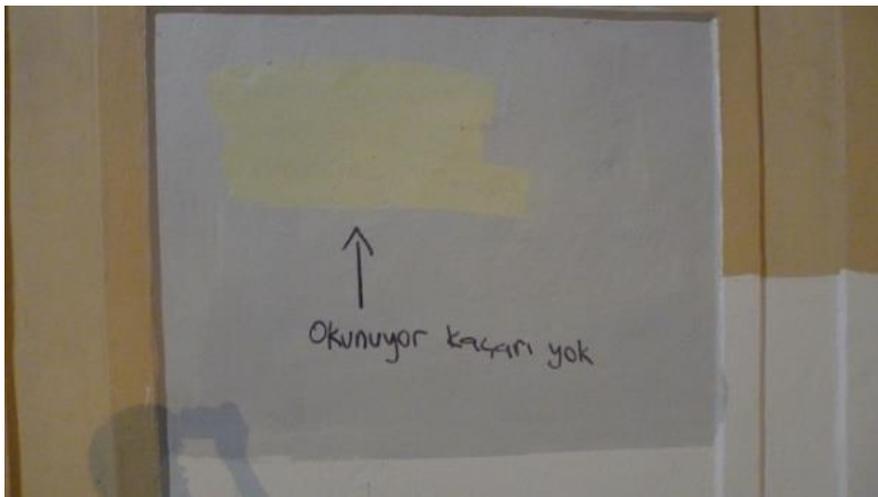
Figure 284 Ironic reaction to greyfication: "it can be read, there is no escape". August.

On one hand, ironic reactions to censorship attest to the historical continuity of language with the post-coup society portrayed by the wall writings of the late 1980 examined in Chapter 2. For emblematic example related to the symbolic value of Taksim, see Figure 109. On the other hand, greyfication caused the loss of historical evidence of the manifestation of dissent and thus affected the very possibility of archiving it. However, unlike the plenty of graffiti fixed in the local collective memory of first-hand witnesses of the wallscape preceding the 1980 coup, many of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance were immediately photographed and widely circulated both via printed publications and the Internet. Wide media visibility concerns also

the area if we want to borrow a term from the graffiti jargon. For instance, see the Pinterest post by Miller (2013).

the famous rainbow stairs linking the Fındıklı and Cihangir neighbourhoods in İstanbul, one of the symbols of the Gezi resistance (even though absorption has by now reduced the place to a touristic attraction)[204].

Figure 285 Rainbow steps. Salı Pazarı Street. Beyoğlu.

The rainbow stairs were first painted in late August 2013 by an ordinary citizen like most of the Gezi protesters (Ateş, 2013). His act was not driven by any particular political purpose other than cheering up the everyday life of other residents and passers-by. However, like most of the countless wall writings popped up during and right after the uprising, the rainbow stairs were also covered up with grey paint by municipal workers. Shortly thereafter, the municipality had them repainted in colour because of widespread reaction to the homogenising grey via rapid replication of the rainbow stairs in other places (e.g., Ankara, Batman, Tunceli, Diyarbakır, and Bursa). Below two examples, one documented in Ankara, and the other in Burgaz (one of the islands of İstanbul).

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[204] Nowadays, the rainbow stairs in Cihangir actually add value to one of the most touristic areas of İstanbul (i.e., that of the Galata Port).

Figure 286 Rainbow stairs in Ankara. 2013.

Figure 287 Rainbow stairs in Burgazada, İstanbul. 2013.

Besides synchronous replication, asynchronous replication must be also recalled. Emblematic is the case of the rainbow stairs and the campus of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. In spring 2021, students refreshed the paint of 2013 to manifest solidarity with the resistance against the presidential appointment of pro-government rectors at the Boğaziçi in İstanbul (Bianet, 2021b). In addition to this, the rainbow stairs were also an explicit manifestation of solidarity among/with the LGBTI+ subjectivities targeted by institutional hate speech during the so-called Boğaziçi resistance. Also in this case, the stairs at METU were repeatedly repainted by administrative order and, given this, my contribution is a humble way to respond to the students' call to action: "keep the rainbow alive despite the grey!". Below the call to action.

Figure 288 Rainbow stairs call to action. METU campus. March 2021 (Source: Bianet, 2021b)

In sum, despite absorption via touristification in the case of Cihangir, the rainbow stairs can be considered a symbol of anti-authoritarian dissent and counterhegemonic resistance. Tracing spatiotemporal continuity, they echo the solidarity rhythm of a slogan become popular with Gezi and actually symbolising it: "this is just the beginning; the struggle goes on!". By doing so, they call for attention on the appropriation of symbolic time for representation of counterhegemonic power, an issue whose importance emerges also from transgenerational slogans such as the ones included in the selection in Appendix D (see the Figures 384, 385, 386, 387, and 388).

To conclude the chapter, I then consider it important to briefly draw attention on selected graffiti with visual and/or textual reference to time to suggest that, despite the repression followed to the Gezi resistance, one of its outcomes is precisely the appropriation of symbolic time of representation. This is for instance evident in the case of graffiti representing Gezi as the beginning of a new political era. The examination of the many graffiti that I collected during the uprising revealed that the ways of representing the Gezi resistance as such varied but can be grouped into two types of representation of time: (1) the year 2013 represented a turning point in the history of İstanbul and Turkey, one comparable to the years 1453 and 1923 (the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the proclamation of the Turkish Republic); (2) the ruling party's symbol (a lightbulb) represented as blown out. The latter was however more common.

Figure 289 Representation of the year 2013 as a turning point in the history of İstanbul and Turkey. Taksim. Early June 2013.

Figure 290 Representation of the Gezi resistance as the end of the AKP era. Taksim. Early June 2013.

In addition to this, several graffiti represented the year 2023 as a longer-term objective and time of resistance. For instance, see the examples below.

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Figure 291 Representation of the year 2023 as the year of a second cycle of the Gezi resistance. Taksim. Early June 2013.

Figure 292 Representation of the year 2023 as time of resistance. Taksim. Early June 2013.

As it is well-known, the 2023 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Turkish Republic, and "2023 Vision" was also the name of the national political agenda released by Erdoğan in the early 2010s, i.e., a set of goals strongly centred on the implementation of mega-projects for urban renewal, a strategy discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Its ineffectiveness in granting the sustainability of the economic progress of the country is however proved by the ongoing economic and financial crisis but making any kind of predictions about the 2023 general elections is obviously a task falling outside the scope of this study.

Hence, I conclude by simply highlighting that, with the Gezi resistance, the 2013 became a global momentum, a notion I use to combine the notion of "global street" (Sassen, 2011) with that of "time of the revolt" (Di Cesare, 2021). In other words, the year 2013 marked what scholars called in various ways: "*kairos* of the multitude" (Hardt & Negri, 2009) and "moments of rupture" (Brantz et al., 2012, p. 14) that, when seized by political subjects, intervene in historical continuity "by imprinting a rhythm on an era" (Lefebvre & Elden, 2004[1992], p. 14). As a matter of fact, the Gezi event/s did not result in a "transformation in the experience of space and place" that was "matched by revolutions in the time dimension" (Harvey, 1989, p. 106). In other words, appropriation of symbolic time is important but the right to the city requires the invention of new rhythms in the everyday life via practices for commoning time. However, social change is not about heroic individualism/leadership but collective consciousness of ordinary people who become aware of themselves "as potential agents of social change" (Davis, 2008). Thus, I evaluate the graffiti of Gezi as historical evidence of such an invaluable change in the terrain of the struggle for freedom despite all the events that followed the 2013 resistance, including but certainly not limited to the 2022 verdict of the Gezi trial[205]. To this day, Gezi still provides the most emblematic case of resistance in public space and appropriation of public space in Turkey because of all the reasons discussed so far and summarised below.

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[205] In April 2022, Osman Kavala (prominent figure of the civil society) was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole after being convicted of 'attempting to overthrow the government'. Accused of aiding him, other people were sentenced to 18 years in prison: the architect Mücella Yapıcı, the city planner Tayfun Kahraman, lawyer Can Atalay, the documentary filmmaker Mine Özerden, the film producer Çiğdem Mater, the higher education director Hakan Altınay, and the university founder Yiğit Ekmekçi. For more detailed information about the verdict, see for instance the statement by Amnesty International (2022).

4.6. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have narrated the Gezi resistance as I witnessed and documented it in Taksim[206]. For narrative purposes, I used a large number of images, most of which are photographs that I took. The images selected for the first section were used as visual support to an annotated timeline of the development of a struggle for the right to the city into an anti-government uprising. In 2011, then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan announced the Taksim project. Controversial aspects of the projects were multiple: the revitalisation of the Ottoman military artillery barracks in Gezi Park, their conversion into a shopping mall, and thus the enclosure of a public park within privatised space for consumption. In 2012, the Taksim Solidarity platform started contesting it for multiple reasons (e.g., lack of participation in the decision-making process). In late May 2013, representatives from the Taksim Solidarity Platform, urban movements and environmental activists organised a protest camp and managed to stop the works for the construction of the barracks. With regard to the reasons why they reclaimed the park, graffiti documented in Gezi Park in this phase of the resistance do not explicitly express dissent against the government nor Erdoğan and have rather suggested that, for some, Gezi started as an environmental justice struggle for the urban commons. By the evening of May 31, the protests turned into an anti-government uprising as attested by ethnographic memories of the slogans chanted by the massive crowd filling İstiklal Avenue. As represented via graffiti, June 1 marked a victory day and thus counterhegemonic time of representation for two reasons: the police retreated from the Taksim area following long and brutal attempts at cracking down on the crowd, and the uprising had quickly reached a countrywide scale. Since then, the Taksim area was literally filled with countless graffiti visibly marking the territory under temporary appropriation. Despite initial attempts at erasing them (e.g., in İstiklal Avenue), walls, pavements and other elements of the built environment started reverberating dissonant echoes. For instance, graffiti vehiculated the rage against police brutality but, at the same time, they also vehiculated the self-irony used to react to issues including but not limited to police brutality and mainstream media censorship. In the first ten days of June, Gezi Park, Taksim Square and the surrounding area turned into a self-managed zone. As attested by graffiti, some called it commune. In this study, I have suggested that the notion of global street can help to decipher its complexity in spatial terms.

In the second section of the chapter, I have examined spatial features of the global street in the case of Gezi/Taksim. To provide visual evidence of how appropriation and resistance to repression resulted in the re-territorialisation of public space with high symbolic value, I have

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[206] For reasons already explained in the Introduction, I restricted myself to Taksim and did not document the resistance and its graffiti neither in the neighbouring district of Beşiktaş nor in other places.

used photographs attesting to its extraordinary use (e.g., sleeping in the Republican Monument area). To clarify that the global street is not a single entity but an assemblage of places turned into strategic nodes of multiscalar solidarity networks of counterpower, I have used graffiti suggesting that the connectedness of Taksim with other places was both transnational and translocal. For instance, graffiti expressing solidarity. By elaborating on their content, I have argued the importance of importance of understanding resistance from a systemic perspective. Then, I have stressed that, in the case of Gezi / Taksim, the global street consisted of space fortified for self-defence via a series of barricades that marked also its boundaries. Compared to the everyday life space, this space was extraordinary for more than one reason. First, police vehicles and uniformed police were temporarily absent. Second, it turned into shared space for commoning practices of collective care. As a result of both material and immaterial production of new space, Gezi / Taksim turned into a mixed-use area with new temporary facilities (e.g., soli-kitchens and temporary monuments for collective remembrance).

In the third section, I have tackled agency-related question to further show the complexity of the Gezi resistance also in terms of social composition. To avoid reducing it via for instance polarisation, I have first used selective examples of graffiti to show that ordinary people joined the protests in Gezi Park for various reasons: to contest police brutality, defend the park, contest the government, contest the Taksim project, and for other specific reasons. To trace continuity with the dissent expressed by graffiti documented before Gezi, I have drawn attention on graffiti attesting to the accumulated dissent against the growing prohibitionist attitude of the government in matters of personal freedoms (e.g., right to abortion, and alcohol consumption). To further trace historical continuity, I have also shown that, among the actors of the Gezi resistance, there were both old and new actors (e.g., revolutionary socialists and LGBT+ rights activists). Lastly, I have briefly examined emblematic examples attesting to the political use of graffiti, namely graffiti that were part of two feminist campaigns: one against the sexist and foul language that characterised many of the Gezi graffiti targeting the police and the government, and the other against harassment. As an additional example of graffiti attesting to collective care as one of the ethical and political values contributing to make the difference in the temporary appropriated space, I also included a slogan inviting to a conscious consumption of alcohol given the need for blood donation by the many injured.

In the fourth section, I have resumed the timeline. To stress that the right to the city implies both the right to space appropriation and right to decision making, I have included visuals that help to grasp the dialectic between absorption of differential space via repression and attempts of resistance to its absorption. Within a short yet intense period of time (June 11 – July 9), spatial dynamics of state absorption of differential space included but were not limited to the following ones: (1) barricades dismantling; (2) Taksim Square clearing; (3) removal of graffiti,

banners and flags from the Republican monument; (4) removal of banners from the Atatürk Cultural Centre façade and substitution with Turkish flags and a portrait of Atatürk; (5) park evacuation and closure. Within the same period of time, practices of spatial resistance to absorption included but were not limited the following ones: (1) downsizing of the barricades in defence of the park following Taksim Square clearance; (2) organisation of assemblies for collective decision making within the park; (3) transfer of decision-making structures for participatory democracy from Gezi Park to the neighbourhoods; (4) temporary re-appropriation of Taksim Square and İstiklal Avenue with the massive LGBT+ pride march; (5) organisation of the *iftar* dinner in İstiklal Avenue as a form of peaceful ritualised protest.

In the fifth section, I have tackled absorption as an issue affecting also the walls of dissent. To refer to the censorship of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance, I have suggested the term greyfication, since most of them were covered up via grey paint except for portraits of Atatürk. Reactions to greyfication varied. First, some grey stripes were overwritten and, in this regard, selective examples provide evidence of humorous language. In addition to this, rainbow stairs became a symbol of resistance whose replication acquired a multiscalar spatiotemporal dimension, namely translocal, synchronous, and asynchronous. In 2013, they were first replicated in various places but, in 2021, students of the METU university in Ankara have repainted the rainbow stairs in the campus as an act of solidarity with the resistance for academic freedom and against police brutality at the Boğaziçi in İstanbul. In light of the importance of the temporal dimension attested by the case of the rainbow stairs, I have briefly examined graffiti representing the years 2013 and 2023 as time of resistance and I have concluded the chapter arguing that appropriation of symbolic time of representation is one of the major outcomes of the Gezi resistance despite the increasing wave of repression of freedom of expression and assembly that followed it. The social production of time is a topic that I will briefly address also in the next chapter, which draws the overall conclusions from the findings emerged so far, and suggests few directions for further research on the subject of graffiti in Turkey.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

To conclude the study, this chapter first summarises the key findings emerged so far in relation to the aims and objectives of the research. Then, I discuss why the findings are valuable and how they contribute to the field. After that, I will also review the limitations of graffiti as historical sources and also the shortcomings of this study. Lastly, I indicate more than one direction for further, possibly collaborative research.

