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Rethinking Public Space:
A Critical Analysis of Urban Movements in
the Age of Digital Technologies
The Case of the Gezi Park Movement in Istanbul

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Abstract

Active resistance to disconcerting urbanisation and privatisation processes has been commonplace for decades. Public space, the chief space of resistance, has often been the target of market-oriented renewal processes and governance. As a new phenomenon, the recent resistance movements to these urbanisation processes are mostly centred in re-politicised public spaces and activated by chaotic networks of digital devices. Through a process that re-associates and redefines the city, this phenomenon gives rise to the main inquiry of this thesis: how does the interplay between the city and urban movements, politics of space and new means of mobilisation, including digital technologies, redefine the meaning of public space and the understanding of urbanity?

The thesis scrutinises the political aspects of urban practices through the analysis of re-politicised public spaces in a specific temporal, spatial and urban context. The thesis suggests that to re-think the notion of public space – the core problem of this research – an in-depth understanding of urban reality is necessary. Thus, the study aims to revisit and rethink the transformation of public space, starting from the foundational works of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas. Focusing on the transformational dynamics of public space found in an ultimate geography of resistance, the thesis casts doubts on the validity of key elements of perception and conception of public space and consolidated urban theories.

The spatial and temporal context of this study is based in a series of events that occurred in May 2013, in the centre of Istanbul. At that time, a substantive protest was triggered by a plan for the commercial redevelopment of a historical urban park. Unlike other social and political uprisings, which use urban spaces for general political purposes, the focus of this struggle was the urban space itself. This research specifically looks at the resulting Gezi Park Movement; a movement situated at the digitally supported nexus of multifarious parties of the local geo-political landscape. The thesis examines and emphasises the urban dimensions of the Gezi Park Movement and how its situated-ness differentiated it from other social movements concerned with nation-state politics.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of this research is based on the works of Henri Lefebvre, particularly his approach to critical urban theory, the production of space and the right to the city. The form, function and structure of the Gezi Park Movement is explored through a critical urban theory approach and supported by an empirical investigation that includes interviews and observations. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, the study unveils the concealed power relations, situated meanings and contextual complexities related to the rise of the Gezi Park Movement. Lastly, this thesis proposes a radical shift in the way that we perceive and conceive the notion of public space through urban practices and theories, developing a theoretical foundation that is not based on universal and hegemonic knowledge and theory, but rather relies on a place-based understanding of context, difference, discourse, power relations and the emerging digital mechanisms that are transforming cities on an unprecedented scale.
This thesis is dedicated to my mother,
And to those who lost their lives during the Gezi Park Movement.
Acknowledgements

At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Dermott McMeel, for his support, advice and friendship during my doctoral research over the past five years. He has constantly encouraged me to remain focused on achieving my goal as well as inspired me to explore the unknown. His boundless patience, confidence in my abilities and his friendship empowered me to have my own voice throughout this research, something that I am most grateful for.

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1.0. A Personal Note

I acknowledge that cities, their streets and their life including their anomaly, brutality, unpredictability, silent beauty, fears and hopes and lastly their struggles, taught me the meaning of urbanity, urban design and architecture more than any academic book or any individual has. This research is rooted in a very personal experience, in a struggle that I lived in the streets of my city, in my family and social networks. With no doubt, this study is the result of collective memories, my past, and the resistance of those citizens who are fighting for a different city and for a better future.

1.1. Introduction

Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideology.

(Lefebvre & Enders, 1976, p. 31)

The Orwellian urban picture in 1984 (Orwell, 1949), the grim and patronizing city of control, is often and rightly over-shadowed by the powerful description of technological surveillance and social fears that chase the characters of the book even during their most private moments. However, the homogenized and segregated city as a bleak and powerful background of many art works, including the novels of Orwell (1949), is vital and eccentrically existential in both the description of dystopia and the clandestine dream of utopia. The revolt of a character against the controlling and the controlled space of the city is the turning point of many stories (Camus, 1991; Frank, 1967; Kafka, 1925). The instant that the inhabitants of the city, fictional and imaginative, real and rational, seize the moment and the reality of life and struggle for the space or in the space is when urbanity will flourish. This research is about this very moment of urbanity and the production of space as a political process.
Unfortunately, the bleak urban picture depicted in Orwell's books (2008, 2014) and others' works (Calvino, 1993; Chekhov, 1999; Frank, 1967; Hrabal, 1993) is resonating more and more with the reality of contemporary cities. "1984 not an instruction manual [sic]" has become a very popular slogan in many grassroots movements, including the protests against digital censorship, users' metadata accessibility and other anti-surveillance movements (Daphi, Lê, & Ullrich, 2013, p. 66). In other words, the dystopia of 1984 is unfolding before our eyes (Giroux, 2015). The dystopia described in the Orwellian novels, and experienced in our daily life, is the driving force of many movements struggling to reclaim the city in search of the promised utopia. This research occupies the intersection of these layers; the pervasion of dystopian oppression by the state's power apparatus, the spectacle of controlled consumption, the emergence of the deviated space of digital social networks and the revolt of the inhabitants against the state’s urban ideology and homogenising urban processes.

The interrelationship between urban space, inhabitants and technology is a fundamental aspect of urban geography. Our life, our survival and wellbeing, is entangled with spatial relations and technological advances and our ability to use and appropriate them in order to experience life to its maximum potential. Therefore, this relationship becomes central to this study and this research establishes its context based on the triangle of space as a social product, inhabitants as the main agents of production of space and technology as a mediator, a machine and a space that transforms the urban society while being produced by it.

To analyse, question and rethink1 the theoretical concepts and hypotheses of this thesis, the Gezi Park Movement has been chosen as the focal concern of the research. The Gezi Park Movement occurred in May 2013, in central Istanbul. Then, it caught the attention of many urbanists and scholars internationally, at the very same time this research commenced. As the movement emerged as a place-based, geopolitical and interconnected urban-digital phenomenon, it has been considered as a relevant and significantly reflective case study for this thesis.

The critical concept of public space, which is intertwined with the notion of the city, will be the theoretical and spatial foundation that brings the three elements of this thesis together. In other words, this thesis rethinks the public space, not only as the locus of urban life, but also as the conceptual interconnector between space, inhabitants and technology. This clarifies how the topic of this research is articulated:

a) Rethinking public space: the initial question of the thesis relates to the perception of space, particularly public space. This research argues that the meaning of space and the way it is produced must be challenged in different contexts. This inquiry aims to depict that certain temporal and spatial conditions that produce contingent, hybrid and hyper heterogeneous urban geographies require a differential understanding of public space in which undoing the ideological understanding of the production of space and the redefinition of public space

1 Words will be italicised when the author wishes to place personal emphasis on that particular idea or term.
based on difference and the complexity of the geographical context are central and essential tasks.

b) Critical analysis of urban movements: urban movements are not a new phenomenon, and this research does not attempt to particularly investigate them, as they have already been extensively studied (Castells, 1983; Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, & Mayer, 2003; Leontidou, 2006, 2010; Mayer, 2003, 2009; Pickvance, 1985, 2003; Schuurman & Schuurman, 1989). Yet, the transformation of urban movements due to the emergence of digitally augmented geographies of resistance and the shift in urban power structures, require a fresh and divergent understanding of the role of urban movements in redefining the meaning of public space and the urban reality of contemporary cities as a whole.

c) The age of digital technologies: technology is the third element of the topic, and of the urban problematique, and hence a crucial factor in defining the critical questions. Events like Occupy Wall Street, the Gezi Park Movement in Turkey, and on-going or predicted urban conflicts in Eastern Europe, South Asia, Latin America and so on continue to bring questions of public space and digital technology into sharp relief (Coyne, 2010; Hall & Pfeiffer, 2013; P. N. Howard & Hussain, 2011; McQuire, 2008; W. J. Mitchell, 2002). Therefore, this thesis considers the role of digital technologies, and specifically the digital social networks, in impacting specific moments of the production of space, such as the emergence of hybrid spaces of resistance and counter public spheres in relation to physical urban spaces and public places.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is based on critical urban theory developed by Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003) and his critical approach to urban phenomena. Three domains of his work shape the theoretical framework of this research. The first and the utmost critical domain is his foundational approach to the concepts of urban, space and everyday life. These concepts are debated in most of Lefebvre’s books, yet my analysis of urban phenomena centres on Production of Space (1991b), Writing on Cities (1996), and The Urban Revolution (2003).

The specific approach of Lefebvre (2003, p.40), discussed explicitly in The Urban Revolution, calls for a “unitary” thought and theory, something which differentiates the theoretical framework of his work and this thesis from science-based and fragmentary urban studies. The unitary theory of Lefebvre, as the first and main domain of his critical urban studies, is a theory that approaches the space and the city as a whole and rejects the fragmentation of urban life and urban knowledge. This is reflected in the structure of this thesis and its theoretical framework.

The other two domains of Lefebvre’s works are more specific, yet not fragmented from each other as discussed before. One is the production of space and how it is related to the main elements of the

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2 The term problematique refers to a set of global complex problems or research questions (Balacheff, 1990) and some authors such as Rittel and Weber (1973) refer to such problems as wicked problems.
thesis. *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 1991b), and its conceptual triad that considers the space as perceived, conceived and lived, is central and crucial to the theoretical framework and the entirety of this thesis. Within this analysis, the third domain appears as the concept of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). This theoretical framework also provides a critical perspective for analysing the impact of digital networks on the urban transformation of public space, particularly within the context of the production of spaces of resistance and urban movements.

To investigate the possibilities projected by this inquiry, digital technologies are considered as a part of the urban reality, rather than a separable fragment plugged into the space. Hence, the digital networks are treated as an urban phenomenon and are scrutinised by Lefebvrian analytical tools and critical urban theory. To address these issues in-depth, Chapter 2 is exclusively concerned with the framework and urban concepts used in this thesis.

### 1.3. The Research Gap

The morphology and architecture of the public spaces of the city and general urban spaces have been affected and reshaped by social and political powers throughout history (Weber, Martindale, & Neuwirth, 1958). Hence, it is inevitable that urbanists and architects must seek to understand the new social and political dynamics of the city and how new social interactions and technologies form the urban life of citizens and produce or annihilate spaces. This subchapter looks at the complexity and totality of the constantly changing and emerging digitally infused urban spaces, identifying several gaps that are underexplored, intentionally undermined or intellectually oppressed due to fragmented knowledge, lack of rigour within academic research, political biases and also technical constraints.

This research is an epistemological investigation into the realm of urban theory that questions the universal knowledge of urban notions, aiming to rethink and understand the notion of public space and its spatial dimensions within a specific temporal, spatial and cultural context of Istanbul. In other words, this is a theoretical investigation into an urban phenomenon situated in Istanbul, in which its context and history, heterogeneous geography and antagonistic urban reality require a new approach. This approach inevitably challenges the universally accepted urban concepts, which are widely used to address such phenomena including the Gezi Park Movement.

The first element in this research that needs to be examined thoroughly is the theory and the meaning of public space. The limited research on the meaning of public space in Istanbul is often based on universalising theories and western notions of public space, the public-private dichotomy and the definition of citizenship and democracy, which are rooted in continental modernity and the hegemony of economic liberalism (Alanyali Aral, 2008; Arslani, Unlukara, & Dokmeci, 2011; Baykan & Hatuka, 2010; Eckardt & Wildner, 2008; Ekdi & Çıracı, 2015). It is evident that even universalising urban theories and philosophies regarding the notion of public, which are entrenched in the Greek agora, the Enlightenment project and western modernity, are incapable of addressing the perpetual transformation of contemporary western society, urban reality, the differences and the antagonistic dimensions of urban life as cities are increasingly presenting themselves as the loci of heterogeneity and a refuge of difference and the othered.
In addition to the shortcomings of the universal theories discussed above, within the literature of public spaces, there is a specific gap that is strongly connected to the ideological hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge that has intentionally produced, and re-produced an ideological, political and cultural gap within urban knowledge. This gap is not easily discerned; it is a concealed, reduced and dominated part of the knowledge that is directly and indirectly overshadowed by the western education system, political powers, and state institutions, and their “empty signifiers” (Foth, Choi, Bilandzic, & Satchell, 2008; Gunder & Hillier, 2009, p.2; Houghton, 2010; Srinivasan, 2004).

The urban knowledge of Middle Eastern cities, specifically the knowledge of the public, private and urban spaces of such complex environments, diverse demographics and eventful histories, cannot be explained through universal urban theories. It requires its own specific and contextualised studies, which this research aims to contribute to. It intends to develop a different knowledge that is based on difference itself, and on the locality and the specific urban reality that produced it. The relationship between state-led urbanisation processes, everyday urban practices, and the digitally augmented public space is deeply embedded within the context of Istanbul and its history. The lack of a situated and contextual understanding of the process of production of space and the re-politicisation of Istanbul, and its central public spaces including Gezi Park, is the critical and central gap this research addresses.

1.4. The Research Objectives and Questions

This research broadly aims to investigate how a specific interrelationship between a public space, an urban movement and digital technologies is shaped, lived, understood and will lead us to new theoretical definitions and spatial possibilities for the context of Middle Eastern cities, and specifically Istanbul. Although, this objective can result in rethinking the notion of public space both within the heterogeneous context of the urban Middle East and other cosmopolitan cities, producing a universalising theory is not the intention or within the scope of this thesis. Indeed, the research challenges the idea of universal urban concepts as they may fail to grasp the contextual particularities of any given urban reality.

1.4.1. Objectives

The thesis investigates three distinct but interconnected urban spaces of the Gezi Park Movement and the context of Istanbul: the abstract space of urban practices, the lived space of urban resistance and urban movement and finally, the complex network of inhabitants, devices and spatial practices which are increasingly mediated by digital networks. Through this process some key urban phenomena and processes are studied. Considering the Lefebvrian theoretical framework, three specific objectives – according to the conceptual triad of the production of space and Lefebvre’s analysis of abstract and differential space – are defined. Further explanation and details of each objective are provided as follows:
The main objective of this thesis is to examine the credibility of notional and universal understandings of public space and develop a contextualised understanding of this concept as the locus of difference and resistance against the urban and spatial ideology of the state. This thesis shows that state-led urbanisation in Istanbul, the poetic lived space of inhabitants and the global digital sphere, all collide to produce a differential urban condition and reality, which necessitates an in-depth and place-based re-thinking and exploration of urban theories.

In addition, the study aims to demonstrate the particular relation between urban processes imposed by state and urban movements – particularly focusing on the case of urban regeneration developments in Istanbul, the Gezi Park Movement and the retrospective impact of urban struggles on the production of new spatial possibilities in the city of Istanbul. This objective addresses the need to understand the relationship between the representation of space of the state (and the planner, designer and politician) and representational spaces of inhabitants, explaining the dynamics of the abstract space of design and homogenisation of the city, leading to the emergence of resistance in the form of differential spaces and urban movements.

Digital technologies played a significant role in the Gezi Park Movement. Thus, it is one of the study’s objectives to reveal the role of digital technologies in redefining the networks of the political public space of Istanbul, the Gezi Park Movement and the urban inhabitants. Through an analysis of the digital information fabric and digital networks, the relationship between the geographies of resistance, political public space and urban inhabitants is studied to reveal the hybridity and complexity of emerging digitally infused spatial practices of urban daily life.

1.4.2. Research Questions

The theoretical concerns of this research raise manifold and complex questions that must be thoroughly analysed. The nature of these objectives is multidimensional as it seeks to understand the complexity of different urban layers and phenomena. The following questions clearly address and interrogate the theoretical and lived complexities of the research objectives discussed above.

First question:

- How do socio-political processes in specific urban geographies, like the Gezi Park Movement of Istanbul, relate to the universal definition of public space and urban concept?

This question regards the objective of examining the credibility of urban theories and definitions of public space for understanding the new situated political and social context of a city like Istanbul, which is increasingly influenced by a recombinant condition of geographies of resistance, networked digital spaces and political spaces. Before understanding the latter urban phenomenon, there is an essential need to question the role of universalising urban theory in understanding such hybrid and differential spaces and processes, which occur within heterogeneous and multifaceted cosmopolitan cities.
Second question:

- How can place-based urban movements, like the Gezi Park Movement, go beyond the disruption of the state’s urbanisation processes and produce new possibilities, utilising the emerging and complex nexus of digital and physical spaces?

This question goes beyond the universal notion of public space and focuses on the processes – urban movements and the lived experience of public space that activates and enables such spaces as the political and heterogeneous heart of the urban reality. It addresses the complexities of urban movements and representational spaces, differential spaces, the appropriation of public spaces and resistance against the dominating abstract spaces of the state and its oppressing power structures.

Third question:

- How are digital technologies impacting the role of public space, its meaning, political powers and its spatiality during specific socio-political conditions in a city like Istanbul?

Finally, questions regarding the role of digital technologies in daily urban life, in interconnected urban networks and particularly in re-politicised spaces are addressed to deliver a consistent and in-depth analysis of the relationship between the three urban phenomena that this thesis is concerned with. All these questions refer back to the main objective of the thesis, challenging the validity of our established urban knowledge and standardised urban theory that fails to treat different geographical, cultural and temporal urban processes differently. Thus, the question of how we think and rethink space is central and fundamental to this thesis.

1.5. The Research Methodology

In a broad sense, the methodology of this study is inductive and qualitative, aiming to challenge and evaluate the understanding and conception of an urban phenomenon. The methodology is mainly based on Critical Discourse Analysis. This analysis is applied to 12 interviews with academics, students, activists and participants of the Gezi Park Movement. The interviews took place in Istanbul and throughout November and December of 2014. In addition to the interviews, ethnographic observations and informal conversations with the interviewees and other locals during the field trip are considered as supplementary information to the formal semi-structured interviews. In order to further enhance the understanding of the role of digital technologies in this urban process, an experimental mapping of Twitter, as the main digital social network used during the Gezi Park Movement, is also incorporated into the research methodology.

This research is designed within critical urban theory framework with a focus on a socio-political urban transformation in the context of Istanbul. The case study is approached through a qualitative methodology that is appropriate to social research, ethnographic studies and urban investigations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). To collect data about the social dynamics of a specific phenomenon in which activities, numbers and accurate information cannot be officially recorded, or are censored due to political reasons, qualitative methods are more appropriate as they reflect the quality of power.
structures and underlying meanings of complex processes. Hopf (2004, p. 203) argues that in “studies of the social and political orientations of different population groups, or studies of access to professions and of professional socialization”, qualitative interviews are more common as there is more flexibility and opportunity to understand the perceptions and interpretations of a phenomenon.

After a thorough theoretical exploration and a critical examination of different theories, I decided to approach the case study from multiple angles. As mentioned above, the power dynamics, the meanings and the ways the Gezi Park Movement and its spatiality can be interpreted, conceived and lived are investigated through three sets of data. The first is the discourse produced by 12 interviews, in which each interview lasted around one hour. Most of these interviews were followed by extensive and detailed, yet informal and off the record, conversations. To examine the geography of the movement and how it was reflected in the interviews, after the field research, an experimental mapping of the digital social network of the Gezi Park Movement – on Twitter – was conducted, aiming to establish a relationship between semiotic narratives of the movement’s participants and the digital geography of the resistance. The relationship between these sets of data, or the triangulation of data, is explained in Subchapter 3.11.

The analysis of the data appeared to be a key and complex part of the research methodology. Initially, I decided to conduct Critical Discourse Analysis on the semi-structured interviews with participants of the movement and inhabitants of Istanbul. Critical Discourse Analysis is a set of approaches that are based around the “semiotic dimensions of power, identity politics and political-economic or cultural change in society” (Wodak, 2011, p. 38), which are also related to the topic of this research. As Louise Barriball and While (1994, p. 329) maintain, qualitative interviews and discourse analysis “are well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers”.

As the interviews were conducted in English, the second language of both the researcher and the participants, Critical Discourse Analysis was applied with caution as some of the meanings and intricate power relations could have easily been lost in translation or ignored due to lack of knowledge about some contextual or historical events, or merely because of political bias. Therefore, the analysis of the interviews has been incorporated with the informal oral history of the interviewees, narrated mostly after the interviews and over cups of tea and coffee, and presented outside the formal framework of the interviews. My own personal knowledge and memories of urban movements in the Middle East also assisted me with decoding the discourse and the accounts of interviewees, as many issues that they referred to, were related to local cultural and traditional practices.

To respond to the research questions, this thesis utilised a methodological triangulation, largely using three aspects of Lefebvre’s (1991b) critical urban theory: the production of space, the right to the city and a critique of everyday life. The combination of the Critical Discourse Analysis on semi-structured interviews, the ethnographic and oral history narratives and an interpretive analysis of the geo-spatial data of digital social networks, reflects the conceptual triad of this thesis, and how the space can be lived – as the lived experience of the movement by the interviewees, perceived as the narrative of the
spatial practices and ethnographic narratives, and conceived as to how an urban phenomena is mapped, visualised and verbalised through the technology, the theory and the thesis. This research finds that normative methodologies may be incomplete for capturing the totality of the fluidity of the phenomenon in question and the urbanity of Istanbul and hence, the methodological triangulation is an essential and critical way of re-thinking public space in that specific context. This critical issue is discussed further in Chapters 3 and 7.

1.6. The Case of the Gezi Park Movement and Istanbul

One of the most important events in the recent urban history of Istanbul, which is particularly related to this research, is the Gezi Park Movement. In it converged all the elements that this thesis is aiming to address: the merging of lived urban life, the representational space of resistance, the different urban inhabitants and digital social networks at play and the physical, social and cultural transformation of a highly contested public space – Istanbul's Gezi Park and Taksim Square. Hence, how the different actors, dimensions and processes of this movement shifted and reproduced the urban spaces of Istanbul is the main focus of discussion.

The Gezi Park Movement first appeared in the international media on the 28th May 2013 (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013). However, the protests had started a few days earlier, projected on digital networks such as Twitter (Göle, 2013b). The symbol of the campaign became a woman dressed in red being tear-gassed in Gezi Park. In a few hours, her photo went viral on Twitter and attracted international attention from the media.

Spatial transformations have aimed to modernize and regenerate the historical city of Istanbul throughout its history. The recent intensity of neo-liberal planning policies has caused increasing antagonism between groups of people and the local and central government of Turkey (Erkip, 2000). These policies have imposed market-driven processes to attract national and international investment, making Istanbul a city that is continuously having its social reality, urbanity and morphology redefined (Dinçer, 2011). Policies and strategies specifically created to govern this change started in the 1980s, mainly rooted in imported European planning visions with the aim of modernizing Turkey (C. Keyder, 2005; Kuymulu, 2013). The cumulative effect of these policies resulted in various forms of urban dissent and uprisings, including, later, the Gezi Park Movement.

According to many media outlets, the Gezi Park Movement started with a protest by environmental activists against the bulldozers that were excavating the western fringe of the park as part of the first phase of the renewal programme. This was the catalyst of a much wider movement that had been fermenting for a long time as a response to new urban policies (Elicin, 2014). Initially, the Gezi Park Movement was a simple urban uprising, like many mobilisations against the commodification and gentrification of urban spaces within Istanbul. However, the way the movement spread within the city, becoming a movement against the totality of urban transformations, is what makes it distinctive. The Gezi Park Movement was a convergence of many other urban movements and uprisings that have
occurred in Istanbul since the 1980s, and had very old roots in 19th century urban reforms and regulations (Lelandais, 2016).

This thesis uses the case of the Gezi Park Movement as an urban reality in which particular theoretical concepts can be reconsidered. This research aims to rethink public space, the urban realm, and the city of Istanbul, through a critical analysis of the Gezi Park Movement, where distinct and interpenetrating moments in the production of space emerged and were distinguished through accentuating the differences and projecting them through digital social networks.

1.7. The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has ten chapters. This chapter, the introduction, draws a broad picture of the thesis, while identifying the gaps in existing knowledge, the research questions and the possible outcomes. Other chapters are directly reflective of theoretical concepts, the research questions and the interrelationships among the questions, the theoretical concepts and the urban reality under focus. The last four chapters bring all these matters together, while Chapter 9 aims to provide a unitary way of rethinking the notion of public space and a discussion on understanding a specific urban reality and process that is transforming the face and meaning of contemporary cosmopolitan and heterogeneous cities, with particular reference to the reality of Istanbul.

Chapter 2: Rethinking Urban Knowledge

This chapter identifies the theoretical framework that this thesis is structured and based upon. While many of the key theoretical concepts are introduced in this chapter, there is a discussion on why a number of other theoretical approaches are explicitly avoided or challenged. This chapter depicts the theoretical journey of this research and why it matters in the context of the events discussed in the thesis. It reinterprets the theoretical concepts and explains how these can further form or oppress the contemporary knowledge of urbanism, resulting in theoretical, practical and social consequences that are increasingly felt in our contemporary society.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

This chapter will explicitly discuss how the Gezi Park Movement and the interconnected complex urban networks that have been unearthed by different forces can be understood from different perspectives and through various methods. This chapter explains how the research data is collected, coded, and analysed. In this chapter, a multi-methods qualitative methodology is discussed, which includes semi-structured interviews, the mode of transcription, and coding. Subsequently, Critical Discourse Analysis is introduced as the central approach to the analysis of interviews and a specific method to carry out such analysis is explained.

Chapter 4: Rethinking the Public

To create a critical and theoretical foundation for analysing public spaces, the necessity of the public and its conditions and characteristics must be understood. This chapter aims to scrutinise the significance, relevance and the meaning of public space within the specific temporal and spatial
context of this thesis. This analysis is built upon the theories of Arendt (1998) and Habermas (1989) and the relevant scholarly work that revolves around their theories (Calhoun, 1992; Canovan, 1985; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Goode, 2005; Habermas, Crossley, & Roberts, 2004; Kellner, 2014; Low & Smith, 2013; D. Mitchell, 1995; Sennett, 1977, 2000a). Prior to analysing the impacts of digital technologies on the urban transformations of public spaces, the theoretical background of cyber public spaces (Dean, 2001) was studied, and the hypothetical transformation of public spaces within the nexus of the digital and urban context is exposed and discussed. Finally, all these theories, definitions and assumptions are considered and challenged within the context of Istanbul, investigating the adoptability and applicability of universal theories and urban concepts – which are mainly rooted in the industrialisation and urbanisation of the west – to the complex and rather contradictory urban reality of Middle Eastern cities.

Chapter 5: Urban Movements

This chapter establishes a framework not only to define the role of urban movements in our society, but also to define the path towards a better understanding of urban movements and how they interpenetrate the production of space and the production of the city. The chapter discusses the initial question of this thesis: how urban is an urban movement and what the distinct and unique characteristics of an urban movement are in relation to the production of political space and the transformation of urbanity? Furthermore, it discusses the conflict between the abstract space of the state and how an imbalance in the process of production of space can result in the emergence of differential and resistance spaces through daily life practices and urban struggles.

