

7

OCCUPY GEZI PARK

The Never-Ending Search for Democracy, Public Space, and Alternative City-Making

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On May 31, 2013 a small-scale protest in Istanbul against the destruction of a public park to make way for the construction of a shopping mall transformed into a nationwide uprising. The peaceful demonstrations in support of this desire to protect Gezi Park and its trees were met by brutal attacks from the police. News of the events spread through social media by individuals calling for solidarity and resistance. Many who had never before been politically active breached their long “silence” by pouring into the streets, parks, and squares. The protestors raised a variety of issues, ranging from the state’s neoliberal top-down policies regarding cities, nature, culture, and agriculture, to policies on women, fertility, belief, education, economy, labor, and so on, issues and voices that had long been suppressed by the government through its exclusionary, homogenizing, and marginalizing discourses and practices. By breaching their silence, the protestors raised demands for freedom of speech, access to public spaces, justice, inclusive democracy, and pluralistic politics. Dissent against politics practiced during the period of AKP government became the focus of this resistance and occupation. The social and political practices that arose from those spaces of occupation and resistance would eventually shape new spatial and political understanding.

Throughout the protests, different space-making and political practices popped up and then faded away, both in and beyond Gezi Park. The design community questioned and experimented with its own role, tactics, methods, and tools within the context of a new urban social movement which demanded the right to the city and to democracy. However, the processes of the creative exploration of true democracy and of city-making generated by “Occupy Gezi” was suppressed by the government through a combination of police brutality and the use of media that distorted the movement’s meaning in the eyes of the general public. After Occupy Gezi, all urban space became militarized; protestors and activists were marginalized and suppressed and the physical marks of the movement were erased from both Gezi Park and Taksim Square. However, despite its ephemeral nature, Occupy Gezi has come to influence different fields and different groups in their search for true democracy, public space, and city-making.

Focusing on the case of the Occupy Gezi Park movement, this chapter explores the reclaiming of public space by an “unsilenced city” and the politics generated by social and spatial occupation practices. It analyzes the political and spatial dialectics of the Gezi protests and occupation at the global, national, and local scales. The chapter further examines the political, social, and spatial crisis that occurred before, during, and after the urban resistance movement. Lastly, this chapter traces the influences of the movement on the political, social, and spatial practices and suggests that the Occupy Gezi Park movement continues to evolve in different ways. While some aspects

fade away entirely, the movement has not ended. It has influence on both the physical and political space in different, albeit fragmented, forms.

The Emerging Dialectic between Politics and Space: Urban Resistance in the Context of “Neoliberal Urbanism”

The recently emerging dialectic between politics and space, at least in the case of the Occupy Gezi Park movement in Turkey, is part of a phenomenon defined as “planetary urbanism” or “neoliberal urbanism.” This phenomenon has occurred across a broad, global context and promises the creation of stable, developing economies. It offers a traditionally liberal concept of democracy based on the creation of consensus and has thus influenced the political landscape of many countries (Mouffe 2000). In this system, opposition should be sacrificed for the sake of the majority; politics and political practice are for the concealment of truth, and political appearances are also an illusion (Rancière 1999). The system of traditionally liberal democracy has constructed an intricate process to selectively enforce silence in societies. With the power of monist politics, decisions regarding every realm of life are made according to a singular mind-set, and are always top-down. Meanwhile, “construction” and urbanization become both the source and the facilitator of capitalist development. The alliance between the state and capitalist enterprise starts to alter places at any scale regardless of territory or characteristics. This transcends the physical limits of cities, and through privatization and deregulation imposes the infrastructures, socio-spatial conditions, cultures, and ecologies of capitalism as planetary phenomena (Harvey 1996, Amin and Thrift 2002, Brenner 2013). From a spatial perspective, this situation has resulted in monolithic power and the imposition of a particular imagination over spaces and cultures, thereby erasing the general public’s connection to their own right to imagine, contest, or practice spatiality.