5.1. The historiographical potential of graffiti

This study aimed to evaluate the historiographical potential of graffiti in contributing to reconstruct change in space and society from below. To find out what graffiti reveal about the social production of space, the discussion chapters fulfilled multiple objectives. In Chapter 2, I retraced significant changes in the sociospatial use of graffiti in Turkey based on a historical account covering a decades-long period: mid-1960s – early 2010s (before Gezi). In Chapter 3, I historicised the social production of space in İstanbul for in-depth contextualisation of the space-related content of graffiti documented in the Taksim area in the early 2010s (before Gezi). In Chapter 4, I tackled the dialectic relationship of space with historic attempts at changing the society via a photo-essay that visually chronicles the 2013 Gezi resistance, i.e., the resistance leading to the temporary appropriation of Taksim and the attempts of resistance to its absorption. Throughout all three chapters, I also paid attention to questions of agency and power relations. Besides highlighting historical dis/continuities in the spatial use of graffiti, I stressed both novelty and continuity in the social actors involved, and I gave particular visibility to issues of class, gender, and ethnicity as intersectional. In addition to this, I also addressed the reactions to graffiti, especially by institutional authorities. Lastly, I translated the textual and symbolic content of an ample selection of graffiti in order to make the local context accessible to potential readers unacquainted with the Turkish language and the slang spoken in the streets.

The findings suggest that the value of graffiti as historical sources shall not be underestimated because of the very attention sought by the ordinary people who turned walls into communicative devices. By turning walls into layers of a continuous conversation, a polyphony

of actors left invaluable traces that provide written and/or visual evidence of how they strove to change the society (for the better or for the worse). Further findings suggest that graffiti can provide useful information also for what concerns the history of urban space in general and in the use of walls in particular.

Defined via graffiti, the notion of walls indicates not only structures that function as boundaries between different property types (e.g., public and private). While endorsing the argument that "architecture is certainly not just another symbolic tool" (Altan, 1999, p. 37), this study suggests also that the notion of walls can actually be used to indicate the surfaces of any composing element of the built environment that heterogenous types of graffiti turn into speaking surfaces and thus spaces of representation of symbolic value (e.g., stairs, bridges, monuments, sidewalks and pavements). Moreover, I argue that graffiti turn also non-static and mobile elements into speaking walls (e.g., transport means). The emblematic cases suggesting the possibility to extend the semantic field of the term walls are two graffiti dating back to the late 1960s: (1) the iconic writing "revolution" on the stairs of the stadium in the METU campus in Ankara (Figure 55); (2) the anti-NATO writing on the boat of the fisherman transiting the Bosphorus in İstanbul (Figure 53). Both cases were examined in Chapter 2, where I provided a detailed overview of the significant changes in the spatial use of graffiti in Turkey starting from the 1960s.

Besides providing evidence of the highly politicised atmosphere of the streets, archival images attesting to the use of graffiti in the 1960s and 1970s suggest also that the relationship between walls and leftist printed periodicals was similar to that between walls and social media nowadays: they were the extensions of each other. In the 1960s, graffiti started being used as media for the expression of political dissent, economic discontent, and agitprop[207]. In the late 1960s, graffiti for agitprop were likely concentrated within university campuses and in their surroundings. In the 1970s, graffiti continued to be used for agitprop in places such as occupied factories; however, the heterogeneity of the wallscape started increasing with the emergence and spreading of graffiti for both ultranationalist propaganda and counterpropaganda[208]. To this day, the late 1970s likely marked the highest peak in spread of graffiti as result of remarkable changes in their spatial use and in the use of space in general: (1) signing space with slogans and acronyms of political organisations became a practice for cross-territorial marking, i.e., a practice to visibly mark the territories contended by antagonistic political actors; (2) the contended territory to be taken under control and thus also to be marked

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[207] As explained in the annotated and illustrated Glossary provided at the beginning of the dissertation, agitprop is the abbreviated form of agitation propaganda, a political strategy of the revolutionary socialist tradition aimed at class consciousness raising and mass mobilization via various media, the latter including but not limited to written speech (e.g., slogans).

[208] As also explained in the Glossary, graffiti for counterpropaganda is a term that I suggest to indicate graffiti made to counteract far-right propaganda via for instance overwriting of pre-existing graffiti.

with graffiti became limitless and came to include entire neighbourhoods and towns. At this regard, graffiti of particular historiographical relevance are those related to the case of the pogrom against the Alevi community of Kahramanmaraş in 1978. Used to mark the houses of the people to be murdered, the graffiti of the Kahramanmaraş case attest not only to the intensification of ethnicized violence but also to the premeditated nature of the hatred crimes perpetrated by militants of the ultranationalist movement. For this reason, I suggested to call them "perpetrator graffiti", a term I borrow from Protner (2018)[209].

Via archival research on the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, I found enough evidence to claim that repression succeeded in silencing the walls of dissent but only temporarily. Graffiti reappeared in the streets in the late 1980s. Besides providing evidence of this, the first printed collections of wall writings provide also evidence of the humorous re-politicisation of their content. In other words, wall writings of the late 1980s provide written evidence of the re-politicisation of the post-coup society in public space.

In the 1990s, tagging, street art and likely also punk graffiti started emerging but, as highlighted later on, I suggest the need for further research so as to for instance find out what influenced their emergence.

Graffiti documented in the early 2010s provide evidence of both continuities and novelties in the use of walls. For instance, graffiti for agitprop documented both in Ankara and İstanbul provide evidence of the transgenerational observance of the International Workers' Day. As discussed in Chapter 3, May Day in İstanbul is not only an occasion to demand justice for the victims of the 1977 massacre in Taksim Square; it is also an occasion to reclaim Taksim as *the* square of the labour movement, a symbolism that historically precedes the Republican symbolism. This is of particular relevance in the examination of historical (dis)continuity and deciphering of "the global street" (Sassen, 2011 and 2013b) in that it calls for critical attention on aspects of the global that are actually continuations of past functions. Another emblematic case of grassroots placemaking is that of Galatasaray, a junction turned into a square and space of representation of the right to freedom of assembly as result of ritualised assemblies. However, a graffiti calling to action in solidarity with the Saturday Mothers that I documented in 2012 confirms the psychogeographic representation of Galatasaray as the meeting place in front of the monumental gate of the homonymous high school and not as a square. Other graffiti containing written and/or visual reference to issues related to the politics of space in İstanbul showed that its image on the walls of the Taksim area was that of a highly contested city. Evidence of conflicting representations of space suggested that neoliberal redevelopment

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[209] As clarified in the Glossary, Protner (2018) suggested the term "perpetrator graffiti" to indicate wall writings with violent content made by military forces in urban war zones in Kurdish-majority provinces of Turkey in the period 2015-2016.

into a global city caused the emergence of geographies of resistance. This was for instance the case of Direnİstanbul, a political festival organised in 2009 by local activists opposing global capitalism. Reaction via graffiti to the designation of İstanbul to a European Capital of Culture in 2010 also attests to conflict in the representation of İstanbul, depicted as a bordered zone to likely call for attention on the intersectionality of urban and migration issues. Another case attesting to the dialectics between hegemonic and counterhegemonic representations of space is that of the contradiction between the by now demolished Emek movie theatre in İstiklal Avenue and the nearby shopping mall Demirören, one of the megaprojects for the renewal of İstanbul into a Neo-Ottoman city. Renewal has been examined also through the case of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood so as to highlight the effects of Neo-Ottomanisation on space (and time), namely its monumentalization (and the monumentalization of the very process of urban renewal of historical heritage).

With the 2013 resistance, Gezi/Taksim turned into a global street, i.e., transnational space for the exercise of the right to the city, which is here understood in the twofold articulation suggested first by Lefebvre (2009 [1968]), i.e., as right to participation in decision-making and right to appropriation of space. The temporary appropriation of Gezi/Taksim via re-territorialisation of public space with high symbolic value contributed to the production of differential space. Besides being connected to other cities via multiscalar solidarity, Gezi/Taksim was transformed into space fortified for self-defence and a mixed-use area commonised via practices of collective care. Following the brutal clearing on June 11, Taksim Square turned into a battlefield and new structures in defence of the park were also erected but did not suffice to resist to the brutal evacuation of the park on June 15. In the immediate aftermath of the crackdown on the uprising, ordinary people continued to try to further produce space of resistance to absorption in the sense suggested by Lefebvre (1991[1974]). As discussed in Chapter 4, attempts of resistance to absorption included also the transfer of assemblies for participatory decision making to the neighbourhoods, a process attesting to the traditional importance of the communitarian scale of the space of the everyday life in the mobilisation for radical change in the society.

In sum, state-led, market-driven, top-down renewal of space in general and public space with high symbolic meanings in particular affects negatively social and cultural interaction: it does not promote social cohesion but rather fuels social polarisation and thus conflict. In a nutshell, this is what the graffiti of the Gezi resistance suggest when read together with graffiti with space-related content preceding the 2013 events

Even with regard to social actors, the findings revealed both continuity and novelty. First, they confirmed what is somehow common knowledge in Turkey: (1) the leading actors of the 1968 movement were revolutionary students inspired by anti-imperialist ideals but workers were

also politically active; (2) revolutionary unions took the lead of the leftist movement and led the struggle against labour exploitation to a massive scale of participation in the second half of the 1970s; (3) militants of the ultranationalist movement also used walls for political propaganda in the late 1970s. In addition to this, the findings revealed that members of the CHP also made graffiti in the 1970s. With regard to women, graffiti of the 1970s suggest their increasing visibility and proactive role within the labour movement but suggest also that their productive and reproductive labour was not always given the visibility that it deserved. By the late 1980s, the second wave feminist movement granted street visibility to issues including but not limited to right to abortion and freedom of sexual orientation. By the early 1990s, also the pride in joining the army gained street visibility and, at this regard, the findings show that the conscription pride wall writings are not a novelty of the 2010s but rather a decades-long practice that, as such, is worthy of academic interest. In the early 2010s (before Gezi), the streets of Taksim bared the traces of a wide range of actors, both old and new: enlisted soldiers indeed, antiimperialists, activists opposing global capitalism, ultranationalists, feminists, LGBT+ right activists, refugee right activists, street artists, hip-hop youth, anarchists, and, to a limited extent, also Ataturkists. With regard to the movement for gender equality, graffiti of the early 2010s provide clear evidence of the rising of the third wave feminism and call also for serious attention on dissent against the government's anti-abortion propaganda rhetoric before it turned into a series of witty writings during Gezi. Graffiti of the Gezi resistance attest to the participation of a multitude of actors included but not limited to social movements (e.g., urban, ecologist, feminist, LGBT+), anarchists, football supporters, political parties and organisations (e.g., of the radical left and outlawed), Ataturkists, and plenty of ordinary people not affiliated with any particular political organisation.

With regard to the reactions to graffiti, the findings suggest that the criminalisation of the practice dates back to the mid-1960s and that, by then, the repression of dissent expressed via graffiti had already acquired visibility in mainstream newspapers. Following the Taksim Square massacre on May Day 1977, the repressive apparatus exerted censorship also by means of pecuniary coercion. In the early 1980s, graffiti for agitprop were cleaned from the streets and also the prison cells walls where political inmates tried to continue to write them (and where they were instead forced to write nationalist slogans of the military regime). In the early 2010s, graffiti turning the streets of the Taksim area into open-air art galleries started being increasingly absorbed via assimilation into the neoliberal production of space while graffiti expressing dissent were erased even before Gezi (e.g., the ones related to the Emek movie theatre struggle). With the crackdown on Gezi, the walls of dissent were greyfied but, unlike in the aftermath of the 1980s coup, they were not overpainted by ordinary citizens forced by the military but by municipality workers. Despite such a remarkable diversity in the degree of the repression, the effects of greyfication in 2013 should in no way be belittled via comparison with the 1980s since it caused the loss of historical evidence of the manifestation

of dissent and thus affected the very possibility of archiving it. However, unlike the plenty of graffiti fixed in the local collective memory of first-hand witnesses of the wallscape preceding the 1980 coup, many of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance were immediately photographed and widely circulated both via printed publications and the Internet.

One of the remarkable findings of this study is that laughing at hegemonic power is not a novelty of Gezi but a transgenerational form of resistance closely tied to graphic satire since the mid-1960s (see the cartoons in Figure 51 and Figure 52). In the late 1970s, cartoonists worked together with workers to create mural cartoons in the factories under strike (e.g., see the Figure 65, 66, 76, and 77). In the same period, the wallscape filled of graffiti was increasingly integrated in Turkish comedy films d (e.g., see the Figure 74, 79, 82, and 89). In the wake of the growing interest for documentation and dissemination emerged in the late 1980s, professional humourists edited printed collections of humorous wall writings in the early 1990s. Despite diversity of contextual circumstances and thus contents, the laughter of the Gezi graffiti was also somehow as bitter as that of the post-coup society given the dominance of ambivalent political affects (e.g., joy, rage, and pride). Humorous was also language of the initial reactions to censorship via greyfication. In short, humour should be understood not only in relation to the expression of dissent but also in relation to reaction to its repression. Below, I explain why this specific key finding and all the ones summarised so far are valuable.

5.2. The potential of this study

To highlight how the findings contribute to the production of knowledge, I am going to first recall the gap and then I am going to highlight how this study addressed it.

With the 2013 Gezi resistance, graffiti for territorial marking reached a historic peak in spread. In the local collective memory, extensive territorial marking via graffiti dates back to the 1970s. The need for detailed historical account of the graffiti of the 1960s and 1970s is a gap that scholars argue since the aftermath of Gezi (Taş & Taş, 2014). However, the literature review provided in the Introduction revealed that contributions focused on the graffiti of the Gezi resistance addressed it as a single case study instead of historicising the political significance of the practice or distinctive features (e.g., humorous language).

Conversely, this study provided a historical overview of the period 1960s-2013 that is not comprehensive yet is detailed enough to start addressing the gap. With regard to humorous language, I examined sufficient evidence to claim that it was not a novelty of the Gezi resistance but rather a form of resistance that call for attention on the kinship relationship between graffiti for the expression of political dissent and graphic satire. In addition to this, I

also problematised the commonly accepted idea that the politicisation of contents dates back to the 1968 movement, and I suggested that it rather precedes it. Lastly, I also problematised another commonly emphasised fact, namely that the difficulty in finding archival images of the graffiti filling the streets of Turkey in the 1970s is primarily due to the archival damage followed to the 1980 coup, and I suggested that lack of documentation may rather depend on the lack of artistic recognition.

As for the conceptual framework, this study contributes to the production of knowledge in more than one way. First, I expanded it by reading the temporary appropriation of Taksim through the notion of global street rather than using only the notion of public space. As for the notion of appropriation in relation to graffiti, the literature review revealed that graffiti are defined as a practice of territorialisation and reappropriation of public space by several scholars (Erdoğan, 2009 and 2010; Seloni & Sarfati, 2017; Evered, 2018; Küçüksayraç, 2011; Sarıyıldız, 2007). After having dwelled for long time on questions related to this assumption, I stopped trying to verify whether the practice can be defined in such terms or not, and I rather focused on space that graffiti mark rather than on discursive reterritorialization of space. Precisely because of this reason, this study differs also from contributions that have already applied Lefebvrian concepts and theories to the analysis of graffiti in the context Turkey (e.g., see Sarıyıldız, 2007).

With regard to Lefebvrian notion of right to the city, the findings of this study confirm its potential in both political struggle against the profit-driven reduction of space to a commodity and in its understanding. The historical overview provided in this study confirm in fact that Gezi started as a struggle for the right to the city and was preceded by previous attempts a struggling for the urban commons. More precisely, the findings suggest that the right to the city functioned as a catalyst for oppositional forces. With regard to the right to the city centre, the findings revealed ambivalent dynamics. The Gezi resistance reached a massive scale likely due to the overlapping symbolic meanings of Taksim while anti-gentrification struggle in the case of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood shows that the disenfranchised did not succeed in reclaiming the right to the city centre. By showing the centrality of urban space in anticapitalist struggle, the findings confirm also the validity of the argument that, with neoliberalism, the primary site of production of value shifted from the factory to the metropolis (Harvey & Negri, 2010).