Chapter 6: The Gezi Park Movement

This chapter establishes and explains the context and history of the Gezi Park Movement, before examining the controversies and exploring the lived experience of the movement through an analysis of the interviews, observations, and digital information fabric of the movement, along with personal experiences. This chapter is solely dedicated to the Gezi Park Movement, not as an event, but as a deeply rooted urban phenomenon that was born during the process of modernization in Turkey in the 19th century. This is reflected in the transformation of current urban life in Istanbul, and will continue by shifting the emerging social and physical boundaries of a future Istanbul.

Chapter 7: The Critique of the Methodology

The chapter elucidates on the methodological critique of this research. Before analysing the interviews and before presenting the concluding discussions of the thesis, this chapter argues that there is an essential need for a reflexive critique of the theoretical approach, the methods and the framework of the thesis. This chapter is based on three aspects of the methodology, providing a critique of the Lefebvrian framework, a discussion on this research’s methodology and methods and, lastly, the possibilities concealed within this self-reflexive methodological analysis. This chapter aims to further challenge the universalising theories and methodologies in understanding differential
contexts and urban phenomena, which are entrenched in multi-layered historical and conflicting processes, like the Gezi Park Movement.

**Chapter 8: Analysis**

This chapter focuses on the findings of the fieldwork, including observations, formal interviews, and informal conversations. The Critical Discourse Analysis of the interviews and the brief urban ethnographic explorations of Istanbul are central to these findings as they provide a foundation to examine the theories and assumptions discussed in previous chapters. To provide a cohesive form for the reader, this chapter is structured based on the theoretical framework of Lefebvre and his urban analysis. It includes a main section reflecting on distinct but interpenetrating moments of the production of space; that is, spatial practice (perceived spaces), representations of space (conceived spaces) and representational spaces (lived spaces) and how these moments are reflected in the movement, interviews and the urban reality of Istanbul.

**Chapter 9: Discussions**

This chapter analyses and summarises the findings presented in the previous chapter through two closely interrelated discussions that respond to the main research questions of the thesis. These discussions further challenge the universal urban theories that have been shaping our understanding of urban form, urban society and the urban reality of transforming cosmopolitan cities. Lastly, within these discussions, I offer a different framing and understanding of the notion of public space to reflect the contemporary agonistic, unregulated and unbounded dimensions of urban movements and augmented geographies of resistance against state-led urbanisation processes.

**Chapter 10: The Conclusion and the Legacy of an Urban Movement**

In this chapter, the main research objectives and questions are reviewed. Through a brief analysis of the findings and discussions, this chapter presents the possible answers to the main research questions and argues why some of the research questions, methods and theoretical concepts are not fully answered, or are understood to be redundant or irrelevant. As part of the concluding points, the chapter also reflects on the problematic practical, theoretical and ethical concerns and challenges that the research has faced and will be facing. Finally, this chapter draws a picture of possible paths, not only for future research, but also for rethinking urban space, urban life and how we can transform the othered cities like Istanbul.
1.8. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the existing understanding of cities, particularly in the context of the cosmopolitan Middle East, may be incomplete, hegemonic or universalising, and thus, requires rethinking. Accordingly, a summary of the gaps and problems within the existing body of knowledge and practice in relation to urban movements and digital technologies has been included. In order to understand such complex processes, a methodological triangulation of Critical Discourse Analysis of interviews with the movement’s participants, interpretive analysis of ethnographic conversations and a geographical and mapping experiment of the digital geography of resistance during the Gezi Park Movement is considered and briefly described in this chapter. Overall, the core objectives are concerned with two phenomena and are discussed as follows: firstly, the systematically removed and misunderstood identity of the public space in the production of urban spaces and its nature and characteristics in the specific political and social realm of the heterogeneous and hybrid Middle Eastern cities like Istanbul; and secondly, the emergence of differential spaces both in Istanbul and its digital sphere that are changing not only the physical fabric of the city but also the meaning of its urban reality, is a critical phenomenon that needs to be considered in rethinking the notion of public space.
2.0. Introduction

This is the fact that intellectual “illumination” has its limits, pushes aside or ignores some things, projects itself in certain places and not others, brackets certain pieces of information and highlights others. In addition, there are things we don’t know and things we are unable to explain. (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 30)

In 1978, David Harvey suggested a critical framework for the analysis of urban processes under capitalism. Although this framework, similar to many other theoretical frameworks in urban studies, is valuable, insightful and highly regarded within academia, through my lived experience of urban daily life in Middle Eastern cities, I have questioned what Harvey (1978, p. 101) presents as the “interpretation of the urban process on the twin themes of accumulation and class struggle [original emphasis]”. The socio-political context of cities, has not fundamentally changed since Harvey (1978) presented his analysis framework, we are still within the “urban process under capitalism”, yet the form, the meaning and the lived experiences of some specific cities, and geographies are not only different, other forces than capitalism, like authoritarian urban governance, populism, technologies and emerging forms of resistance have changed these cities significantly in the last few years. Thus, establishing a relevant framework which is contextualised, place-based and challenging the applicability of old and universal frameworks is a critical task, required further attention.

This chapter presents six specific theoretical concepts that outline the theoretical framework. The first section is centred on the meaning of the urban, both as a concept and as a process, and why the
etymology of the notion of urban matters in this research. The second subchapter explains the application of critical urban theory and its role as the theoretical foundation of this study. Following the critical urban theory, two of the key concepts in Lefebvrian thought will be introduced and discussed; the production of space and the right to the city. These two concepts are focal points in the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement. The last two theoretical matters are the critique of urban knowledge and the theoretical framework itself. One section is a critique of urban knowledge from a Lefebvrian point of view, elaborating on his concept of blind fields, and the second critique revolves around Middle Eastern cities, the need for a place-based understanding and the questioning of universal knowledge.

This thesis approaches the matter of urban reality and urban space from two different angles: theoretically and experientially. In other words, how it is understood within the theory and how it is lived. The theoretical framework of this thesis is predominantly centred on the works of Henri Lefebvre and others’ elaboration and studies of his theories (Brenner, 2000, 2009; Brenner, Jessop, Jones, & Macleod, 2003; Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2008, 2012; Merrifield, 2006; Purcell, 2002; Smith, 2010; Stanek, 2011; E. Wilson, 1995). Three of his theoretical works play a significant role in structuring, identifying and analysing the problems, concepts and discussions of this thesis. These works are The Production of Space (Lefebvre, 1991b), The Urban Revolution (Lefebvre, 2003) and Writing on Cities (Lefebvre, 1996).

Before elaborating on the specific theoretical concepts that are deployed in this thesis, it is crucial to draw a rough picture of the research progress and how its theoretical orientation has changed. The initial concern in this study was the transformation of public space, and hence there was a great emphasis on the public dimension of public space rather than its urban meaning. This required an in-depth investigation into the matter of publicness, based on the theories of Hannah Arendt (1998) and Jürgen Habermas (1989) as key theorists of the public and public space. Through the course of the research and the investigation of Habermas’ and Arendt’s critiques and their shortcomings in explaining contemporary urban phenomena, the significance of urban reality and urban space was highlighted. Therefore, a shift in the focus of the research towards the understanding of urban space rather than specific public space was inevitable. Although the theories of Habermas and specifically Arendt were indeed insightful and enlightening, the study required a further, deeper critical analysis of urban transformation of such spaces. Subsequently, Lefebvre (1991b) and his noteworthy work, The Production of Space, became the key and the spine of this thesis’s framework to address some of the complex aspects of the transformation of cities, and in particular Istanbul.

2.1. The Urban – Etymology

The urban is defined as the place where people walk around, find themselves standing before and inside piles of objects, experience the intertwining of the threads of their activity until they become unrecognizable, entangle situations in such a way that they engender unexpected situations. The definition of this space contains a null vector (virtually); the cancellation of distance haunts the occupants of urban space. (Lefebvre, 2003 p.39)
The initial question that arose from the studies and the literature is that of the meaning of the word *urban*. To date there has been little agreement on what it means and how it is implemented. It may seem too obvious or naïvely dull to explain what *urban* means (Sayer, 1984). However, this assumption has resulted in misinforming, misleading and vague studies on urban phenomena that indeed are not *urban* per se (Cuthbert, 2006). Prior to clarifying the role of critical urban theory and how it locates the discipline of urban design in the political sphere of the city, the meaning of *urban* and what it means in this thesis must be reviewed.

The distinction between the urban as a physical entity and the urban as a quality helps us to understand the complexity of urban life and illuminates different approaches to the study of cities. (Pacione, 2009, p. 22)

In his writings, Lefebvre (1996) avoids presenting a concrete, or rather simplistic, definition of *urban* or *the city*, unlike many other urban authors such as Short (2014, p. 2) who briefly states “the term ‘urban’ is plastic and elastic; we will use it to refer to cities in general but especially the large sort of cities”. On the other hand, Lefebvre (1996; 2003, p. 6) in his writings and in many instances equates *urban* with *urban reality*. The implication of this approach relates to urban as a quality rather than a physical entity.

Lefebvre (1996, p. 66) defines cities as “the centres of social and political life where not only the wealth is accumulated, but knowledge (connaissances), techniques, and oeuvres (works of art, monuments). The city is itself oeuvre. He continues to describe the city as the topos of a reality, a reality that in itself is contradictory, the urban or urban reality. Both the city and the urban are to be destroyed by industrialisation, by the “exchange value” over the “use value”, by the “generalisation of commodities”. And here the contradictory and problematic aspect of urban reality becomes visible; we witness a “double process”, which entails “industrialisation and urbanisation, growth and development, economic production and social life”, all at the same time and in the same spatial context (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 70).

According to Wirth (1938), Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003) and many other scholars including Foucault and Miskowiec (1986), P. Marcuse (2009, 2012), Amin (2008), Brenner (2000, 2001) and Short (2014, p. 9), one of the key aspects of the urban as a social reality or quality is the *heterogeneity* of and within the city. *Heterogeneity* is the reflection of the unexpended encounters between the strangers within the city. It also projects the otherness and the difference that can either thrive or be annihilated through the process of urbanisation. Heterogeneity and the contradictory characteristics of the city are central and key to *urban* life and the meaning of *urban* reality. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this thesis, the notion of *urban* refers to a reality that defines the quality of the city. This reality is full of unexpected, unrecognised, elastic and plastic encounters and phenomena.

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3 Oeuvre as Lefebvre (1996, p.66) himself describes it in a bracket is “works of art, monuments”. Yet further reading into his work depicts that the term oeuvre refers to something more than just any work of art. Namely, his analysis (Lefebvre, 1991b, pp. 73-76) of Venice in his work *Production of Space* is a good reference to his understanding of oeuvre and also the critical differentiation he makes between a work and a product.
2.2. Critical Urban Theory and Uprooting Urban Design

For both the intellectual and the everyday person, a key challenge of deciphering the urban, how the city works and how it is transformed, is to understand the current urban crisis⁴ and the possibilities for an alternative space which is based on urban as a heterogeneous and autonomous quality, independent of oppressive power structures. This challenge requires a sophisticated apparatus, medium and process to understand, problematize and examine the possibilities, and a theory to inform, publicise and politicise it. The works of Henri Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003), which were written in the 1960s and 1970s and translated into English in the 1990s and 2000s, and subsequently the studies of David Harvey (2000, 2010) Manuel Castells (1983, 2000), Peter Marcuse (2009, 2013), Margit Mayer (2009) and many others, were concerned with this process and related theories (McFarlane, 2011). Drawing on their work, this subchapter reveals how critical urban theory can unmask the urban crisis of cosmopolitan and transforming cities like Istanbul, critique and appropriate the urban knowledge and eventually investigate the possibilities for the alternative city, specifically within the context of Middle East.

Critical theory, a pivotal concept in the Frankfurt school, was coined by Max Horkheimer (1982) in New York (Brenner, 2009). The concept was then developed by Adorno (2012; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002) in 1947, and Herbert Marcuse (1989, 2009, 2013) in 1968, and later on by Habermas (1985; 1989) during the 1980s. According to Brenner, despite all the methodological, theoretical and practical differences between all critical theorists, there are four shared propositions that can clearly lead us to a critical urban theory:

Critical theory is theory; it is reflexive; it involves a critique of instrumental reason; and it is focused on the disjuncture between the actual and the possible. These propositions should be understood as being inextricably intertwined and mutually constitutive. (2009, p. 201)

One of the key questions raised by many researchers (Brenner et al., 2012) is “can critical theory not be urban?” The relation between the urban as a quality and the critical theory is a key point in defining the critical urban theory. Considering the four propositions and particularly the reflexive and contextualised nature of critical theory it is inevitable to consider that critical theory is innately urban, as it intends to reflect the current state of the society in a contextual way. This is also further emphasised within the urban conditions of the contemporary world and the hypothesis of Lefebvre (2003, p. 1) that “society has been completely urbanised”. It also offers new possibilities on different levels. In defining critical urban theory, Brenner states that,

Critical urban theory rejects inherited disciplinary divisions of labour and statist, technocratic, market driven and market-oriented forms of urban knowledge. In this sense, critical theory

⁴ In this thesis, I use the notion of urban crisis in Lefebvrian sense. For him, this crisis was rooted in industrialisation, Fordism and expansion of Keynesian welfare system and later was exacerbated by functionalist urban planning and architectural aesthetics. Schmid (2012, p. 43) states: “For Lefebvre, this crisis consisted primarily of a tendency towards the homogenization of lifestyles and an engineering and colonization of daily life.”
differs fundamentally from what might be termed ‘mainstream’ urban theory – for example, the approaches inherited from the Chicago School of urban sociology, or those deployed within technocratic or neoliberal forms of policy science. (2009, p. 198)

Critical urban theory emphasises the “politically mediated and socially contested” character of urban space as a “site, medium and outcome of historically specific relations of power” (Brenner, 2009, p. 199). The urban space is not given or guaranteed, it is won through struggles. Critical urban theory, by rejecting existing urban knowledge and by scrutinising urban space not only as a by-product of the system, but as a socially and politically produced space, aims to understand the strategies of social change and possibilities for another city. Therefore, it should be remembered that critical urban theory is not a guide book for revolution, and it is not intended to be used in that way in this study. It is to be critical and criticized; it is informing while being informed; it rejects any form of knowledge that sits outside of the context, and it can form or be informed differently depending on spatial and temporal contexts.

Pivotal to the Lefebvrian critical urban theory, is the production of space, as concept and as a process. The production of space is the central theoretical framework here, and the other concepts are used to explain the process or outcomes of an imbalance within the process of production of space. Abstract space is the result of the domination by one moment of production of space over another, and differential space is the embodiment of the resistance to abstraction. The right to the city is a demand for a differential space and a differential city. All the concepts are strongly tied to each other and they are all rooted in the theoretical framework of the production of space. Therefore, the next two sections specifically explain these concepts to reinforce the analyses presented in the following chapters.

Although there are other viable theories to critically investigate the urban (Dovey, 2014; Harding & Blokland, 2014; Short, 2014), this Lefebvrian analysis is the initial step in explaining the urban phenomena of this thesis. An extensive study of urban theories (Castells, 1983; Cuthbert, 2006, 2011; Dovey, 2014; Gunder & Hillier, 2009; P. Marcuse, 2013) shows that all the critical methods, frameworks and concepts can be profoundly useful in paving the way for a better understanding of the urban dimensions mentioned above. Many approaches are based on philosophical foundations; some are strictly structural Marxist analysis and some are based on post-structuralist methods and psychoanalysis.

While the main theoretical discourse of this thesis, the framework and many concepts are borrowed from Lefebvre to be reinterpreted in a particular context, there is a fundamental gap within urban theories that either simplify or entirely dismiss the language, history and the complexity of hybrid and heterogeneous Middle Eastern cities like Istanbul. This problem, appearing as a gap within our knowledge of cities, may have been produced by the ideological hegemony of western knowledge, domination of knowledge economy and the suppression of local knowledge within the context of othered geopolitical regions and cities. This chapter and the discussions that follow will further investigate this issue and aim to contribute to the urban knowledge of Middle Eastern cities.
To sum up, this thesis utilises critical urban theory as its theoretical framework because it is not fragmented, it conceives the space as a “politically mediated and socially contested” aspect of urban reality (Brenner, 2009, p. 199), and it posits and analyses the space within the existing power relations of that specific geography. These aspects of critical urban theory can be profoundly useful in a critical analysis of the Gezi Park Movement while arming the thesis with adequate tools to discuss new possibilities for future public spaces and cities of Middle East through a place-based and contextual knowledge.

2.3. Production of Space

To understand the process of production of space, Lefebvre (1991b, p. 30) proposes a hypothesis: "(social) space is a (social) product". One of the key implications of this hypothesis is that each society has its own social space since the process of production of social space occurs within society: "each society offers up its own peculiar space, as it were, as an ‘object’ for analysis and overall theoretical explication" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 31). This approach and hypothesis sheds a different light on matters of public space, urban movements and digital technologies.

As stated by Kirsch (1995) and Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003), the production of space and subsequently the role of technology are under constant negotiation. Consequently, space is dynamically produced and reproduced in everyday life and through the mentioned negotiations. Accordingly, the role of urban movements and digital technology (within the public space and public realm) in the production of space can be addressed as a medium of negotiation, or a negotiated space by itself. When a new space is produced, many forces from different social layers are involved. Some of these layers are produced through and within urban conflicts and also the digital realm. Yet, it is vital to review the main conceptual triad of Lefebvre (1991b), which are the three moments of the production of space. It cannot be overemphasized that these moments are not hierarchical, separated or functioning independently from each other; they are tightly and deeply interpenetrating and influence each other while remaining distinctly and uniquely themselves:

Spatial Practice: Spatial practice includes everyday urban life, evolved social norms and conventions that are tolerable behaviours (Watkins, 2005), projecting the perceived space of a society. According to Lefebvre (1991b, p. 38), spatial practice produces and reproduces “society’s space slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it”. Lefebvre maintains that “social space ‘incorporates’ social actions that are conducted by agents and collective groups who live in the society and are the actors of the lived experiences” (1991b, p. 38). Spatial practice includes an individual living in a social housing unit, the social interactions of a family in a suburban area and even the politics of public transport. Spatial practice secures a certain level of competence and performance through society.

Representations of Space: According to Lefebvre (1991b, p. 46), representations of spaces are conceived spaces that are the spaces of “planners, urbanists, designers and social engineers”. These spaces are abstract, symbolic and “tend towards a system of intellectual signs”. These spaces are closely related to the process of production and “orders” that are imposed by the relations of production. Digital technologies and the technification of the production of such spaces have
introduced new dimensions to the practice of architecture and urbanism. Defining the meaning of conceived space of designers, Speed states:

[Representation of space] can be understood to be the detached by-products of the machinations of both industry and academia. These machinations include maps, plans, coordinates, diagrams and any abstractly quantitative and artificial interpretation of space. (2010, p. 172)

**Spaces of Representation or Representational Spaces:** Representational spaces are focal and key to this research. They are lived by "inhabitants", users, philosophers and sometimes artists. Lefebvre (1991b) argues that these spaces are dominated (by designed spaces) and passively experienced by their inhabitants. Lefebvre calls these spaces "lived space[s]" that is the combination of perceived and conceived spaces (1991b, p. 39). Lived space "is directly lived through its associated images and symbols" and projects a fundamental element of social life (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 39).

According to Lefebvre (1991b), representational space is highly dynamic, fluid and alive, therefore he correlates these spaces to dwellings, houses, churches, graveyards and other places. These places have significant symbolic meanings in daily life, in which their space "embraces the loci of passion, of action and lived situation, and thus immediately implies time" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 42). Considering the characteristics of spaces of resistance, their fluid nature and dynamic environment, they can unequivocally be categorised as representational spaces as Stewart maintains: "spaces of representation are sites of resistance, and of counter-discourses which have not been grasped by apparatuses of power, or which "refuse to acknowledge power"" (1995a, p. 611). Lefebvre (1991b, p. 42) argues that "representational spaces are symbolic works", which are mostly dominated or structured by "order" in the form of architecture and construction, or verbal and physical control in the form of the police and the law. However, as discussed before, this oppression and domination fails to fully master the space; consequently, spaces of resistance emerge within the space of domination and this confrontation of forces is embodied in the form of urban movements, revolutions and uprisings.

The order intended by designers, becomes merely the imposition of the state’s power through war and violence, and the abstract space is produced. The representation of space – the abstract space of the designer – is in the hands of ideological power and the state; hence the abstraction aims to control the totality of the city, urban reality and everyday life. Abstract space appears as a frontal representation in the form of buildings, monuments and in general urban spaces. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 33) maintains, “Such frontal (and hence brutal) expressions of these relations do not completely crowd out their more clandestine or underground aspects; all power must have its accomplices – its police”. In other words, the “seemingly apolitical form of abstract space” through the images of designers and materialised architecture aims to conceal the direct violence of the state.

Through “the cracks and fissures of planned and programmed order”, resistance and movements against the totality and the authority of the order emerge (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 129). These struggles are innately place-based and appear “in-and-against abstract space, characterized by assertions of
diversity against homogenization, territorial autogestion against state domination, and commonality against privatization and fragmentation” (J. Wilson, 2014, p. 520). Through these struggles, a new space will be produced, the differential space as it is called by Lefebvre (1991b, 1996). Differential space accentuates diversity and complexity against reduction and homogenization. It also aims to “restore unity to what abstract space breaks up — to the functions, elements, and moments of social practice” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 52). Lefebvre (1996) elaborates on these place-based struggles and the demand for a differential space and eventually a new city through his analysis of the right to the city that is explained in the next section.

2.4. The Right to the City

The Right to the City was first claimed by Lefebvre (1996) and further developed by David Harvey (2003; 2012), Don Mitchell (2003), Mark Purcell (2002; 2009), Margit Mayer (2010) and others (Brenner, et al., 2012). Lefebvre (1996, p.158) argues that “the right to the city is like a cry and a demand … the right to the city cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life.” He further elaborates what he means by demanding this right:

- The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualisation in socialisation, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city. (1996, pp. 173-174)

The notion of the right to the city, both fortunately and in a peculiar way unfortunately, went beyond radical academic, urban and human geography studies and revolutionary planning policies; it became the slogan for many urban (social) movements. Accordingly, and unsurprisingly, this concept has had a central role in the theoretical and experiential investigations of this thesis. Therefore, it is essential to briefly discuss the concept as one of the fundamental aspects of the theoretical framework.

Key elements of the right to the city can be categorised according to three questions that are intricately explored later in Chapter 4:

- What right does the right to the city address?
- Whose right is that?
- What kind of city is this right concerned with?

Lefebvre (1996) states that the manifestation of the right to the city is the right to participation and appropriation, and these two concepts are focal in what kind of right the right to the city is. Also, the right to the city exclusively relates to the disenfranchised, the marginalised and those who are deprived of urban life, and this is further critical within the context of Middle Eastern cities, as the city itself can be considered marginalised in relation to the cities of the global North and western countries. Lastly, the right to the city firstly refuses and negates the discriminatory and segregated organisation of the city by urban planners, politicians and designers and, secondly, it aims to produce
a new space or a new city that both differs from the traditional city and opposes the homogenised modern city. The new city accentuates differences and heterogeneity, freedom and collective urban living, urban life and play.

### 2.5. The “Blind Field” and Urban Knowledge

If we cannot produce a new theory, and I agree it is not easy, we can at least find new words. . . If we find new words we can hope to produce a framework of understanding. Without a framework, any means of instrumentality are futile. (Rem Koolhaas in Burdett & Sudjic, 2007, p. 320)

By itself, the attempt to “produce a framework of understanding” is problematic and can prevent or mislead the process of thinking as *mostly* frameworks are rooted in our existing knowledge that is unswervingly becoming *abstract*, increasingly specialised and acutely manipulated by dominant ideologies. The reflective and dialectic critique of the theoretical frameworks, as the basis of research, is one of the key pillars of this thesis. This critique refers to the *blind fields* of urban knowledge and the way we perceive and conceive the city. It is a persistent and repetitive reminder that highlights that “intellectual ‘illumination’ has its own limits” and that “there are things we don’t know and things we are unable to explain” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 30). Therefore, this thesis aims to contextualise and localise a critical question that has occupied the work of some of the scholars within the realm of critical urban theory, presented thus by Brenner:

> What are the limitations and blind spots of inherited and contemporary approaches to the urban question in relation to emergent worldwide urbanisation patterns? What is the role of ideological (mis)interpretations of the city and the urban historical and contemporary strategies to shape socio-spatial and environmental transformations? (2014, p. 25)

This research occupies a space that is on the disciplinary edge of urban design science, political and critical urban theory – which is mostly detached from the practice – and the emerging digital technologies’ epistemology, which its urban understanding is in its infancy. The place that this research occupies is antagonistic and complex, as it seeks to rethink the notion of public space as the place of resistance, rather than the neutral and apolitical space, which is what the urban design science tends to assume. Hence, it is crucial to find new words to explain this process of rethinking, this shift in our understanding and the emerging concepts of urban knowledge. Yet, we have to note that while this research is an intellectual illumination and acts as a flash light on some aspects of contemporary urban reality, it “brackets certain pieces of information and highlights others” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 31). The research is subjective in deciding what to investigate and what to dismiss and this process can lead to ideological bias, negligence of aspects of the phenomena and misleading results. Looking at the case of Istanbul through universal urban theories without thorough criticality and differential points of view can easily turn this research into a blinding force, Istanbul into a blinded city and the Gezi Park Movement into a *blind field*, in which many major and minor details may be neglected or understated.
The following paragraphs unpack what a *blind field* is and what its elements are, and how it can be addressed or even avoided. Here, Lefebvre problematizes the way we see the *urban*:

The urban (urban space, urban landscape) remains unseen. We still don’t see it. Is it simply that our eye has been shaped (misshaped) by the earlier landscape so it can no longer see a new space? Is it that our way of seeing has been cultivated by village spaces, by the bulk of factories, by the monuments of past eras? Yes, but there’s more to it than that. It’s not just a question of lack of education, but of occlusion. We see things incompletely. How many people perceive “perspective,” angles and contours, volumes, straight and curved lines, but are unable to perceive or conceive multiple paths, complex spaces. (2003, p. 29)

This thesis, initially and most importantly, considers that we are facing a “new space”, a new public space and a new city, a becoming city in other words. This requires the *rethinking* of space, to critically analyse and reframe our urban knowledge. Yet, Lefebvrian thought questions our ability of *rethinking* based on earlier epistemologies and urban knowledge. Merrifield (2013, p. 911) explains this phenomenon as follows: “we continue to think ‘city’, perceive things through a ‘city’ lens, through the notion of ‘objects’, ‘categories’ and ‘things’, and through the traditional language and concepts of industrial growth.” Lefebvre (2003) further maintains that this is not only a matter of a lack of education or knowledge, it is also “misshaped” knowledge and “occlusion”. Occlusion is the centre of a *blind field*. A blind field is where knowledge cannot see itself – its blindness is located in the centre of the retina, “not merely dark and uncertain, poorly explored, but blind in the sense that there is a blind spot on the retina, the centre – and negation – of vision. A paradox” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 29).