The political, economic, and spatial exclusion and homogeneity created by global capitalism have in turn created unrest in societies. This unrest has raised a variety of issues neglected by ordinary political systems and has provoked the eruption of urban resistance movements for “the right to the city” that have emerged all over the world (Brenner 2013). These movements, particularly the Occupy movement, have given a voice to the silent masses, and have deciphered and connected all the symptoms of capitalism that infiltrate every single aspect of life (privatization of nature, genes, water, seeds, urban spaces, and so on) and which generate increasing levels of inequality (Shepard 2012). Moreover, the movements have created truly public spaces by making dissent and difference visible (Arendt 1998, Rancière 1999, Lorey 2014), which stand in contrast to the landscapes of neoliberalism or planetary urbanism. The inclusive power of these urban resistance movements has brought together disparate and previously mutually exclusive groups (Pell 2014). These movements have produced diverse landscapes and enabled an autonomous remaking of parts of the city by ordinary people. In addition, they have created a fruitful platform for the critical engagement of cultural production (including diverse practices from political philosophy to planning as well as design and art). Consequently, they have produced a new political imagination, opening forms and practices of subjectivization and have engendered dissent towards real politics and the political (Rancière 1999).

Neoliberalism’s Touch on Turkey: Urbanism, Cultural Politics, and Public Space in Istanbul

Peck and Theodore (2012) emphasize the fact that there is no singular formula for how neoliberalism will adjust to different geographical contexts since it gains particular shapes according to the cultural and political peculiarities of every location to achieve the political legitimacy it requires. After the 2001 economic crises, the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or Justice and Development Party) came to power by promising political stability and economic development through the implementation of

IMF-crafted policies to cut public spending, control wages, significantly roll back agricultural subsidies, and privatize state-owned enterprises, lands, and natural resources. Most importantly for the expansion of capitalist accumulation, rent-seeking and speculative construction initiatives constituted the backbone of the AKP's political economy (Patton 2006). In 2013 alone, 36.2 million square meters of land were opened for construction (Turkstat 2014). The decision-making process for urban projects was centralized, transferring the authority of local municipalities to central state ministries. The Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI) began to play a major role in urban regeneration (Lovering and Türkmen 2011). Meanwhile, an emerging Islamic bourgeois started to exercise a hegemony through the use of media power and the opening of private schools and universities. In Turkey, neoliberalism became legitimized through Islamic conservative codes (Tugal 2007, Blad and Koçer 2012). This led to a significant decline in civil liberties and political rights for non-AKP groups and brought Islamic social interventionism and concomitant restrictions on secular lifestyles (Gürçan and Peker 2015). These developments created a massive authoritarian biopolitic which tells people how and where they will live, what they will eat and drink, how many children they should have, and what they should learn and believe. This is a hegemony over every possible aspect of biological, material, and intellectual existence; every landscape was realigned to the phenomenon of planetary (neoliberal) urbanism. With changes to the law (Butunsehir Yasasi, or Whole City Law 2013), all villages fell under urban jurisdiction; agriculture within rural settlements was banned, common land was privatized, and capitalistic urbanism infiltrated the very heart of every village. In addition, over 500 rivers and creeks were diverted for hydroelectric power plants (Enerji Atlasi 2015), thereby diverting water away from everyday use, the agricultural production of individual farmers, and from nature itself.

In such a context, Istanbul became the most intensive theater of the emerging political and economical framework of the government. In particular, the gentrification of housing districts and cultural centers, the occupation and privatization of public spaces through an increasing number of shopping malls, gated communities, and theme parks, and the intensive semiotization of urban landscapes as viewed through the lens of the government's ideology changed Istanbul immensely. The urban fabric that previously consisted of complex authentic cultural and natural networks of formal and informal developments started to dissolve (Kurtuluş 2005, Adaman and Keyder 2006, Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008, Karaman and Islam 2012). The unsterile and dynamic aesthetics of everyday urbanism that were constantly being produced by different subjectivities were replaced by artificial ones reflecting the singular ideology of the government and the meanings given to them by the developers.

Alongside the everyday piecemeal alterations of urban space in the city, the government announced megaprojects to be implemented without public approval and without any consideration of the social, cultural, and ecological phenomenality of a place or the well-being of society. These included a third bridge and a new airport, a new satellite city, Channel Istanbul, a meeting area in Yenikapi (a vast coastal infill area far away from the city center, devoted to mass meetings and political party gatherings), a grandiose mega-mosque on the Çamlıca Hills, and the Taksim Pedestrianization Project. Any criticism of the projects was immediately and publically discredited, and alternative ideas were marginalized.