As for the criticism towards graffiti expressed by Lefebvre (1991 [1974], p. 145), this study acknowledges that changing the symbolic meanings of space is not enough for the actual production of space. However, the findings suggest that graffiti can actually be useful in the understanding of space production in that they provide historical evidence of global patterns of neoliberal urbanisation and reactions to it. For instance, in İstanbul, by the early 2010s,

graffiti became not only an essential component of the aesthetics of the global street but also an essential component of the aesthetics of the gentrified space of the global city. In Lefebvrian terms, we can therefore speak of absorption, which differs depending on contextual circumstances. As shown by the emblematic case of the yellow fists in Galata absorption becomes commodification if graffiti can contribute to the increase in coolness of a certain area and thus to place-branding. As shown instead by the case of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance, absorption becomes erasure via overwriting (a repressive measure dating back to the 1960s).

More precisely, the greyfication of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance was also erasure of historical evidence. Given this, this study is valuable. It is a humble way to contribute to the resistance against systematic repression of the right to freedom of expression of dissent, assembly, and action. In practical terms, the study provides also an archive for anyone willing to select from the hundreds of photographs that it contains and engage in more in-depth analysis. Given this possibility, I would like to stress also the value of the Glossary provided at the beginning of the dissertation. As I borrowed the term "perpetrator graffiti" from Protner (2018), someone else can borrow one of the various terms that I have suggested and carry on with the research in light of the shortcomings reviewed below.

5.3. Limitations of graffiti and shortcomings of the research

In this section, I am going to first review the limitations of graffiti as historical sources in space-focused research and then the shortcomings of this study – not to undermine its validity but to actually lay the ground for further research.

What limits the historiographical potential of graffiti is not so much ephemerality in itself but the fact that, in many cases, it is difficulty if not impossible to find out the exact date of the making. For instance, except for graffiti documented during the making, most of the dates provided in this study refer to the date of the documentation. As a result, historical research based on graffiti cannot follow a rigorous but only a loose chronological order. For this reason, graffiti are not sufficient for chronological taxonomies of the social actors who participated in specific movements and/or events. For instance, this is the case of the Gezi resistance. Another reason why graffiti are not adequate sources for a comprehensive reconstruction of its social composition is that not all participants made use of graffiti. For instance, collective actors such as the *Antikapitalist Müslümanlar* (Anti-Capitalist Muslims) made banners but, in my archive, I have no graffiti signed by them as collective actors (neither slogans nor collective signatures). However, the large amount of collective signatures that I was able to document is more than enough to claim that graffiti can nonetheless provide evidence of the presence of

many collective actors (e.g., political parties and organisations of the radical left but also movements for social justice).

For similar reasons, graffiti providing insights into the opinions and ideas by ordinary people who represented space on walls via graffiti cannot be generalised. For instance, graffiti representing Taksim Square as space of resistance reclaimed by the labour movement are surely valuable and attest to real representations of space by ordinary people. However, it must be also taken into account that not all people who reclaimed Taksim during the Gezi resistance did it for the same symbolic meanings.

As for the shortcomings of the research conducted for this study, I first and foremost acknowledge the extreme length of the sources selection and writing processes. Without entering into an overly detailed explanation, I limit myself to stress that it depended on multiple reasons, the first of which is the initial unacquaintance with the local context, whose relevance is self-explanatory since it hinders the in-depth deciphering of what walls say. Second, I was intent on including as much as possible images rather than focusing on selection criteria. Third, I dwelled for too long on questions that made me lose the focus on space (e.g., questions related to the actors, indeed). Fourth, I overthought questions related to the positionality of myself as participant observer while reflecting on the blurry boundaries between participant observation in street ethnography and autoethnography as a process of subjectivation as well as a methodological approach. Lastly, I did not conduct the research in a sufficiently systematic manner, something that was also related to the lack of experience in archival research and space-focused historical research.

As a result, the study provides a detailed yet non-comprehensive account. (1) The size of the sample of sources based on which I suggest that the politicisation of contents precedes the 1968 is limited in number and is limited to fictional evidence (two cartoons, see Figure 51 and Figure 52). (2) None of the sources that I was able to collect referred to the first half of the 1970s but I did not conduct archival research aimed to find out information about the wallscape of the period. (3) The collected material relating to the second half of the 1970s includes graffiti for ultranationalist propaganda but I did not conduct archival research aimed to find out if they were actually spread also before the late 1970s. (4) I suggested that the 1977 likely marked the highest peak in spread of graffiti in Turkey but evidence of this is limited to the information revealed by a few oral sources. (5) I highlighted that graffiti for agitprop continued to be written on prison cell walls during the military regime of 1980-1983 but I did not conduct further research to validate the generalisability of fictional evidence suggesting this (i.e., still frames of the film *Duvar* by Güney, 1983). (6) Written evidence of the wallscape of the early 1990s suggest that conscription pride wall writings were widespread enough to attract attention and inspire jokes (see Figure 108 and Figure 109); however, I did not conduct further research to

find out whether they started spreading also as consequence of the 1980 military coup. (7) I extensively discussed the global dimension of local processes but I did not engage in comparative analysis of graffiti documented in İstanbul with those documented in other cities. (8) I clearly highlighted that the historiographical potential of graffiti lies in the contribution to rhythmic attempts at changing the society but I did not apply systematically the rhythm analysis framework suggested by Lefebvre & Elden (2004 [1992]). (9) Several graffiti pointed at time as an object and field of struggle – both in the everyday life and under extraordinary circumstances – but I did not elaborate on the notion of time as social product. In light of all these shortcomings, I am going to make a series of suggestions for further research.

5.4. Further research

Further and more systematic archival research is needed for an increasingly comprehensive history of graffiti in Turkey, and thus also for an increasingly comprehensive history of the use of walls by ordinary people.

(1) Archival research on the mid-1960s is needed to verify the generalizability of the real-world insights suggested by fictional evidence of the emergence of graffiti for agitprop before the 1968. In other words, I suggest archival research aimed at verifying the hypothesis that the wallscape depicted in Figure 51 and Figure 52 was a representation of the real-present and not a representation of the near-future as imagined by the authors of the cartoons. In both cases, the findings would be of crucial relevance. On one hand, archival research attesting to the reality of the wallscape as represented in the cartoons could help to shed light on the spatial extension of graffiti for agitprop in the mid-1960s. For instance, the examination of archival evidence could aim to clarify in which specific areas they emerged so as to also validate or invalidate another twofold hypothesis, namely that they first emerged in neighbourhoods where foreign companies were headquartered and then in working-class neighbourhoods. On the other hand, archival research attesting to the fictionality of the wallscape represented in the cartoons would suggest the effectiveness of graphic satire in mobilising ordinary people to become agents of agitprop themselves by for instance using walls as a medium. In other words, systematic research could help to define the kinship relationship of graffiti with graphic satire and thus provide useful insights to retrace the genealogy of the humorous language characterising sociospatial resistance to hegemonic power in the local context.

(2) Archival research on the mid-1960s is needed also to verify the degree of media coverage. Systematic research in newspapers archives would help to evaluate whether mainstream

media supported the criminalisation of the practice since its emergence or it is rather an effect itself of state repression on any type of media.

(3) Archival research on the first half of the 1970s is needed to find out whether the 1971 coup affected the propagandistic use of walls by for instance silencing those of dissent.

(4) Archival research on both the 1960s and 1970s could also reveal if graffiti for ultranationalist propaganda were to be found before the late 1970s or if they were rather the result of emulation of the propaganda methods employed by the revolutionary left in those years both in the local and non-local context based on the recognition of the communicative potential.

(5) Further research on the second half of the 1970s via for instance interviews with cartoonists could help to better decipher the specific symbolism of recurring elements of the Great Strike imagery (e.g., the snakes used to write the letters 's' of the acronym MESS and the fist crushing them depicted in Figure 64 and Figure 65). In addition to this, it would be interesting to conduct interviews with first-hand witnesses of the late 1970s to find out whether the quantity of graffiti perceptible to the naked eye was higher compared to that of the Gezi resistance and thus to verify the idea that the 1977 likely marked the highest peak in spread of graffiti registered so far in Turkey.

(6) Further research on the early 1980s via for instance interviews is needed to verify the generalizability of the fictional evidence of graffiti for agitprop on prison cell walls (see Figure 100 and Figure 101). In addition to this, the research could possibly reveal also information about the wall writings that I suggested to call *intikam duvar yazıları* (revenge wall writings), i.e., slogans of the military regime that political inmates were forced to write on the walls of the prison cells as pointed out by Bozarslan (2006). A pilot study to assess the feasibility of the research could start from the Ulucanlar Prison Museum in Ankara. In case of positive results, it would be interesting to conduct comparative research on political geographies affected by military coups.

(7) Interviews with first-hand witnesses of the late 1980s and early 1990s could validate the hypothesis that I made with regard to graffiti that I suggested to call *askeri gurur duvar yazıları* (conscription pride wall writings), namely that they started spreading in the aftermath of the 1980 coup and possibly as one of its consequences. In other words, further research is needed to verify whether the post-coup walls were completely silenced or if they rather vehiculated militaristic nationalism.

(8) A wall writing found in a collection published in the 1990s raises an interesting question, namely whether disclaiming the revolutionary experience of the pre-coup era was a

widespread attitude among revolutionary socialists following the 1980 coup (see Figure 109). In theory, verifying via interviews should not be difficult.

(9) Archival research on the 1990s is needed in general. As I have already pointed out in the sixth section of Chapter 2, it would be useful to write the history of tagging, street art and possibly also punk graffiti in Turkey. For a good starting point for the research on punk graffiti, see Figure 110, a poster advertising the first hard-core punk festival in Turkey. As find out by De Sanctis (n.d.), the event took place in 1992 in a bar in Ankara named Graffiti, indeed.

(10) Comparative research on the graffiti of the Gezi resistance and graffiti of the Egyptian revolution is limited (Taş, 2017) and further research could focus on the search for evidence of the connectedness between Taksim Square and Tahrir Square emerged in Figure 179 and Figure 234.

(11) Comparative research on the graffiti of the Gezi resistance in the context of İstanbul could focus on both similarities and differences between the wallscape in Taksim and that of Gazi, a peripheral and highly politicised neighbourhood where the uprising also spread.

(12) Comparative research on the context of İstanbul could also focus on both similarities and differences between the wallscape in Taksim in the early 2010s and the current wallscape in the district of Kadıköy.

(13) Further research could be specifically focused on perpetrator graffiti, i.e., graffiti attesting to the violence perpetrated by militants of the ultranationalist movement against ethnic minorities. To collect historical evidence of the practice of marking the houses of members of Alevi communities, it could be good to retrace the spatial use of graffiti from the case of the Kahramanmaraş pogrom in 1978 to recent years, when the practice has been for instance reported on online newspapers.

In addition to all this, new questions could also be tackled to further investigate the historiographical potential of graffiti in the context of Turkey from a Lefebvrian perspective. For instance, what kind of alignments would a rhythms analysis of the graffiti of the Gezi resistance reveal when compared with the previous decades? In this regard, the graffiti examined in this study have suggested that listening to the rhythms of the streets via transgenerational and transnational slogans could be a good starting point. Moreover, I suggest that, like rhythms of the resistance echoed by walls, rhythms of silencing can also be a good indicator of power struggle. In other words, further research could focus on fluctuation, i.e., the movement of rising and falling voices of dissent.

Lastly, I would like to suggest the need for further elaboration on the notion of time, by which I do not refer to history but to a social product and thus a tool of reproduction of uneven social

relations. As attested by the several graffiti, time is in fact a field of struggle. For instance, the stylised Cinderella in Figure 125 shows that, like everyday life space, the everynight is a field of feminist struggle and thus time to reclaim and occupy when needed. In addition to this, she shows that theory begins from our lived experience, not necessarily from the normative. Some graffiti of the Gezi resistance also point at the importance of the appropriation of symbolic time but draw attention on the extraordinary rather than on the ordinary. Like space, time is a powerful category, though, and, as such, it is not an invitation to think. That is why I suggest to search for a methodological lens to investigate the co-originarity of space and time, and to thus further elaborate the right to the city as a threefold right: the right to participate in decision making, the right to appropriate space, and the right to appropriate time.

In conclusion, the study has suggested that, in the context of Turkey, graffiti can be granted academic legitimacy as historical sources in space-focused research because they can contribute to reconstruct rhythmic attempts at changing space and society from below, i.e., from the perspective of ordinary people. Examined through Lefebvrian theory and concepts by Sassen, a large selection of graffiti collected via archival and street ethnographic research suggests two remarkable findings. First, walls speak and echo resistance, especially when silenced. Second, graffiti mocking hegemonic power are historically correlated to graphic satire, and this suggests the need for further, collaborative research on transgenerational aspects of spatial resistance.

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APPENDICES

A. WALLS IN TURKEY IN THE LATE 1970S

Selection of collective signatures graffiti and slogans attesting to the widespread use of graffiti as territorial markers and the internal fragmentation of the left.
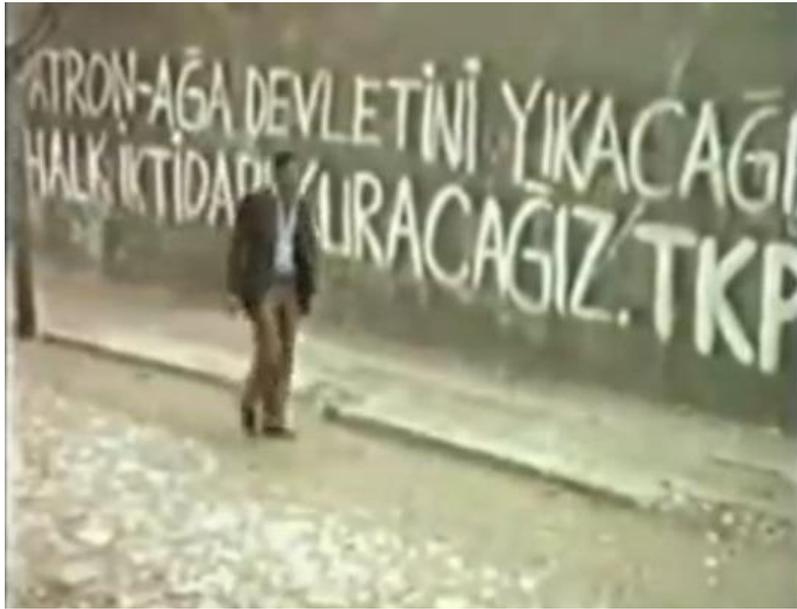
Figure 293 Slogan by the Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey, TKP): "we will destroy the boss-landowner's state. We will establish the people's power". (Source: Yılmaz, 1978).