In addition, we have to explain what is being blinded, and what the blinding force is. Lefebvre (2003, p. 46) argues that ideologically misshaped knowledge and ways of seeing are a blinding force that illuminates the urban phenomenon through “description” and thereby eradicates or brackets some of the social relations or “lived” experiences of urban reality (Buttimer & Seamon, 2015; Diversi, 1998). What Lefebvre (2003) is addressing is directly relevant to this thesis’s theoretical outlook. The Gezi Park Movement, as an intensely lived urban reality, can be misunderstood if it is forced into a *blind field*, if it is explored and studied through the concepts, theories and practices of western industrialisation, urbanisation, knowledge and hegemony. Therefore, this thesis aims to address these issues and acknowledge the blind fields and the blinding forces of this research where and when it is needed. These issues will be further explained in Chapter 7.

### 2.6. Istanbul, a Differential Context and a Different Urban Thinking

*Universal* urban knowledge is mostly applied unchallenged as *the urban knowledge*, which means the *urban* in any context around the world is considered the same and is homogenised. Urban studies, the science of urban design and main principles of urban planning are based on universal and particularly western theories, in which mostly the cities of Middle East (including some of global South cities) are seen as the generalised locality of colonial experiments, or depicted as inferior,
understated, or marginalised to be ignored. This directly relates to one of the aspects of the blind field mentioned above. This section aims to elaborate on this aspect of urban knowledge and discusses the significance of a context and place based theory for understanding heterogeneous cosmopolitan Middle Eastern cities and their transition.

As Lefebvre (2003) argues, there are certain parts of knowledge that are poorly explored and there are parts of knowledge that are negated by the knowledge itself (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2007). This problem demands a comprehensive investigation as the known facts have to be reconsidered, or as Samara, He, and Chen (2013, p. 1) argue, "As this awareness increases, it is difficult to hold on to many explicit and implicit assumptions about how we should think about cities, and which cities we should be thinking about." The root of this problem is within the concept of theory and how it is detached from place and placed based thinking. Edward Said clarifies this matter:

Theory, in short, can never be complete, just as one’s interest in everyday life is never exhausted by simulacra, models, or theoretical abstracts of it…. No reading is neutral or innocent, and by the same token every text and every reader is to some extent the product of a theoretical standpoint, however implicit or unconscious such a standpoint may be. I am arguing, however, that we distinguish theory from critical consciousness by saying that the latter is a sort of spatial sense, a sort of measuring faculty for locating or situating theory, and this means that theory has to be grasped in the place and the time out of which it emerges as a part of that time, working in and for it, responding to it; then, consequently, that first place can be measured against subsequent places where the theory turns up for use. The critical consciousness is awareness of the differences between situations, awareness too of the fact that no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported. And above all, critical consciousness is awareness of the resistances to theory, reactions to it elicited by those concrete experiences or interpretations with which it is in conflict. Indeed I would go as far as saying that it is the critic’s job to provide resistances to theory, to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests, to point up those concrete instances drawn from everyday reality, that lie outside or just beyond the interpretive area necessarily designated in advance and thereafter circumscribed by every theory. (1983, p. 241)

Drawing on Said’s argument, this section aims to draw the attention of the reader to what Said sees as the responsibility of a critical study: “to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests, to point up those concrete instances drawn from everyday reality”. Although, this research is heavily and deeply rooted in Lefebvrian thought (and obviously the Marxist analysis of urban phenomena), it also aims to critique and produce a different critical urban theory that is placed based and explores everyday life, history, poetry and lived experiences in Istanbul as a city that does not fit in the binaries and hegemonic classifications of cities of North, South, West or East. The question that one may raise here is, how is this exploration possible and is an other urban knowledge possible for understanding Istanbul? Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007, p. xliiv) argues
that another knowledge is possible as “different human communities produce diverse forms of viewing and dividing up the world, which do not necessarily conform to Eurocentric distinctions”.

The concept of the South refers not just to a geographical divide, but to a very complex and concealed history of power/knowledge (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2007). According to Aravamudan (2012) the term South is used to implicitly address the Third World, that area distinct from the west, or more politely, the place below the west that is not developed or is under development (Edensor & Jayne, 2012; Mabin, 2014). For instance, Parnell and Robinson (2012, p. 595) regard global South cities as “poorer cities and beyond the academic networks of the U.S. and EU”. Such statements indicate that despite the well-intentioned attempts of some scholars, the global South cities are still seen and explained through western concepts, dismissing the world view of Southern philosophy itself. For instance, the statement above does not indicate how poverty is measured and whether those cities are merely considered poor according to western financial, cultural and political systems or through the everyday life of those cities and their understanding of poverty and wealth.

To clarify the position and the theoretical approach to the case of the thesis, it is essential to briefly explain why the Southern city is different and how it is perceived in this thesis. Simone (2010), in his profound analysis of the Southern city, addresses the city not as the entity known through Northern theories, but as the unknown, as something that is not explained, if not unexplainable. Simone (2010, p. 43) presents the qualities of “cityness” through the intersections, in-betweenness, uncertainty and what is not “urbanised” in Northern theory perceptions. He further clarifies “cityness refers to the city as a thing in the making”, a process that enables and “provoke relations of all Kinds”.

In this thesis, the South and the Southern city are defined not as the opposite (and somehow the inferior) counterpart of the North and Northern cities, but by their position vis-à-vis the hegemonic power of the west and northern powers. Southern cities are those that cannot be reduced through modern rationality and abstract theory. Hence, the theory of the South is a paradoxical term, considering how the Southern world may not be theorised, as the irregularities, emotions, anomalies and lived experiences of the South constantly escape the rationalisation and abstraction of theory. Therefore, I can argue that the theoretical framework of this thesis is heavily influenced by Southern thinking and Southern thinkers rather than being a theorised South.

Despite the usefulness and relevance of urban theory of the South and the literature of global South cities, it must be understood that this categorisation within the context of this research can also be problematic. The main two issues in a consideration of Istanbul as a global South, one theoretical and the other contextual and geographical, need to be considered. From a theoretical point of view, using global South literature and knowledge to study any non-western city can also be homogenising, and could also lead to the dismissal of significant differences between the cities of the South or East. In addition, consideration of Istanbul as part of global South geography is ahistorical, considering its Roman and Greek past and also its peculiar geopolitical location, bridging not only the east and the west, but also culturally and symbolically containing histories and stories of different empires, religions
and civilizations. Therefore, this research considers the theories of South to highlight the differences between Istanbul and its western counterparts, yet Istanbul with its complex peculiarities cannot be generalised within the totality of the global South or East. Therefore, an alternative thinking, or a differential thinking in Lefebvrian terms, is required to understand and rethink the city of Istanbul within its own merits and context.

This differential thinking addresses the lived experience, the being and the life of the inhabitants of Istanbul, and is mostly rooted in stories, poetry and literature that directly and indirectly have had a huge influence on the way that this thesis has been conceived. The literature that supports this differential thinking comes from non-western theorists including Said (1979), Ahmad (1994), Bhabha (2012), Simone (2004, 2010), and Spivak (1988, 1999). Through these stories and literature, this thesis aims to understand Istanbul as a differential city and the case of the Gezi Park Movement as a differential phenomenon, while simultaneously trying to explain the unknown through Lefebvrian thought (i.e. wester theory), and more importantly, through the critique of such theories and abstractions.

2.7. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the theoretical framework of this thesis has been explained. The theoretical framework here aims to "cast doubt upon established understanding of the urban as a bounded, nodal and relatively self-enclosed socio-spatial condition in favour of more territorially differential, morphologically variable, multiscalar and processual conceptualisation" (Brenner, 2014, p. 15). This differential territory in this research is the complex context of Istanbul, and the multiscalar phenomenon is the Gezi Park Movement.

This chapter elaborated on the theoretical path that the researcher has taken to explore, publicise and politicize the subject. It has drawn a picture of key theoretical concepts and these, in relation to each other, are sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory, and form the theoretical framework of this thesis. As discussed before and to understand our evolving urban crises, there is a vital need for a critical urban theory that utilises urban knowledge with a new lens. This lens is not saturated with well-worn concepts and images of old cities and traditional knowledge. Also, it is not homogenised and universalised by western urban theories and philosophy.

This theoretical framework accentuates difference; difference in knowledge and difference in cities and the production of space. As Lefebvre (2014b, p. 48) states, the concept of difference is central to the very concept of urban; "the very concept precludes our ability to mandate anything that reduces difference. Rather, it would imply the freedom to produce differences (to differ and invent that which differs)." This framework can lead us to a differential urban theory and alternative urban possibilities that are needed now more than ever. Following and strongly connected to the theoretical framework, the next chapter elaborates on the methodology and the design of this research.
3.0. Introduction
This chapter discusses the approach to the case study and the methods for analysing the interview questions and structure, the participants and their positionality, and how I engaged with the site and the phenomenon. It then explains how the interviews were coded and analysed. This chapter also sheds light on informal conversations and ethnographic observations that occurred and were included as part of the research methodology, which were complementary to the interviews.

The following subchapters elucidate on details of conducting interviews and the implications and politics of interviewing in Istanbul, and also the methods chosen to select and approach both the participants and the Gezi Park Movement. This discussion illustrates that despite all the theoretical and practical limitations of qualitative interviews, this methodology comes a step closer to rethinking urban space, or undoing the production of urban theory and practice that has been produced by the dominant cultural hegemonies.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the ethical and theoretical investigation of the research’s methodology in order to explain some of the problematic aspects of qualitative interviewing within the context of Istanbul and the Gezi Park Movement. The second part explains how the interviews were conducted, recorded, and interpreted. The selection of the interviewees within the intense and politicised atmosphere of Istanbul has been and still is a challenging and complex task. Accordingly, Section 6.4 briefly describes how the participants were selected and approached, as well as who they
are without revealing their actual identity. To ensure the safety and security of the participants, and considering the current and unfolding political situation in Istanbul, some detailed parts of this section have been eliminated.

The analysis and findings of this research are not limited to data from the interviews or from the digital information fabric. Ethnographic observations and informal interviews played a key role in the implementation of the methodology, the coding of data, and also in its interpretation. Part of this chapter demonstrates how ethnographic observations combined with my own experiences of urban movements became an integral part of the research methodology, without dominating the interviews and the digital data analysis. This section illustrates and projects the experience of being in Istanbul, the presence within the political public sphere, and indirectly engaging with civil society and the Gezi Park Movement, a movement that has resonated with many of my own personal experiences and memories.

This chapter inevitably requires a critique of the research, and specifically of qualitative research as it is known, as a way of revealing some of the central points of this thesis that are key to *rethinking* the notion of public space. Without an honest critique of the self, the language, and the knowledge, *rethinking* would be just another name for the diversion of knowledge, abstraction of reality, and infinite repetition of what is already known. The methodological limitations and critique that have been identified throughout and after the analysis of the data will be discussed in Chapter 7.

### 3.1. An Overview of Field Research

For urban movements, spaces of resistance, differential spaces, and all the other fluid, passionate, and dynamic spaces that are of interest to me and described in this thesis, a qualitative research method seemed the most flexible and in-depth approach to enhance my understanding of the urban phenomenon in question. To collect appropriate data about the social dynamics of a specific phenomenon, in which activities, numbers, and accurate information cannot be officially recorded or have been censored for socio-political reasons, qualitative methods are more appropriate and reflective of the nuanced characteristics of the phenomenon (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Hopf (2004, p. 203) argues that in “studies of the social and political orientations of different population groups,” qualitative methodologies are more common, as there is more flexibility and more opportunity to understand the perceptions and interpretations of a phenomenon.

Through a process of snowballing, 12 interviewees were selected and interviewed. The interviews were conducted in informal settings, mostly in busy cafés, late night bars and in streets, due to the perception of safety in such environments. As part of my own ethnographic observations, I also wanted to assess the polity and sociability of such places. The interviews were audio recorded in Istanbul, transcribed in Auckland, and then coded and categorised based on the theoretical themes discussed in the previous chapter, namely the conceptual triads of *production of space*: perceived, conceived and lived space. Other themes, including the notion of public space, the right to the city, or the local aspects of the movement such as the notion of *mahalle* (neighbourhood) were also part of the categories and codes.
Eventually, the interviews were analysed through Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak, 2004) in addition to the theoretical framework that was developed based on critical urban theory and Lefebvre’s approach to urban phenomena. The two overlap in many ways regarding the in-depth consideration of context, socio-political structures and power relations. Barriball and While (1994, p. 329) maintain that qualitative interviews and discourse analysis “are well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers.” Although my approach to the analysis of the interviews in principle does not differ significantly from Critical Discourse Analysis in its original form, some crucial critiques may be applied to Critical Discourse Analysis as a method, which I will expound on later. The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 8.

To respond to the main research questions presented in the Introduction chapter, this thesis develops a critical methodology by looking at three aspects of Lefebvre’s (1991b) theory that indeed framed the interview questions. Each aspect of the theoretical framework informed the interview questions and how they were thematically categorised and coded. Later, each theme of the Lefebvrian conceptual triad is analysed through relevant methods, which is explained below:

*Spatial Practice/Perceived Space: What is the role of political and social transformations in the definition of public space and conception of urban theory within the context of Istanbul in an age of digital technologies?*

The first question is investigated through semi-structured interviews, ethnographic observations and informal conversations that occurred pre and/or post the formal interviews taking place. The semi-structured interviews were designed in order to scrutinise the meaning of public spaces in Istanbul before, during and after the Gezi Park Movement. The semi-structured interviews provided the flexibility for shifting the questions regarding the interviewees’ response about their perception of public space within different temporal contexts. Through the process of analysis, the interviewees’ accounts have been further explored theoretically through a Lefebvrian approach and Critical Discourse Analysis.

*Representational Space/Lived Space: How can urban movements go beyond disruption of state urbanisation processes and produce new possibilities, utilising the emerging and complex nexus of digital and physical spaces?*

The second question, revolving around the representational spaces and lived experiences of an urban phenomenon, is addressed through an analysis of interviews with activists and the observation of emerging insurgent practices, NGOs and autonomous public spaces. The questions in this theme also cover the role of the state’s abstract space and the conceived space of designers, which overlaps with the next question and the theoretical theme. The data produced by these methods are again categorised and coded according to a Lefebvrian theoretical framework and further analysed through Critical Discourse Analysis, portraying the existing and emerging power relations in urban movements and the new urban possibilities they produce.
Conceived Space of Resistance: How are digital technologies transforming both the lived experience of urbanity, resistance and also how can the digitally augmented public spaces be studied, mapped and understood through the digital technologies?

The last question includes two critical points. The first one revolves around the use of digital networks within the urban movement, and the second is centred on the use of digital technologies to read, theorise and conceive urban movements. The first part of the question is addressed through semi-structured interviews and Critical Discourse Analysis. To address the second part, this research applied an experimental method (experimental at the time of the research, but since then, this method has become more prevalent, studied and structured) to collect data and analyse it. In the last two years, big data mining and digital social network analysis has attracted many researchers’ attention within urban studies and hence was considered as a potential method of data collection regarding the use of Twitter during the Gezi Park Movement. The process of data collection and analysis of the digital geographies of the movement are explained in the last subchapters and also in Chapter 8.

3.2. Ethics and Urban Knowledge

The research included engaging with academics, researchers, and activists involved in the process of reclaiming public space making and their right to the city. Therefore, it was obligatory to obtain ethics approval to conduct such fieldwork. An ethics application was submitted on 10 December 2013 and approval was granted by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) on 15 January 2014, Reference number 010742. The ethic’s approval is presented in Appendix 1.

Apart from the formal ethics approval, there is a crucial point regarding ethical research and what it means. This is strongly tied to subjective ethics and the values of the researcher(s) and their positionality. Through the study, the matter of ethics, the validity of the research, and in general the role of research in the production of space came to the foreground and appeared as one of the critical conclusions of this thesis. Therefore, the analysis of ethics, subjectivity and power relations between the researcher and the researched, the critique of universal urban theory, and in general the impact of the research on the rethinking of public space, specifically in the context of a city like Istanbul, is one of the key areas this research aims to theoretically explore.

3.3. The Interview Questions

As with other parts of the research, the interviews and the interviewing process appeared to be a non-linear process — something that is quite common but concealed within the academic presentation of outcomes. Marshall and Rossman (2016, p. 65) acknowledge this common experience when they point out that “real research is often confusing, messy, intensely frustrating, and fundamentally non-linear.” Interviewing appeared as not only essential but also inevitable, since there was no other way for me to understand the perception of the movement, the production of space, and the urban reality of Istanbul within a short period of time.
This section analyses two aspects of the interview questions and the critical dimensions of the interviewing process. The first section revolves around the designed questions, and the second part describes and analyses the questions that actually have been asked in reality. The reason for having two different types of questions will be clarified through the course of the analysis, but in short, it should be noted that the research is centred on the critical and qualitative aspects of urban life and urban reality, which has led me to the appropriation of qualitative methods with unexpected and possible irrational results (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

3.3.1. The Structured Questions

As can be observed in Appendix 2, the interview questions that were designed were indicative and were formed at early stages of the research. The questions intended to respond to most of the possibilities and, more importantly, were designed to increase the chance of generating unpredicted results. Therefore it can be seen that apart from theoretical themes, the questions are sometimes repetitive, or somehow confusing. These questions were designed to reflect the non-linear characteristics of the research and also to guide the interviews to explore all the theoretical themes and concepts discussed in previous chapters and those that will be further analysed in upcoming chapters.

As is evident in the questions, the representational spaces of resistance of the Gezi Park Movement were not addressed directly. When designing the questions, I assumed that mentioning Gezi might lead to multiple problematic issues. The first concern was the safety of the participants and also myself. Another concern was the political bias and a possible shift in and divergence from the conversation’s direction. However, during the first few days of the field trip and based on informal conversation I had with people in Istanbul, this assumption was reassessed. Under the condition of anonymity, more of the participants felt relatively safe to discuss the movement, however, as it was expected, it led to the divergence of interviews towards emotional narratives and oral histories of the event. This issue limited the presentation of the data, as personal information must be protected due to safety concerns.

The theoretical themes formed the structure of the interview questions. Although it appears that Lefebvrian thought and his theoretical concepts go beyond guiding the interviews innocently, throughout the interviews, I attempted to discuss the themes in neutral and sometimes vague terms, to avoid possible subjective bias. Simplifying, or using localised examples, was a technique I used to avoid referring explicitly to theoretical themes such as the right to the city. Some of the political bias or ideological leaning of the questions were addressed through the ethnographic and informal conversations that mostly occurred after the interviews. In addition, the analysis of digital social networks depicted that the reality – even the virtual reality – of such political events can be profoundly complex, to the extent that even interpenetrating theoretical concepts of Lefebvre would not suffice for illustrating a clear image of the processes and agents involved. The next section elaborates on these nuances further.
3.3.2. The Semi-Structured Questions

The questions that were asked during my interviews were semi-structured and sometimes varied from one interviewee to another. Some of the reasons for this irregularity in the eventual questions will be explained in the next section, as they are directly related to the individuals with whom I selected to talk. Other reasons originate from the nature of the topic and the context. The informal conversations mostly had after the interviews or sometimes on the spot when meeting the interviewee, slowly metamorphosed into a brief ethnography and my interpretation of contextual particularities of Istanbul helped to define many of the questions.

The interviews took place in November and December 2014 when I travelled to Istanbul, specifically for this research. I mainly resided in Beyoğlu and Tophane neighbourhoods, in which the Gezi Park Movement took place. Most of the interviews – and ethnographic observations – happened in these areas, except two of them, which occurred in Kadıköy, another area to be introduced in Chapter 8. During my stay, Istanbul was having a relatively quiet time regarding the political activities internally and nationally. Yet, due to the location of my residence, I was able to participate in and witness some of the street protests in Beyoğlu area that were happening for women’s rights in opposition to some comments from authorities regarding the role of women in the society (The Guardian, 2014). The location, the time and experiences I had not only influenced the handling of the interviews, but also informed my approach to the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement and the understanding of critical urban theory within the context of Istanbul.

It is impossible and unnecessary to provide or summarise all the questions that were asked as the wording of the questions changed according to the positionality of the interviewees. However, it is essential to discuss the commanding aspects of these questions. In total, I asked 457 questions, supplementary questions, comments, and affirmations during 12 distinct interviews with individuals, who will be introduced in the next section. During the year 2015, in Aotearoa-New Zealand, I transcribed the interviews and, by using NVivo 11 for Windows developed by QSR International Pty Ltd. (2016), all the interviews’ scripts were coded and categorised into five nodes (all these nodes and their sub-nodes are presented in Appendix 3). Similarly to the designed questions, the Lefebvrian triad of the production of space and the concept of public space played a significant role in defining the themes of the interview questions. These five nodes are:

1) Public Space — 165 questions

After initial observations and informal conversations, I understood that public space is indeed a very appropriate topic to talk about with strangers. The public is about the daily life of people; it is ingrained in the metropolitan culture of Istanbul, and almost everyone has strong feelings about their public life. Hence, the initial questions in all the interviews were in some way about public life, social life, and the public spaces and places of the city.

2) Spatial practices, perceived space, urban daily life — 177 questions
This node revolved around how people and the participants perceived the city. This included their spatial practices, the way they commute, socialise, live and work. These questions were more generic and were related to their urban daily life, regardless of the Gezi Park Movement or the emergence of digital technologies. However, digital communication was a prevalent topic within this context and therefore became a sub-theme. A frequently reoccurring concept that emerged in all the initial questions related to the matter of change in social relations between people. As part of this theoretical theme, many questions were raised about the impact of digital technologies on the urban production of space, such as:

“Do you think digital technologies are changing the traditional public culture of Turkey?”

“Do you think digital technology has created a new public life within the city of Istanbul?”

3) Representation of space, conceived space — 44 questions

Representation of space, or the space of architects, planners, and politicians, were also important parts of the dialogue. Although the importance of this abstract space in the development and regeneration of Taksim Square and subsequently the Gezi Park Movement was evident, very few questions concentrated on this, yet the comments of the participants addressed some of the issues regarding the totality of urbanisation and the role of authorities in imposing their spatial ideology.

“Does municipality have significant power within this process?”

“Do you think there is a form of Dubaism happening in Istanbul? With the type and pace of the developments and regeneration projects?”

Some of the questions were shaped by the previous interviewees, or many informal conversations I had during my stay. Therefore, I acknowledge that these questions are ideological and has introduced bias into the conversations, yet, they were rooted ideological biases, and I attempted to question or further explore them by highlighting the matters in conversations with different individuals and also in the methodological critique of this research.

4) Representational space, lived space, the Gezi Park Movement — 130 questions

The questions around the lived experiences of the movement and life in Istanbul can be categorised as follows: the personal narratives, the demographic profile of the movement, the spatial configuration and social relations, the impact of the city and digital technologies on the movement, and finally the impact of the movement on the city, its perceived spaces, and the process of urbanisation. The initial questions regarding the movement mostly started by asking the participant to provide a short narrative of the movement from their own perspective:

“So basically I want to know if you could give me a short summary of your version of the story of what had happened here.”

Moving on from the demographic details of the movement, the questions were directed to more complex aspects of the movement, and specifically, how the people occupied the park and organised themselves in a self-managed autonomous fashion:
“Do you think the occupation site of Gezi Park was the temporal utopia?”

Following the discussion on the utopian aspects of the movement, the questions turned towards future possibilities for Istanbul.

5) On Possibilities — 65 questions

This part of the interview was generally about the future of the city. The questions asked whether the movement, digital technologies, and the combination of these would affect the urbanisation or the appropriation of space. Some of the answers also reflected on urban practices that either emerged from or became publicised and politicised during and after the movement, including Bostan Forums, discussed in Chapter 8:

“Do you think it changed their perception or their understanding or the importance of the public space?”

“You know the practices like TAK or Architecture for Everyone, what do you think about these practices, do you think they are really about what they claim to be about?”

3.4. Selection of Participants

Before commencing my field trip to Istanbul in November 2014, a few contacts were made through my supervisors’ to establish a network. The main point of reference was an architecture lecturer in one of Istanbul’s universities (participant No. 7). On the first few days of the trip, before I met the lecturer, I noticed that people were far more accessible than I had previously thought. Considering the political sensitivity, safety risks, lack of knowledge, and trust and language barriers, I assumed that the process of snowballing to select a number of participants would be problematic and complex. However, the experience turned out to be different and unpredictable as in some cases it appeared to be easy to approach some of the interviewees and in some cases, it was exactly the opposite.

A note and disclaimer: The ethnographic observations and informal conversations began through a conference about urban issues, called Contemporary Urban Issues – CUI ’14 – Rethinking Informality. Although there were few native presenters in the conference, one of the organisers appeared to be a friendly and knowledgeable local of Istanbul. In our initial conversations, the interviewee (No. 9), whom I interviewed three weeks later, seemed interested in the topic and my research, though cautiously and only gradually. Through the first informal conversations, the safety nets and security risks were assessed. The risk of having a conversation about a very urban, local, and almost outdated topic during that period seemed trivial. However, after recent events in Turkey and after the 2016 coup attempt, increased security risks and ethical reasons have meant that any clue that may reveal the actual identity of any participant has been removed from this account.