The Spatial Context of Occupy Gezi: Taksim Square and Gezi Park

In the early 19th century, there were almost no settlements in the Taksim area. *Taksim* means "allocation" and it took its name from the water distribution chamber completed in 1839 during the reign of Mahmut II. An artillery barracks and courtyard were constructed between 1803 and 1806 and required rebuilding and renovation on several occasions due to fires and damage from uprisings (Kubilya 1994). As an extension of the Grand Rue de Pera, the district was developed under the influence of a non-Muslim bourgeoisie and foreign inhabitants. With the expansion

of the city, new residential areas for Muslim populations, infrastructure, and public buildings were created and the area gradually became more diversified. By the 19th century it had become “Ottoman cosmopolitan” (Çelik 1993) and at the turn of the 20th century Taksim was an urban juncture connecting newly developing areas with the historical peninsula. After WWI, Taksim Square became an important natural locus for the Kemalist regime, which was looking to create spaces to disseminate Western ideas and discourses on modernism, republicanism, civic rights, progress, and secularism (Baykan and Hatuka 2010). In 1940, the military barracks and the Armenian cemetery were demolished and a public park, Gezi Park and Esplanade, was planned according to the modernist urban principles of the time by French urbanist Henri Prost (Bilsel 2010).

A giant multipurpose cultural center and opera house, the Atatürk Cultural Center, was added in 1969. In the 1970s, Taksim Square became part of the real democratic political terrain by serving as a meeting place for dissent, in particular highly organized protest demonstrations by the Turkish Left. After a massacre of protestors on May 1, 1977, International Labor Day, Taksim became the symbol of a working-class struggle for justice and democracy in Turkey (Baykan and Hatuka 2010). Taksim Square, Gezi Park, and its environs gradually evolved into a rich social place with diverse everyday practices and political events for a variety of people, particularly minorities, largely because of its hard-won secular and liberal atmosphere. In such a context, redeveloping the Taksim area carried much deeper meanings for then-Prime Minister Erdoğan. The government’s tactics were to leave the Atatürk Cultural Center, Gezi Park, and Taksim Square to decay and to ban all political protest. In 2012, the Taksim Pedestrianization Project was declared. This included the rebuilding of the military barracks as a shopping mall and luxury residence in the neo-Ottoman style on the Gezi Park location, the demolition of the Atatürk Cultural Center, and the construction of the Taksim Republican Mosque, a History of Religions Museum, and massive traffic interventions on the major routes around Taksim Square. Meanwhile, the district municipality would attempt to ban outdoor seating for local restaurants and pubs, and new regulations were imposed to limit alcohol consumption. According to Gürcan and Peker (2015, p. 72–73), the Taksim project was a conservative attempt to eliminate Taksim as a center of entertainment, leisure, and political protest.

With its social, architectural, aesthetic, and urban characteristics, and also the apparent level of its design quality, the project became the focus of criticism from local inhabitants, professionals, intelligentsia, and artists. It also attracted the close attention of organized groups from several counter-urbanism movements. As the proposed military barracks would function as a shopping mall and luxury residence, the whole public park would be privatized. It would also carry a neo-Ottoman aesthetic, thereby erasing the modernist landscape of the Early Republican Era. The vast hardscape of its surroundings would be ornamented with green, tulip-shaped patches similar to other landscape design examples in the Gulf Region. Traffic circulation would be put below street level, dividing and separating the streets, and narrowing the pedestrian sidewalks. Furthermore, a futuristic, orientalist mosque and a “religions center” would be erected. Through these arrangements, pedestrian circulation would be limited and taken under control, public spaces would be privatized, and access would be limited. The park’s natural habitat would be erased, and consequently there would be no place left for political demonstrations and meetings.

Soon after the announcement of the project, Taksim Platform, a civic organization supported by neighborhood foundations and professional groups, was established to express the public values of the Taksim area and Gezi Park, to expose the negative outcomes of the project to the general public, and to constitute a participatory organization within which artists, professionals, intellectuals, and local inhabitants could collectively imagine the future of the area. In this context, urban planning and design professionals explored different ways to become involved in the process by inventing new social practices.

Through various events and studies, Taksim Platform attempted to act as a constructive agent by using positive language focused on spatial, social, and ecological values rather than criticism

aimed at the government or the municipality; it wrote letters to the mayor of the greater municipality of Istanbul to invite him for a Sunday walk in the park (Taksim Platform 2012); well-known artists, writers, and parliament members adopted the trees of the park which had been marked to be cut down; and a Taksim symposium was organized to discuss the characteristics of the project and the future of the area with experts. With “Kayıtdışı” workshops and site installations, students went to the Taksim area to highlight how pedestrian circulation would be affected by the project (Arkitera Mimarlık Merkezi 2012). A foundation called Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All) began to organize weekly festivals in Gezi Park in order to enrich the social and cultural life and attract people’s attention to the park. This was a key way the civic organizations challenged the government’s media discourse, which trivialized the role of the park (Herkes için Mimarlık 2012). Civil organizations appealed to the Ministry of Culture and the Higher Board of Protection of Cultural Heritage, countering municipal decisions with expert reports presented at legal platforms.