Figure 294 Still frame of the film *Neşeli Günler* (Aksoy, 1978) depicting the collective signature by İGD, *İlerici Gençlik Derneği* (Progressive Youth Association). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 295 A funeral and a slogan signed by İGD and trade unions: "power is the murderer" (Source: Can, 2011, pp. 192-193)

Figure 296 Still frame of the film *Sultan* (Tibet, 1978) depicting two writings. In red: collective signature by *Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist* (Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist-Leninist, TKP/ML). Slogan in black: "*bağımsız demokratik Türkiye*" (independent democratic Turkey). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 297 Still frame of the film *Çöpçüler Kralı* (Ökten, 1977). Part of a slogan and the signature by *Halkın Birliği* (People's Union), the media outlet of the TKP/ML. (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 298 Various graffiti including a collective signature by *Devrimci Gençlik* (Revolutionary Youth, Dev-Genç). Taksim Square, İstanbul. 1978 (Source: Can, 2011, p. 203)

Figure 299 Various graffiti including a collective signature by Dev-Genç. Ankara. Late 1970s. (Source: Aysan, 2013, p. 247)

Figure 300 Still frame of the film *Köşeyi Dönen Adam* (Yılmaz, 1978) depicting slogans and the signature by Dev-Genç (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 301 Fist on top of a star, symbol of *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path, Dev-Yol). Slogan: "let's resist the cruelty of the oppressors". Fatsa. Late 1970s (Source: Akçam, 2007)
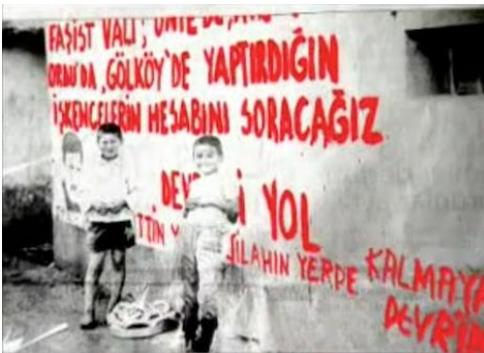
Figure 302 Slogan signed by Dev-Yol. Fatsa, late 1970s (Source: Akçam, 2007)

Figure 303 Military and a slogan signed by Dev-Yol. Fatsa, late 1970s (Source: Akçam, 2007)

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Figure 304 Still frame of the film *Neşeli Günler* (Aksoy, 1978). Slogan signed by Dev-Yol: "*faşist yalanlara aldanmayalım* (Let's not be deceived by fascist lies)". (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 305 Still frame of the film *Derdim Dünyadan Büyük* (Gören, 1978). Slogan by Dev-Yol: "*oligarşi döktüğü kanda boğulacak* (the oligarchy will drown in its blood)". (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 306 Still frame of the film *Taşı Toprağı Altin Şehir* (Aksoy, 1979). Slogan signed by Dev-Yol and Dev-Genç: "*sağ sol çatışması yok faşist katliamlar var*" (There is no right-left conflict, there are fascist massacres). (Source: Politikhane, 2020)

Figure 307 Signature by Dev-Sol, *Devrimci Sol* (Revolutionary Left). Slogan: "our way is the way of those of [Mahir] Çayan". (Source, Can, 2011, p. 206)

Figure 308 Slogans by Dev-Sol: "one path, the revolution", "war until independence". Taksim Square. Late 1970s. (Source: Can, 2011, p. 202)

Figure 309 "A wall in İstanbul", 1977, sketch, crayon on paper. Author: Burhan Doğançay. (Source: Burhan Doğançay Archive)

Figure 310 "Tek Yol Devrim", 1977, sketch, crayon on paper. Author: Burhan Doğançay. (Source: Burhan Doğançay archive)

Selection of humorous writings published in printed collections

Figure 311 Freedom of sexual orientation: "Become bisexual! you'll multiply your possibilities" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 6)

Figure 312 Right to self-determination over the body: "Your tummy is yours" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 2)
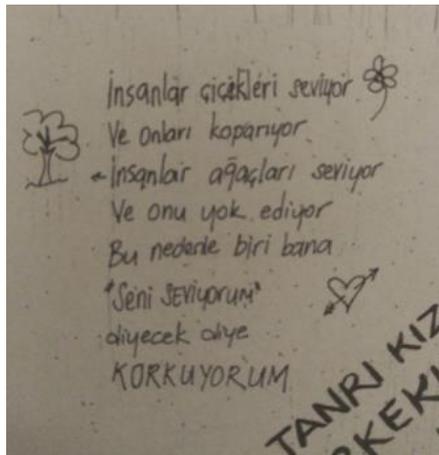
Figure 313 Fear of gender violence: "People love flowers and tear them off. People love trees and cut them off. For this reason, if someone says to me 'I love you', I'M SCARED" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 27)
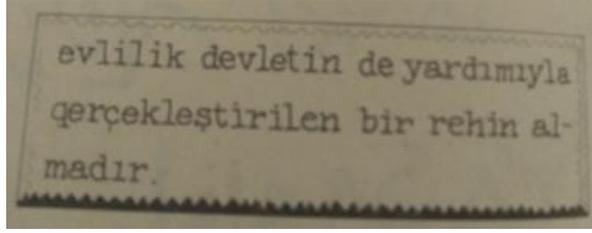
Figure 314 Right to divorce: "Marriage is a pledge realized with the help of the state" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 2)
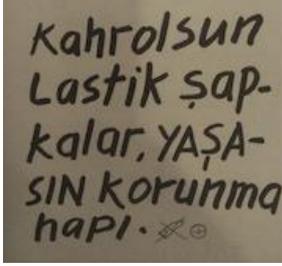
Figure 315 Right to birth control methods: "Damn rubber hats, long live contraceptive pill" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 61)
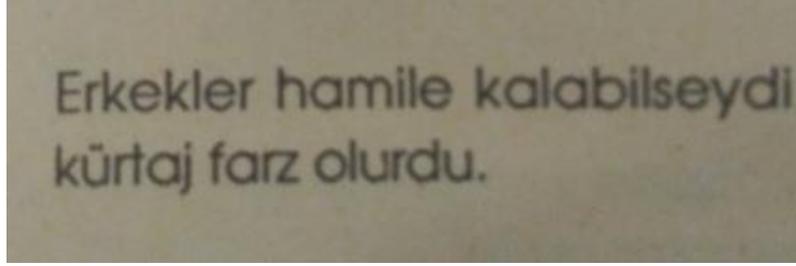
Figure 316 Right to abortion: 'If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a postulate" (Source: Çorlu & Tütüncü, 1989, p. 8)
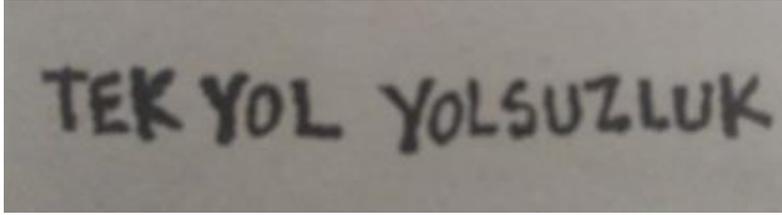
Figure 317 Parody of a popular revolutionary slogan of the 1970s: "the only way is corruption" (Photo: Üstündağ, 1990, p. 11)
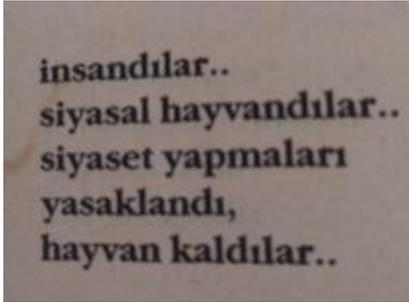
Figure 318 Political bans: "They were humans... they were political animals... they were forbidden to engage in politics, they remained animals..." (Source: Özdemiroğlu, 1990, p. 18)
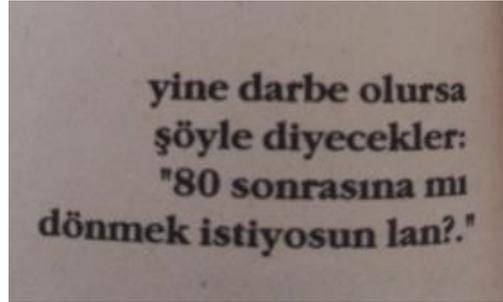
Figure 319 Fear of another coup. "If there'll be another coup, they'll say: "Do you wanna go back to the aftermath of the 1980, mate?" (Source: Özdemiroğlu, 1990, p. 96)

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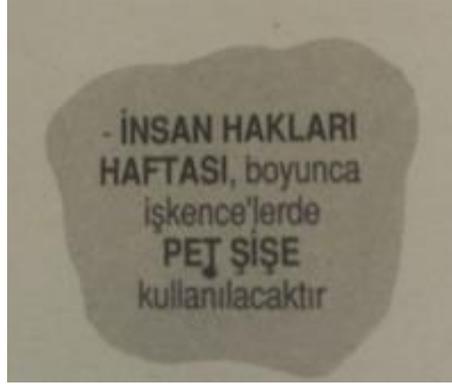
Figure 320 Torture: "Human Rights Week, bottles in PET will be used during torture" (Source: Üstündağ, 1990, p. 12)

Figure 321 Vs. militarist nationalism: "National history / My national history / Our national history / National historiography of our national history / Militarism" (Source: Üstündağ, 1990, p. 74)

C.   WALLS IN İSTANBUL, 2010-2013 (BEFORE GEZI)

Selection of graffiti attesting to the heterogeneity of the social actors using walls as medium for political activity. All the photographs were taken by the author in Beyoğlu.

Figure 322 Slogan signed with the circle-A: "we are everywhere". Cihangir. 2012

Figure 323 Slogan signed with the circle-A: "no room for powers". Cihangir. 2012

Figure 324 Slogan "Revolt! Revolution! Freedom!" signed by *Sosyalist Yeniden Kuruluş Partisi (Socialist Refoundation Party)*. İstiklal Avenue. 2013.

Figure 325 Slogan by the *Özgürlük Dayanışma Partisi, Freedom and Solidarity Party,* ÖDP): "no in the referendum". Karaköy. 2012

Figure 326 Three crescent moons, symbol of the ultranationalist movement. 2013

Figure 327 X Graffiti for counterpropaganda. Erasure of MHP symbol. 2013

Figure 328 Portrait of jazz musician John Coltrane and slogan: "all black people of the world are beautiful". Cihangir. 2013

Figure 329 Slogan in light blue (erased): "no border, no nation, fuck deportation". Galata, 2012

Figure 330 Adaptation of *Yer Gök Aşk* (a Turkish drama television series broadcasted between 2010-2013). The term "*aşk*" (love) substituted with "*19 Mayıs*" (May 19), a Republican holiday (Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, Atatürk'ü Anma, Gençlik)

Figure 331 Feminist symbols, Tarlabaşı. 2012.

Figure 332 Feminist symbol and slogan: "Feminist revolt". Beyoğlu. 2013

Figure 333 Feminist slogan related to the 2009 TEKEL protests signed by *Emekçi Hareket Partili Kadınlar*: "Women Resisting in Tekel Open Our Way". Cihangir. 2012

Figure 334 Slogan vs. traditional gender role: "there is life outside the family". Cihangir. 2012.

Figure 335 Street artivism vs. domestic violence: "the murderers are at home". Cihangir. 2012.

Figure 336 Slogan vs. government's anti-abortion rhetoric. Beyoğlu. 2013.

Figure 337 LGBT+ presence. Cihangir. 2012.

Figure 338 LGBT+ rights street artivism. Cihangir. 2012.

D. WALLS IN TAKSIM DURING GEZI, 2013

Photos by the author. Except for Figure 379, they were taken in Taksim in early June 2013.

D.1. Laughing at hegemonic power

Figure 339 Shutter of a store the multinational beauty products company M·A·C: "Taksim poked Tayyip :)"; "pepper spray makes the skin beautiful"; "let Tayyip come down to Taksim!"; "Recop Presssure Gasdoğan".

Figure 340 (In orange) "Look what 3-5 tree [can] do". Scaffolding of the Emek movie theatre renewal works. İstiklal Avenue.

Figure 341 "If there is no bread, let them eat gas". In reference to "let them eat cake", a quote attributed to Marie-Antoinette (the queen of France during the French Revolution). In Turkish, the expression "*gaz yemek*" (to eat gas) is commonly used by protesters facing a police intervention with tear gas.

D.2. A multitude of social actors: a sample of slogans and collective signatures

Figure 342 Quoted attributed to Marx: "Capitalism will cut down the tree if it can't sell the shadow".
French Institute façade, İstiklal Avenue.

Figure 343 Slogan signed with a circle-A: "The streets are ours". Taksim Square.

Figure 344 *Lise Anarşist Faaliyet* (High School Anarchist Action, LAF).

Figure 345 Graffiti with textual and visual content. Among the visual, molotov cocktail signed with the circle-A, and a police helmet represented as a skull likely to contest police brutality. Inonü Avenue

Figure 346 Slogan by football
fans signed with a circle-A: "We'll
win. No ultras, no party".

Figure 347 Collective signature by ultras.

Figure 348 Logo of *Kaldıraç* (Leverage), a
revolutionary socialist publishing house.

Figure 349 Slogan by the leftist periodical *İşçilerin
Sesi* (Workers' Voice): "freedom will come with the
workers".

Figure 350 (Highlighted in yellow) Acronym of *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party,
CHP).

Figure 351 "General strike, general resistance!". Signed by *Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi* (Socialist Party of the Oppressed, ESP)

Figure 352 Collective signature by the *Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi* (People's Liberation Party, HKP). Galatasaray.

Figure 353 Slogan signed by *Sosyalist Yeniden Kuruluş Partisi* (Socialist Refoundation Party, SYKP): "this people is a wonderful friend!".

Figure 354 (Highlighted in green) Collective signature by *Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi* (Socialist Democracy Party, SDP). Inside Gezi Park.

Figure 355 Slogan by *Sosyalist Dayanışma Platformu* (Socialist Solidarity Platform): "SODAP is marching, the uprising is growing". Taksim Square.
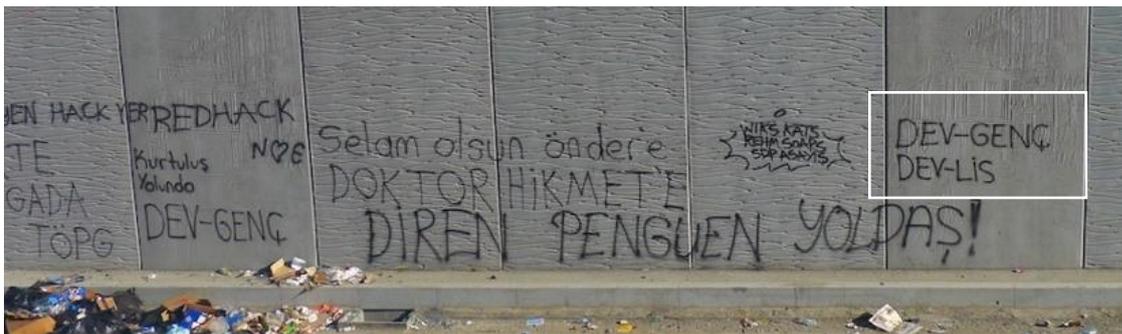
Figure 356 (On the right, highlighted in white) Collective signatures by the youth revolutionary organisations Dev-Genç and Dev-Lis. Taksim tunnel under construction.

Figure 357 Slogans and collective signatures by organisations and parties of the revolutionary left (banned organisations included). (Left) Sickle and hammer, and slogan by TKP/Kıvılcım: "long live our party". (Right) Slogan by the Bolshevik Party: "either barbarism or socialism". Collective signatures by *Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi* (Socialist Democracy Party, SDP), *Dev-Lis*, *Marksist Leninist Komünist Parti* (Marxist Leninist Communist Party, MLKP), *Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi* (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front, DHKP-C).

Figure 358 Collective signature by MLKP/KGÖ, the *Marksist Leninist Komünist Parti* (Marxist–Leninist Communist Party) and its youth wing Komünist Gençlik Örgütü (Communist Youth Organization). İnönü Avenue barricades.

Figure 359 (Highlighted in yellow). Collective signature by *Maoist Komünist Partisi* (Maoist Communist Party, MKP). Gezi Park.

Figure 360 (Highlighted in white). Sickle and hammer and slogan: "long live the people's war". Signed by TKP/ML (Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist-Leninist, Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist–Leninist) & TİKKO (Türkiye İşci ve Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, Turkish Workers and Peasant's Liberation Army). Inside Gezi Park.

Figure 361 Slogan in Kurdish: "resistance is life". Slogan in Turkish: "PKK [Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Workers' Party] and KCK [Koma Civakên Kurdistanê/Kurdistan Communities Union] are the people". Both the party and the organisation are banned.

Figure 362 (In dark red). Slogan about civil society actors: "revolutionary lawyers are our pride".

Figure 363 (Top-right, in red) Slogan: "trade unions to the strike".