Some of the interviewees, including two of the leaders of Taksim Solidarity and the lawyer who defended the park in different courts, initially agreed to be interviewed and then later refrained due to on-going judicial processes and safety risks. Nine other interviews were cancelled for unknown reasons or other circumstances, such as emergency travel or the difficulty of conducting the interview in English. The participants, their relevant backgrounds and the context and location of the interviews are described in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Method of Finding</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Location of the interview</th>
<th>Connection to others</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number 1</td>
<td>Accidental – The interviewee was working on a project in the same venue as the conference I was attending.</td>
<td>Artist, a lifetime inhabitant of Istanbul and documenting the city through the medium of art for the last decade.</td>
<td>The balcony of the Chamber of Engineers and Architects.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The conversation had to be conducted in Turkish and it was the only one that required a translator. This interview had a profound impact on the trajectory of this research since it depicted the importance of the language, the feelings, and ordinary urban life, which is mostly underestimated in urban scholarly work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 2</td>
<td>Direct contact via digital social networks</td>
<td>Journalist and employed in an advertisement agency</td>
<td>Area of Levent, or the Manhattan of Istanbul, in the infamous shopping mall of Kanyon.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This interview provided me with a deeper understanding of another layer of the city, a layer that is attempting to detach itself from the conflicting characteristics of the old city and present itself as something modern (not modernised), and secular, affluent, and open minded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 3</td>
<td>Snowballing process.</td>
<td>An urban researcher in an NGO active in the realm of urban inequalities.</td>
<td>The NGO the interviewee was working in.</td>
<td>A colleague of participant #7, assisting a project in one of the university studios.</td>
<td>It was a great help in terms of discussing the key concepts, elements, and layers that are essential for understanding Istanbul, its public spaces, and the Gezi Park Movement, due to in-depth understanding of theoretical and lived layers of the city and the Movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 4</td>
<td>Personal connections and friends.</td>
<td>An Iranian artist who photographed and documented the movement.</td>
<td>A local café in Taksim area.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This point of not being purely an insider or outsider gave rise to an extra layer of complexity, specifically reflecting on the cosmopolitan and global aspect of Istanbul. The interview was conducted in Persian/Farsi, later translated back to English and then transcribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 5</td>
<td>Direct contact via email.</td>
<td>Artist and one of the key figures of the Movement</td>
<td>Local café in Taksim area</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Participant No. 5 was and still is a media sensation, and hence revealing any further information regarding the identity of this specific participant would not be ethical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 6</td>
<td>Snowballing process.</td>
<td>PhD Student in Architecture, lecturer and activist.</td>
<td>University.</td>
<td>Friend of participant #7.</td>
<td>The interviewee was passionate, knowledgeable, and unpredictable. Participant was involved in the movement as an activist and hence had strong feelings about the place. The interview turned immediately into a sizzling debate about the definition of public, the public spaces of Istanbul, and urban processes, reflecting the complexities of defining western concepts within Istanbul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>First point of reference, introduced to through my supervisor</td>
<td>Lecturer in architecture</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Friend of participant #6 and colleague of participant #3</td>
<td>The interviewee addressed the internal conflicts emerging in the architecture and design disciplines and education regarding the ethics and politics of design.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 8</td>
<td>Direct contact via email and introduced by participants #3 and #6.</td>
<td>Architect in one of the community oriented architecture firms, involved in the Movement and from Kurdish ethnic minority.</td>
<td>The architecture firm where the interviewee was working.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This interview contributed to more insights into the concealed social and political dimensions of the city and Gezi Park during the time of occupation. Also, issues of fragmentation and segregation of ethnic minorities in different neighbourhoods dominated the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 9</td>
<td>The organiser of the conference mentioned above.</td>
<td>PhD student in Art History and a local of Taksim area.</td>
<td>A local restaurant in Beyoğlu area</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The formal interview occurred after many informal discussions on the topic and life in Istanbul in general. The interviewee raised many questions about ethics in everyday life, in the movement, and in research, which are also central issues that I aim to address in my findings, and the discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 10</td>
<td>Direct contact via email.</td>
<td>Lecturer in the area of communication, media, and internet analysis.</td>
<td>University office.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The point of difference in this interview was its formality and also that it was far more specifically on the topic of digital technologies and their impact on the public life of the city and the movement. This interview provided further detailed knowledge about the social space of digital social media and the power relations at play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 11</td>
<td>Through an American barista in a bar I used to frequent.</td>
<td>An anthropologist, political commentator and activist.</td>
<td>One of the late night bars of the Beyoğlu area.</td>
<td>Now friend of participant #12.</td>
<td>The interview resulted in an insightful analysis of eastern-western dualities of both urban life and the way it is perceived in Istanbul and in the west.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 12</td>
<td>Through an American barista in a bar I used to frequent.</td>
<td>Studied Political Science and interested in environmental activism after the movement.</td>
<td>One of the late night bars of the Beyoğlu area.</td>
<td>Now friend of participant #11.</td>
<td>The interview took a relatively short time, as participant No.12 only emphasised some specific aspects of the movement and how an ordinary citizen like them engaged in political and urban transformation without any prior background in politics or urban movements’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. The Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted by using the *qualitative semi-structured* approach. The reason behind the decision was the support within social and critical studies for this method of data collection (P. Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Silverman, 2013). Within the context of the thesis, it is important to define the quality of such *qualitative* interviews (Roulston, 2010) and their relevance to this study. Other issues that are essential to investigate include the validity of the qualitative data, the matter of sampling, and the implications of *semi-structured* or *open-ended* interviewing in the wider context of the research. Therefore, this section includes:

1. The quality of qualitative semi-structured interviews.
2. The validity of the transcribed data.
3. The size and quality of sampling.
4. How the interviewing was constructed in an open and semi-structured manner.

a) The quality of qualitative semi-structured interviews

Roulston (2010) argues that there is no consistency within the literature on qualitative interviews in defining the qualitative characteristics of such a method. He further summarises the prominent literature on how to improve the quality of qualitative interviewing, placing an emphasis on reflections, the critical analysis of the metadata of interviews, the craftsmanship of the researcher, and so on. However, the quality of the qualitative methods comes down to the critical question regarding the assumed *objective* position of the researcher, or envisaging her as the co-constructor of the outcome and the knowledge (Rapley, 2001).

According to Seale and Filmer (1998) there are two dominant practices of interviewing: one considers the interview data as a *resource* and the other practice considers the interview and the produced data of a topic. Rapley (2001) states that considering the interview data as a resource is widely criticised, since it ignores or underestimates the role of the co-construction of data and knowledge and also the role and the voice of the interviewer as an active and critical force in the production of knowledge: “[T]he interview is an artefact, a joint accomplishment of interviewer and respondent. As such, its relationship to any ‘real’ experience is not merely unknown but in some senses unknowable” (Dingwall, 1997, p. 56).

The literature on this matter is exhaustive and profoundly critical of this type of research, yet it is vital to consider that *judging* the *quality* of my own research, the interviews, my voice, and my contribution as the co-constructor of the data, would be naturally inaccurate and possibly biased. However, to an attentive reader, I suggest that while the voice of the interviewees in semi-structured interviews has to be at the centre of attention, there should also be a critical consideration of my subjective voice, personality and the context that the interview is taking place in. These three elements, while they are distinct and highly interrelated at the same time, do indeed construct and define the quality of the
interviews. In the same way as I provided both an account of the interviewees and how I met them, it is crucial for the reader, and for me, to reflect on my background, identity, gender, and knowledge as well. It is also important to consider that the interviews occurred in Istanbul, a city that played a significant role in defining, transforming, and understanding the data.

b) The validity of the transcribed data

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 191) maintain that “data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them.” Hence, while there is no need to argue about the validity of semi-structured interviews as a concept, it is crucial to consider the validity of data produced through and by interviews. Rapley (2001, p. 306) asserts that the discourse of validity revolves around the issue of “bias, establishing trust,” and thus the validity and truthfulness of the interviewer’s data.

The questioning of the bias in the interviews that were conducted in Istanbul is important and also complex. It can be argued that all the interviews, research questions, and the interviewees’ accounts and knowledge were biased. Concisely, the research is already biased because the research questions, interviews, and the data all concerned the practices of people and the production of space by people, but not of all people — in fact, the field research was exclusively focused on politically, ideologically and socially marginalised or recently disenfranchised people. The interviews were not designed for government officials, planners or designers. It also excluded the supporters of the government, who were considered to be on the other side of the political spectrum. Therefore, it can be clarified that the data is biased and the research acknowledges that. Despite that, other forms of bias arising from the process of research and by research itself will be discussed in Chapter 7.

On the other hand, the concept of bias and establishing trust has to be considered in the specific context of Istanbul, Turkey, and the Middle East. I am from the Middle East, and this fact, along with my knowledge of languages and my background, provided me with a strong foundation for establishing trust and friendship. This assisted me to see the data beyond the binaries of us vs. them. I was partly able to understand people’s urban life and their language of love, dignity and respect and what Pamuk (2006, p. 90) specifically calls the feeling of Huzn or Hüzn (melancholy) in Istanbul. Conducting an interview in English about a highly politicised urban movement in a formal setting could be very one-dimensional and misleading, yet I was aware of this problem and attempted to address the underlying issues of fragmentation and segregation, the contextual complexities, power relations and the concealed social dynamics that exist between them and me, as the researcher, and also within the urban spaces of Istanbul.

c) The size and quality of sampling

One of the initial concerns in this research was the small sample of people being interviewed. I approached more than 25 people. Some rejected the idea of being interviewed without further communication, while three prospective interviewees accepted the interview but later abstained due to safety reasons. Others agreed to have a conversation in Turkish, yet couldn’t proceed with a formal interview conducted in English. Thus, for this research, I eventually interviewed 12 individuals, three
of whom were familiar with each other. The rest were unknown to each other and were selected opportunistically. As previously explained, their selection was limited to the pool of others — the marginalised and the disenfranchised — or mainly the activists and academics who were opposing the dominant ideology of the state. Thus the sampling was somehow “purposeful,” which gave some form of consistency to the views and perceptions of at least one side of the conflict, while depicting that within this pool of individuals there are significant differences and variations of opinions (Baxter & Eyles, 1997, p. 512). On the other hand, this sample did not include the powerful or newly franchised urban inhabitants — such as the government’s supporters. One may question whether, despite the randomness and acknowledgment of possible bias, this small sample is appropriate for understanding the complex and critical processes of the Gezi Park Movement in which thousands of citizens participated.

Crouch and McKenzie (2006, p. 496) maintain that using small samples is the best way to conduct “analytic, inductive, exploratory” research. They (2006, p. 496) argue that to achieve the desired “depth” required for such research, it is better to be “intensive, and thus persuasive at the conceptual level,” rather than being “extensive” in order to convince by providing manifold accounts, or “through enumeration.” For critical research like this, it is vital to question and explore all the aspects of the data in relation to the theory thoroughly and deeply, and thus a large number of participants may have undermined the depth of understanding.

d) How the interviewing was constructed in an open and semi-structured manner

As previously stated, semi-structured interviews are mostly open-ended and co-constructed. The open-endedness of the interviews reflects two important aspects of this research: the role of researchers and their subjectivity, and the spontaneous impact of each on the other. The first aspect, regarding the importance of both the researcher and the researched, has been mentioned. The section below describes how the second dimension defines the practice of interviewing as a continuous form of learning, reflecting, and rethinking.

There is no doubt that power relations play a significant role in interview based research (Pile, 1991). Baxter and Eyles (1997, p. 510) maintain that, instead of “capturing the voice of the other”, the researcher realistically tends to “ensure that the other’s voice is heard alongside” her voice. This does not mean that the researcher refuses to capture or hear the voice of the other, however, she can utilise her power to intentionally or unintentionally interpret the voice of the other, according to the research hypothesis or the desired outcome. This research, and I as the researcher, is not exempt from the impact of power relations on the process of interviewing and its interpretations. The mitigations and how I handled the impact of power relations are discussed in Chapter 7 and 8.

The reader, therefore, needs to consider my personal background, my position as a researcher from a similar background to the researched but informed through western education and universal theories, in relation to the position of the researched, which is the Middle East, Turkey and Istanbul, and that her voice is systematically misrepresented or undermined by the western media or hegemonic power of the knowledge economy. To address this issue, I attempted to apply a form of openness,
informality, and playfulness to the interviews, aiming to empower the interviewees to speak their mind the way they feel comfortable with. I provoked and encouraged them to be as they want to be, or to be seen or heard as they want to be; yet, unfortunately, this openness and their reactions could not be easily translated and transcribed in the formal setting of the analysis or the thesis.

To conclude, this section has considered four different aspects of qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to describe, analyse, and criticise the methodology used for this thesis. These four aspects are to evaluate the quality, the validity of data, the sampling size, and the openness of the interviews. Through unveiling these characteristics, this section addressed some of the shortcomings and critical issues that may have arisen due to the sample size, my background and positionality, the type of interviews and also the specific geographical and temporal context that the research has occupied and was concerned with. Further discussion on these issues is presented in Chapter 7.

3.6. Transcription

According to J. M. Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003, p. 64), the transcription of interviews should be considered as a research activity and not as a “technical detail” that leads to analysis. It has to be done with rigour and according to the critical framework that shapes the research. McLellan et al. (2003, p. 65), quoting Mergenthaler and Stinson (1992, pp. 129-130), argue that there are seven principles that can be used to develop a transcription guideline, some of which apply to this thesis, and some of which do not. These seven rules are:

1. Naturalness; preserving the words and the form and punctuation of sentences.
2. “Naturalness of the transcript structure”; indicating the context, the turns, the location, and external elements of the interview, like a movie script.
3. Precision and verbatim accounts; freezing the spoken words into letters, and not reducing the interviewees’ accounts prematurely.
4. Universality; appropriating the transcription for both human and computer use. I used a standard form of transcription that can be used in both cases.
5. Completeness and Everyday Language Competence; enabling the ability to deal with all forms of linguistic expressions, emotions, and other everyday communicative acts. This principle does not really apply to my interviews, since the language of everyday life in Istanbul is detached from the academic language of the interviewer and the interviewees.
6. Independence; this principle requires the transcription to be accessible and applicable by others. Although my transcriptions are deeply personal and entangled with personal lived experiences, they are transcribed in such a way that others who have a basic familiarity with the context of the research and the city can understand.
7. Intellectual elegance; my transcriptions are simple, easy to understand and coherent, while addressing complex, interconnected, and irrational processes.

The literature of transcription has a strong emphasis on the verbatim account of the discourse (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; McLellan et al., 2003; Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). However, Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) demonstrate that a transcript of a qualitative interview cannot
achieve providing a verbatim account of the discourse as there are constant analytical and critical revisions of questions, subjects, the self, and the data. Also, in the specific case of this research’s interviews, many elements played a significant role in the formation of the discourse that could not be transcribed. Some of these elements could be political bias, fear, melancholic and nostalgic memories, power relations, projection of an eastern-western binary, sacredness, spirituality, and so on. These elements do not appear in the transcriptions or even in the findings of this thesis; however their impact can be found in the final discussions and conclusions that reflect on the contextualised process of rethinking the public space and the urban reality of Istanbul.

It is necessary here to clarify that the process of coding the transcripts was conducted through computer software called Nvivo (Lyn, 2005). This is a tool to process text, video, audio, images, and other research materials, and it assists the researcher with qualitative data analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). It is designed to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the analysis and is mainly used to manage and visualise the data, theoretical concepts, and analytical ideas.

### 3.7. Coding and Categorising

For this research, I applied the analytical strategy proposed by Christiane Schmidt in *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (Jenner, Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004). The key concept in Schmidt’s strategy is that there is an interplay in all stages of the data collection and analysis between the data, the theoretical concepts derived from the literature, the theoretical framework, and also the “experience and observation during exploration of the research field” (2004, p. 253). I have further developed and appropriated the strategy in order to reflect the research’s theoretical framework.

**First Stage: Formation of categories based on the material**

In this stage, Schmidt (2004) suggests that the categories of the data should be identified by an extensive reading of the material and transcribed interviews. This stage is solely based on the topics of each single statement made during the interviews. Clearly, this can be an exhaustive and time-consuming process. Also, many arguments could have multiple topics, as indeed happened in the process of coding. To apply this strategy, I labelled all the statements and arguments of each interview with the topic at the centre of each sentence. Most of the codes followed the topic of the question, which was at the same time reflective of the theoretical framework, yet in many cases unexpected topics emerged, which required further theoretical exploration and conception.

**Second Stage and Third Stage: Coding and Categories**

Since the theoretical framework initially directed and formed a rough structure for the designed questions, and this theoretical structure appeared in the asked questions, this stage and the next stage were combined. After a thorough investigation of the topics of each argument, the material was categorised into the key theoretical concepts that formed the different chapters of this thesis:

1. On Public Space
2. Spatial Practices — Perceived Space
3. Representation of Space — Conceived Space
4. Representational Space — Lived space — the Gezi Park Movement
5. On Digital Technologies
6. On Possibilities

Using these categories, each part of the text, both the questions and the answers, were coded according to the topic and the relevant theoretical concept that was being discussed. The outcome of this process of categorising and coding can be seen in Figure 1. Interviews, while being coded, require a process of decoding. Some of the accounts of the interviewees had complex references to local or national events, cultural practices or just linguistic signs. The Lefebvrian framework and his analysis of urban complexity, and my personal understanding of the context and experience of urban movements in Istanbul, assisted me in the process of coding and categorising of the data.

Figure 1: Interviews Transcription’s Nodes compared by number of coding references - Produced by NVivo 11 for Windows (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2016)
In many cases the statements were directly related to one or more categories. But in many cases, a response to a specific question had an overt meaning and multiple covert connotations. In these cases, specific terminologies were used to depict the complex relations between different phenomena. For instance, the term *conservative* was used in some responses, yet, the way in which the word *conservative* is used in political discourse of western media does not reflect how it translates in the context of Istanbul. In the context of the Middle East, you can belong to a leftist party and be ultra-conservative in a religious sense, or the opposite. In general, the usual binaries, or linguistic boundaries may lose their meaning within the context of Istanbul. Therefore, at the time of categorising I have paid attention to these contextual, cultural and linguistic particularities. The above graph depicts all categories produced by Nvivo. (A detailed presentation of all the nodes can be seen in Appendix 3)

**Fourth Stage: Quantifying**

The fourth stage in Schmidt’s (2004) strategy is concerned with quantifying surveys of the material. Initially, this stage was considered to be useful and essential to be applied and understood. It appeared that some aspects of quantifying the interview material could shed light not only on the topic of the research, but also on the interviews as the topic. For instance, quantifying shows the frequency and amount of reoccurrence of a particular topic, such as ‘public space’, or indicates whether one theoretical concept, such as the neighbourhood concept, is more debated and hence more problematic, complex, and underexplored in that context. Some of these frequencies and quantities can be seen in Appendix 3. Despite all these benefits, I decided that quantifying the discourse would reduce the significance of the meaning and may actually be misleading due to the sample size, the socio-political dimensions and the nuanced characteristics of the Gezi Park Movement. Therefore, the significance of each code and concept would not be determined by the frequency of coding or reoccurrence of one word in the conversation; on the contrary, the significance of each code would be defined based on each single case and also in relation to other codes, theoretical concepts, and the framework as a whole.

### 3.8. The Interpretation – Critical Discourse Analysis

The fifth stage in the analysis of qualitative interviews is the interpretation or the analysis. In this thesis, it is based on the theoretical framework of the research, and most importantly Critical Discourse Analysis. The initial approach to interpreting the interviews is Critical Discourse Analysis, which includes the various approaches that revolve around the “semiotic dimensions of power, identity politics and political-economic or cultural change in society” (Wodak, 2011, p. 38). Discourse Analysis is a methodology that attempts to cast a light on the way that the *discourse* is constructed, in order to demonstrate the context, complexities, and the contradictions that exist within it (Parker, 2004). Shirazi (2013, p. 35) argues that the main purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis is “to distinguish the emphatic pattern in the use of language from the ideological and/or authoritative perspectives and their relationship to democratic discourse.”
Discourse Analysis has been criticised as it underestimates the role of power within the discourse; hence, Fairclough, Wodak and van Dijk developed Critical Discourse Analysis in the 1980s (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). According to Fairclough (1995, p. 204) Critical Discourse Analysis aims to investigate “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.” Wodak (1994, p. 193) elaborates on the purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis and states that this methodology analyses the deep and extended instances of social interactions that appear mostly in “linguistic forms”: “The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed.”

Critical Discourse Analysis includes manifold approaches. One of the best-suited and most appropriate approaches for this thesis is what Gee (2010) has called a situated meaning approach. The reason for choosing this approach is entailed in its name, considering that the urban phenomenon in question is situated in a specific context and environment. To reveal the systematic manipulation of discourse in which power relations play a significant role, the situated meaning of the words, language and action need to be considered critically (Cukier, Bauer, & Middleton, 2004; Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer, & Middleton, 2009). Drawing on cognitive psychology, Gee (2010, p. 150) introduced “the notion of ‘situated meanings’ and argues that we humans actively build meanings ‘on line’ when we use language in specific contexts.” Therefore, the context plays a spinal and critical role in an analysis of interviewees’ accounts. The relationship between the researcher – myself, and the context also has a critical significance that is explained in the next section regarding the ethnographic conversations and observations I had in Istanbul. To clarify the notion of context in this discourse, Gee defines the term:

Context includes the physical setting in which the communication takes place and everything in it; the bodies, eye gaze, gestures, and movements of those present; all that has previously been said and done by those involved in the communication; any shared knowledge those involved have, including cultural knowledge, that is, knowledge of their own shared culture and any other cultures that may be relevant in the context. (2010, p. 84)

Considering the importance of the context as discussed above, a crucial issue can arise and inevitably needs to be addressed. Despite its profound criticality and use in this field, one major drawback of this approach can be its reliance on the knowledge of the researcher and presumption of the existence of a concrete understanding of “structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control” (Wodak, 2004, p. 187). Yet this is a methodological limitation, as part of the wider methodological critique of this thesis that needs to be discussed after the analysis, as it may affect the perception of the findings. Due to its importance and its role as one of the key findings of this research, a methodological critique of Critical Discourse Analysis and other methods is discussed in Chapter 7.

Although Critical Discourse Analysis may not be able to fully address the complexities of the context and limitations identified above, it is still a thorough and judicious methodology to be considered for
analysing the interviews. In addition, the Lefebvrian approach to the analysis of urban phenomena is not significantly different from Critical Discourse Analysis, as it takes into account the way that the discourse/space is constructed and produced and what the roles of power, discrimination, and control are within the process of production of discourse/space. Therefore, I can argue that this study as an epistemological research combines the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis and Lefebvrian critical urban theories for “experimental theorizing” and critically questioning the urban theory, urban movements, and public spaces (Bude, 2004, p. 321).

3.9. Ethnographic Observations and Informal Conversations

As mentioned earlier, most of the interviews were extended to lengthy informal conversations that were not planned, designed or recoded. The interviewees had a desire to discuss further, beyond the limits of my theoretical and semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the interviews led to discussions of the narratives and oral histories of interviewees’ lives, their memories and also questioning of my own background and history, as some of the interviewees were naturally interested to know more about me. These interactions significantly enhanced my relationship with the interviewees and built a strong relationship and trust between us. Moreover, these informal conversations became a significant part of my research and analysis, yet, they did so in an unusual way, which I aim to address here.

Of 12 interviewees, I met 4 of them for only one session. One interviewee became my friend, collaborator and a reference. The interview was just the beginning of our prospective academic and intellectual collaboration to date. I met others multiple times, mostly after the first interview. And through all these informal and rather friendly meetings, I had many conversations, which, had they been recorded, could have been considered as ethnographic or “life history” interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p.156). Many of these conversations were around the interviewees’ memories of the past, and how Istanbul has transformed since their childhood, during the Gezi Park Movement and after that. As many of these accounts were deeply personal and subjectively considered the way they engaged with the urban politics of Istanbul and its transformation, the interviewees asked me to keep this information off the record. However, undoubtedly these conversations had an influence on my understanding of the movement, the urban fabric of Istanbul and its socio-political dynamics. Therefore, these unrecorded ethnographic observations and conversations became part of my own knowledge and history.

In order to critically address my positionality and also my personal experience of urban movements and emerging digital technologies, I took an analytical approach to my memories, my conversations in Istanbul, my observations of its urbaneity, and also my own personal history of political activism in the Middle East. In this approach, “analytic reflexivity”, the “narrative visibility of the researcher’s self”, the “dialogue with informants beyond the self”, and the “commitment to theoretical analysis” play key roles in using personal experiences and narratives to analyse the Gezi Park Movement (Anderson, 2006, p. 378). My own experience of urban movements in the Middle East, and also in Aotearoa-New Zealand, became a reference point to question, reflect and critically assess the process of the Gezi Park
Movement and the perceptions of interviewees during the field research. Some of these reflections are evident in Chapter 7, discussing the linguistic confusions that are prevalent in this context.

My experience of urban movements and utilising digital social networks are predominantly based on two significant events. One was the Green movement in Iran in 2009 (Rahimi, 2011), which was a national and highly political post-election uprising. The other one was an anti-eviction and housing rights movement in Auckland, Aotearoa-New Zealand in 2016, in which my theoretical and experimental knowledge of these processes assisted me to understand, politicise, and publicise both the context and the event.

These experiences are not directly scripted in this thesis, yet they enhanced its analysis and discussions through a critical and subjective understanding of the case study that “critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts” (Spry, 2001, p. 710). As part of the analytical approach to this informal knowledge, it was essential for me to critique my positionality and the possibility of personal bias within the context of the Gezi Park Movement. The combination of this analytical approach with Critical Discourse Analysis and Lefebvrian critical urban theory has enabled and reinforced the investigation of the thesis within a multi-layered and dynamic methodology, which is further discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

3.10. Digital Information Fabric of the Gezi Park Movement

Recently, many studies that have focused on urban movements have considered the user-generated social networks as their main source of data. Twitter, a popular micro-blogging service with more than half a billion users, has created a de-territorialised global public sphere for digital users who can, in this way, organise, communicate, mobilise and enable a stronger and more autonomous public engagement in urban movements. To evaluate the information fabric produced by Twitter, this study analyses different data sets from dedicated servers to geographically map and interpret the dynamics of the digital geography of the movement within Istanbul.

This section focuses on the digital information fabric of the movement and how it transformed during the protests and the occupation of Gezi Park. Twitter can generate a complex and relatively open and transparent network of users and digital activities, through which an analysis of the geography of digital resistance during the movement may shed light on the transformation of urban spaces. Particularly in times of recent urban movements, Twitter has played a key role in mobilising, informing, and manifesting the demands of the urban inhabitants. The increasing use of locative mobile devices and more advanced geo-locative features of social networks, such as the geo-tagged tweets of Twitter, can create a place-based, dynamic and hybrid information fabric, revealing the emerging complexities of the geographies of resistance. These geographies in fact are “continuous fields of presence that may extend throughout buildings, outdoors, and into public space as well as private” (W. J. Mitchell, 2003, p. 144).
To create the digital information fabric of the movement, data needs to be collected from the Twitter APIs, which stands for Application Programming Interface, and provide a refined data set that depends on enquiries made by developers, agencies, or researchers. Collecting Twitter metadata and digital data mining has become popular in academic research. The work of Onnela, Arbesman, González, Barabási, and Christakis (2011) has been used to analyse many social movements over the last few years (Adanali, 2013; Christensen, 2011; Juris, 2012; Koehler, 2013; Mislove, Lehmann, Ahn, Onnela, & Rosenquist, 2011; Takhteyev, Gruzd, & Wellman, 2012). However, compared to conventional methods of data collection, this method has many challenges and loopholes, as it is still in its infancy and is underexplored in the academic sphere (Li et al., 2016).

The first challenge in this approach is obtaining the data. In the case of the Gezi Park Movement, the problem is that the required data was labelled as *historical* by Twitter’s API’s classification and that was just two years after the movement. Twitter has a service for developers and researchers to obtain streaming data of the users for free, however, since our required data is considered historical it must be purchased, which raises questions as to the accessibility and affordability of the information fabric in the wider context of urban studies. Eventually, the data was obtained by a digital cloud-based text-analytic service called SIFTER | DiscoverText (DiscoverText, 2015), which provides, codes, and analyses the digital data produced by digital social networks.

The services and third parties that sell the historic data from Twitter require a very specific enquiry about the type of data, the exact topics or content, and the exact period of the targeted activities. After articulating the rules and codes, the data with the specific topic and produced in the specific time slot – in this case the length of the movement - was given to the buyer. The code for this study was articulated in two parts, which gives richer and more diverse data. There might also be some overlaps.