Despite all these efforts, Prime Minister Erdoğan did not wait for the outcome of the judicial process. During the launch of the third bridge construction, he stated: “Whatever you do, we made a decision for that place, and we will do it” (Erdoğan 2013a). On May 27, construction vehicles entered the park, trees were uprooted, and urban and environmental activist groups started to gather and encamp in order to stop the destruction. The uprooting of a few trees unleashed the accumulated frustration felt against the socio-ecological traumas occurring throughout the landscapes of Turkey (Figure 7.1).



FIGURE 7.1 The encampment area in Gezi Park; the motto on the banner reads, “Do not touch my neighborhood, my square, my tree, my water, my soil, my house, my seed, my forest, my village, my city, my park!”

Source: Burcu Yiğit Turan

Occupy Gezi Park: Reclaiming and Exploring “Public Space,” “Democracy,” and “City-Making”

On the morning of Friday, May 31, the encampments of the activists were destroyed, the police evicted people from the park using tear gas, and the park itself was sealed off. The police then obstructed a press conference organized by professional and civic organizations. A sit-in by around 600–700 people began in Taksim Square, but this was soon met by the police force and several protestors were severely injured. This was the limit for the silent masses. Through social media, the ongoing incidents were communicated to the wider public while the mainstream media reported nothing. Most of the social media messages focused on the violent suppression of the peaceful demonstrations, and after leaving their schools and workplaces, thousands of people from all over Istanbul started to march to Gezi Park shouting “enough is enough.” Those who could not go encouraged the others by banging together pots and pans on their balconies and out of their windows, shouting “resist Gezi, resist Turkey!” The city was no longer “silent.”

By the morning of Saturday, June 1, people had occupied Gezi Park and the Taksim area after brutal struggles with the police, and similar events had spread and escalated into nationwide anti-government protests. All over Turkey, millions of people occupied open urban spaces to express their demands for democracy and their rights to their own cities and nature. These events led to a broader realization of how profoundly a society needs public space and that the citizens should have the right to access it.

For Yörük and Yüksel (2014), the social profiles of the people involved in the protests and occupation activities in Gezi Park could not be explained by an examination centered on social class or a singular ideological tendency, but rather through an understanding of the diverse political and cultural orientations that became united against the urban, social, environmental, economic, and cultural policies of the government. Young people and women constituted the majority of the protestors; their education level was very high, with over 40% having university and higher degrees. Significantly, many protestors would later state that they had never been involved in a political demonstration before (Yörük and Yüksel 2014).

As soon as the protestors reoccupied the park, they cleared away the spent tear gas canisters and other garbage. A volunteer group of medical doctors established a medical room, and volunteer veterinarians started to check the injured street dogs and cats. In the middle of the park, people started to leave food to help each other. Much of the sociopolitical discourse at the park revolved around this sentiment: It was all because the people were deprived of freedom of expression. Gezi would be the opposite. Everyone could express his/her thoughts, feelings and demands. Within a short time there were small-scale occupations of the park that became full of encampments by various groups, including the Ecology Initiative, Taksim Solidarity, the Gezi Park Beautification Foundation, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, LGBT movements (LGBT Bloc, Kaos LG), People’s Houses, the Youth Union of Turkey, Çarşı and other football fan clubs, feminist groups (the Socialist-Feminist Collective and the Women’s Coalition), the Animals’ Rights Movement, and many other groups, artists, intellectuals, and thousands of individuals. All made their own individual narratives or created their own humorous expressions. No one interfered, and everyone became visible. An alternative world and a united community had taken shape under the trees of Gezi Park.

The emergent landscapes of Gezi Park evolved informally and according to the changing needs and agendas of the protestors. The whole Taksim area was truly pedestrianized as the traffic was blocked by barricades. The damaged part of the park was repaired and trees and flowers were planted. The Ecology Initiative established an orchard to grow vegetables to attract attention to the issue of food justice. A spot was marked as a free speech corner. Armenian protestors

highlighted a forgotten heritage of the park, the Armenian Cemetery, which had been bulldozed while the park was being built. Tents were erected and a library was set up to circulate books to be read during encampments. Many other spontaneous spatial organizations were set up to meet functional needs or to send political messages alongside art installations, graffiti, banners, and posters. During its two weeks of existence, forums were organized for people to express their thoughts and reach decisions on the issues of everyday life in the park or on the much broader political issues regarding the protests (Figure 7.2). In the forums, communication, management, negotiation, and decision-making processes and methods were explored to achieve true democracy.