Figure 364 Slogan signed with the symbol of feminism: "we do not leave the squares".
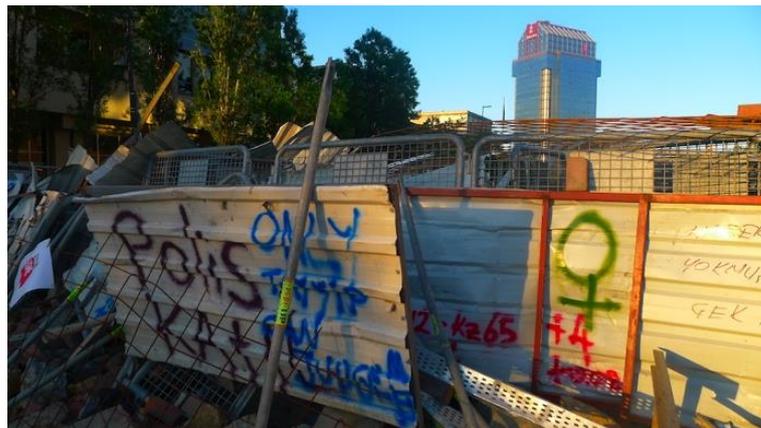
Figure 365 Feminism symbol on a barricade.

Feminist symbol and slogans: "feminist rebellion", "no to sexism, homophobia, and speciesism"; "Tayyip [Erdoğan], run, run, run, the women are coming".

Figure 366 Symbol of transfeminism.

Figure 367 Slogans signed with a five-pointed star (traditional symbol of the revolutionary left): "revolutionary homosexuals/lesbians are everywhere".
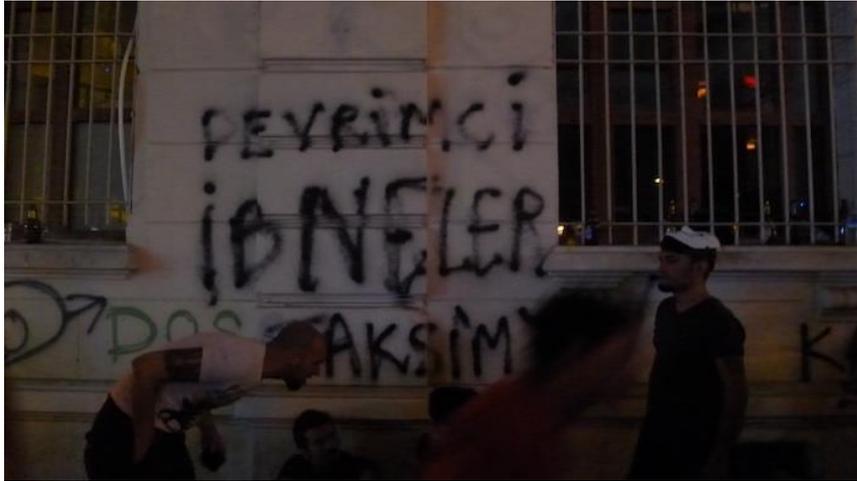
Figure 368 Slogan attesting to LGBT+ resistance to discriminatory language via appropriation: "Revolutionary fagots – Taksim[de]".
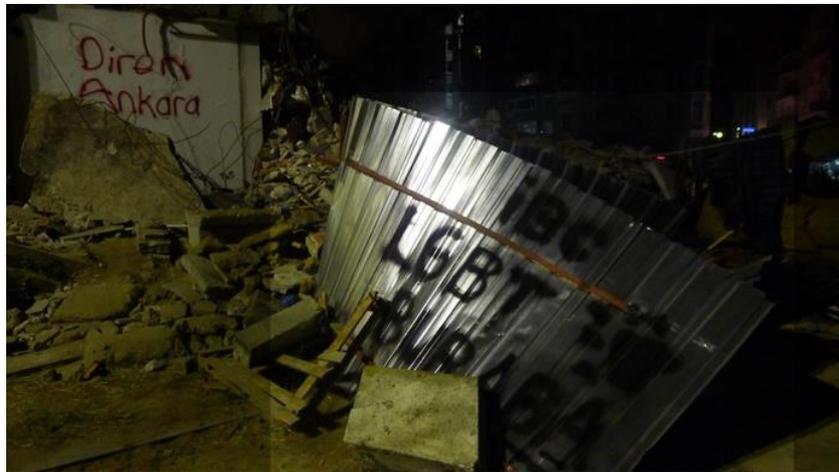
Figure 369 Slogan inside Gezi Park: "LGBT are here".

Figure 370 Nationalist pride via symbols of the Turkish flag: crescent moon and star.

Figure 371 Writing attesting to Republican pride signed with the acronym of Turkish citizenship: "Here we are". Taksim Square.

Figure 372 (In black and red) Atatürk portrait. Exterior wall of Gezi Park.
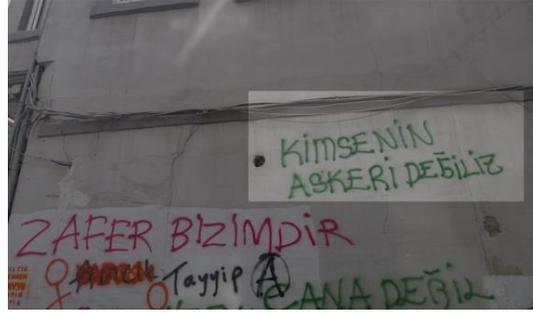
Figure 373 (Highlighted in green) Antimilitarist slogan: "we are nobody's soldier". In reaction to "Mustafa Kemal'in askerleriyiz" (we are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal), a slogan become popular during the Gezi uprising.

Figure 374 Antiracist slogan. "There is no race, there is geography". (Photo: Alp Tekin Ocak)

Figure 375 Slogans showing interactive communication on the same wall. (In black) Nationalist slogan: "God is with us". (In red) Racist slogan: "thanks to the Turkish race".
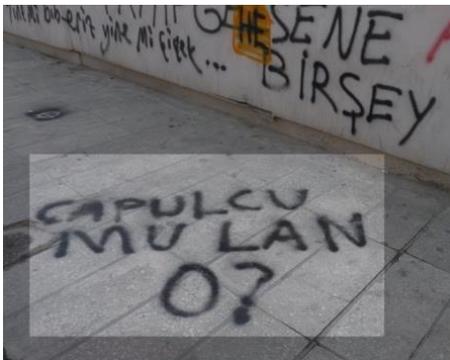
Figure 376 Humorous appropriation of the epithet *capulcu* (looter): "Is s/he a chapuller, dude?"

Figure 377 Victims of police brutality. Urban Café wall. Galatasaray area. July 2013.

D.3. Slogans

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Figure 378 (In black) Translation of a slogan of the Parisian 1968 used in the Emek movie theatre protests and become popular with the Gezi resistance.: "*continuons le combat, ca c'est le debut*" (this is only the beginning; the struggle goes on".

Figure 379 One of the slogans chanted by the crowd: "by dint of resisting we'll win".

Figure 380 One of the slogans chanted by the crowd: "rebellion, revolution, freedom".

Figure 381 Slogan of the Kurdish-women movement (in Kurdish): "woman, life, freedom".

Figure 382 (In red) Slogan of the Parisian 1968: "poetry is in the street. 2013, June 1". High site-dependency. French Institute Entrance. İstiklal Avenue.

Figure 383 (In orange) Slogan of the Parisian 1968: "*sous les pavés la plage*" (under the paving stones, the beach), referring to the paving stones used for the barricades and those thrown at the police.

Figure 384 Slogan of the revolutionary left in Turkey in the 1970s: "one solution, the revolution".

Figure 385 Transgenerational antifascist slogan (used in the 1970s in Turkey): "shoulder to shoulder against fascism".

Figure 386 LGBT+ movement readaptation of an antifascist slogan of the 1970s in Turkey: "leg to shoulder against fascism".

Figure 387 Ironic writing referring to the abundance of slogans: "I could not find a slogan!".

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EDUCATION

2012	Visiting Scholarship, Columbia University, Sociology Department, New York, US
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2005	BS/MS (old system) in Philosophy, University of Macerata, IT
	Master Thesis in History of Philosophy: "Spinoza in Nietzsche"
2002	Erasmus programme, Freie Universität, Philosophy Department, Berlin, DE
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WORK EXPERIENCE

2021-2022	İstanbul Aydın University, TR	Italian language instructor
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PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

Bernardoni, M. (2014). Graffiti and re-appropriation of political space in İstanbul. In Cellamare, C. & Cognetti, F. (Eds.). *Practices of Reappropriation – Planum/Journal of Urbanism*, Roma-Milano, 60-67.

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Bernardoni M. (2012). Social production of public space and intercultural education. In: Brauer, D., D'Aprile, I., Lottes, G., Roldan, C. (Eds.). *New Perspectives in Global History* (pp. 291-308). Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag.

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Bernardoni, M. (2011). Urban space and social practices in İstanbul. *Lo Squaderno*, issue 21: *"Dwelling: Perspectives on the Many Ways of Inhabiting Cities"*, 45-48.

Bernardoni, M. (2010). Kentte yapılı çevrenin rengi ve manzara. *Dosya 23*, TMMOB Mimarlar Odası Ankara Şubesi, (Aralık*), 59.

Mimarlık tarihi ve kent sosyolojisi alanındaki bu disiplinler arası çalışma, mekânın üretimi hakkındadır[210]. Çalışmanın özgünlüğü, tarih yazımı yaklaşımında yatmaktadır. Mekânın toplumsal üretimi, duvara yazma ve sprey boyama gibi mekânsal pratikler için kullanılan bir çatı terim olan grafiti aracılığıyla araştırılmaktadır. Grafitinin mekânın aşağıdan yazılan tarihinde kaynak olarak taşıdığı potansiyeli değerlendirmek amacıyla, İstanbul örneği geniş bir perspektiften incelenmektedir. Nihai odak noktası, 2013'te yaşanan Gezi direnişi esnasında Taksim'in tabandan sahiplenilişidir; ancak Taksim'in sahiplenilişini bağlamı içinde anlamak için analitik bakış açısı çok ölçeklidir: hem çağ-ötesi hem de yer-ötesidir.

2013'te, Taksim'in tepeden dönüşümüne karşı kurulan protesto kampının hükümet karşıtı bir isyana dönüşmesiyle grafitinin yayılması Türkiye'de tarihi bir zirveye ulaşmış ancak grafitiler uygulanan baskılarla silinmişlerdi. Aslında sansür de, siyasi sloganlar ve toplu imzalar yoluyla yapılan bölgesel işaretlemeler de yerel kolektif hafıza için yeni değildi. 1960'larda ortaya çıkan ve 1970'lerde yaygınlaşan grafiti uygulamaları 1980 darbesinin ardından durmuş fakat 1980'lerin sonlarında tekrar ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştı. Buna rağmen, Gezi grafitisi çoğunlukla tekil bir vaka çalışması olarak ele alınmaktadır.

Türkiye'de grafiti araştırmalarındaki kesintileri/sürekliliği araştırmak ve eksikliği gidermek için, arşiv ve sokak etnografik araştırmalarıyla toplanan yüzlerce grafiti Lefebvre'in kuramı ve Sassen'in kavramları üzerinden seçilmiş, düzenlenmiş ve analiz edilmiştir. Öncelikle, grafitinin Türkiye'deki mekansal ve politik görünümü 1960'lardan başlayarak tarihselleştirilmektedir. Sonrasında, küresel kent olarak önemli bir görünürlüğe sahip olduğu 2010'ların başında İstanbul'daki mekân siyasetine dikkat çeken grafitiler bağlamsallaştırılmaktadır. Son olarak, Gezi direnişinin nasıl Taksim'e sahip çıkılmasıyla sonuçlandığı ve bu alanı nasıl küresel sokağa, yani kent hakkını geri alma mekanına dönüştürdüğü görselleştirilmekte ve yorumlanmaktadır.

Seçilen tarihyazımsal ve kuramsal çerçevenin arkasındaki mantık grafiti teriminin kullanımından başlayarak ayrıntılı olarak açıklanmaktadır. Grafiti bu çalışmada hem görsel hem de metne dayalı genel olarak grafiti olarak adlandırılan tags/etiketler, sokak sanatı, duvar yazıları ve bunların tüm alt türleri vb pratikler için bir çatı terim olarak kullanılmaktadır.

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[210] Özet'in ilk taslağının İngilizce'den Türkçe'ye çevrilmesindeki değerli emeği ve hızlı yardımı için Tarkan Tufan'a teşekkür ederim.

Çalışmanın başında yer alan resimli ve açıklamalı kavramlar sözlüğünde terminolojinin heterojenliğinin tarzın, içeriğin, amaçların ve ilgili aktörlerin heterojenliğine bağlı olduğu gösterilerek grafitinin belirgin özellikleri ön incelemeden geçirilmektedir. Bu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, çeşitli tipolojiler arasında açık biçimde ayrım yapmak mümkündür ve tartışma bağlamının gerektirdiği durumlarda belirli terimleri kullanmak gerçekten de önemlidir (örn. sokak artivizmi, solcu ajit-prop grafitileri, aşırı milliyetçi propaganda grafitileri, karşı propaganda grafitileri, askeri gurur duvar yazıları, intikam duvar yazıları ve mütecaviz duvar yazıları)[211]. Bununla birlikte, çatı terimleri kullanmak da mümkündür ve aslında yaygın olarak kabul edilen ama herkes tarafından kabul görmeyen tarza dayalı bir kategorizasyonu sorunsallaştırmak önemlidir.

Grafiti ve sokak sanatı üzerine çalışma alanında, grafiti terimi genelde, ağırlıklı olarak metinsel ancak özellikle metinsel olmayan tagging/etiketlemenin dilini sokak sanatının ağırlıklı olarak görsel ancak özellikle görsel olan dilinden ayırmak amacıyla kullanılır ve sonuçta sokak sanatı, etiketleme olmayan her şeyin temel anlamda gruplandırıldığı geniş bir kategori olarak kullanılır (Blanché, 2015; Abarca, 2012). Sokak sanatının dili, grafitiye kıyasla bazıları tarafından daha kolay anlaşılır kabul edilir (örn., bkz. Wacklawek, 2011). Bununla birlikte, dil, ayrım kriteri olarak yeterli değildir; çünkü içeriğin anlaşılırlığı bağlamsal koşullara da bağlıdır (örn., metinsel ve / veya görsel içeriğin atıfta bulunduğu olayların bilgisi). Dahası, gelişim seviyesinin durumunu değerlendiren araştırmacılar, tarza dayalı taksonomi sınırlarının gittikçe daha fazla aşıldığını öne sürerler (Ross et al., 2017).

Türkiye'deki grafitiyi konu alan literatürün taranması sonucunda terimlerin kullanımının Türkiye'de de esnek olduğu ve Türkçe'de yaygın biçimde kullanılan terimlerin 'grafiti', 'sokak sanatı' ve 'duvar yazıları' şeklinde üç terimden oluştuğu görülür. Örneğin, İngilizce 'grafiti' terimi ve Türkçe 'duvar yazıları' terimi 1980'lerin sonlarından beridir birbirinin yerine kullanılmaktadır (bkz. Metis Yayınları, 1989). Bunların bu şekilde kullanılması olasılığı, dil sözlüklerinde bulunan tanımlarla da onaylanmıştır[212]. Bununla birlikte, duvar yazıları, hem sosyalist devrimci ajit-prop hem de aşırı sağ propaganda içeren duvar yazıları olmak üzere belirli alt türlerle yakından ilişkilidir. Bundan dolayı, incelenen kanıtların yazılı, görsel veya her ikisi birden olmasına bakılmaksızın, hem metinsel hem de görsel pratikler için İngilizce 'grafiti' terimi şemsiye terim olarak tercih edilmiştir. Bu terimi sokak sanatına tercih etmemin temel nedeni, bu çalışmanın herhangi bir tipolojinin sanatsal değerini varsayamaması ve değerlendirmeyi amaçlamamasıdır.