The first code contains:

*Rule Text:* (contains:Gezi OR Taksim OR #Gezi OR #DirenGezi OR #OccupyGezi OR #DirenGeziparki OR #Geziparki OR #ResistGezi OR place:Taksim OR place:Gezi ) (has:geo)

*Start Date:* 05/28/2013

*End Date:* 06/18/2013

*Estimated Activities:* 219,000

The second code contains:

*Rule Text:* (#DirenGeziparki)

*Start Date:* 06/02/2013

*End Date:* 06/03/2013

*Estimated Activities:* 396,000

The result of the first code is a data set containing around 219,000 tweets, which includes any of the words listed above, including “Gezi” or “#OccupyGezi,” or other relevant hashtags. This means that both the supportive and opposing tweets regarding the movement will be included in the data set, as
they are about the “Gezi” movement. The other characteristic of this data set is that all the activities (tweets) and users are geotagged. However, according to the codes and rules of Twitter this does not mean that all the tweets are precisely geo-located. These kinds of challenges will be further explained in the next section. This data set was produced from one month of the movement, which started before the peak of the clashes on 31 May 2013, and goes up to the ban of protests and gatherings in Gezi Park on 16 June 2013.

The second code produced a different data set with different characteristics. The activities are all limited to the topic of “#DirenGeziparki” (Resist Gezi Park), which was the main hashtag in support of the movement. It draws double the size of the data set obtained by the first code, even though it is limited to only two days. Furthermore, the first code limits the data set to the activities that are geo-located, whereas, the second code obtains all activities whether they were geo-located or not. During the process of data mining it was found that around only 2% of these activities were geo-located. This limitation will be further discussed in the following sections.

After obtaining the data sets, the tweets were filtered by their geo-location properties. Many tweets were geo-located by a country rather than the exact location. Therefore, the tweets that had a location normalised to a country were eliminated from the process. The result of filtering the historical tweets led to a much smaller sample of tweets, which can be precisely located and mapped. The mapping process also limited its boundaries to the city of Istanbul to scale down the presentation of the information fabric to the urban scale. The maps and the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement’s digital information fabric is presented and discussed in Chapter 8.

3.11. Triangulation of Data

As it is maintained in the previous sections, there are three sets of collected data for this study. This section explains why there are multiple data sets, how these sets of data relate to and complement each other and how they form a case study research. Using different sources of data is called data triangulation. Data triangulating includes collecting data at different times, in different places and/or from different sources (Yilmaz, 2013). The objective of using triangulation in qualitative research, “in its original forms” as developed by Denzin (1970), is to provide different points of view, perspectives and understandings of the subject of the study. Torrance argues, “no single method is likely to afford a comprehensive account of the phenomenon under investigation”, advocating for triangulation as it is believed that it produces a more informative picture that is “more rounded, nuanced, and valid” (2012, p.113).

There are critiques of triangulation as a mixed-methods research, as discussed by Denzin (2012), who developed its primary forms. The main critique is that the qualitative methods of data collection, including interviews and ethnographic observations, “rested on specific epistemological assumptions and each method had a complex disciplinary history” and hence may not “be easily combined with one another” (Denzin, 2012, p.82). However, considering the way that the triangulation is applied in this research in a hierarchical and complementary way, these critiques are not fully applicable to this discussion. That is because the interviews are considered as the main and primary source of data,
and the ethnographic conversations and the digital data are considered as secondary and complementary to the discourse produced through the interviews. Therefore, different sets of data are not necessarily incorporated with each other, rather the last two inform and enhance the interpretation of the first and main set of data.

The primary source of data in this research was the interviews. The research was designed to use Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the perceptions and narratives of the Gezi Park Movement’s participants using qualitative and semi-structured interviews. Meanwhile, after the field trip, it became evident that Twitter was a significant part of the movement. Hence, this digital social network became another focus of the research for the possibility of data mining and an experimental approach to data collection. However, since this method was in its infancy at the time of research design, it was not fully clear what data could be extracted from digital sources. Later, and throughout the digital data mining, it appeared that the data itself may not give a different and cohesive image of digital activities during the movement, however, the metadata, specifically the geo-location of digital activities became a point of interest, then was studied and eventually harvested. Throughout my interviews, I had discussions about both the geography of the movement and the digital technologies. The digital information fabric that was extracted from Twitter activities was a reflection of those discussions with an aim to illustrate a possible digital geography of resistance. The ultimate objective was to examine and compare the digital geography of the Gezi Park Movement with the actual and physical geography of the movement, described by the interviewees.

As discussed in Section 3.9, the ethnographic conversations became a method of data collection during the process of interviewing and field research. I had not intended to have extensive informal conversations and oral history approaches to the case study. However, because of the controversial and political nature of the research, many conversations led to long narratives told by the interviewees, expanding on their perception and understanding of Istanbul and the Gezi Park Movement. Most of the time, the interviewees had requested to keep the informal conversations off the record, and hence, I had reduced these conversations to key notes and names of documentary films, music groups, the name of places and people, date of protests, political events and so on. Nonetheless, during the analysis of the interviews I had clear recollections of those conversations, many which were very graphic and emotional that assisted with unveiling some of the emotional or social meanings of certain statements or words. Those ethnographic conversations indeed became an integral part of my contextual knowledge of the case study, my interviewees’ background and how they may have perceived the Gezi Park Movement and Istanbul’s urbanity.

In order for the data collection to be credible and trustworthy, the three data methods need to be seen in line with each other and not as separate entities to be combined. Data triangulation is not for the validation of data, as indicated by Denzin (2012). It has been considered to further deepen our understanding of the original data, the case study and the analysis. It also reinforced and enriched the methodological critique of this thesis, explaining the contextual, socio-political and linguistic complexities of the case study.
3.12. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the process of data collection in interviews, coding and the methods of analysis. The methodology of this research has not been a linear one; rather, it is constituted by a multiplicity of methods in both data collection and data analysis. Parts of research methodology have been amended after analysis of some aspects of the phenomenon, or failure to attain enough data on certain aspects. The process of research design, research questions, and the selection of participants equally had a critical significance in the thesis’s methodology. This chapter assessed semi-structured interviewing as the main method of qualitative data collection, scrutinising the quality and depth of such methods.

Critical Discourse Analysis has been introduced as the main method of investigating the contextualised meaning of the interviewees’ accounts of the Gezi Park Movement and of Istanbul. Due to the significance and complexity of the context, this thesis utilised a tool kit as a situated meaning approach to conduct Critical Discourse Analysis of interviewees’ accounts and other data. This method enables the research to investigate the meanings and implication of notions and concepts within and in relation to the very particular temporal and spatial context of the Gezi Park Movement and Istanbul. Due to the nature of this research and the event, many of the interviews led to informal and life history conversations. These ethnographic observations, in addition to my own personal experiences and memories, enabled me to identify some of the methodological shortcomings of this research, which are presented in Chapter 7.

Before an in-depth analysis of the Gezi Park Movement and the accounts of the participants are presented, the thesis discusses the theoretical aspects of the public space and the urban movement in the next two chapters. This analytical literature review on the topic of the research provides a foundation for a critical analysis of the Gezi Park Movement and its role in transforming the perception and conception of public space within the context of Istanbul.
4.0. Introduction: The Public

To live an entirely private life means above all to be deprived of things essential to a truly human life: to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, to be deprived of an “objective” relationship with them that comes from being related to and separated from them through the intermediary of a common world of things, to be deprived of the possibility of achieving something more permanent than life itself. (Arendt, 1998, p.58)

Rethinking public space is impossible unless through an in-depth study of the public and the public realm and their history. It is essential to understand the root and the meaning of the public and the implication of publicness, and also how these abstract concepts have changed or transformed through history (Madanipour, 1999). This chapter focuses on theories of the public realm, public sphere and eventually public spaces and their role in urban life. These theories might seem disparate in the urban context, as they are mostly discussed within the socio-political disciplines, but all share the aim of enfranchisement, to enhance democracy, empower citizens and include them in the process of urbanisation in the post-industrial west.

To create a critical theoretical foundation for analysing public spaces, the necessity of the public and its conditions and characteristics must be understood. This chapter is built upon the theories of Arendt (1998) and Habermas (1989) and relevant scholarly work that revolves around their theories. Prior to analysing the impacts of digital technologies on the urban transformations of public spaces, the theoretical background of cyber public spaces (Dean, 2001) is studied, exposing and discussing the hypothetical transformation of public space within the urban context.
Prior to introduction of the concepts and the structure of this chapter, it is essential to elaborate on a significant and foundational distinction between public sphere and its literature, and public space and the studies regarding the spatial dimensions of publicness. Indeed, there is no factual division between the two as they inherently and deeply interpenetrate each other’s realm, yet there is a critical gap and some deficiencies with both literatures that this chapter mainly aims to address. This problem with both literatures is addressed by Smith and Low:

Where the weakness of public space literature lies in the practical means of transitions from theories of political and cultural economy to the materiality of public space, the public sphere literature offers a historically embedded discussion of continual making and remaking of the public vis-à-vis state and related institutions, and ideologies and modes of communication and power. By corollary, the weakness of the public sphere literature may lie in the distance that it maintains from the places and spaces of publicness, whereas it is precisely the insight of the public space literature that produced public spaces naturalize the very assumptions interrogated by public sphere theorists and provide an extraordinary palimpsest for detailed scrutiny. (2013, p. 6)

The following discussions in the first subchapter on the theories of Arendt (1998) and subsequently Habermas (1989) attempt to shed a new light on the root of the word public, and the relations between the public realm and public spheres and the public space of the urban designer. The second subchapter revolves around the interconnections between the realm of politics and urban design. This subchapter challenges the depoliticized nature of urban design theory, proposing to produce a different possibility of politicized urban design and political public spaces.

Subchapter 3 questions the relevance of the Eurocentric philosophy of urban public spheres in understanding the peculiar spaces of appearance and resistance in Istanbul. Low and Smith (2013, p. 4) argue that “public space has very different meanings in different societies, places, and times”, and therefore there is a crucial necessity to contextualise the discussions presented in this chapter. The central literature on public spaces relating to non-western or developing cities has many gaps on different levels, largely because most studies have been undertaken by western academics using Eurocentric notions (Aravamudan, 2012; Leontidou, 2010; Mabin, 2014). An in-depth and extensive questioning and investigation of fundamental considerations, social relations and spatial dimensions of the Middle Eastern city is required, not as an opposite entity to the western city, but as a different and a differential phenomenon.

Lastly, this chapter unpacks the role of emerging digital technologies in the production of alternate spaces of resistance and spatial practices, both universally and in the context of Middle Eastern cities. This chapter aims to illuminate and accentuate the role of spatiality and the geography of public space within the historical and political discourse of the public sphere. It approaches the issue of public space through an urban lens and on an urban scale, yet sheds a light on recent and emerging scalar transformations of public space, into both the local and global spheres through pervasive digital technologies.
4.1. The Public – A Theoretical Inquiry

4.1.1. An Etymology

The way the word *public* is used in social theories, political philosophy and urban studies is mostly unquestioned. There are some vague definitions, but the notion of public and its roots are often underexplored. One may wonder what use an etymologic approach to the concept of public space may have in urban studies and particularly in the context of this thesis. The response to these inquiries lies in the meaning of the word and how it is interpreted in many ways, depending on the context, time and possibly the interests of the author.

In *The Dictionary of Urbanism* (Cowan, 2005, p. 311), the word *public* as a noun is defined as “the people.” In the *Oxford Dictionary* (Stevenson & Brown, 2007, p. 2394) *public* as a noun is defined as “1- in public in a place or state open to public view or access; openly […], 2- organized society, the body politics, the nation; the state; the interest or welfare of the community. 3- People collectively […], 4- a section of community […].” In other words, the term has the widest meaning possible — from a place to body politics, to the people collectively, to a section of the community — and this is indeed the root of many confusions in urban studies, as authors mostly take for granted that the reader knows which meaning of the word public they are referring to. This point is neatly discussed in Madanipour’s (1999, p. 880) analysis of public spaces and their significance:

> The significance of symbolism in the construction of social reality, however, shows how there can be more than one interpretation for the social facts. As one of the most important dimensions of our social world, space finds different interpretations and meanings. As different groups give different meanings to space, it becomes a multi-layered place, reflecting the way places are socially constructed (Knox, 1995).

The root of the word public goes back to the Latin term “*populous,*” meaning *people* (Stevenson & Brown, 2007, p. 2394). Therefore, if public is treated as a *noun*, its meaning is *the people*, assuming that the meaning of public as an adjective is *of the people* or for the people. This simple clarification has manifold complicated and possible provocative consequences. For instance, the following definition by Cowan and Hall (2005, p. 312) of the public realm would be disconcerting: "The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to see, use and enjoy, including streets, square and parks. [emphasis added]" This vague definition with the troubling brackets about the ownership of the space may result in misleading claims about the publicness of shopping malls for instance, which everybody can “see, use and enjoy”; however, such spaces not only are privately owned but are also extremely privatised and commodified. To further clarify what the word public actually means, I investigate the work of Arendt and Habermas as two notable theorists on the public realm and sphere specifically. In addition, their critics’ works will be discussed in order to shed a new light on this subject and eventually build a strong foundation for further discussions on public spaces as the loci of urban movements and digital technologies.
4.1.2. Human Conditions and Arendtian Public Realm

The initial question here is concerned with the importance of the public, its necessity for human beings and its relation to the general conditions of human life. This section investigates the necessity and significance of the public realm as a human condition through the theories of Arendt (1998), who dedicated many of her intellectual efforts to a discourse on the public and the distinction between the public realm and private realm.

A human being is a conditioned being and these conditions are made by humans and humanity as a process, and anything that enters into a sustained relationship with a human’s life becomes a condition of human existence (Arendt, 1998; Benhabib, 1999). According to Habermas and McCarthy (1977, p. 8), “the fact of human plurality” is the spatial dimension of the life-world in Arendt’s theory: “every interaction unifies the multiple perspectives of perception and action of those present, who as individuals occupy an inconvertible standpoint.” Arendt (1998, p. 22) also declares that “all human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together [added emphasis].”

As a brief introduction to Arendt’s theory, it can be argued that she fundamentally categorises human activities into three: labour, work and action (Arendt, 1998). Arendt (1998, p. 7) maintains that labour corresponds to biological conditions; work corresponds to man-made, artificial needs, the “world of things,” and the “unnaturalness of human existence”; and action corresponds to the need for togetherness, to the fact of “we, the people,” to the human condition of plurality. As life in itself is a condition of labour, and worldliness the condition of work, plurality is the condition of action, and this discussion argues that plurality is the condition of the public, the public space, the urban movement and the city as a whole.

Arendt maintains that this human condition of togetherness found its place in human life with the rise of the city-state. Since then, man has received “besides his private life a sort of second life, his bios politikos” (Arendt, 1998, p. 22). She continues, “Now every citizen belongs to two orders of existence; and there is a sharp distinction in his life between what is his own (idiom) and what is communal (koinon)” (Arendt, 1998, p. 22). The innate complexity of defining public space is the foundation of Arendt’s argument about the public realm, in bios politikos and the distinction between idiom and kionon.

Bios politicos literally refers to the political life of men; however, it has a deeper meaning in Arendt’s thought. According to Taminiaux (1996, p. 207) Arendt’s bios is not just a form of living or lifestyle, it is life itself, it is existing, and more importantly it is a life out of the circle of living, “a liberation from the necessity which burdens it.” It is a life that occurs where free men of the polis come together in the space of appearance and make politics.

The space of appearance and the public realm of Arendt are interconnected and sometimes used interchangeably. The space of appearance is the space where “I appear to others as others appear to me” (Arendt, 1998, p. 198). In the space of appearance, where men appear to each other equally
through their action and speech\(^5\), they can distinguish themselves as distinct beings, to define who they are and to disclose their unique identity.

Arendt (1998, p. 50) considers that the public can be conceived of as two interconnected and at the same time distinct phenomena. The first is that “everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity.” Arendt (1998) focuses on the concept of appearance, which in her opinion is what constitutes reality. In addition to appearance there is the need for others to assure us of this reality. This aspect been the central focus of many studies on Arendtian politics (Beltrán, 2009; Kohn, 2004; Lang Jr, 2005). The second phenomenon that the public signifies is the world itself: a common place that is distinct from the place that is owned privately. Arendt (1998, p. 52) differentiates between the world and the earth/universe. The world is something that relates to human artefacts, to the handmade fabrication of affairs among men who live in a handmade environment together (Canovan in Hinchman & Hinchman, 2012). This common-world is the place where the public realm emerges. Arendt (1998, p. 52) states: “The public realm, as the common-world gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other.”

Arendt (1998, p. 152) maintains that the action, the bios politikos, materialises within a network of human interactions, in a place where people speak, make and act for and of the common-world: “most words and deeds are about some worldly objective reality in addition to being a disclosure of the acting and speaking self.” From this statement we can conclude that (a) a “common-world” is the requirement of the action and the public realm, and (b) the action requires an autonomous place to contain the speech and the act.

The common-world can be defined by the speech and action of the citizens; however, it is still ambiguous whether among the citizens anyone has any dominating power to impose or reject a definition. Lastly and most importantly, it should be noted that due to its worldliness, the common-world has strong ties to the spatial and temporal dimensions of the context in question. Thus, the common-world of each public realm, public space, urban movement or any struggle should be defined within that context through an analysis of the speech and the actions of the public actors.

Arendt’s public realm has drawn manifold criticisms and can be interpreted as either utopian or seductive by her critics (Villa, 2000). Nonetheless, Richard Sennett (2000a) sheds a different light on the utopian concept of the public realm; he maintains that Arendt’s egalitarian public realm is a response to the dystopian and repressive public realm of Simmel, which later on, was echoed in the Foucault’s space of surveillance. In the public realm of Arendt, different voices and speech can be heard as she has given critical virtue to difference and distinction. Sennett (2000a, p. 382) maintains that “she reversed the Simmelian notion of sight and speech and argued that the public realm was a realm in which we had to privilege speech over sight” and further argues that freedom of discourse is the central point of Arendt’s conception of public. Although Arendt, and Sennett in her defence,

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\(^5\) One of the noteworthy aspects of publicity is the separation of action and speech into two different activities (both within the action as the activity that relates to human plurality). After the emergence of the Polis, there was more emphasis on speech rather than action, which generated a new phenomenon. Speech was a tool of persuasion rather than a “specifically human way of answering, talking back and measuring up to whatever happened or was done” (Arendt, 1998, p. 26).
project a theoretical framework for a utopian space of appearance, the concerns regarding the possibility of having real freedom of discourse regardless of socio-economic status, gender, race and hereditary powers undermine the power of the Arendtian approach towards the analysis of public space.

These considerations of Arendt and her critics gradually lead us to a better understanding of what is meant by public space, and emerging concepts such as privatised public space. The spatiality of the public realm in Arendt’s account has two inter-penetrating characteristics: the theatrical performance of politics and the worldliness of the public. According to Canovan (Hinchman & Hinchman, 2012, p. 189), Arendt’s conception of public space is concerned with a “worldly space”, a space that is durable and allows citizens to move freely — it is “a house where freedom can dwell” (Arendt, 1963, p. 28). These aspects are further discussed in following section.

### 4.1.3. Arendtian Public Realm and the Struggle of Public Space

The spatiality and geography of Arendt’s theories are underexplored in urban studies, and also Arendt’s intellectual and political understanding of the public realm is directly reflected upon in most spatial and geographical studies of public spaces and places (Low & Smith, 2013). For instance, Lofland (1989, p. 473) conducted an extensive review of the literature of public space and Arendt was only mentioned once in a footnote that referred to her concept of the public realm as a realm of “economic and political activities.” One of the reasons for this lack of discussion on Arendt’s theories may be that there is no explicit spatial dimension in Arendt’s theories per se. However, it can be argued that the Arendtian public realm can be significantly useful in understanding public space in a different temporal context, particularly in a time of urban movements. The following explains the two key aspects of Arendt’s public realm that reinforce our understanding of emerging public spaces and the transformation of cities.

**Appearance, Speech and Sight — for All.**

One may assume that based on the first aspect of Arendt’s concept of the public realm, the public realm is any-where that anyone can appear and can distinguish himself/herself as a distinct being through action and speech. The key element in this argument that can lead us to an urbane understanding of Arendt is her use of the word *anybody*, opposed to everybody. Of course, *everybody* cannot fit into one spatial geography, city or building, however the possibility of having everybody — or basically anyone — is a critical point in this discussion. The city and the ideal public space reflect the notion of the public realm more clearly than the formal institutions of representative democracy. The central city square of a mediaeval city, the vast concrete public squares of political cities, the main Bazaar of merchant cities and so on, were the places where one could equally appear, and possibly be heard and seen. Yet the distinction between everybody and anybody may justify the exclusionary nature of the Greek agora, which significantly influenced Arendt’s utopian notion of the space of appearance.

In contrast to the formal spatial setting of the public realm such as national parliaments or institutional assemblies, informal gatherings resonate more with the public realm of Arendt. For instance, urban
gatherings, movements and urban struggles like rent strikes, political housing movements and particularly resistance movements against the privatisation of public space have been based on an inclusiveness, making the voice of the marginalised heard. The fascinating point in these movements is that like Arendt, the realm of appearance is not limited to any geographical location. The city becomes the public realm and the political space of appearance. The city emerges and becomes the public space, not as an agglomeration of unrelated spaces, but as a tightly knit network of spaces and people, in multiple dimensions and on different levels. And hence in times of urban struggles, particularly for the common-world of citizens, the city is the perfect and ultimate public realm.

**Common-world and Political Public Spaces**

The second aspect of public in Arendtian discourse is the worldliness of the public realm. It has been noted that, in many cases, the political space of the city or the state is dominated by non-public matters, or at least the public realm is not concerned with the common-world of the citizens. Rather, it is entertained by the personal and private world of the politicians, which can lead to the alienation of citizens from the political life and the public realm of the city. In contrast, in the informal public realm of the city, specifically in times of urban struggles, it is exactly the common-world that brings the citizens together, unites them and provides them with the possibility of collective action. Citizens on either side of the debate can understand the nature of housing, the rental market, public transportation, services and so on, and hence their appearance in the public space to debate such matters reflects a very important aspect of (un)successful urban movements. It is suspected that movements that are formed for mere political change without a clear common-world and defined worldly demands often tend to fail.

Public space can and has been the common-world of many movements (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010; Hou, 2010; D. Mitchell, 1995). The struggles over the protection of the public realm are the ultimate spatial, urban and also political aspects of the city and urban living that are increasingly repressed and silenced. The public spaces of the city are the ultimate common-world, in which the homeless, the immigrant workers, the religious minorities, the working class, skateboarders and normalised others appear, to some extent equally, and privatisation or elimination of these public spaces produces a backlash, leading to the strong public realm of Arendt, for speech, and for collective action. The spatial characteristics of these spaces that facilitate the presence of all and anybody are significant and mostly underemphasised in the literature of public spaces, a subject that will be discussed in more detail in the next sections.

As a final note on Arendt’s conception of the public realm and its relation to the questions of this thesis, it would be pertinent to question the origins and context of Arendtian thought. Hannah Arendt, a post-World War II theorist and a student of Heidegger, based her theoretical concepts on Eurocentric philosophy (Benhabib, 1990, 1996). Briefly, I can argue that the private/public binary and human conditions discussed in Arendt’s work (1998) may not fully apply to a Middle Eastern or global South context, and particularly to the context of Istanbul. Spirituality, religion, introverted spaces and different urban governance throughout history, war and colonisation, as well as many other cultural
layers, make it extremely difficult to comprehend how and under which conditions citizens can appear somewhere equally. Thus, it is justifiable to consider her ideas since the case of this research is not fully defined within the Eurocentric context, though Istanbul may have been heavily influenced by it, due to geographical proximity and globalization.

To summarise, it can be noted that Arendt’s work on the public realm and the space of appearance has an utmost significance for urban studies and urban practices. While her work does not necessarily discuss the aesthetic of the public space, its physical dimensions or its architectural merits, it clearly projects the vitality and prominence of an autonomous public space in creating a public realm where citizens can equally appear. The space of appearance is not only the space in which people can be in the presence of each other. In Arendt’s thought, it is the space of politics and speech and action, where political citizens can discuss their common-world without resorting to violence. As discussed, the specific settings of such spaces should be defined and re-appropriated through the context they are applied to. Arendt’s thought may not be applicable to a universal sphere; however, what is inevitable in her discourse is that plurality is the condition of human beings. We need the public space to meet this condition, to be together without falling over each other, to exist, equally and as distinct beings at the same time, to achieve and sustain our common-world and our collective action.

4.1.4. Habermas and the Public Sphere

In this section, the public and particularly the public sphere will be studied from a Habermasian perspective. Habermas’s works have attracted a lot of attention in recent years due to his extensive and strong commitment to an elaboration of the concept of public sphere, democracy and communicative theory. Also, Habermas acknowledged the significant influence of Arendt’s (1998) work, The Human Condition and her discourse of public realm on his theoretical investigations and development of the theories regarding the transformation of the public sphere (Canovan, 1983). Therefore, it is essential to explore Habermas’s public sphere in light of Arendt’s in-depth analysis of the public realm that is discussed in the last sections.

The city, as Park (1967) argues, is the place where citizens meet their desires, creating the world in which they live and, in the production of their lived spaces, they create themselves; hence the significance of the role of citizens in the production of space and particularly in the production of the public place become apparent. In light of this, it follows that cities are the consequence of the human will; that in turn implies that citizens have the right to the freedom of their cities (Harvey, 2007; Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2002). As Flyvbjerg (1998) and many others have said, the act of citizenship and citizenry is the focal point of pluralist democracies. This claim is clearly projected in Flyvbjerg’s works on Habermas and Foucault (1998), where he explains that both are concerned with the enhancement of civil society and the role of citizens in forming a democratic life and tackling social, economic and political inequalities.

In Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1991), Habermas investigates the meanings and transformations of public in the historical socio-political
context. He explores *publicity* and *privacy* throughout history and the transformations of the meanings, venues, functions and the consequences of the transformation of both concepts. The modern meaning of public emerged in the town, which in Habermas’s (1991) view was the domain of civil society’s life in that it hosted early public spheres in the form of coffee houses, theatres, salons and table societies. In the golden age of coffee houses and salons – between 1670 and 1730 – these public spaces were the core of criticism, dominated by literary figures who later included political agendas in their public debates (Habermas, 1989). This reflects some of the aspects that Arendt focused on: the public realm as the space of speech and action, politics as high culture, theatrical performance and persuasive debates.

Publicity, transparency and openness are the implicit meanings of the idea of the public sphere, introduced by Habermas through his *Structural Transformation* theory (Habermas, 1991). This theory addresses the theoretical and practical aspirations of the critical theory that is to understand and to guide social life. The public sphere discourse is about a space where subjects, agents and individuals are equally involved in a *rational* interaction in search of the *common good* and *truth* (Goode, 2005). In theory, everyone is included in the rational discussion but, in practice, many might be excluded by the complexity and nature of the system.