Individuals became politicized through the subjectification of themselves and others by learning how to socialize across different perspectives. Yogis and yoginis organized yoga sessions in the mornings, artists gave concerts, ballet dancers performed, and pianist Davide Martello came to play for the mothers of protestors who had come to protect their children. Experts and communities established informative circles to talk about contemporary problems, particularly urban issues and human rights, and the members of the Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All) foundation helped with the temporary spatial interventions of the people and documented the emergent structures under the theme of #Occupy Gezi Architecture (Gündoğdu 2013). There were art courses for children. Food was collected and cooked in the park and commercial activities were banned. The street children were included and given food, shelter, and friendship and



FIGURE 7.2 One of seven forums established in Gezi Park discussing the terms of negotiation with Prime Minister Erdoğan one day before the brutal evacuation by the police, June 14, 2013

Source: Burcu Yiğit Turan

were integrated in the events. An independent television channel, Çapul TV, was established, since the mainstream media initially did not break their schedules to report this major protest and police actions in the center of Turkey's most populous city. Millions of tweets and Facebook posts spread the word of Gezi to the whole world (Demirhan 2014). The people of Gezi Park became a "whole," and Gezi Park became more than a physical entity through these organic articulations of people (Gambetti 2014), spaces, performances, actions, and expressions. The hope was that people would make the city, democracy, and public space their own by realizing their dreams in the utopian world of Gezi as a critique of the existing socio-spatial order.

After Occupy Gezi Park

On Saturday, June 15, the police evacuated the park with excessive force on the orders of Prime Minister Erdoğan (Erdoğan 2013b). On Sunday, June 16, the European Union Integration Minister Egemen Bağış stated, "Whoever comes to Taksim will be treated as a terrorist" (Bağış 2013). In the following weeks the protests gradually faded away. Nationally, 10 people were killed and over 8,000 were injured (Amnesty International 2013). The processes of the creative exploration of true democracy and of city-making generated by Occupy Gezi were suppressed by the government through a combination of police brutality and the use of mainstream media, in which the movement's meaning was distorted in the eyes of the majority. Protestors and activists were marginalized and suppressed. The whole Taksim area became militarized and the municipality erased all signs of occupation from the landscape of Gezi Park through the homogenization of its aesthetics and by rolling out ready-made grass. The gravestones of lost protestors were instantly removed.

However, despite its ephemerality, Occupy Gezi has influenced different fields and different groups in their search for true democracy, public spaces, and city-making. Occupy Gezi was not only a material entity fixed to a singular space. The experiences, knowledge, emotions, and solidarity prevailed. People established "park forums" in their own neighborhoods, sticking with the same principles that were developed in Gezi. The forums connected with each other via the Parklar Bizim (Parks Are Ours) blog and communicated to establish possible collaborations for urban, social, and political productions (Parklar Bizim 2013). National and international social and intellectual forums were developed to highlight and discuss critical issues. Professionals, medical doctors, sociologists, teachers, architects, etc. established their own forums to explore how best to fit into their new roles and emerged with new perspectives provided by Gezi. Academic meetings and events were organized to better comprehend the phenomenologies of Gezi and to further build on them. The largest LGBTI parade in Turkish history was organized on June 30, 2013 on Taksim Istiklal Street in answer to a call by the LGBTI block of Gezi Park, which invited the whole of society to stand with them against oppression, violence, and discrimination. Despite the high risk of police brutality, thousands of people attended the parade with the motto of "There is no emancipation alone: either all together, or no one" (LGBT Blok 2013).