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[211] Kavramlar sözlüğünde [Glossary] kullanılan özel terimlerden bazıları yazar tarafından Örneğin, Protner'ın (2018) etnik azınlıklara yönelik şiddet içeren duvar yazıları için önerdiği "mütecaviz duvar yazıları" terimi.

[212] Örneğin, bkz. çevrimiçi Cambridge İngilizce-Türkçe Sözlüğü (t.y.) ve Türk Dil Kurumu (TDK) tarafından kabul edilen 'duvar yazısı' tanımı (Türk Dil Kurumu | Sözlük, t.y.).

Bu çalışma, bundan ziyade, herhangi bir grafiti türünün mekânla ilgili araştırmalarda metodolojik mercek ve tarihsel kaynak olarak potansiyelini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Dayandığı iki varsayım mevcuttur. İlk olarak, metodolojik mercekler, potansiyel olarak mekânı ve kullanımını çözümlemeye yardımcı olur. Buna ek olarak, grafiti, duvarları çeşitli amaçlar doğrultusunda iletişim araçları olarak kullanan sıradan insanlar açısından (varlığın tezahürü ve / veya medya aktivizm dahil ama bunlarla sınırlı olmamak kaydıyla) mekân siyaseti konusunda potansiyel olarak bir kavrayış sağlar.

Bu çalışmada temel odak noktası, 2010'ların başında küresel bir kent olarak tanımlanan İstanbul'da mekânın toplumsal üretimidir. Özetle, küresel kentler, piyasa güdümlü neoliberal rekabet mantığına tabi olan ve böylece küresel finansal ve beşeri sermaye akışları için ağ geçitleri haline getirilen kentlerdir (Sassen, 2007; 2008; 2012b; 2013). A.T. Kearney Küresel Kentler Endeksi'nde (2010) belirtildiği üzere, İstanbul'un küresel şehir bazında rekabet gücü, 2010 Avrupa Kültür Başkenti seçilmesinden de faydalanmıştır[213]. 2005 yılında Türkiye'nin AB'ye tam üyelik adaylığı müzakerelerinin başlamasıyla birlikte başlatılan 2010 İstanbul – Avrupa Kültür Başkenti projesi (AKB), kentin tarihi ve kültürel mirasına değer katmayı amaçlayan bir yıllık kültürel faaliyetleri içeren bir programdı ve turizm odaklı bir yeniden geliştirme planıydı (Bilsel & Arıcan, 2010; Doğan & Sirkeci, 2013). İstanbul 2010 – AKB projesi, öncelikle düşük yaşam kalitesi sunan konutlar barındıran tarihi mahallelerin yenilenmesi sürecinde katılımcı bir kalkınma modeli öneren sivil toplum aktörlerinin taleplerine uygun biçimde uygulanmaması sebebiyle tartışmalara neden oldu; devlet aktörlerinin güçlü liderliği, daha ziyade tarihi binaların yıkılmasına ve buralarda yaşayan düşük gelirli iç göçmen kesimlerin zorla yerinden edilmesine neden oldu. 2011 yılında dönemin Başbakanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, daha büyük bir muhalefete neden olan Taksim yeniden imar projesini açıkladı. Projenin tartışmalı yönleri birden fazla ve birbiriyle bağlantılıydı: Gezi Parkı'nda geçmişte bulunan Osmanlı askeri topçu kışlasının alışveriş merkezi olarak yeniden inşa edilmesi ve dolayısıyla kamusal bir parkın, tüketimin hizmetine sunulan alanla çevrelenmesi. Taksim Dayanışması platformu, 2012 yılında sembolik değerleri yüksek olan mekânın dönüşümüne dair karar alma sürecinin katılımcı olmaması nedeniyle projeye karşı çıkmaya başladı. Taksim, küresel bir şehrin gözbebeği olmasının yanı sıra, hem Cumhuriyet'in hem de işçi hareketinin sembolik değerlerinin temsil mekânıdır. 2013 yılında Taksim Dayanışması, çevreciler ve toplumun şehircilik hareketinin aktivistleri bir protesto kampı düzenleyerek kışla inşaatı çalışmalarını durdurmayı başardılar ve böylece parktaki ağaçların kesilmesi de durdurulabildi. Protesto kampının şiddetli biçimde dağıtılması, Gezi direnişinin Türkiye'de bugüne kadar yaşanan en uzun ve en yaygın ayaklanma haline gelmesini ve hükümet karşıtı

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[213] A.T. Kearny Küresel Şehirler Endeksi, şehirleri (ticari faaliyet, sosyal sermaye, bilgi alışverişi, kültürel deneyim ve siyasi katılım gibi) çeşitli boyutlardaki küresel katılımlarına göre sıralamak amacıyla 2008 yılından beri her iki yılda bir gerçekleştirilen bir çalışmadır.

bir ayaklanmaya dönüşmesini tetikledi. Buna ek olarak, muhaliflerin ifade ve toplanma özgürlüğü hakkının acımasızca bastırılması da ülkenin Avrupa Birliği'nden uzaklaşmasına neden oldu. Bununla birlikte, uluslararası ilişkiler alanındaki değişim, İstanbul'un Avrupalılığını değerlendirmekten ziyade, grafitinin, mekân ve tarihi/tarihsel değişim arasındaki ilişkiyi çözmeye katkı sağlamasına dair toplumdaki tarihyazımsal potansiyeli değerlendirmeyi amaçlayan bu çalışmanın kapsamıyla ilgili değildir.

İstanbul'da binlerce sıradan insanın direnişi, Gezi/Taksim'in geçici biçimde sahiplenilmesiyle neticelendi[214]. Ayaklanmanın hızla yayıldığı diğer tüm kentsel alanlar gibi Gezi/Taksim de bir küresel sokağa dönüştü. Kamusal alandan farklı olarak, 'küresel sokak', ritüelleştirilmiş protestoların alanlarını değil, kent hakkı mücadelesinde ulus-ötesi eylemlerin alanlarını işaret etmek için kullanılan bir kavramdır (Sassen, 2011 ve 2013b). Lefebvre (2009 [1968]) tarafından tanımlandığı gibi, kent hakkı, karar verme sürecine katılma ve mekânın sahiplenilişi olarak iki yönlü bir haktır.

2013 Gezi direnişi örneğinde, büyük kısmı esprili yazılardan oluşan sayısız grafiti, küresel sokağın alanını gözle görülür bir şekilde işaret ediyordu. Uygulanan baskılarla birlikte, çoğu, yetkililerin emriyle gri boyayla kapatıldı ve bundan dolayı, sansür eylemine atıfta bulunmak için 'grileştirme' terimi önerildi. Yukarıda bahsedildiği gibi, ne sansür ne de siyasi sloganlar ve toplu imzalar aracılığıyla bölgesel işaretleme yerel kolektif hafızada yeni bir şey değildi. 1960'larda ortaya çıkan ve 1970'lerde yaygınlaşan bu pratikler 1980 darbesinin ardından durmuş; fakat 1980'lerin sonlarında mizahi yazılar şeklinde yeniden ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştı. Bu duruma ve Taş ve Taş (2014) gibi araştırmacıların bahsettiği tarihsel araştırma eksikliğine rağmen, Gezi grafitisi, büyük kısmını karakterize eden mizah da dahil olmak üzere, çoğunlukla tek bir vaka çalışması olarak ele alındı. Buna karşılık, bu çalışma, arşiv ve sokak etnografik araştırmaları yoluyla toplanan çok sayıda duvar yazısını inceleyerek tarihsel kesintileri/sürekliliği incelemektedir.

1960'lı ve 1970'li yıllarda duvarların ve grafitilerin kullanımına ilişkin arşiv araştırması çeşitli yollarla yürütülmüştür: (1) ulaşılabilen kişisel arşivlerin incelenmesi; (2) İstanbul Atatürk Kütüphanesi gazete arşivinde sistematik olmayan ve kısa bir araştırma; (3) Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı'nın (TÜSTAV) rehberliğinde, süreli yayınların ve belgesel filmler taraması; (4) dijital ve çevrimiçi medyanın incelenmesi (örn. gazeteler); (5) ilgili tarihsel dönem filmlerinin incelenmesi. Sistematik bir şekilde yürütülmemesine karşın, arşiv araştırması birçok fotoğraf, birkaç belgesel ve komedi filmi karesi, çizgi film ve çizim gibi düzinelerce görüntünün elde edilmesini sağladı. Bu araştırma sonuçları, yapılandırılmış olmayan görüşmeler sırasında

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[214] 'Gezi/Taksim' derken Gezi Parkı, Taksim Meydanı ve çevresini kastediyorum: Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Tarlabaşı Bulvarı, İstiklal Caddesi, Sıraselviler Caddesi, İnönü Caddesi, Mete Caddesi, Asker Ocağı Caddesi ve onları birbirine bağlayan yan sokaklar.

ortaya çıkan ve yaygın biçimde vurgulanan bir gerçeğin aksine, yerel kolektif hafızada bir yer kaplayan grafitiyle ilgili arşiv görüntülerini bulmanın mümkün olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Bu durum, 1960'ların ve 1970'lerin grafitisi hakkındaki tarihsel araştırma eksikliğinin, öncelikle 1980 darbesinin ardından yaşanan arşiv kaybından değil, konuya karşı ilgisizlikten kaynaklandığını ve bunun da sanatsal tanınma eksikliğinden kaynaklanabileceğini göstermektedir. Arşiv araştırması yoluyla, 1980'lerle ilgili yazılı ve görsel kaynaklar da bulundu. 1990'lar ve 2000'lerle ilgili kaynakları detaylı araştırmadıysam da elde ettiğim kaynaklar daha fazla araştırmanın mümkün olduğunu ve hatta gerekli olduğunu düşündürmektedir (örn. punk grafiti ile ilgili bir poster).

2010'lu yıllarda İstanbul'daki grafitiler hakkında yapılan araştırmaların ana arşiv verisi ise sokaktan sağlandı. Keşif amaçlı flanerie, gözlem ve fotoğrafçılık gibi tekniklere dayanan etnografik sokak araştırmaları, yüzlerce fotoğrafın toplanmasına imkân tanıdı (bu çalışmaya dahil olan fotoğraflar, arşivin yalnızca bir kısmıdır). Bunların büyük kısmı, bu çalışma için yapılan araştırmanın başlangıcından üç yıl sonra gerçekleşen 2013 Gezi ayaklanması esnasında Taksim'de çekilen fotoğraflardan oluşmaktadır ama Gezi'den önce de İstanbul'un Beyoğlu, Fatih ve Kadıköy gibi merkez ilçelerindeki grafitiler belgelendiler[215]. Ne Gezi öncesinde ne de Gezi sırasında, grafitilerin içeriğine veya tarzına dayalı bir seçim kriteri gözetilmemiştir. Başka bir deyişle, mümkün olduğunca çok grafiti fotoğrafladım. Ayrıca temalı etkinlikler de belgelendi (örn. Gezi Parkı'nda düzenlenen bir yasal grafiti festivali olan AllStars Meeting'in 2012 baskısı). Benzer şekilde, 2010'ların başında (Gezi'den önce) Ankara, Buenos Aires, New York, Madrid ve Belfast gibi araştırma amacıyla kaldığım ya da seyahat ettiğim diğer tüm şehirlerde de grafitileri ve temalı etkinlikleri belgeledim[216]. Ne var ki, Gezi'nin yerel bağlamı incelemek için birincil kaynaklarda büyük bir artışa neden olması sebebiyle, İstanbul'daki duvar manzarası ile diğer şehirler arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkların karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapma fikrinden vazgeçtim.

Bu çalışma, birincil kaynakların incelenmesi söz konusu olduğunda, mekânsal-bağımlılıklar göz önüne alınarak, grafitinin yerinde incelenmesi gerektiğini iddia eden Chmielewska'nın (2007) önerdiği üçlü metodolojik çerçeveyi uygulamaktadır: (1) içerik analizi; (2) bağlam analizi; (3) bunları birbirine bağlayan teori. Hem içerik hem de bağlam analizi, yazılı, görsel ve sözlü ikincil kaynaklara dayanmaktadır (akademik denemeler, yerli ve yabancı çevrimiçi ve

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[215] 2012 yazında yapılan yapılandırılmış olmayan görüşmeler sırasında ortaya çıkan önerilere karşın, alt sınıfa dahil iç göçmenlerin ve etnik azınlıkların yaşadığı politikleşmiş iki kenar mahalle olan Gazi ve Gülsuyu'nda araştırma gerçekleştirilememiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlanmasını etkilemeyen bu durum, bu konuda daha fazla araştırmanın mümkün olduğunu göstermektedir.

[216] Bunlar, küreselleşmenin tarihsel boyutlarının incelenmesine adanmış üç yıllık Marie Curie başlangıç eğitim ağı olan 'Englobe' (Aydınlanma ve Küresel Tarih) kapsamında seyahat ettiğim şehirlerdi. Ağın web sitesi (http://www.englobe-itn.net) artık faal durumda olmasa da projeyle ilgili bilgilere ulaşılabilir (bkz. CORDIS | European Commission, 2022).

basılı basın, belgesel filmler, yapılandırılmış olmayan görüşmelerle elde edilen bilgiler ve etnografik anılara). Toplamda, ikincil kaynaklar, grafitiyi kesişimsel bir bakış açısından, yani grafitinin tahakkümün yapısal biçimlerine nasıl aracılık ettiğini vurgulamayı amaçlayan ve birden fazla sosyal kategoriyle (örn. cinsiyet, sınıf ve etnik köken) bağlantılı konulara dikkat çekmeyi amaçlayan bir bakış açısından incelemeye yardımcı olur. Farklı biçimde söylersek, grafiti, sosyal çatışma ve değişimin mekânda ve mekân üzerinden nasıl gerçekleştiğini vurgulamayı amaçlayan bir bakış açısıyla incelenmektedir. Bu nedenle, içerik ve bağlam, Lefebvre'nin (1991[1974]) mekânın toplumsal üretimi kuramı üzerinden incelenmektedir.

Türkiye'de grafiti hakkında Lefebvre'in teorisi üzerinden gerçekleştirilen araştırmalar, diğer çalışma alanlarındakiler kadar kapsamlı değildir ve birkaç katkıyla sınırlıdır[217]. Sarıyıldız'ın (2007) öncü çalışması, İstanbul odaklı tek katkıdır. Bu yüksek lisans tezinden farklı biçimde, bu çalışma hip-hop imza grafiti üzerine odaklanmıyor ve şehir üzerine yazmanın, terimin Lefebvre'in ima ettiği anlamda bir mekânsal direniş ve sahiplenliş pratiği olarak kabul edilebileceğini iddia etmiyor. Bu çalışma, daha ziyade, Lefebvriyan mekânın sahiplenilişi kavramının, yeniden anlamsallaştırma yoluyla, yani yalnızca mekâna atfedilen sembolik değerlerin değiştirilmesi yoluyla söylemsel yeniden bölgeselleştirmeye indirgenebileceği fikrini sorgulamaktadır. Nedenini açıklamak için Altan'ın (1999) bir argümanını hatırlatmak yeterlidir: "Mimarlık kesinlikle, yalnızca başka bir sembolik araç değildir". Lefebvre'nin terimleriyle söylersek, mekânın somut üretimi, sembolik değerlerin üretimine indirgenemez (1991[1974]).