Habermas (1985) insists that the public sphere is the way to a democratic political consensus, the ground for agents, individuals and communities to equally, morally and rationally communicate in the world of letters to develop institutions capable of resisting the established orders created by the state and the system. He introduces the *Programme of Social Theory* to explain the sociality of citizens and particularly the communicative actions they undertake that might lead to the identified public sphere (Habermas, 1985).

The next sections will discuss how the public sphere of Habermas was transformed through the industrialisation and urbanisation process, and particularly through the emergence of cyber space. Many studies on the public sphere of the digital environment are based on the theories of Habermas, and therefore, I discuss these investigations, taking into account the critique of Habermasian thought.

### 4.1.5. Critique of Habermas

In a late capitalist democracy, any attempt to illuminate the limits of the public sphere and practice of citizenship cannot succeed unless it addresses Habermas’s (1989) *transformation of bourgeois public sphere* theory. On the other hand, because of the shifts in urban life and the transformation of socio-economic patterns in the late 20th century, the bourgeois public sphere is no longer relevant in the same way that it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Accordingly, there is an essential need to see the possibility of a new form of the public sphere(s) or the publics and to rethink the notion of publicity (Fraser, 1990).

The public sphere in Habermasian (1989) terms is based on the rhetoric of publicity and equal accessibility; however, as Fraser (1990) argues and as Habermas (1992b) himself admits, the Habermasian public sphere is exclusionary, both in theory and practice. According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere is comprised of private persons deliberating about the public good. This
theory is accomplished in politics and planning in diverse societies and in different forms in western geographies, but in most cases societies have suffered from different forms of social inequality and discrimination against minorities despite the strong democratic mechanism. Therefore, it is still a challenge to see whether or not the democratic needs of a society can be met through a bourgeois public sphere or representative democracy as its ultimate outcome.

Critiques of Habermas, such as those by Goode (2005) and Fraser (1990), include a detailed investigation of every single aspect of his public sphere, as well as critiques of his perspective towards the history of intellectuality, questions regarding identity and gender politics, power relations and his take on rationality and reason. Fraser (1990, p. 62) criticises four assumptions made by Habermas concerning the public sphere and some may also apply to the public realm of Arendt:

1. The assumption that private persons can “bracket status differentials and to deliberate ‘as if’ they were social equals”;

2. The assumption that greater democracy only occurs through a singular public sphere but not through a proliferation of public spheres and their competition weakens the path towards a democratic society;

3. The assumption that the debate within the public sphere should be centred on the “common-good” and that “private issues are always undesirable”;

4. And lastly, a “functioning democratic public sphere” can only appear if there is an explicit divide between the state and civil society.

Arendt (1998) argues that plurality, publicity and the public realm are the conditions of action, and what makes us human beings. Yet Habermas is concerned with the Kantian question of how to establish “solidarity among strangers” (Garnham, 2007, p. 203), or as Kellner (quoted in Boros & Glass, 2014, p. 19) maintains, the central theme of Habermas’s work is the “concern with the public sphere and the necessary conditions for a genuine democracy.” This concern is strongly rooted and reflected in Habermas’s personal life also, as he himself argued in a more informal lecture in Tokyo (Habermas, 2004).

Within both theories, there are clear similarities between Habermas’s and Arendt’s conception of the public sphere and the public realm. However, one of the differences that Sennett (2000b, p. 383) points to is that the Habermasian public sphere “is richer” in content as Habermas does not consider matters of “labour” and work as private affairs which are then not permitted in the public sphere, in contrast to the public realm of Arendt in which these matters are not allowed. Yet one may interpret the common-world of Arendt more broadly and include work and private matters within the public realm discourse. What can be seen as a more fundamental problematic issue, which is addressed by more recent scholars (Frazer, 2009; Habermas et al., 2004; Muñoz, 2009), is the concrete divisions and lines drawn by Arendt and Habermas between different lives and spaces of citizens and cities, or as Lefebvre (1991a, 1991b) argues, the spatial and temporal segregation that dominates everyday life.
Like Arendt’s conception of the public realm, Habermas (1989) imagines a *utopian* public sphere where equal citizens engage in rational communication for the common good. Although the Habermasian public sphere is “richer” in terms of details and the inclusion of private matters (Sennett, 2000a, p. 393), similar to Arendt’s theories, it is significantly reliant on occidental rationality, philosophy and history. This, in addition to theoretical critiques of Habermas’s work (Goode, 2005; Fraser, 1990), casts a shadow over the use of his theories in a different context.

According to Flyvbjerg (1998), Habermas’s public sphere generates inequalities due to its lack of insight into relations of power, exclusionary geographies and its reliance on utopian ideas; therefore it fails to tackle social inequalities in practice. These deficiencies in the formal public spheres of cities and nation-states means that they are unable to meet the demands of urban inhabitants, thus leading to public dissent and the possibility of grassroots movements, the occupation and appropriation of urban spaces and the digital realm. In addition, the shift towards the notion of the cyber public sphere or digital public space can be seen as a symptom of the Habermasian public sphere’s failure.

### 4.1.6. Cyber Public Sphere

Fraser’s (1990) critique of Habermas and the emergence of a cyber forum and digital public networks led to an analysis of the role of digital technologies as a platform for multiple and competing publics, and to whether or not the collaboration between the digital publics of subordinated individuals within the public space is challenging the dominant public sphere, culture and the state’s institutions. The threshold between the public and private in digital social networks is the other side of the issue. Because this threshold is blurred, minorities and privatised issues are now interconnected within political discourse, which reflects on one of the key critiques of the Habermasian public sphere (Fraser, 1990; Houghton, 2010).

Many claim that the Internet and new digital social networks can evoke new public spheres. However, Buchstein (1997, p. 251) questions these optimistic claims by maintaining that:

> The new technology seems to match all basic requirements of Habermas’ normative theory of the democratic public sphere: it is a universal, anti-hierarchical, complex, and demanding mode of interaction. Because it offers universal access, uncoerced communication, freedom of expression, an unrestricted agenda, and participation outside traditional political institutions and generates public opinion through processes of discussion, the Internet looks like the most ideal speech situation.

It can be understood that computer mediated communication can be deceiving and distortive for citizens (Dean, 2001). Digital spaces can be analysed from different aspects that indicate that these spaces are democratic or else projecting a deceiving image of democracy. However, this thesis is interested in the correlation between urban spaces and digital technologies as mediators of the production of space in the urban context, rather than solely focusing on the analysis of digital atmospheres as democratic spaces or even as tools for making a democratic city or society. Therefore, it may not necessarily be the focal point of argument, but it is worthwhile to see the relationship between the cyber public sphere and political public spaces of the city. Dean (2001)
suggests an alternative to the Habermasian public sphere, which may have had a direct impact on the transformation of public spaces in the urban context.

Dean (2001), through her analysis of Habermas’s (1991) and Benhabib’s (1994) takes on the public sphere and advocates for the digital public sphere, the cybersalon of civil society. Unlike Habermasian models, Dean claims that the cybersalon is capable of responding to the complexities of civil society in the information age. Dean (2001) rejects Fraser’s (1990) concept of multiple public spheres, as she argues that this pluralistic approach solely reinforces the idea of the bourgeois public sphere as an ultimate goal or an ideal.

Dean (2001, p. 258) claims the cybersalon provides “a model of interactivity, subjectivity, media, and political space significantly different from the rational and friendly salons of Habermas and Benhabib”; it is a model of “political connection and contestation in civil society.” The cybersalon has different modes of interactivity. In the traditional salons of Habermas, debate was limited to face-to-face encounters that might have excluded some from the public discourse. In contrast, the debate in the cybersalon is more like to be daily life conversations that can include a wider audience. However, the economic dimensions of cyberspace might lead to the exclusion of some agents and individuals from interactivity and other benefits. One of the first requirements of integrating with modern technology is the ability to afford and invest in accessing, maintaining and interacting with technological devices. In other words, as Aurigi (2005, p. 53) maintains: “[t]he first, necessary requisite to dwell in cyberspace is wealth, and this has been a crucial problem addressed by those organisations determined to create civic networks that are able to involve as many citizens as possible.

Dean (2001) depicts the interactivity of the cybersalon in a model that embraces the embodied and disembodied participants of public discourse, whereas in Habermas’s (1989) public sphere, the debate is tied to embodied participants with knowledge and/or property. However, Dean argues it is naïve to celebrate the inclusivity of digital networks, because of:

Encryption, surveillance, modem speeds, incompatible protocols, the difficulty of finding useful information amid all the Net clutter, the problematic dominance of English, the comparatively fewer numbers of ethnic minorities on-line, and the basic economic inability of large numbers of people to take advantage of networked resources because they can afford neither a computer nor basic training. (2001, p. 260)

As a result, we can conclude that the early twenty first century’s cybersalon, which later evolved into advanced, personalised and far more pervasive digital social networks like Facebook and Twitter, has had an impact on the public sphere, the publicness and eventually the public space of the city. This thesis will further investigate the role and impact of these technologies in and on the process of urbanisation and the production of space specifically. Many problems with the analysis of the digital public sphere and how it influences the urban reality are rooted in the approach to the problem of digital technologies and the lack of consideration of the moments of the production of space accordingly. The following sections and chapters unpack these specific issues, utilising a clear and
critical theoretical framework, pinpointing different impacts of digital technologies on different perceived, conceived and lived spaces of the city and urban society.

4.1.7. Conclusion; the Public Theory and the Question of Spatiality

Building on the Arendtian foundation, and with the support of Habermasian structural analysis, it can be understood that the public realm/sphere is vital and public space is instrumental to public life. Habermas simply argues that a democratic society, and essentially a democratic city, will not exist unless through an effective, open and equal public sphere, where citizens can debate their public affairs though communicative actions.

Public space, as the locus of the public sphere/realm, must reflect and acknowledge the (lack of) equality, equity and matters of property and wealth and eventually and most importantly the matter of difference. Although, the major weight of Habermas’s criticism is on the matter of difference, due to the complexity of the issue, this will be discussed in a subsequent section and following chapters. Geographical location, spatial configuration, either architectural or symbolic language (signs and symbols), the wider temporal and spatial context and other urban layers play a significant role in reflecting the matters of equality and equity within public spaces.

The last lesson from Arendt and Habermas regarding the public is politics and the political. Public is political, and hence public space is political and essential for democracy. Privatisation of public space by private interest not only dominates public space, but also it results in the de-politicisation of the city, the urban, and urban society. The public space as the place of pleasure, enjoyment and mere communication is not necessarily public, rather it may be social or leisure space (which requires a different political and historical analysis), while in Habermasian and Arendtian thought, the public and more importantly the public space is autonomous, worldly and directly political.

In conclusion, it is important to consider that there is a crucial difference between public space and other social spaces within the urban context, and the difference is in the political dimension of space. This distinction has been systematically and gradually neglected in urban studies and particularly in architectural and urban design scholarly works. It is essential to consider the words of Lefebvre (1976, p. 31) – “space is political” and accordingly the public space is where the political is publicised, is discussed and debated. Consequently, the political is an immanent part of public space, particularly in the context of this research.

4.2. Public Space and the Urban

Bridge and Watson (2000, pp. 369-380) classify the studies of public space and “democratic cities” in urban disciplines into three themes: (a) the relationship between the public realm and urban spaces, (b) the distinction between the public realm and private realm and (c) the relationship between the everyday and extraordinary moments of urban life. These themes correspond to the initial conceptual framework of this thesis.
In this section, public space – the space of politics and political appearance – is uprooted and investigated with a focus on the spatial and urban aspects of public phenomena and their relationship with the meaning of public and publicness. This section includes subsections that structurally explore the notion of public space within urban studies and urban practices, enforcing the initial objective of the thesis: *rethinking the public space*. This section is based on commonplace themes within the literature, and includes the following discussions:

- The public space, *urbanity par excellence*: unpacking the relationship between public space and urban space in theory and practice,
- Public-private dichotomy: challenging and critiquing the adequacy of the public-private dichotomy to understand the emerging complexities of urban life,
- The everyday public and the extraordinary public: unpacking the interpenetrating relationships between everyday public space and different moments of the production of space and urban life.

### 4.2.1. Public Space - *Urbanity par Excellence*

The relationship between public space and the urban reality of the city, how urbanity is formed while it is itself produced by the process of urbanisation, is of outmost importance in this discussion. As Kingwell (in Kingwell & Turmel, 2009, p. 19) argues, “[U]rban life is public life, the courtyard is the city, the proximity inevitably creates the complicated shared gazes of the unprivate private – which is to say, the always already public.” Thus, the initial question here is why some well-recognised scholars refer to public space as “urban” public space (for instance in Madanipour (1999, p. 879) and Harvey (2006, p. 16), while Low and Smith (2013, p. 3) argue that “stretching back to Greek antiquity onwards, public space is almost by definition urban space, and in many current treatments of public space the urban remains the privileged scale of analysis and cities the privileged site”.

Is non-urban public space possible? This question leads us to the initial inquiry of this chapter: what is the *public*? Referring to Arendt, Habermas, Lefebvre and many other scholars, it can be understood that public space is not possible without the urban, since it is only the urban reality that provides the desired heterogeneity for radical and spontaneous *encounters*, for the appearance of *difference* and the possibility of collective action for the common-world and common-good. Sennett (2000a, p. 380), in his reflections on Arendt, the public realm and public space, argues that:

> At the time of the French Revolution when political philosophers used the word public they tended to try to get hold of what it meant for a society to shift from court-based power to urban power, from court to city.

Matching Sennett’s point with the theories of Habermas and particularly Arendt can draw a picture of the *public* traced over the strange world of urban reality. Public space as the urban, or vice versa, is the critical and focal point here, yet it must be noted that the public *sphere* is possible on a rural or global scale, specifically with the emergence of networked and mobile digital technologies globally.
and locally. Turmel (Kingwell & Turmel, 2009, p. 151) briefly defines “city life” as the forceful and constant encounter with the “effects of other people’s behaviours,” which leads him to conclude that public space is unequivocally the city. Although Turmel's argument supports the initial idea of this study’s hypothesis that the public space is the urban, a deeper discussion about the dimensions of this correlation is needed. The role of private property – as most landmass in the urban fabrics is in private hands – the role of power relations, ownership and everyday practices are also critical in defining the relationship between public space and urban reality and are discussed in subsequent sections (Bridge & Watson, 2000). The following three qualities of urban space, based on the definitions and theoretical framework mentioned in Chapter 2, depict the relationship between public space and urban space in theory and practice.

**Conflicting and Heterogeneous Conditions of the Urban and the Public:**

Considering the city as the container of a fluid public and urbanity provides a different conclusion: the city cannot retreat from what makes it the city, or indeed from itself. Hence, Sennett’s (1977) argument of a “retreat into the private realm of family and close friends”, mostly within the cafes and salons, may not be accurate. Instead of retreating, the public sphere — and urban reality in general — transforms, reshapes and re-appropriates itself due to what Lefebvre (2003, p. 186) calls the paradoxical character of urban form and urban phenomena, and hence it has to be understood as a “totality”, which accordingly to Lefebvre (2003) attempts to escape analysis.

The city may have a distinct position in relation to public space, particularly in a hierarchical order, yet the city is not equal to urban reality and therefore the relation between the public space and urbanity should not be confused with the positioning of the city against the public. Urban reality contains the heterogeneity, the density and proximity of Wirth’s (1936) definition, which leads to the conflict, to radical encounters and civilizing debates for the common good. The urban reality, according to Lefebvre (1996, p. 70), is a “double process” — and in fact conflictual and public space is where this double process is embodied. Public space is where the conflict resurfaces and social life is shaped. The city is the topos of this urban reality, as it is the topos of public space. In other words, public space is where the conflictual nature of urban reality, its heterogeneity and opposing and antagonistic differences appear. The public space, as an urban phenomenon, is the “terrain on which various strategies clash” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 87). Thus, it is understandable that the public space and the city as a whole, and not as separate entities, are the loci of heterogeneity, conflict and contestations.

**Informal and Formal Conditions of the Urban and the Public:**

It can also be argued that formality prevents and eradicates the conflictual, agonistic, and equality of the public space in advance due to the imposition of formal domination and hierarchy, and thus formal public space as a notion would be a mere oxymoron and it may have to be called formal representatives’ space. However, Parkinson (2009, pp. 107-108) depicts the formal physical public spaces in a more positive light and describes them as “required”. He also argues that “it is easier to demonise the other and call them names when one has not actually met them, let alone when one’s own name is hidden behind an online pseudonym,” in which it is obvious that he dismisses the power
relations in the process of *demonising* the other, as we can see that demonising others is becoming so prevalent and crudely explicit within and through the formal public sphere, specifically in recent years and with the rise of Trumpism.

The contemporary city, like formal public space, is also strongly shaped and appropriated by capitalist policies and power relations, left in the hands of private developments and the oppressive property market. However, the informality, the everyday urban rebellion, and the urban disorder erupting from the interstices of the city is the glimmer of hope within the bleak image of urban transformations and urban crisis depicted in the literature (Davis, 2006; Harvey, 2007, 2010; Koolhaas, 1995, 2002; Lefebvre, 2003). Despite the insistent endeavour of the system to *colonise* (Habermas, 1985) the everyday life, the inhabitants and the urban reality will leap into disorder (Lefebvre, 1991b), not because of weaknesses in the system or dominant power, but due to the conflictual and heterogeneous nature of urbanity.

From major violent crimes to routine civil disobediences, traffic jams, and spontaneous moments of passion and protest on the streets of the city, it is apparent that the system cannot fully and infinitely formalise and master the urban reality. The informality eventually leaps into reality. Public space is where it happens: public space, not as a specific designated area for controlled social interactions and not fetishized carnivals and festivals but exactly to the contrary — the informal public space is for movements, *for disorderly actions*, informal gatherings, or mischievous behaviour. The whole city as an informal public space is the locus of urban informality. *This once more proves that public space and the urban space are inseparable as the informal geographies of urban reality.*

**Multilateral Condition of the Urban and the Public:**

Urbanity and urban space is not a singular space. It is not the sole object of the analysis and cannot be reduced to a singularity. Urban space has a multilateral nature, layers over layers with interpenetrating elements and dimensions (Kingwell & Turmel, 2009; Lefebvre, 2003). Although this nature makes the urban reality indecipherable, it makes it *public*. One of the strong critiques of Habermas is in regards to the singularity of his bourgeois public sphere, which excludes and disenfranchises the non-participants, while Fraser (1990) suggests that the multiplicity of publics and counter publics may be the key in the enabling, recognition, and enfranchisement of the citizens. This refers us back to the Arendt’s conception of public realms and city-states as the network of public spaces and places. In the city, the network of spaces, agents, and interests are so tightly interwoven that the boundaries blur and the city becomes a unique peculiar public space, or counter public space, as a whole. Once more, it can be argued that *public open spaces* are ultimate forms of urbanity, where the proximity and heterogeneity of the city explode and implode (Lefebvre, 2003) and create one uniting whole.

Eventually, the urban space as the ultimate public space is the locus of *conflict, disorderly behaviour*, and a *network* of endless interconnected layers, elements, and individuals. Nonetheless, if the city as a whole is considered public, what would be the need for the public spaces that are conventionally demarcated as *public*, like city squares, streets, and so on? Public space is not a guaranteed,
permanent, given space or condition. It is a contested one. Eley (1994, p. 11) indicates that “the public sphere was always constituted by conflict”. Therefore it can be argued that public space (in its conventional definition) can be privatised and taken away at any given time, which is happening gradually around the world (S. Graham, 2011; Harvey, 2006; D. Mitchell & Heynen, 2009; Smith, 1996). Therefore, the publicness of the conventional public space is contested at every moment. However, the city and particularly the urbanity, regardless of relentless and ruthless efforts of the system or state as a dominating power, cannot be privatised fully — cannot be controlled and mastered in totality — and hence the urban reality is the public space par excellence, and public space is urbanity at its best.

4.2.2. Public-Private Dichotomy: An Incomplete Binary

Bridge and Watson (2000) identify the distinction between the private realm and the public realm as the second theme in studies of public space. The public-private dichotomy is not only an accessible, comprehensive, and straightforward concept to be studied or analysed; this dichotomy is the foundation of manifold aspects of our universal urban knowledge and is the driving force behind many urban practices. The distinction between public and private realms is studied mostly from a Eurocentric point of view and particularly from a legal perspective or within feminism historiography (Horwitz, 1982; Landes, 2003). In urban studies, the distinction and the dichotomy is differently problematic, while it is still related to the history of the public and private from a legal point of view and in relation to matters of gender studies.

The division and segregation between the private space and the public space is supposedly clear; the private architect designs the private space for the private realm and with private interests in mind, and the public architect — supposedly the council as a public body — produces the public spaces for the public realm with public interests in mind. There are clear boundaries between the private space and the public realm, and discussions on privacy, protection of private life, or the attack on the privacy of citizens in the media and everyday life is common. This is, however, far more problematic and theoretically challenging, especially in a not fully Eurocentric context. The simplistic classification of spaces, whether into public-private dichotomy or any other classification, may lead to further segregation and the fragmentation of urban life and urban fabric under particular circumstances.

Based on the first aspect of this section, Public Space, Urbanity par excellence, and considering the entire city as the public space, it may be troubling to have a clear cut between the public and private realm. L. H. Lofland (1989, p. 455) assertively reflects on the strong co-dependence of city and public; she maintains that “again, only with the invention of the city does the public realm come into existence.” In rural areas, the countryside, and particularly in the suburbs, the private is the core virtue. The intimate space of families, individuals, and private affairs are divorced from wild nature, danger, strangers, and politics by clear physical boundaries such as walls, gates, and fences. In the urban setting, the wall, the gate, and the fence are mere obstacles, just a shroud over a constant exposure to the neighbour, the passer-by, and the world of strangers.
The city is filled, overloaded by private affairs to the point that the public-private dichotomy can be reduced to a mere abstract concept. L. H. Lofland (1989), and many others prior to her (Goffman, 1963, 1981; J. Jacobs, 1961), rightly and accurately emphasise the issue of the social life of the public realm, relative social norms, language, and semiotic and social relationships within the urban context; however — and as Lofland herself admits — this reductionist and oversimplified approach to urban complexities cannot suffice.

Harvey (2006, p. 19), in a note on a prose poem by Baudelaire, reflects on the complexities of the public-private dichotomy and on how Haussmann’s boulevards, and particularly the “dazzling” cafés of Paris, have become the loci of the political public, “where ambiguities of proprietorship, of aesthetics, of social relations (class and gender in particular) and political economy of everyday life collide.” Further, he argues that the café the characters of the poem, Baudelaire and his lover, inhabit is not private per se: “it is a space within which a selective public is allowed for commercial and consumption” use (Harvey, 2006, p. 20). Here it can be noted that the exact public space, “the café,” is the locus of Habermas’s public sphere, and that the theatrical setting of Baudelaire’s prose poem, and subsequently Harvey’s analysis of “spectacle” and the appearance of private interest in the public, resonates with Arendt’s space of appearance and the public realm.

Harvey (2006 p. 32) eventually concludes that the political sphere “relates” to the “symbiotic connectivity between private, public and institutional spaces.” Extensive research on the public-private dichotomy, its “symbiotic connectivity” and its history, particularly in Eurocentric philosophy, is required in order to unpack some of the issues and questioned mentioned above. Nonetheless, it can be understood that this dichotomy, and other classifications based on public/private distinctions, or even the trichotomy that L. H. Lofland (1989) and Hunter (1985) suggest, which includes the parochial spaces of neighbourhoods and communities, may not enhance our understanding of contemporary urban life and, specifically, the analysis of the emerging political dynamics between urban layers and digital technologies.

It can be concluded that the lack of an adequate terminology in this discussion is palpable. A richer discourse is needed to reflect the fluidity and in-betweenness of urban spaces, as current binaries in our urban knowledge are constantly failing to explain the complexities of contemporary life. Therefore, it is important to consider some inherent scepticism wherever the term public space is used. At the least it must be kept in mind that in this research, public space only signifies the spaces that are recognised as of urban inhabitants and are for political struggles and collective actions within the urban fabric.

4.2.3. Everydayness and the Extraordinary Public

The last theme in studies of public spaces and analyses of interrelations between the public space and urban reality is the correlation between urban everydayness and the extraordinary urban, and how public space flows between these two aspects of the urbanity. This relation is interconnected with the conception of public space as social space and with public space as the space of politics. In this
section, this correlation between ordinary urban life and the extraordinary political public space of the city will be examined.

Lefebvre (2014a, p. 205) succinctly depicts that “everydayness appears quite simple. It is strongly imprinted by the repetitive.” He further explains that through the analysis of everyday life, the complexities of everydayness and its dimensions appear. The physical, biological, social, and political dimensions of everydayness, even the repetitiveness, are transformed “as everyday life represents the busiest crossroads (le lieu le plus traversé) for the contradictions of social practice. These contradictions are themselves revealed only incrementally.” This may lead us to a better understanding of the correlation between the everydayness and the extraordinariness of the public space. They may not be separable.

Public space is commonly seen as indifferent, or at least unreflective of the distinction between the everyday life practices and the extraordinariness of the urban reality. In other words, the perception and design of public space is processed regardless of its lived experience. A public space, while always political and the locus of politics, can be used for everyday spatial practices, such as the place of public performances, public arts and installations, and social gatherings, which all have strong political dimensions. However, public space is also the locus of extraordinary urban reality, the resistance, the conflict, and the urban movements. It seems that studies of public spaces, and of publicness within urban studies, are either indifferent to this distinction or avoid seeing the interrelationship between these two moments of the production of urban space.

Everyday urban life has a significant role within the production of urban space and how it is perceived and conceived. The spatial practices of citizens creates a social cohesion that makes urban society function. They also constitute the way we, the city’s inhabitants, perceive the spaces, which directly influences the conception and design of the cities. The use of the public space, and people’s behaviour and movements, has been the subject of many studies which have informed the design of the public spaces and of the city as a whole (Amin, 2008; Banerjee, 2001; Carmona, 2010; Gehl, 2011; Kingwell & Turmel, 2009). However, it should be noted that a mere description of everyday affairs and everyday space does not provide us with the critical power to produce the knowledge of everyday life (Lefebvre, 1991a).

Rethinking the public space in light of the extraordinariness of urban life unpacks other aspects of the publicness, and more importantly, the political lens of Arendt’s thoughts on the public realm and the space of appearance. Extraordinary urban moments, in Lefebvrian thought, are tightly associated with lived space, representational space, and the space of passions, emotions, and fluidity. Through the extraordinary, strangers encounter each other to be seen and heard, which is not only about the same and similar, but individuals will also encounter differences. Therefore, it is essential to see the moment of resistance and the spatial locus of urban movements in relation to the extraordinary character of public space. It is clear that the space of urban movement is strongly in relationship to the extraordinariness of urban life, and this relationship comes to the forefront of attention within the antagonistic, conflictual and political public space.
Extraordinariness is a central and critical aspect of rethinking the public space within the urban context, yet that context is what defines emotions, meanings and conflicts. What may appear as everydayness in one context may appear extraordinary in another urban context, and therefore there is a critical point to be understood; the extraordinary moments of urban life – moments of conflict and protest, and the space that contains them – the space of protests and movements are strongly tied to urban everydayness, which is defined by and through the specific context of each society. Thus, it can be concluded that understanding the correlation between everyday public space and the space of extraordinary moments profoundly depends on the context, and hence it requires a context and place-based knowledge. This issue is further discussed in Chapter 9.