The freedom of expression in the park paved the way for emerging empathy among very different groups. A retired man painted a famous flight of steps in the Cihangir district in rainbow colors to give a message of solidarity, and all over Turkey, steps started to be painted in similar fashion. During Ramadan, the Anti-Capitalist Muslims, hand-in-hand with secularists, organized "Earth Tables" on Istiklal Street to stress "unity against discrimination," "diversity against the homogenization of society," "simplicity against vanity," "fertility against scarcity," and "sharing against self-serving" (Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar 2013). After being inspired by Gezi, several inhabitants of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood squatted in an empty building and filled it with artistic and intellectual content (Doğanoglu 2013). Architects, urbanists, and designers realized

how spatial design is a social act capable of producing complex phenomena. *XXI Magazine of Architecture, Design and Space* (published in Turkish) devoted two special issues to Occupy Gezi Park: *Gezi Parkı Mimar(sız)lığı* (The Architect(less) Architecture of Gezi Park) (July/August 2013) and *Yeni Bir Mimarlığa Doğru mu?* (Towards a New Architecture?) (September/October 2013), in which architects and designers expressed their fascination with the remaking of public space and democracy in its true sense by ordinary citizens, and also described their attempts to find new roles for themselves after Occupy Gezi Park. The Taksim Platform turned itself into a new group, Istanbul Hepimizin (Istanbul Belongs to All of Us), and prepared a manifesto for the local elections of March 2014. Left-wing opposition party members brought the messages of Gezi into their parties. Criticizing the absence of localness in urban politics, the group called on all the candidates from all political parties to work according to the principles mentioned in their manifesto, and emphasized the citizens' rights to all aspects of the city (Aktar 2015).

The expression of dissent, once represented in city squares and streets, in Taksim and on Istiklal Street in particular, found new unexpected spaces. For instance, football matches became protest events. Football fans sent political messages through mass media with chants and banners until ways to silence them were found.

Conclusions

Starting with dissent against the destruction of a public park in the middle of Istanbul, the Occupy Gezi Park movement became a uniting platform for all groups who stood against government policies on many aspects of life. People realized that to take back control of their lives and of their living environments it was essential to reassert themselves politically regardless of how absent they may have been from politics. Gezi Park became a truly public space and for two weeks enabled people to express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and dreams about the politics and just city-making. Novel forms of direct democracy were explored and experimented with. Different groups established strong empathies and alliances, raising awareness about the injustices that they experience. People produced various socio-spatial practices based on conflict, negotiation, and consensus. An urbanism emerged within the agonistic patches of landscape which were appropriated by different groups. Consequently, new social and political identities were constituted by those in search of a means of relating themselves to the social context through their professional skills and agencies.

This two-week interruption of the general silence and rehearsal of democratic politics and city-making showed us the social and political potential of public space. Furthermore, it proved that there should be a foundation of agreement on freedom of "expression" (verbal, bodily, spatial, artistic, etc.) that will enable true pluralism. This pluralism is not a stable one, however. As Mouffe (2000) stresses, it is agonistic. Furthermore, through explorations of novel forms of direct democracy, Occupy Gezi Park proved that ordinary people have the capacity to remake the city and the politics with their autonomous, conflicting, but negotiable acts of insurgency. Within these acts, a fascinating, ever-changing landscape emerges with a multiplicity of meanings related to the subjective heritage, everyday culture, lifestyle, memories, and dreams. Consequently, this landscape makes space both public and political with its semiotic and physical incompleteness, and it also has a complexity that stands for social and ecological justice against the landscapes of neoliberalism.

On the other hand, however, this short interruption of political silence in Turkey reinvigorated the historical paradox of the conflict between hegemony and anti-hegemonic formations. Today, monist politics has consolidated and brought massive suppression of free speech and the media. This situation has drastically reduced any opportunity for political influence, academic

knowledge production and dissemination, and socio-spatial practices. In addition, the commercial development project that will destroy Gezi Park is still continuing. Public dissent either physically or in cyberspace is now managed through regulations, court cases, city permits, police practices, and media diversions. Therefore, and as witnessed in the aftermath of many other movements such as Tahrir Square, Los Indignados, or Occupy Wall Street, there has been no immediate transformative influence of Occupy Gezi Park on the current political system or the institutional city-making process in Turkey. On the contrary, there has been an increasing erosion of freedom, rights, and participation in decision making. Despite this erosion, the Occupy Gezi Park resistance left a rich heritage of experience and sentiment, particularly for urban planners and designers who are learning how to mobilize against specific injustices in their own realm. Therefore, its legacy is not directly connected with its physical ephemerality or with any particular political group formation. The Occupy Gezi Park movement continues to multiply; its different aspects continue to evolve in different ways. While some aspects have faded away entirely, the movement's influence has not ended. It will reclaim both the physical and political space in many different albeit fragmented forms until the silence is once again interrupted by voices raised by a unifying call for democratic politics, city-making, and public space.

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