Bununla birlikte, mekânın toplumsal üretimi, fiziksel mekânın maddi olarak inşasına indirgenemez. Meşhur bir üçlü figür aracılığıyla Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) tarafından kavramsallaştırıldığı üzere, mekânın sosyal üretimi üç momentumda ifade edilen bir süreçtir: mekânsal pratikler, mekânın temsilleri ve temsil mekânları. Üçüncü dalga Lefebvre yorumcularına göre, mekân üretiminin üç momentumu, diyalektik bir ilişki yoluyla birbirine bağlı oldukları için eşit derecede önemlidir (Schmid, 2008; Kipfer et al., 2008; De Simoni, 2016). Mekânla ilgili tarihsel araştırmalar için bu argüman çok önemlidir ve disiplinler arası araştırmanın neden sadece mümkün değil, aynı zamanda yararlı olduğunu da açıklar; çünkü mekânın maddi üretimi, mekân hakkında bilgi üretimi ve sembolik değerlerin üretimi, mekânın toplumsal çelişkilere ve değişime nasıl aracılık ettiğini anlamak bağlamında önem arz eder. Lefebvre'in iddia ettiği gibi, mekân tarihi "Ne mekân içindeki nesnelerin envanteriyle […] örtüşür, ne de mekân üzerine temsil ve söylemlerle"; mekân tarihi "hem temsil mekânlarını hem de mekân temsillerini açıklamalıdır; fakat özellikle bunlar arasındaki ve toplumsal pratikle olan bağları açıklamalıdır" (2014, s., 139)[218]. Tam bu nedenle, bu çalışma yalnızca grafitiyi ve

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217 Türkiye bağlamında, Lefebvre'in Mekânın Üretimi'yle ilgili kapsamlı bir literatür taraması için bkz. Ghulyan (2019). Grafitiye ilişkin katkılar için bkz. Melik (2022), Alpaslan (2016) ve Sarıyıldız (2007).

218 İngilizce alıntı için bkz. Lefebvre (1991[1974], s. 116).

grafitinin sosyo-mekânsal kullanımını değil, aynı zamanda işaret ve aracılık ettiği sosyo-mekânsal çelişkileri de tarihselleştirmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, mekânın hegemonik temsilleri ile sembolik değerlerin temsilinin mekânın sahiplenilmesine yönelik karşı-hegemonik mekânsal pratikler arasındaki diyalektiği tarihselleştirmektedir. Tez buna göre yapılandırılmıştır.

Birincil kaynakların içerik ve bağlam analizi üçlü bir çerçeveye göre yapılandırılmıştır: Mekânsal pratikler, mekânın temsilleri ve karşı-hegemonik gücün temsili için mekânın sahiplenilişi. 2. Bölüm'de sunulan tarihsel genel bakış, 1960'ların ortaları ile 2010'ların başları arasındaki dönemi kapsamakta ve Türkiye'de grafitinin sosyo-mekânsal kullanımındaki büyük değişimleri ele almaktadır. 3. Bölüm'de, mekânın hegemonik ve karşı-hegemonik temsilleri arasındaki diyalektiği incelemek için, küresel kent olarak önemli bir görünürlüğe sahip olduğu 2010'ların başında İstanbul'daki mekân siyasetine dikkat çeken grafitiler bağlamsallaştırılmaktadır. 4. Bölüm, Gezi direnişine ve Taksim'in 2013'teki sahiplenilişine odaklanmakta ve görseller aracığıyla baskıya karşı direniş mekânını incelemektedir. Aşağıda, temel bulgulara dair ayrıntılı bir genel bakış yer almaktadır.

1960'lar ve 1970'lerdeki duvar ve grafiti kullanımını gösteren arşiv görüntüleri, toplum ve sokağın son derece siyasallaşmış atmosferine ilişkin kanıtlar sunuyor. 1960'ların ortalarında grafiti, siyasi muhalefetin, ekonomik hoşnutsuzluğun ve ajit-prop faaliyetin ifade edildiği bir medya alanı gibi kullanılmaya başlandı[219]. Grafitinin kriminalize edilmesi de aynı dönemde başladı ve ana akım gazetelerde görünürlük kazandı. Bunun kurgusal kanıtlarını sunan görüntüler, sol tandanslı süreli yayınlarda yayınlanan hiciv karikatürleridir ve bu durum, duvarlar ile basılı süreli yayınlar arasındaki ilişkinin günümüzde duvarlar ve sosyal medya arasındaki ilişkiye benzediğini ve bunların birbirlerinin uzantısı olduğunu da göstermektedir. 1968'de sol hareketin faaliyetleri yüksek bir zirveye ulaşmış ve grafiti devrimci sosyalistlerin anti-emperyalist ideallerine geniş bir görünürlük sağlamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. 1960'ların sonlarında, ajit-prop amacını taşıyan grafitiler büyük oranda üniversite kampüslerinde ve çevrelerinde yoğunlaşmış; 1970'lerde, solcu ajit-prop grafitileri, kullanımı diğer bağlamlara genişletmiştir (örn. grevler ve işgal edilen fabrikalar gibi). İşçi hareketinin yoğun mücadelesine ses vermeyi amaçlayan grafitiler yalnızca sloganlardan değil duvar karikatürlerinden de oluşmakta ve bu durum da solcu ajit-prop açısından grafiti ile grafik hiciv arasındaki ilişkinin önemini de göstermektedir. İşçi hareketinin önde gelen aktörlerine dair arşiv görselleri, Mayıs 1977'deki Taksim Meydanı Katliamı gibi karşı-devrimci girişimlerin acımasızlığına rağmen, devrimci sendikaların emek sömürüsüne karşı mücadelenin katılım açısından tarihi zirvelere

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[219] 'Ajit-prop', 'ajitasyon propagandası' teriminin kısaltılmış biçimidir. Devrimci sosyalist geleneğin, yazılı sözler (örn. sloganlar) dahil ancak bunlarla sınırlı olmamak üzere, çeşitli medya araçları vasıtasıyla sınıf bilincini ve kitlesel seferberliği büyütmeyi amaçlayan siyasal stratejisidir (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998; Lenin, 1902).

çıkmasındaki proaktif rolünün kanıtı niteliğindedir. Grafiti, kadınların işçi hareketine proaktif katılımına ilişkin olarak da, ekonomik bağımsızlık mücadelerini kanıtlıyor; ancak aynı zamanda erkeklerin kadınların üretken emeğini yeterince temsil etmediklerini de kanıtlıyor. Bu yüzden, grevdeki bazı fabrikaların duvarlarının, (aile) iç(i) duvarların uzantısını oluşturduğunu da gösteriyor. 1970'lerin sonlarında ise, hem aşırı milliyetçi propaganda hem de karşı propaganda grafitisi ortaya çıkmış ve bunların yayılmasıyla, duvarların manzarasının heterojenliği artmaya başlamıştı[220].

Bugüne dek, mekânsal kullanımlarına ve genel bağlamda mekân kullanımına ilişkin yaşanan dikkat çekici değişimlerin bir sonucu olarak, 1970'lerin sonları, muhtemelen grafitinin en çok yayıldığı dönemdi. Siyasi örgütlerin sloganları ve kısa isimleriyle mekânı imzalamaları artık yalnızca belirli bir siyasi davayı ya da bakış açısının propagandasını amaçlayan bir mekânsal pratik değildi, daha çok, çekişmeli bölgeleri işaretlemek amacıyla uygulanan bir pratik haline gelmişti. Yani düşman siyasi aktörlerin (örn. devrimci sosyalistler ile aşırı milliyetçi harekete mensup militanlar) şiddetli biçimde karşı karşıya geldikleri bölgeleri gözle görülür bir şekilde işaretledikleri bir pratik haline gelmişti. Kısacası grafiti, bölgesel kontrol amaçlı güç mücadelesinin bir göstergesine dönüşmüştü. Mekânsal kullanımlarında yaşanan böylesi bir değişim, sınırsız hale gelen çekişmeli bölgelerin ölçeğindeki bir değişimle birlikte gerçekleşmişti. Liseler ve üniversiteler gibi eğitim tesislerinin bulunduğu bölgelerdeki çatışmalar devam etmiş, ancak artık bunlarla sınırlı kalmamış ve tüm mahalle ve kasabalara yayılmaya başlamıştı. Bu bağlamda, 1978'de Kahramanmaraş'ta Alevilere yönelik pogrom vakasına ilişkin duvar yazıları, tarih yazımı açısından özel bir öneme sahiptir. Kahramanmaraş vakasında öldürülecek insanların evlerini işaretlemek amacıyla kullanılan grafiti, sadece etnik kökenli şiddetin yoğunlaşmasını değil, aynı zamanda aşırı milliyetçi harekete dahil militanların işlediği nefret suçlarının kasıtlı niteliğini de ortaya koyuyordu. Bu nedenle bunlara Protner tarafından önerilen (2018) bir terim olan 'mütecaviz duvar yazıları' demeyi öneriyorum[221].

1980 askeri darbesinin ardından uygulanan baskı, grafitiyi birden fazla şekilde etkilemiş;öncelikle, geçici bir süreyle sokaktan kaybolmalarına yol açmıştı. Sınırlı sayıda olmasına rağmen görsel kaynaklar ilk elden tanıkların yerel kolektif hafızasında yer alan senaryoyu doğruluyor: Ordu sıradan yurttaşları duvarları temizlemeye zorlamış; Yılmaz Güney'in ikonik filmi *Duvar*'da (1983) görüldüğü gibi, hapishanelerde hücre duvarlarına slogan yazmayı sürdüren siyasi mahkumlar da bunları silmeye zorlanmıştı. Bununla birlikte, siyasi mahkumlar, 1980'den 1983'e dek ülkeyi yöneten askeri rejimin sloganlarını da yazmaya

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[220] 'Karşı propaganda grafitisi', örneğin önceden var olan grafitilerin üzerine yazılar yazarak aşırı sağ propagandaya karşı çıkmak amacıyla yapılan grafitiyi belirtmek için önerilen bir terimdir.

[221] Protner (2018) tarafından kullanıldığı biçimiyle "mütecaviz duvar yazıları" terimi, 2015-2016 döneminde, Türkiye'nin Kürtlerin çoğunlukta olduğu illerdeki şehir savaşı alanlarında askeri güçler tarafından yazılan şiddet içerikli duvar yazılarını işaret etmektedir. Bununla beraber, bu çalışma, kullanımının farklı coğrafi bağlamlara ve tarihsel dönemlere genişletilebileceğini önermektedir.

zorlanmışlardı (Bozarslan, 2006). Bu dönemin duvar yazılarını 'intikam duvar yazıları' olarak tanımlamayı öneriyorum; baskı muhalif duvarları susturmayı başarmıştı ama sadece kısa süreliğine.

1980'lerin sonları ve 1990'ların başlarında, grafiti temelde esprili yazılar biçiminde sokaklara geri döndü ve basılı koleksiyonlarda belgelenmeye başlandı[222]. Tarih yazımı açısından bu döneme ait duvar yazılarının önemi birçok nedenden dolayı yüksektir. İlk olarak, darbe sonrası toplumun kamusal alanda ve mekânda mizahi bir şekilde yeniden siyasallaşmasına ilişkin yazılı kanıtlar barındırırlar ve bu yolla hem baskıcı iktidara hem de genel olarak hegemonik güçlere tepki göstermenin bir aracı olarak kendi kendine ironik tepki vermeye dair kanıt sağlarlar. Örneğin kadınlar tarafından yazılan ve yayınlanan ironik duvar yazıları, daha çok kürtaj hakkı ve cinsel yönelim özgürlüğü gibi ikinci dalga feminizmin ele aldığı konulara sokakta görünürlük kazandırmak amacıyla mizahı nasıl bir araç olarak kullandıklarına dair kanıtlar içerir. Bu durum göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, 1980'lerden itibaren yayınlanan basılı koleksiyonlar, sadece siyasi faaliyet amaçlı medya olarak duvarlar ile onlara görünürlük sağlayan basılı medya arasındaki doğrudan ilişkiyi teyit etmekle kalmaz, grafiti ve grafik hiciv arasındaki yakın ilişkiyi de doğrular. Son olarak, mizahi yazılardan seçilen örnekler, 'askeri gurur duvar yazıları' diye adlandırmayı önerdiğim grafiti aracılığıyla, duvarların militarist milliyetçiliğin dilini de konuştuğunu göstermektedir[223]. 1990'lardaysa tagging (etiketleme), sokak sanatı ve büyük oranda punk grafiti gibi yeni grafiti türleri de Türkiye'ye ulaşmıştır.

2010'ların başında İstanbul'da belgelediğim grafitilerin büyük kısmı Beyoğlu'nun güneybatısında, yani Taksim ve çevresinde (İstiklal Caddesi, Tünel Meydanı ve Tarlabaşı, Cihangir ve Galata mahalleleri) yer almaktaydı. Bu bölgede, grafitinin biçim, içerik ve üslup detaylandırmasında Kadıköy ve Fatih'e kıyasla daha yüksek düzeyde bir heterojenlik gözlemledim[224]. Taksim ve çevresinde mütecaviz duvar yazıları, intikam duvar yazıları ve duvar karikatürleri dışında, Sözlük'te (Glossary) listelenen türlerin tamamı ve şu alt türler mevcuttu: askeri gurur duvar yazıları, toplu imza grafitileri, culture jamming, duvar yazıları, çeşitli boyut ve detay derecelerine sahip hip-hop graffiti, devrimci ajit-prop amaçlı grafiti, karşı propaganda amaçlı grafiti, sağcı siyasi propaganda amaçlı grafiti, gündelik hayattaki mekânsal pratiklerle ilgili grafiti, yasal duvarları, punk grafiti, sokak şiiri, sokak sanatı ve sokak sanat aktivizmi eserleri.

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[222] Bkz. Metis Yayınları (1989); Çorlu & Tütüncü (1989); Üstündağ (1990); ve Özdemiroğlu (1990).

[223] Sözlük'te [Glossary] açıklandığı üzere, militarist gururu yansıtan duvar yazıları, tekrarlanan unsurlardan oluşur: Askerin adı, "o şimdi asker" cümlesi ve tertip numarası. Tertip numarası doğum yılı ve hizmet dönemini gösteren rakamlarla oluşturulur.

[224] Büğünlerde senaryo artık bu değil; ancak Taksim'in bugünkü duvar manzarası ile Kadıköy gibi yerler arasında herhangi bir karşılaştırma bu çalışmanın kapsamı dışındadır.

Gezi'den önce Taksim ve çevresindeki duvarlar, grafitinin siyasi kullanımında hem sürekliliği hem de yenilikleri gösteriyor, hem solcular hem de aşırı milliyetçiler tarafından siyasi faaliyet amacıyla bir araç olarak kullanılıyordu. Öte yandan, hem yeni aktörlerin varlığı hem de toplumsal hareketlerin gelişimi barizdi. Örnek olarak, LGBT+ haklarına ve toplumsal cinsiyet ve etnik kökene dayalı ayrımcılığın kesişimine dikkat çeken grafitiler, Türkiye'de üçüncü dalga feminizmin yükselişine tanıklık etmektedir. Yenilikler alanında, yalnızca normalleşmeyi değil, aynı zamanda metalaşmayı da içeren kayda değer gelişmeler gözlemledim. Yasal grafiti festivallerinin ortaya çıkmasının yanı sıra, grafitinin sokakları küresel kentlerin sahip olduğu estetiğin mühim bir bileşeni olan açık hava sanat galerilerine dönüştürmeye başladığını gözlemledim. Son olarak, Taksim ve çevresinde, mekân siyasetine dikkat çeken grafitiler de vardı. Sınırlı sayıya rağmen, mekânın üretimine yazılı ve / veya görsel bir şekilde dikkat çeken grafitilerin tarihyazımsal önemi yüksektir çünkü sıradan insanların mekânı nasıl temsil ettiğine ve daha doğrusu mekânın hegemonik temsillerine karşı çıkıp çıkmadıklarına ilişkin kanıt sunarlar.

İstanbul'daki mekân üretimine işaret eden grafitiler, 2010'ların başında Taksim'in duvarlarında çizilen ve / veya yazılan şehrin ne kadar çelişkili bir yer olduğunu gösteren bir portresiydi. Grafiti, mekânın çelişkili temsilleriyle ilgili kanıtlar sunarak, küresel ve yerel dinamikler arasında gerçekleşen etkileşimin, direniş coğrafyalarının oluşmasına katkı sağlama potansiyeli olduğunu düşündürüyor.