4.2.4. Conclusion; the Ultra-Urban Public Space and the Production of Space

This subchapter has argued that the spatiality and urbanity of public space has a significance and strong relationship with the socio-political and historical analysis of Habermas and Arendt. The spatiality of public space and its physical geography has been discussed according to three main dominant themes within the literature of public space; public space as the ultimate urban space, public-private dichotomy, and the everydayness and extraordinariness of public space. All these three aspects further solidify this hypothesis that public space is the urban space that needs to be studied, designed and lived as such. Perceiving public space as an urban space and urban phenomenon requires a critical framework to theorise the space as part of the production of space and also as a socially produced space.

This further clarifies why Lefebvre (1991b) and his theories are central in this thesis and should be in an analysis of emerging public spaces. Many studies on public spaces are predominantly concerned with architectural aesthetics, the scale, size and materiality of public places, thus dismissing the historical, political and most importantly the urban aspects of public space. This subchapter has placed the geography and urbanity of public space in the centre of the historical and political discourse of publicness, aiming to bridge the gap between the literature of the public sphere and public spaces.

4.3. Public Space and Emerging Digital Spaces

What remains to be abolished — and urgently — can only be space and time ... At the end of the century not much will remain of this planet that is not only polluted and impoverished, but also shrunken and reduced to nothing by the technologies of generalised interactivity (Virilio, 1993, p. 12).

The emerging and transforming urban reality of the 21st century is significantly influenced by emerging technological advances, both in the realm of infrastructure and in the social and everyday life of urban inhabitants. Through previous sections and as part of the critique of the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere, the notion of cyber public sphere as a political sphere is discussed. Here, the interrelationship between the public space and digital technologies is investigated.
4.3.1. Digital Technologies and the Production of a New Public Space

Spatial practices include everyday urban life, evolved social norms, and conventions that are tolerable behaviours (Watkins, 2005). According to Lefebvre (1991b, p. 38), spatial practice produces and reproduces “society’s space slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it.” The relations between spatial practices and digital technologies are associated with the daily habits of inhabitants. Digital technologies evidently entangle social communications between acquaintances, everyday financial and economic transactions of citizens, and information exchange between people (Aurigi, 2005b; Houghton, 2010; W. J. Mitchell, 2002).

If we assume that digital technologies dominate the spatial practice of a city’s inhabitants, then the space that is produced because of these spatial practices is influenced by the dynamic nature of digital technologies that appropriate and reproduce the existing spaces. In more spatial terms this phenomenon is mostly referred to as the annihilation of public spaces by digital technology, or the transformation of urban spaces to digitalised public spaces or "networked public spaces" and so on (Alex de Freitas, 2010; S. Graham & Marvin, 2001, 2002; Vesna, 2000). Accordingly, in order to describe this transformation Carmona states:

Leaving on one side the most extreme predictions of the ‘techno-determinists’ of an end to urban life, some of the most thoughtful writers in the field have concluded that the nature of cities as we understand them today will be challenged and must eventually be reconceived. ‘Computer networks become as fundamental to urban life as street systems’ (W. Mitchell, 1996, p. 107). (2010, p. 133)

In the above statement, supported by Mitchell’s (1996) quote, Carmona (2010) briefly addresses the impact of digital technologies on urban life. What these statements by renowned urban authors fail to fully and clearly unpack is a critical analysis of the phenomena and the lack of any conceived distinction between different aspects of urban life. One may question the role of digital technologies in the decline of public space, in comparison with the emergence other technologies such as the automobile, Fordism, gated communities, mass media, television, and so on. Interestingly, when all these emerging urban or anti-urban phenomena appeared, they were criticised, challenged and normalised, yet urban public spaces retained their significance, either through architectural beautification, official conversation, or contestation and conflict (J. Jacobs, 1961). Thus, in my opinion, focusing solely on digital technologies as the main cause of the decline of urban spaces seems futile while there is a lack of understanding of how the abstract space of power works, how design and the production of space is conceived, and ultimately how urban space is lived. Following the discussions in previous chapters, it must be noted that in this section there is not a concrete distinction between urban and public space, as one without the other loses its meaning.

**Perceived Public Spaces and the Digital Everyday life:**

In *Architecture from the outside: Essays on virtual and real space*, Grosz (2001) maintains that the transformations of perception and imagination are the most significant shifts caused by technological advances and virtual environments. Accordingly, architects, planners, and urban designers envisage
the ideal city overcoming the problems of social interactions and communications, not in the physical reality of the city but in a digital urban space augmenting every dimension of everyday life. Although cities are becoming more fragmented, it is believed that cyberspace is reclaiming lost social connectivity amongst citizens and revitalizing the social reality abolished by urban segregation. Hence can we conclude, with the emergence of cyberspace and the elimination of distance in response to the basic desire of citizens that “displacement wins over agglomeration” (Aurigi, 2005a, p. 20)?

Of the greatest importance is the utopian element, the vision or imaginaries of the urban, the obsession “with abolishing distance” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 39), the “urge to meet and come together,” and “the lust for speed” (Blume & Langenbrinck, 2004, p. 28). This vision is nurtured by technology. The principles of industrialisation, such as mass production, typification and standardisation promote the expansion of the urban. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the catalysts of the urban. They accelerate processes, change the quality of encounters and contacts, and help to abolish distance (Blume & Langenbrinck, 2004, p. 28).Possibly the most significant impact of digital technology is on this dimension of urban spatial practices —distance and proximity. The perceived space is constantly changing within the context of digital rituals that are just another norm within urban life.

The change in the perception of space due to evolving digital spatial practices, like any other urban phenomenon within this system, includes the problem and the solution at the same time. It is clear to urbanists that cyberspace, along with the other political and social strategies of the dominant system, has exorcised the social object of the city. It is not a new urban conflict; it has been an implicit urban problematic since the industrial revolution (Lefebvre, 2003) and it is further reinforced by the extreme pervasiveness of digital technologies within the spatial practices of urban dwellers. Also, Kirsch (1995) argues that in Lefebvrian thought, technology as a means of abstraction has always had a tendency towards the domination of space, rather than an appropriation of space.

Considering that Lefebvre (2003, p. 40) himself defines the urban “as the place where people walk around … until they become unrecognizable, entangle situations in such a way that they engender unexpected situations,” a problem arises when the spatial distance that has been abolished by digital networks transcends urbanity, since there is no need for walking, being unrecognisable, and engendering unexpected situations. However, these aspects may be reclaimed by enthusiastic digital-determinists since they may argue that one can walk while tweeting and being fully present in digital networks. For instance, through the emerging Pokemon Go phenomenon (Hjorth & Richardson, 2017), which is a place-based mobile navigating game, individuals are becoming even more unrecognisable by having encrypted profile and communication systems and engendering unexpected situations by agglomerating fantasies, physical impossibilities, utopias, and dystopias within a constructed virtual reality. Is this a new spatial practice, or is it part of the process of alienation, abstraction, and the homogenisation of the urban habitat and its differences? Are we all going to be unrecognisable digital profiles? What role does the body and emotions play in this utopian (or dystopian) image? These critical questions are an essential part of the rethinking and understanding of public space, yet due to their complexities they may require a further detailed inquiry.
into the role of digital technologies in transforming the city and how it is conceived by the state, the power structures, and also the designer.

**Conceived Spaces and the Smart City:**

This section sheds light on how the interrelation between the inhabitants' urban life and the digital infrastructure of the city functions, how this may lead to the transformation of the city as a whole into a big private space, and finally scrutinises the fantasies and possibilities around the emergence of smart cities.

A liquid architecture in cyberspace is clearly a dematerialized architecture. It is an architecture that is no longer satisfied with only space and form and light and all the aspects of the real world. It is an architecture of fluctuating relations between abstract elements. (Novak, 1991, p. 225)

On the other side of the dematerialised architecture of cyberspace is what digital technologies control and produce: the smart city. The public spaces within the context of smart cities are of a new nature and they have to be understood within the same context. Smart city is not a matter of concern in this thesis per se, however there are some dimensions in the critical analysis of smart cities and the myths around them that may reinforce the understanding of how digital technologies can contribute to the understanding and production of public space.

**What is a smart city?**

The definition of smart city includes many other concepts such as “intelligent city,” “information city,” “knowledge city,” “digital city,” and “ubiquitous city” that are seemingly used interchangeably within the literature (Lee, Hancock, & Hu, 2014, p. 81). Despite the fuzzy definitions and variety of labels, it seems that there is a consensus around one aspect of the smart city, which is its ICT and digital networks oriented nature (Lee et al., 2014; Nam & Pardo, 2011). The digital network within the context of the smart city mostly refers to the connected networks of “three core factors”: technology, people, and institutions (Lee et al., 2014, p. 82). In the literature on smart cities and the propaganda around it, and fuelled by techno-determinism and positivism, it is commonplace to encounter such phrases as these: “the study reinforces the significant position of community participation while promoting urban ecotourism” (Lazaroiu & Roscia, 2012) or “through participatory governance” (Lee et al., 2014, p. 82) or “Partridge’s (2004) observation of Brisbane in Australia sheds light on social inclusion and equal participation as enhanced opportunities created by smart city initiatives” (Nam & Pardo, 2011, p. 284).

**What is the role of citizen within the smart city?**

It would be impossible to avoid the concept of digital divide within the discourse of smart city. Digital divide refers to uneven access to digital infrastructure, devices, and knowledge (Calzada & Cobo, 2015). The digital world, while explosive and extremely pervasive, is still divided physically and socially. Calzada and Cobo (2015) ingeniously address another important issue too:
[A] closer examination of digital technology utilization suggests the need for a comprehensive understanding that includes effective access to the Internet, which cannot be explained exclusively by focusing on access to connectivity but must address the deep-rooted patterns of social inequality. (p. 23)

As mentioned before, the definition of a smart city refers to cities that are highly invested in ICT and digital infrastructure to sustainably manage natural and urban resources through “participatory governance.” Considering this definition in conjunction with the social and physical aspects of the digital divide, the concept of the smart city can be criticised from various aspects. The first one is the definition of citizen and participation. As is evident within the literature (Van Dijk and Hacker, 2003; Norris, 2003; Selwyn, 2004; Warschauer, 2004), the citizens within hyper-connected societies are not equal. While one urban dweller may be actively participating in the production of urban information, another urban dweller may use the bare minimum services of the Internet to contact family and friends (considering that everyone physically has free access to the digital sphere within the smart city). It is obvious that the digital society that is engaged with the project of the smart city shrinks to a society of hyper-connected and hyper-active digital users.

Although it might be accessible by everyone, technology, like space, cannot be neutral in terms of social and spatial segregation. As Aurigi (2005b, p. 50) maintains, the physical constraints of implementing technology might create “certain disadvantaged categories like, for instance, elderly people, children or disabled.” The closest analogy to this argument is shopping malls in which their private nature is imposed on citizens and ignores and punishes those who are defined as non-customers (Brill, 1989; Crawford, 2011; Erkip, 2003; Kohn, 2004; P. Marcuse, 2012; D. Mitchell, 1995). Correspondingly, cyberspace can be envisaged as a shopping mall in terms of inclusion and exclusion, levels of freedom, the elimination of lines of privacy, and repression by the systems of control. Graham and Marvin (2002, p. 232) maintain that “networked traffic is also dominated by the technologically converted: a very small and extremely unrepresentative set of people.”

The critical analysis of smart cities depicts the notion of public space within a context in which the meanings of private and public are lost, is redundant, and almost irrelevant. Digital technologies, and how they are reshaping the infrastructure of the cities, in fact have a significant influence on the design and conception of the space, yet it must be kept in mind that the key and critical aspects of public space — as the political space of appearance — are still central in the emergence of contemporary urban realities. Power structures, the domination of abstract space over the everyday life of inhabitants, and the homogenisation of urban reality are still urban processes that should be critically examined despite technological advances. Therefore, digital technologies and the impact of smart cities on public spaces have to be understood through the complex layers of urbanisation and the production of space.

**Lived Spaces and the Digital Urban Movements:**

One of the significant influences of digital technologies in regards to public spaces is the use of digital social networks for urban and social movements. A considerable part of the literature on the
transformation of public spaces is focused on this aspect and the combination of digital technologies, public spaces, and urban movements (Adanali, 2013; Christensen, 2011; Juris, 2012; P. Marcuse, 2012; Molnár, 2010; Rahimi, 2011; Zheng & Wu, 2005). This matter is extensively discussed in the next chapter; however, a couple of points that are directly to the discussions in this chapter are presented here.

A new dimension of the contemporary urban reality of our cities is that although the lived space cannot be fully lived digitally, the passion and image of the lived space can be transformed beyond time and the geographical locality of that space. The political public space, the space of appearance, can be shared, seen, and heard by the others — the anonymous others — through digital social networks. This sharing can intensify and accentuate the differences and the collective power of passionate resistance, yet it is essential to bear in mind that this can lead to the reduction of the lived space to an abstraction, to an image or video to be shared and re-shared.

In addition, it can be argued that digital technologies during urban movements create a multiplicity of public spheres for contestations and also for others to be seen and heard. Thus, the digital social networks, which are widely used in urban movements or any emotional lived experiences, can be considered an extension of the urban and public space, stretching the geographical and temporal boundaries and defusing the obstacles of physical accessibility, social responsibilities, and the physical and mental stress that the actual bodies may go through within a physical lived space.

The impact of digital technologies on public spaces, as the loci of lived space and lived experiences, goes beyond the brief argument presented above. The next chapter will present an extensive and in-depth discussion on the interrelationship between digital technologies, lived space and urban movements, and subsequent chapters will examine these theoretical explorations through the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement.

### 4.3.2. Rethinking Public Space in the Age of Digital Technologies

This subchapter has discussed the impact of digital technologies on different moments of the production of space and how emerging digital spaces are transforming the meaning of public space. This section concludes that it is not the political space of the city that is transforming due to digital technologies, rather it is the spatial practices and the conception of the space that is shifting, while the lived and emotional space of urban life is becoming more and profoundly critical and vital for the contemporary city.

The first concluding point in this section revolves around the interconnection between digital technologies and everyday urban life, spatial practices, and perceived spaces. This aspect of digital technologies is widely discussed within the literature and is mostly and uncritically related to the loss of urban public space (Aurigi, 2005b; Houghton, 2010; P. N. Howard & Hussain, 2011; Molnár, 2010; Partridge, 2004). This section sheds a different light on this matter. Digital technologies, firstly, absorb and filter non-public matters from the public into their social and communicative space. Secondly, as discussed in previous sections, the urban space cannot be classified through theoretical and utopian binaries, and digital technologies and digital social networks bring this matter to the forefront.
The second concluding point is that the pervasion and penetration of digital technologies into spatial practices and the spaces of designers and planners must not create an illusion of achieving more equality, equity, and democracy within our cities. The development of smart cities and the implementation of smart technologies have depicted that the public sphere, both digital and physical, and the urban space that accentuates the differences and facilitates their livelihood, are all vital, critical, and inevitable for a thriving society.

It can be argued that the shift in the notion of the public sphere and the transformation of communicative spaces into digital spheres contains a double process of exclusion-inclusion. David Sibley (2002) clearly explains the process of purifying and eliminating the differences in his study of the geographies of exclusion. He maintains that mass media has intensified this dominant culture of exclusion and inflamed the concept of considering differences as threats. Lefebvre (1996, pp. 160-175) regards the idea of integration and participation as an “obsessional theme” with “an enormous malaise” that “attracts interested and concerned people at a small price.” Any participation excludes all non-participants, so despite the ability of the Internet to involve more diverse groups and individuals in social discourses and political life even more intensely, it excludes the non-participants who are already externalised by means of the system and power relations.

4.4. Conclusion

The aim of the present chapter is to respond to the first inquiry of this research; rethinking public space. The key conclusions of this chapter are summarised as follows:

- Plurality is the condition of human beings and public space is where plurality can be contained and provided. This legitimises the necessity of public space and understanding its meaning to sustain and enhance our common-world.

- The urban reality is the public space par excellence, and public space is urbanity at its best.

- Public spaces and the city as a whole, not as separate entities, are the loci of heterogeneity, conflict and contestations.

- The whole city as an informal public space is the locus of urban informality. This informality can be further produced and reflected through and by digital technologies.

This chapter has argued that a sophisticated and adequate discourse is needed to reflect the fluidity and complexity of public and urban spaces, as current binaries in our urban knowledge are constantly failing to explain the complexities of urban layers and phenomena. A place-based and contextualized knowledge is vitally required to understand and rethink the public space of each society. Universal urban knowledge may not grasp the totality and complexity of all urban contexts and realities, considering how different cities are more and more appearing as distinct and unique networks of spaces, systems and inhabitants. Therefore, the public space of Middle Eastern cities and specifically Istanbul requires a specific knowledge that is produced and thought of by and through the specific context of the city and its own inhabitants.
The Urban Movement; an *Urban* Phenomenon

5.0. A Personal Experience

I will begin with a personal experience. This thesis, unsurprisingly, is written based on a profound personal interest in my own experience, understanding, and memories of resistance and protests. I do not intend to elaborate on my personal experiences, yet it is essential to declare that my approach towards urbanism, the city, and the space is deeply rooted in my engagement with civil and social movements, housing resistance movements, and the struggle over the reclamation of urban spaces. It also has to be noted that my childhood, and most importantly part of my education, revolved around street culture, urban life, myths, conflicts and struggles within the city. These elements were pivotal in shaping my understanding of the Gezi Park Movement as an urban struggle, and the urban theory, philosophy, and academic scholarly works came as a complementary source, to explain, publicise, and politicise what I lived on streets for a long time.

5.1. Introduction

It is argued that only bulldozers or Molotov cocktails can change the dominant organisation of space, that destruction must come before reconstruction. Fair enough, but it is legitimate to ask what ‘reconstruction’ entails. (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 56)

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and unpack the phenomenon of contemporary urban movements. It is a theoretical foundation for the next chapters and the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement. It is built based on the pervious chapters and analysis of the political public space as the space of appearance, contestation and difference. It aims to shed light on different aspects of urban
movements, including their distinct urban dimensions, history, roots, causes and their recent technological transformations. This chapter includes three main subchapters discussing the key and central aspects of urban movements.

The first part revolves around the complex relationship between urban movements and the city, and accordingly the public space. The urbanity, urban reality and urban inhabitants are central to this part. The second subchapter is a discussion on the concept of the Right to the City. Lastly the complex relationship between urban movements and emerging digital technologies is discussed in a separate subchapter. The main aim of this subchapter is to differentiate between the different roles of digital technologies in urban movements and how they are understood.

5.2. The Urban Movement and the City

The previous chapter was centred on the question of public space. The last chapter established that the public space, and in general any urban space, must be understood and studied through an in-depth and relevant theoretical and practical framework that distinguishes different moments of the production of space and how these spaces are perceived, conceived, and lived. This chapter revolves around one specific moment of the production of space: lived space or the moment of confrontation, resistance, and protest. This moment is not just about the temporal dimension of the resistance within an urban space, it is also about the spatial dimensions of resistance, which together with specific temporal aspects engender urban movements.

The relationship between the movements, resistance, protests and the city is a problematic one, or more precisely, it is complex, vague, and dynamic. The initial question is that of creating a distinction between different movements. The main concern here is whether different movements are urban by default or not. To comprehend and respond to these questions, clear distinctions and definitions should be drawn in order to distinguish urban movements from labour, natural, national, and global movements. This subchapter establishes a framework not only to answer the former questions, but also to define the path towards a better understanding of urban movements and how they interpenetrate the production of space and formation of the city.

5.2.1. The Urban Movement as an Urban Phenomenon

The literature of urban movements has a short history, though a complex and a conflicted one. The ground-breaking work of Castells (1977) in The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach and his later work, The City and the Grassroots (Castells, 1983), is considered seminal in urban movement studies (Prujt, 2007). While the significance of Castells’ research on urban movements is irrefutable, Pickvance (1986, 2003) has a very insightful and constructive critique of Castells and his analysis of urban movements, which is the departure point for this section.

Similarly to what Pickvance (1986, p. 221) considers to be the “sources” of his analysis of urban movements, this section is triggered by a few concerns: (a) the meaning of the urban, (b) the transformation of the urban and subsequently urban movements — which Pickvance (1985, 1986)
calls the *rise and fall of urban movements*, and (c) the relation between the movements and their urban context. Although the latter approach of Pickvance (2003) in dealing with urban movements resonates with this study, there are fundamental differences regarding the initial concerns and sources that are discussed in this section.

Pickvance (1985, 1986, 2003) disentangles a very detailed discussion of terminology around the difference between urban movements and urban *social* movements. "Urban social movement" was coined by Castells (1983) and for many reasons took off in many scholarly works about social movements. The difference, as discussed by Pickvance (1986), Pruijt (2007), and even Castells (1983), is in the effects of the movements and their typologies. There is no doubt that any urban movement is inherently *social* as it is produced by the collective action of society or a large segment of it; however, Castells (1983) and more recent scholars like Mayer (2009) used the term *urban social movement* to place emphasis not on the social nature of the movement but on the outcomes of such movements, as they “lead to structural change to urban power relations” (Pickvance, 1986, p. 222). This kind of argument, and also its critique, is very useful and at the same time problematic. It is useful as it provides a framework for analysis, and problematic as it negates the first source of Pickvance’s (1986) paper — the meaning of the *urban*.

Pickvance (1986, 2003) argues that urban social movement is a subcategory of urban movements. I have no disagreement with this statement; however, my concerns arise from the notion of *urban* and what it means. Pickvance (1986, p. 222) argues that urban movements are of three types, reflecting the theoretical notions of the urban — “collective consumption, local political control, and territorial defence.” He further maintains that each of these notions triggers a specific type of urban movement and gives rise to "strictly, urban movement goals." This categorization and these statements are problematic on different levels:

a) Urban movements are, before anything else, concerned with the totality of the city, its quality, and its meaning, if the meaning of urban, in the Lefebvrian sense, is considered in totality and in its entirety. The reality of urban movements, the actions of activists, the anger, signs and symbols, physical alteration, vandalism, destruction and their impact is not only about one or a set of demands, it encompasses a rooted and complex discontent with the process of urbanisation. The literature of urban movements immediately moves to the material demands, processes, and specifically the aims and effects. However, the Lefebvrian (2003) analysis and approach leads us to the point of the conception of the city and its urban phenomena not as a set of fragmented elements and events, but as an interconnected, dynamic, and fluid process.

b) The second problematic outcome of these classifications is their exclusiveness and limitations. For instance, many urban movements that revolve around the heterogeneity of cities, such as the LGBTQI movements and feminist movements for more equal and equitable urban space, are not concerned with “collective
consumption," the political process, or control. In other words, many contemporary urban movements are about peculiar urban qualities rather than material demands. Protests and urban movements that resist the privatisation of urban spaces are also excluded from these typologies. One may consider that they are part of “collective consumption or territorial defence” movements; however Lefebvre (1996, 2003, 2014a) considers these movements as a resistance to the consumption of the space, exchange value, and commodification, going beyond a simple goal or purpose.

The critical question would be about the alternative approach to urban movements. An objective analysis of urban movements would be almost impossible. On the other hand, approaching an urban movement as a universal phenomenon with total disregard to the context of each case seems problematic and may lead to significant theoretical, cultural and political misunderstandings. Therefore, this study suggests a different approach: to study urban movements as an urban phenomenon based on critical urban theory and the specific context and locality of the movement.

Further, in three subsections, the conceptual foundation and the theoretical concepts of urban movements regarding the process of urbanisation will be discussed. These three subsections are rather more concerned with the conceptual notions of urban theory and particularly the theoretical concepts of Lefebvre (1991b) and how he frames the process of domination, oppression, and revolt. In a theoretical investigation, Lefebvre (1991b) maintains that the absolute space (nature) is transformed to abstract space, which aims to dominate the totality of the space and eventually, through resistance and revolt, the differential space is produced. The first subsection revolves around the production of abstract space and its process of domination, and the second and third sections explain the emergence of differential space.

- **Abstract Space: The Root of Urban Movements**

This section excavates the roots of urban movements. The domination of abstract space over all the other aspects of urban reality is the root of the struggle. The reason lies within the definition and process of abstraction. This process aims to homogenise society and abolish differences. It is violent, both explicitly and mentally. Abstract space tends towards the abstraction of the space fully, in totality and in all aspects; however, it fails to do so. Lefebvre (1991b, 2014a), in an in-depth analysis, provides a very profound understanding of this space, how it is produced, and how it operates. He also argues about how the abstraction of space can trigger urban movements. Accordingly, the following paragraphs are in four sections: (a) the definition of abstract space; (b) the formants of abstract space; (c) the process of abstraction and the violence, and eventually (d) the possibilities of struggle as a resisting force to the domination of the planet by the abstract space.

**a) The Definition:** Abstract space is a result and does not exist in nature. As the outcome of “historical-geographical processes, and a technology of power,” abstract space solidifies the existence of the state and its institutions (J. Wilson, 2014, p. 519). Based on a historical exploration,
Lefebvre (1991b, p. 285; 2003, p. 86) traces the development of abstract space “as a product of violence and war” and concludes “it is political; instituted by the state, it is institutional.” Lefebvre (1991b, p. 285) depicts it as a violent instrument of state which “indeed ... serves those forces which make a tabula rasa of whatever stands in their way” and it is planned and designed through the logic of the political state, money, and power that “allows the state to introduce its presence, control, and surveillance in the most isolated corners” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 86). However, he immediately points to the fact that abstract space works in a complex way, appearing to be non-violent as if produced by a peace pact or agreement (Lefebvre, 1991b). This complex way, conflictual character, of being produced by “violence and war” and appearing as “non-violent,” reveals the innate process of abstraction, a process fertile to the struggle, to the conflict, and to urban movements (Lefebvre, 2014a, p. 292).

b) The “Formants” of Abstract Space and the Characteristics of the Abstraction Process:
Analysis of abstract space and its implications is vital when analysing urban movements and struggles and in understanding the spatial and urban dimensions of domination and homogenisation, though it is underexplored and has rarely appeared in literature except in studies regarding State/Space matters (Brenner, 2000; Brenner et al., 2003; Lefebvre, 2009; J. Wilson, 2014). Therefore, here I intend to place the emphasis more on urban aspects of the abstract space rather than on how it is used as a technology of state power to homogenise the nation/state. In Lefebvre’s (1991) writings on abstract space, the often-discussed characteristics or aspects of abstract space consist of the following: the “formants,” the violence, the homogenising process, and eventually the “cracks.” Following Lefebvre’s (1991) approach to abstract space, it is essential to begin with the explanations of the “formants” used in this context:

1) The geometric formant: this is of “Euclidean” space. Here, what Lefebvre refers to is the reduction of three-dimensional space to two-dimensional space. It is not the plan, the map, or any kind of “the representation or projection” of the space; rather it is the process of “quantitative manipulation” and reducing the space to a piece of paper, abstract and real at the same time, exactly like money. Therefore, “abstract space is measurable” and tends “towards the disappearance of the qualitative” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 351).