2010'ların başlarında, Taksim'deki duvarlar, küresel kapitalizme karşı çıkan yerel aktivistlerin eylemlerinin izlerini taşımaktaydı. Bana göre, Taksim'in 2013'teki sahiplenilişini bağlamı içinde anlayabilmek için, Direinistanbul'dan başlamak önemlidir. Direnistanbul, neoliberal kentleşmenin dayattığı ve Dünya Bankası ve Uluslararası Para Fonu (IMF) gibi uluslararası aktörler tarafından desteklenen eşitsiz gelişmeyi bağlamlaştırmak amacıyla 2009'da düzenlenmiş siyasi bir şenlikti. Logosu, duvarların çok katmanlı zamansallığına dikkat çekmenin yanı sıra, küresel ve yerel dinamikler arasındaki etkileşimin, direniş coğrafyalarının doğmasına katkıda bulunma potansiyelinin altını çizmekteydi.

İstanbul'un küreselleşmesine kaktı sunan uluslararası aktörlerin hegemonik mekânı temsiline karşı direniş, başka bir grafitiden, İstanbul 2010 – Avrupa Kültür Başkenti projesinin logosunun bir yeraltı reklamında (subverstising / culture jamming) da ortaya çıkıyor. Bu grafitide, İstanbul, Avrupa'yı Doğu'suna bağlayan bir sınır bölgesi olarak temsil edilmişti. Böyle bir sembolizm birden fazla biçimde yorumlanabilir. Birincisi, İstanbul'un bu projeyle tanıtılan Avrupa-merkezli ve öz-Oryantalist temsili, yani karşıtların karşılaşma yeri (örn. Batı/Doğu, eski/yeni, geleneksel/modern, geçmiş/çağdaş) olarak sunulması eleştirilmekteydi. İkincisi, gelen geçenleri yukarıda bahsedilen olayın tartışmalı yanlarına karşı dikkatli olmaları konusunda uyarma potansiyeline sahipti (örn., iç göçmenlerin zorla yerinden edilmesi). Üçüncüsü, 2010

inisiyatifince ön plana çıkarılan iç göç sorunlarının, 2016 yılındaki Türkiye ile AB arasındaki mülteci anlaşmasından çok daha önce sınır kontrolünün dışsallaştırılması konusunda geleceğe dönük bir eylem perspektifi çağrısında bulunduğunu düşündürüyor[225]. Özetle, İstanbul 2010 - Avrupa Kültür Başkenti'nin logosunu yeraltı reklamı yapan graffiti, kentsel kürelleşme ve göç alanlarında antikapitalist mücadelenin ortaklaşmasının aciliyetine dikkat çekmekteydi.

Mekân üretiminin çok katmanlı ölçeğine kanıt sağlayan bir diğer örnek ise, İstanbul'un neo-Osmanlı fethini, kentsel dönüşümün ve yenilenen gücün temsil mekânı üretime odaklanmış ve başarılı bir süreç olarak temsil eden bir duvar resmidir. Ulusal mirasın yorumlanmasındaki yenilenmeye dikkat çeken bu grafiti, İstanbul'un küresel bir şehre dönüştürülmesinin ulusal alanın dışında gerçekleşmediğini ve ulusal vurgunun azalması anlamına gelmediğini hatırlatıyor. Farklı şekilde söylersek, küresel neoliberal kentleşme kalıplarının, bunların uygulanmasını garanti eden ulus devletlerin gündemlerine iliştirilmiş gibi görülmesini öneriyor.

Tarihi mirasın yenilenmesi, tarihsel olarak etnik azınlıkların yaşadığı Taksim Meydanı'na bitişik bir mahalle olan Tarlabaşı'nın devlet öncülüğünde soylulaştırılmasına değinen grafiti örneği üzerinden de incelenmektedir. Tarlabaşı, 19. yüzyılın sonlarının üst-orta sınıf mahallesinden, 20. yüzyıl sonlarında Taksim'de iş arayan ama konut bakım masraflarıyla baş edemeyen hem iç hem de dış göçmenler için bir sığınma yeri haline gelmişti. Bu çerçevede, tarihi mirasın yenilenmesi, yalnızca kent yoksullarının küresel kentin gözbebeğinden kovulmasını değil, aynı zamanda sığınma biçimlerinin silinmesiyle, kolektif hafızanın değiştirilmesini de amaçlıyordu.

Kolektif hafızanın temsil mekânının toplumsal üretiminde taşıdığı önem, Taksim Meydanı ve Galatasaray Meydanı vakalarıyla ilgili grafitilerin incelenmesinden de ortaya çıkan bir konudur. Her ikisi de şehir merkezinin sembolik değerlerinin, yalnızca tavandan tabana planlama aracığıyla üst üste bindirilenleri değil, aynı zamanda tabandan mekân oluşturmasının kaynaklarını da içerdiğini gösteriyor. Taksim Meydanı örneğinde, Gezi'den önce belgelenen grafitiler, Cumhuriyet sembolizmi değil, 1 Mayıs alanı olarak taşıdığı siyasi sembolizmi de işaret ediyor. Taksim'in Uluslararası İşçi Bayramı'nın kutlandığı bir alan olarak taşıdığı sembolik değer, kolektif hafızayla ilişkilidir. Bununla birlikte Taksim, sadece yerel işçi hareketinin 1977 katliamından bu yana talep etmeye devam ettiği adaletin temsili açısından tartışmalı bir alan değildir; dahası, 20. yüzyılın başından beri 1 Mayıs kutlama alanıdır. Yani, işçi hareketinin temsil mekânı olarak Taksim'in taşıdığı sembolizm, Cumhuriyet'in değerlerinin kutlanması için kullanılan anıtsal bir meydan haline dönüştürülmesinden önce gelir.

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[225] 2016 yılında imzalanan mülteci anlaşmasında, Türkiye, iki söz karşılığında AB sınırını geçmeyi başaran sığınmacıların geri gönderilmesini kabul etmeyi taahhüt etti: Suriyeli mülteciler için geçici koruma sisteminin desteklenmesi amacıyla milyarlarca avro verilmesi ve Türk vatandaşlarının AB ve Schengen bölgesinde serbestçe seyahat etmesini engelleyen vize gerekliliklerinin kaldırılması - ki bu madde hâlâ uygulanmış değildir.

Galatasaray Meydanı örneğine gelince, bu yeri Cumartesi Anneleri'yle dayanışmanın gösterileceği bir buluşma yeri olarak temsil eden bir grafiti, bir kavşağın, toplanma özgürlüğünün ve uygulanan baskıya karşı sürdürülen direnişin temsil mekanına tabandan dönüşmesine kanıt teşkil ediyor.

Gezi ayaklanmasının patlak vermesinden önce, İstanbul'un merkezindeki direniş mekânının tabandan üretildiğine işaret eden son grafiti örneği, İstiklal Caddesi'ndeki tarihi bir binada yer alan Emek Sineması'na dair olandır. Salonun yıkılarak bir alışveriş merkezine dönüştürülmesine karşı çıkan bu grafiti, hem tarihi mirasın hem de kolektif hafızanın metalaştırılmasına karşı verilen mücadelenin, kentsel müşterekler için yürütülen mücadeleye potansiyel olarak nasıl katkı sağlayabileceğinin kanıtını sunuyor.

2013 yılında, mekânın hegemonik ve karşı-hegemonik temsilleri arasındaki diyalektiği, Gezi direnişiyle zirveye çıktı. Bu çalışmada, Taksim'de çekilen çok sayıda fotoğraf yardımıyla, kent hakkı mücadelesinin hükümet karşıtı bir isyana dönüştüğü süreç izlenmektedir. Gezi Parkı'nda Mayıs ayı sonlarındaki protesto kampında belgelediğim grafiti, hükümet ya da dönemin Başbakanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan karşıtı açık bir muhalefet ifadesi taşımıyor ve kimi aktivistler açısından Gezi'nin kentsel müşterekler için verilen bir çevresel adalet mücadelesi olarak başladığını ortaya koyuyor. 1 Haziran'da polis Gezi/Taksim'den çekildi ve alan, uygulanan baskının acımasızlığına ve medya sansürüne hem öfkeyle hem de kendi kendine ironik tepki gösteren binlerce sıradan insan tarafından sahiplenildi. 11 Haziran'da Taksim Meydanı'nın şiddetle boşaltılmasına dek, Gezi Parkı, Taksim Meydanı ve çevresi geçici olarak otonom bir bölgeye dönüştü (yani Taksim Komünü).

Bu çalışma, Taksim'in geçici sahiplenilişinin mekânsal niteliklerini incelemek için, 'küresel sokak' kavramının kullanılmasını önermektedir. Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, küresel sokak, kent hakkı mücadelesinde eylem mekânının bir temsilidir (Sassen 2011 ve 2013b). Gezi/Taksim örneğinde, sembolik değeri yüksek olan kamusal alan, birden fazla dinamiğin sonucu olarak, küresel bir sokağa dönüştü: (1) olağanüstü kullanım, yani normalde yasak olan bir kullanım (örn. Gezi Parkı'nda ya da Taksim Meydanı'ndaki Cumhuriyet Anıtı'nı çevreleyen alanda kamp yapmak) yoluyla yeniden bölgeselleştirme; (2) öz-savunma amaçlı tahkimat; (3) dayanışma yoluyla, Türkiye'deki diğer direnişteki şehirlerle yerel ötesi bağlılık; (4) kamusal alanın geçici olarak ele geçirildiği diğer tarihi vakalara ulus-ötesi bağlılık (örn. Tahrir Meydanı); (5) kolektif bakım ve toplu anma gibi pratikler aracılığıyla mekânın müşterekleştirilmesi. Maddi anlamda Gezi/Taksim, bir revir, bir sebze bahçesi, dayanışma mutfakları ve aynı zamanda karşı anıtlar gibi yeni ve geçici tesisler içeren birçok farklı işlevle kullanılan bir mekâna dönüştü. Küresel sokak olarak Gezi/Taksim, kent hakkının mücadelesi için gereken mekânsal direnişin sistemli bir bakış açısından anlaşılması gerektiğini açık biçimde göstermekteydi. Farklı bir

deyişle, 2013 direnişi, Gezi/Taksim'i, karşı gücün çok ölçekli dayanışma ağının stratejik bir düğümü haline getirdi.

Gezi direnişinin toplumsal bileşimine gelince, grafiti, küresel sokakta çokluğun var olduğunu gösteriyor. Toplu imzalar ve sloganlar hem eski hem de yeni toplumsal aktörlerin proaktif rolünü kanıtlıyorlar (örn. devrimci sosyalistler ve LGBT+ hareketin aktivistleri). Bunun yanı sıra, grafiti, Gezi Parkı'nı savunan ve direnişine katılan sıradan insanların, polis vahşetine, Taksim projesine ve hükümetin bireysel özgürlükler alanında artan müdahalesine karşı çıkmak gibi çeşitli ve birbiriyle bağlantılı nedenlerle direnişi gerçekleştirdiğini gösteriyor. Gezi direnişinin grafitileri, alkol tüketimine getirilen kısıtlamalara verilen tepkiyi ortaya koymasının yanı sıra, hükümetin yürüttüğü kürtaj karşıtı propagandaya karşı kadınların verdiği tepkiyi de gözler önüne sermektedir. Hetero-patriarkiye karşı mücadelede grafitinin siyasi kullanımıyla ilgili olarak, Gezi vakası bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. Feministler, grafitiyi iki kampanya bağlamında kullandılar: Bunlardan birincisi polisi ve hükümeti hedef alan yazıların büyük kısmını karakterize eden cinsiyetçi ve küfürlü dile, diğeriyse tacize karşıydı.

Mekân müştereklştirmesi için gerçekleştirilen kolektif korumaya ve bakmaya ilişkin bu tarihi deney, şiddetli biçimde bastırıldı. Lefebvre'in terimleriyle söylemek gerekirse, "absorbe" edildi (2014, s. 374). Mekânsal anlamda direniş mekânının "absorbe" edilmesi, barikatların kaldırılması ve 11 Haziran günü Taksim Meydanı'nın şiddetli biçimde boşaltılmasıyla başladı ve bunu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi ve Cumhuriyet Anıtı gibi son derece sembolik yerlerdeki grafiti, pankart ve bayrakların kaldırılması izledi. Neticede, Taksim Meydanı bir çatışma alanına dönüştü ve parkı savunmak amacıyla yeni barikatlar kuruldu; fakat 15 Haziran'da park şiddet kullanılarak yeniden boşaltıldı ve geçici süreyle kamuya kapatıldı. Buna karşın, "absorbe" edilmeye karşı mekânsal direniş pratikleri sürdü. Örneğin, ilk kez Gezi Parkı'nda düzenlenen kolektif karar alma meclisleri mahallelerin parklarına taşındı ve bu, toplumdaki radikal değişim yönlü seferberlikte gündelik yaşam alanının toplulukçu ölçeğinin geleneksel önemini gösteren bir süreçti.

Uygulanan baskı, duvarları de etkiledi. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk portreleri hariç, Gezi Direnişi'nin grafitileri griye boyandı. Sansüre verilen çeşitli tepkiler, sistematik olarak "absorbe" edilmesine karşı direniş çabalarını da ortaya koymaktadır. İlk olarak, bazıları gri çizgilerin üzerine yazılmış olan seçili örnekler, Gezi'nin dilini karakterize eden mizaha dair daha fazla kanıt sunmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, gökkuşağı merdivenleri, artan otoriterliğe karşı direnişin bir sembolü haline geldi; çoğalarak yerel-ötesi, eşzamanlı ve eşzamansız olmak üzere çok ölçekli bir boyuta ulaştı. 2013 yılında ilk olarak çeşitli yerlerde (hem İstanbul'da hem de diğer şehirlerde) çoğaldılar. 2021 yılında Ankara'daki ODTÜ öğrencileri, İstanbul Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'ndeki akademik özgürlük direnişi ve polis baskısına karşı bir dayanışma eylemi olarak, kampüsteki merdivenleri boyamışlardı. Gökkuşağı merdivenleri örneğinde gösterildiği üzere, direnişin

sembolik temsil mekânının sahiplenilişi, sembolik temsil zamanının da sahiplenilmesini gerektirir. Bu bağlamda, Gezi Direnişi'nin grafitileri, sembolik temsil zamanının sahiplenilişinin, onu takip eden ifade ve toplanma özgürlüğüne yönelik artan baskı dalgasına karşın, Gezi direnişinin en mühim sonuçlarından biri olduğunu göstermektedir.

Özetle, bu çalışma, grafitinin mekân odaklı araştırmalarda tarihsel kaynak olarak kullanılabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Arşiv ve sokak etnografik araştırmalarıyla toplanan birincil kaynaklardan geniş bir örneğin gösterdiği üzere, grafiti, toplumsal değişimi amaçlayan mekânın toplumsal üretimini ve özellikle sıradan insanlar tarafından Taksim'in sahiplenilişine yönelik girişimlerini aşağıdan tarihselleştirmeye katkıda sağlama potansiyeline sahiptir. Lefebvre'in kuramı ve Sassen'in kavramları üzerinden incelendiğinde, grafiti iki temel bulguyu daha öne sürüyor: İlk olarak, duvarlar konuşur ve özellikle susturulduğunda direnişi yankılar. İkinci olarak, hegemonik güçle alay eden grafiti tarihsel açıdan grafik hicivle ilişkilidir ve bu durum, örneğin grafiti ve grafik hiciv arasındaki yakınlık ilişkisinden başlayarak, mekânsal direnişin nesiller ötesi yönleri hakkında daha fazla ve işbirliğine dayalı araştırmanın mümkün ve hatta ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir.

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