2) The optical (or visual) formant: Lefebvre (1991b, p. 286) unravels the process of the reduction of the space to a mere image. He uproots the “logic of visualisation,” maintaining that abstraction overpowers any social characteristic of the space that is independent from

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6 Tabula rasa, (Latin: “scraped tablet” — i.e., “clean slate”) in epistemology (theory of knowledge) and psychology; a supposed condition that empiricists attribute to the human mind before ideas have been imprinted on them by the reaction of the senses to the external world of objects. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2017)

7 Formant was defined by Gunnar (1960): The spectral peaks of the sound spectrum |P(f)| are called formants.

8 Euclidean geometry is the study of plane and solid figures on the basis of axioms and theorems employed by the Greek mathematician Euclid (c.300 BCE).
“intense, aggressive and repressive visualisation.” The space transforms into a codified image, seen and read by the eyes while the other senses are deprived of the space all together. The space becomes the mirror, like the white wall of a gallery, sanitised and cleansed of all the emotions, ready for the gaze of the spectator.

3) The Phallic formant: the last and most relevant aspect of the abstract space relates to the magnet within the space, the power and force to completely fill or evacuate the space. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 286) asserts that the geometric and visual aspects of abstract space do not suffice in order to control the space fully, thus the power (state) inserts its full object, which “symbolizes force, male fertility, masculine violence.” Phallic brutality will be metaphorically and physically imposed on space through the brutality of power, explicitly and in a normalised way. This process comes to life through the “police, army, bureaucracy” and also through planning, rationality, design, and architecture (Lefebvre, 1991b, pp. 280, 363; Stewart, 1995a, p. 610).

Drawing on the phallic brutality described above, the violence aspect of the abstract space dominates the rest of the discussion:

c) The Process of Abstraction and Violence: Wilson (2014, p. 114) argues: “for Lefebvre, abstraction is a complex and inherently violent process through which a richly differentiated socio-spatial reality is progressively emptied of its substantive content …” and so on. Why is the abstraction process violent? Here I respond to this inquiry, which leads us to the appearance of urban movements and struggles. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 287) clarifies that “abstract Space is not homogenous; it simply has homogeneity as its goal” and this leads to the violence of the abstraction process. The state, the politician and the city planner, to impose the rigid and rational grid of networks, nodes, signs and symbols, must abolish the difference, the abnormality, and the disorder. To do so, the state and its abstract space lean towards the use of violence, physically and symbolically.

The “violence” is not explicitly defined by Lefebvre; nonetheless it is vivid in his writings that his conception of violence is not limited to the physical brutality of the state, conventionally referred to as law enforcement and police brutality. Lefebvre’s reflections on phallic formant and masculine brutality depict what Žižek (2008) and Wilson (2014, p. 115) have debated as “structural” and “symbolic” dimensions of violence. The structural, symbolic, and physical aspects of violence have interpenetrating relations. Without the bureaucracy of the state, the abstraction of money and private property, the grid and street networks, the rationality of planning loses its power to dominate.

The main means through which power eliminates difference is through fragmentation — through the division of the urban into parcels, zones, districts and regions, or as Kipfer, Goonewardena, Schmid, and Milgrom (2008, p. 201) declare: “the production of abstract space homogenizes through separation [emphasis added].” Yet Lefebvre (1991b, p. 51) repeatedly accentuates the “extent” of the suppression and power of abstract space. While abstract space aims to completely uproot the
difference and abolish it, reaching towards an absolute homogeneity, the cracks in the abstract space — the constant antagonism within its violent process and “occasional eruptions” — provide the possibility of “place based struggles in and against abstract space” (J. Wilson, 2014, p. 116).

a) The Possibilities of Struggles: Lefebvre (1991b, p. 55) argues that “it is that struggle alone which prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences.” We should bear in mind, though, that by struggle he means “class struggle” since he sceptically regards other forms of struggle as “isolated particularism” that tend to reproduce the abstract space as the reinforcement of the process of abstraction through the abstract fragmentation of real (social) life. Therefore the type of struggle, and whether urban movements are regarded as unifying rather than fragmenting movements, is a matter of utmost attention.

The key to this inquiry lays in the production of subsequent space. According to Lefebvre (1991), if the movement or the struggle cannot go beyond the “process of homogenisation” through the fragmentation of life, then it fails as it appears as part of the abstraction process itself. An urban movement has to produce its own space, a “differential space” that “restore[s] unity to what abstract space breaks up — to the functions, elements and moments of social practice” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 52).

- The Production of Differential Space

As discussed in the last section and as Lefebvre (1991, p.52) explicitly states: “Thus, despite — or rather because of — its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space.” Lefebvre continues and calls this space “differential space.” The clear and primary aspect of this terminology would be that of being different, though it is more intricate. The differential space and its definition is underexplored or not thoroughly explained in the literature, considering its importance (see Madanipour (1995); Brenner (2000), while the issue of “difference,” “otherness,” and “right to the difference” are debated at length (Johnson, 2006; Purcell, 2013b, p. 316; Soja, 1996). Lefebvre (1991, p.52) defines the differential space in relation to abstract space and more specifically the abstraction process, and maintains “as much as the abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences.”

Brenner (2000, p. 369) defines the “differential space” within a wider concept of “the implosion-explosion of urbanization.” He argues that within Lefebvre’s analysis of this concept there are three aspects: (a) “the role of urban space during the transition from mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism,” (b) the domination of urban space by “exchange value,” and eventually (c) the possibility of a radical political transformation based upon differential space and the concept of “the right to the city” (Brenner, 2000, p. 369). As is evident even in the Brenner (2000) account, there is no clear indication of the spatiality, physicality, and realisation of differential space.

Milgrom (Kipfer et al., 2008, p. 264), based on an analysis of Harvey (2000), maintains that even Lefebvre did not leave any hint regarding the spatiality and realisation of the space, except that its
seed is within the cracks and “contradictions of abstract space.” Harvey (2000, p. 183) argues that, contrary to “utopias of spatial form” as represented in architectural imagery and models, the differential space needs an “articulation of utopias of space” and “utopian processes”, which are to produce a “utopianism” that is “explicitly spatiotemporal.” It seems even Harvey’s (2000) account does not project a clear idea of what Lefebvre’s concept of “differential space” looks like.

5.2.2. The Relationship between Abstract Space and the Production of Space
Since the spatiality and characteristics of the differential space is not clarified in works by Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003) or by recent literature around this subject, here I aim to approach the concept of differential space from another aspect. It is previously argued that in Lefebvre’s (1991b, p. 26) thought, “social space is a social product” — hence it is produced and obviously it has a production process. If this is the Lefebvrian hypothesis, I argue that the differential space is a social product too and it is produced through the process of production of space. This section investigates how the differential space is produced, and more importantly, how it relates to the understanding of urban movements as urban phenomena.

The process of abstraction and the emergence of differential spaces and spaces of resistance are not separate from the process of production of space. In fact, they are integral parts of this process. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space (1991) the conceptual moments of production of space are what determine the space. None of these moments are independent or complete; the three are strongly interwoven and interconnected. The third concept (though there is no concrete sequence in Lefebvre’s theory), is the representational space, which is tightly connected to the space of resistance and to urban movements (Stewart, 1995b). According to Lefebvre (1991), representational space is associated with the social and “bodily functions of lived experience” (Butler, 2009, p. 320). Within this space, the users and inhabitants passively experience the city, though as the bodies and the inhabitants are alive, they (entailing the representational space) resist the “rules of consistency and cohesion” and the power of the abstract space (Delaney, 2004):

Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, and house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situation, and thus immediately implies time. Consequently it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic. (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 42)

Considering the definition of representational space, it is clear that the space of resistance is a spontaneous space, full of passion and action. Therefore, the spatiality of such spaces needs to respond to the passion, action, and the fluid nature of movement. As a consequence, the space of resistance constantly changes, expands, transforms, and destroys itself. The constant expansion, appropriation, and destruction of spaces of resistance create an unregulated spontaneous network of spaces. In addition, it is important to explore all the senses and dimensions of such representational spaces. In contrast to the abstract spaces of urban planners, designers and engineers,
representational spaces are full of fear, hope, despair, laughter, tears, life and death, and these human factors cannot be reduced, visualised, or symbolised in words, symbols, and conventional satellite images or planning maps. Now, it is becoming clearer why the spatiality of differential space or representational space is not clearly described, as its persistently escapes clarity. This lack of clarity is essentially a force of resistance in representational spaces.

The analogy of differential space and representational space may present them as equal. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 52) describes the emergence of differential space, maintaining that “a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences.” This description, and the qualitative definition of representational space, addresses a concealed difference: the differential space has spatiality, it can be born, within and from the cracks of abstract space, while the representational space is a concept, it is a moment within the process of production of space, and it is a concept embodied by differential space. In other words, while Lefebvre’s (1991b, p. 39) representational space is a “dominated — hence passively experienced — space, which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate,” the differential space is active and it is “produced.” Consequently, it can be understood that differential space is an outcome of the production of space. It is of the utmost importance that in Lefebvrian theory, none of these concepts can be considered or assumed in isolation.

5.2.3. The History of Urban Movements

For Weber, when cities were not free or autonomous, or when they ceased being free, they were no longer cities in the strict sociological sense, but became physical concentration of population and activities subjected to a religious-political apparatus and/or to the uncontrolled rules of the economic market. (Castells, 1983, p. 12)

The aim of this section is to put the studies of historical urban movements into perspective in order to make clear distinctions between protests, movements, riots, and revolutions. This is not an approach to urban movements through historicism, but it appropriates the required theoretical framework for an understanding of urban movements and particularly the Gezi Park movement. Castells (1983) conducted a similar study, thoroughly, extensively, and in-depth. He justifies his historical approach by maintaining that his theory is formed “on the basis of historical experience in order to avoid the ethnocentric bias implicit in most urban research” (Castells, 1983, p. 4). He does not clearly define the meaning of the “ethnocentric bias” and how it is avoided through an analysis of the historical experience, however, this matter will be further investigated in subsequent chapters.

To summarise the historical background of urban movements, this study has investigated the studies conducted on urban movements and the elements that have played critical roles in their formation and occurrence, and the final result. The history of movements might go back to the Comunidades de Castilla of the 1520s, as Castells (1983) argues based on what his work establishes. However, whether Comunidades was an urban movement or not is debatable. Nonetheless, there is a long history of urban movements that have shaped our contemporary cities in one way or another, which I do not intend to review; this section is interested in the urban dimensions, social dynamics, and urban typologies of the movements rather than their political motives or legacies. To summarise the
background studies of this matter, four general aspects of the movements that were fundamental in the analysis of the relevant studies can be listed as follows:

1) **Actors and Contexts**: Many studies have been conducted in sociology, communication studies, politics and philosophy regarding the actors, agents and people who played a role in forming urban movements in different contexts. This is evident in many studies, from Frantz Fanon (2008) and his studies on the role of women in anti-colonization movements, to Castells’ (1983) studies on grassroots movements, to the Southern Europe urban movements (Bezmez, 2013; Cirkovic; Fadaee, 2011; Göle, 2013b; Kuymulu, 2013; Leontidou, 2006, 2010; Mayer, 2009; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Yildirim).

2) **Demands and the Rights**: Leontidou (2010) and Purcell (2002) built their theories upon the “the right to the city” of Lefebvre (1996), showing that the demands of urban movements changed over time. From the Commune of Paris (Castells, 1983) to the Occupy Wall Street movement (Juris, 2012), the material demands of movements, such as housing and income shifted, or at least widened to take in immaterial demands too: the “right to inhabiting” the city, occupying public squares, and participating in the production of urban spaces (Adanali, 2013; Erkip, 2000; Karaman, 2014; Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010; Leontidou, 2010).

3) **Media and Communicative Spaces**: Many studies have been conducted to analyse and enhance our understanding of public spheres, particularly in times of urban and social movements. Urban movements are organised through different mediums, from coffee houses (Goode, 2005) and social centres (Leontidou, 2010), to underground spaces, newspapers, cinemas, and so on.

4) **Effects and Consequences**: As pondered in the section regarding the meaning of urban movements, the effects and consequences of urban movements are central to many urban studies (Badiou, 2012; Castells, 1983; Mayer, 2009). This is significantly grounded in Castells’ (1983) work, *The City and the Grassroots*. The class struggle, political change, and power relations are more imperative and central in his view. This approach is also reflected in many recent analyses of social movements, specifically the Occupy Wall Street Movement and the Arab Spring (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Chomsky, 2013; Gause III, 2011; Juris, 2012; Van Gelder, 2011).

The city, its design, and how it has formed the urban life of people has played a vital role in undermining or enhancing the rights of its citizens. These factors are extensively discussed in urban philosophy and urban geography (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984; Harvey, 1998; Lefebvre, 1991b, 1996, 2003; Purcell, 2002); however, the role of urban spaces, their designs, and their impacts are not analysed in-depth in the literature as a unique factor. It seems that the space, by itself, is portrayed as apolitical, insignificant, and indifferent in the course of urban movements. For instance, Castells (1983) analyses the built environment of Paris and its impacts on the Commune of Paris, however, the urban dimension of the movement is reduced by the emphasis on the structural changes.
and political aspects of the urban struggle. This shows that there is an indispensable importance in an in-depth analysis of the urban space within the context of urban movements. To clarify the rest of this subchapter and the following sections, it is crucial to consider that this study is concerned with specific urban movements and is not a historical literature review of any social movements documented in western studies. Therefore the selection of cases is very limited and revolves around the unique urban dimension of that specific movement.

- **Communes of Paris — 1871**

Mayer and Fezer (2010, p. 18) argues that the movements of the 1960s were mobilisations against the “crisis of Fordism.” Mayer and Fezer (2010, p. 18) wraps them up as “struggles around housing and rent strikes,” concerned with a *private* level of urban phenomena, “campaigns against urban renewal” on a *global* and *urban* scale at the same time and eventually, quoting the German psychologist Alexander Mitcherlich (1996), “the inhospitality of our cities,” which precisely relates to the *urban* quality of the city. Here, I am more concerned with the latter than the mobilisations against housing issues or the global economic development policies of the cities. Negating the last aspect of these movements during that period, the urban movements are mostly defined as “collective consumption” movements (Castells, 1983; Mayer & Fezer, 2010, p. 20; Pickvance, 2003).

Paris instantly rose in arms like one man, and war was declared between Paris and the French Government sitting at Versailles. On the 26th of March the Paris Commune was elected, and proclaimed on the 28th. (Engels in Marx, 1920, p. 9)

The Communes of Paris was a movement of the city as a whole and not only of its citizens. Similarly to Engels, Petr Kropotkin (1895) accentuates *Paris as itself*, not just as any city, not just the working class of *Paris*, not marginalised and disenfranchised, but *Paris as a whole*. Kropotkin (1895, p. 3) starts his book with: “On 18th of March, 1871, the people of Paris rose against a despised and detested Government, and proclaimed the city independent, free, *belonging to itself* [emphasis added].” This emphasis on *Paris* as a city with its own unique urban dimensions, “belonging to itself,” brought the well-debated historical *Communes of Paris* back into this study, though with a slightly different and yet important approach to its analysis.

Apart from this initial point, Castells (1983, p. 25) maintains that there are three aspects that define the *Communes of Paris* as an *urban revolution*: (a) opposition to the rural, (b) the “cancellation of rents,” and (c) its relation to the state and Paris, a city as a “particular political culture, a form of democracy, articulating the grassroots democracy and representative democracy.”

Aside from the cancellation of rents, what is a matter of interest in Castells’ analysis is his first reason for calling the *Commune* an *urban revolution*. Castells (1983) puts the *Commune of Paris* in contrast to the entire *rural* society and thus it is an urban revolution. He insists on the “Parisianism” of *communards*, mentioned earlier in this section, and furthermore argues that, rather than a conflict between the industrialist and the working class or the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat, the *Commune* was about the “political opposition between the city and countryside” (Castells, 1983, p.
This aspect is itself problematic as it follows a binary logic, however it does make sense when put in the right context. The other aspect, the relationship between the city and the state, is also pivotal and significantly relevant, considering the role of the abstract space of state and how it leads to revolt and resistance movement to claim the city back. This aspect will be specifically discussed in Chapter 9.

In Paris, and in many contemporary cities, the city is still not controlled by the city — it is heavily dependent on the power of the countryside. There is a paradoxical situation: the periphery is in the centre of power and the centre as a whole is dominated. This domination by the periphery in the form of State power was one of the key factors in the Communes of Paris and still is in many urban movements. The city struggles to take itself back, to be independent and to belong to itself.

- **People’s Park — May 15, 1969 — Berkeley, California**

  It’s a symbol for the police versus the homeless, the have-nots versus the haves, progress versus turmoil, development versus non-development, all of the undercurrents most troubling in the city. You’ve got pan-handling going on, the business community nearby, the town-gown tensions. You have anarchists and traditionalists. People’s Park becomes a live stage for all these actors. For many people around the world, Berkeley is People’s Park [emphasis in the original]. (Kahn, 1991, p. 28)

The battle of People’s Park fell on May 15, 1969 in Berkeley, California, and is another example of how abstract space aims to dominate and master the space. Almost a century after the Communes of Paris, in a completely different context and on a different scale, an urban movement was triggered by the same system, mechanisms, rhetoric, and power relations. Urban renewal, modern rationality, planning, and the state — here represented by the University of California administration — decided to take over a park and abolish the difference and the different, literally and symbolically.

*People’s Park* was certainly a park that belonged to the others — “drug dealers and homeless,” “hippies and radicals” (Cash, 2010, p. 8). This park played a controversial role in the discussion of public space, the public, and citizenship in the United States and worldwide (Ashton, Blackmore, & Scorrano, 2013; A. H. Miller, 1972; D. Mitchell, 1995; Rabinowitz, 1989). The property, Lot 1875-2, is owned by the University of California (UC). It was planned to be university accommodation but was empty for two years, turned into a muddy car park for one year, and finally students, community activists, and local merchants challenged the UC to turn it into a user-controlled Park. The University rejected the idea, erected a fence around the park, and ignored the activists and students.

In 1989 the University negotiated with the city to build recreational facilities (apparently volleyball fields) in the People’s Park. The University of California insisted that it intended to maintain the People’s Park as a park. Meanwhile, making a clear distinction between public space and open space, the University considered the park to be an open space, while the activists contested the park as a public space (Cash, 2010; D. Mitchell, 1995).
The battle of *People’s Park* has a greater intricacy beyond the negotiations and the deals between the activists and the University. When a law student, back from his European adventures, dreamt of organising rock concerts in the muddy Lot 1875-2, he never envisaged the extent of the passion a self-organised park could suck into itself: “someone brought a tractor to excavate the foundations of old housing the University had demolished …the project ballooned, drawing in thousands of local residents, students, and professors” (Allen, 2007, p. 21). Even today, thousands use the park, its playground and community garden; as the place is rooted in the hearts of people and to date it is a loved space where, as can be seen from images from Google Earth on February of 2016, people have written boldly on the walls of the park’s public restroom is the plea to “Save the Park.”

Allen (2007), along with Mitchell (1995, 2003), has an insightful and critical take on the battle of *People’s Park*. He accurately uproots the seed of the battle, concealed in the violence of the “planning publications of the Educational Foundation Laboratories (EFL).” EFL was a publication advocating “modern architecture and planning” for American and European universities (Allen, 2007, p. 4). The rational, modern, and abstract process of expansion, development, and growth was discussed in such documents, and Allen unpacks the strong relations between the violence inherent in this process and the brutal violence of the urban struggle for the preservation of the park as a public space:

In this sense, the battle over urban space at People's Park resembles the distinction between dominated and appropriated spaces that Margaret Kohn describes in her book *Radical Spaces*, based on Henri Lefebvre. Dominated spaces are produced through expert knowledge for standardized citizens by the state in its quest … Appropriated spaces, however, subvert the logic inherent in Scott’s [(1998)] *Seeing like a State*. They are spaces produced by ordinary people, based on their own situated knowledge and experiences. (2007, pp. 6-7)

The people of *People’s Park* produced a differential space, within the abstract space and the neglected space, unwanted by the powers and abandoned to speculation. Eventually, in early August of 1991, the City and the University hand in hand resorted to violence against the *people*; this time *Park* protesters responded in peace, compromised, and were then defeated. The University and the City built volleyball fields that had CCTV cameras. The abstract space is not only homogenising, divisive, and violent, it is stubborn as well. However, the difference always finds its way to erupt. The power, the bureaucrats, the police, and the architect may be able to eliminate the different, the hippies, the others, and the homeless, but the difference is irreducible, it eventually erupts again. The story did not come to an end, and probably won’t: the wicked, misfits, and the homeless people are still wicked, misfits, homeless and visible in the *People’s Park*.

- **The Berlin’s Wall — November 9, 1989**

The fall of Berlin Wall is a burdensome, emotional, and irreducible event not only in the history of human beings, but also in the history of cities. It is a very different exemplar from the previous two historical movements. Not only it is not in my power, but it is also not my intention, to review and
scrutinise such a significant historical event. Here I only intend to address and unfold some of the implicit urban dimensions of this event, which are underexplored or less debated due to the other profound and extraordinary political and historical dimensions of the Berlin Wall.

As Berlin has left behind its heroic and propagandistic role as flashpoint of the cold war and struggles to imagine itself as the new capital of a reunited nation, the city has become something like a prism through which we can focus issues of contemporary urbanism and architecture, national identity and statehood, historical memory and forgetting. (Huysseen, 1997, p. 57)

In the initial analysis of this chapter, the abstract space of the state (power, politicians, rationality, and architects) was identified as the ultimate force to homogenise and to fragment. The Berlin Wall was a physical and metaphorical symbol of this power, par excellence. Berlin was divided into two halves, and the people had to live within this fragmentation “by turning their backs to the Wall and anything behind it” (Tölle, 2010, p. 350). There is a contradiction, a deep conflict, and a very enlightening experience in the Wall. The Wall was fragmenting a city, not by a singular power but by a peaceful agreement between two states to violently divide the city and eliminate the difference; “yet over time, Berlin and the Wall developed into a symbol of justice for the cause of German unity. The interpretation was that it was only by force” (Tölle, 2010, p. 350). The absolute paradox of the Wall was that it was of and for unity and division at the same time. Is not this the precise description of abstract space and the violent process of abstraction that Lefebvre (1991) enthusiastically talks about?

On both sides of the Wall, both states in different forms or shapes aimed to render themselves as homogenous, united and one, somehow utopian, while keeping the actual one — the city — segregated. Berlin became a half-city by force and a non-violent pact with a concealed violence. The violence concealed in the wall was far beyond the punishment of trespassing. It was the Wall itself, and it was the division and the attempt to homogenise the city, the people, and the urban. Meanwhile, the most fascinating phenomenon was the Wall, this time its fall. The Wall itself was the crack in the abstract space of Berlin. The differential space was the Wall itself and the moment of trespassing. The Wall was the space of resistance to domination and oppression, and therefore its fall became the symbol of freedom, democracy and the reclaiming of the city, so Berlin could be the city, not any city, but the city.

Among the overwhelming accounts of the significant events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Alexanderplatz demonstration is the most relevant one to this thesis. One may wonder, considering the earlier criticism of Castells about urban social movements, why the Alexanderplatz demonstration is considered relevant to the history of urban movements. It is indisputable that this movement had an international and national significance, since it was in the midst of the Cold War and the consequences of World War II (WWII) were still tangible in all affairs of life. However, the movement is directly associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall, if not considered the main reason for it.
On the 4th November 1989, close to half a million East Berliners gathered in Alexanderplatz Square to say that "We are one people" (in German: Wir sind ein Volk) (Jarausch, 2011). The protest clearly had explicit political motivations, slogans, demands and consequences, though it was urban in its heart. The urban unity of Berlin was demanded; the desire to become one people, and the implosion could only happen on, in, and through the Wall. Interestingly, the Wall oppressed those living on both sides of the wall, as any wall or tool of division does. However, the Eastern Berliner could see the concealed violence of the Wall more explicitly: “westerners could physically interact with the Wall, e.g. by touching it, painting on it, walking along it, looking over it, or travelling through it … by contrast, for Easterners even the territory adjacent to the border was a no-go area” (Tölle, 2010, p. 350).

The lessons to be drawn from the Wall, the fall of the Wall, and its traces on the urban fabric of Berlin are unlimited. Here I have attempted to touch on some of the aspects that are not debated in the extensive literature about the events of WWII and the Cold War. The violence inherent in the Wall, in its materiality and meaning, in segregating and fragmenting the city physically and symbolically, can vividly portray how the abstract space aims to control the city to the point of destruction and — more importantly — how the people, the citizens as one, resist to the point that the same means of the abstract space, its symbol and embodiment, becomes the differential space for one city, or for a different one.

5.3. The Right to the City and Urban Movements

The recent urban movements have been changed, transformed, and revolutionised in their structures, forms and functions to the point that a generalisation of them would be futile and misleading. Although different in scale in demands and objectives, most of these movements mainly or partly were and are protesting neoliberal urban processes (Brenner et al., 2012; Hamel et al., 2003; Mayer, 2009; Mayer & Fezer, 2010). It is also essential to note that these movements have increased in numbers exponentially or at least that they were publicised and known at a much faster pace compared to the 1960s (and earlier) movements. Domination of the market and the state as a tool in the control of the market, to homogenise and control the urban reality of the city brings the concept of the right to the city to the foreground and makes it a critical force to be reckoned with to demand an equal and different city.

This subchapter introduces the concept of the right to the city, established first by Lefebvre (1996) and further developed by David Harvey (2000, 2008, 2010, 2012), Don Mitchell (1995, 2003), Mark Purcell (2002, 2003, 2013a, 2014), Margit Mayer (2009; 2010), and others (Brenner et al., 2012; Leontidou, 2006, 2010; P. Marcuse, 2009; Samara et al., 2013). The right to the city fortunately — and in a peculiar way, unfortunately — goes beyond radical academia, urban and human geography papers, and revolutionary planning policies; it has become the slogan for many urban (social) movements. It has emerged in the agenda and objectives of NGOs and in practical development policies (Harvey, 2008; Mayer, 2009; Merrifield, 2011).
The pervasive use of “the right to the city” can be problematic; put simply, it normalises and eventually becomes another abstract term in a pile of planning, policy making, and urban design documents prepared by exactly the same system that negates the “rights” of people to their cities (Mayer, 2009, p. 368). The debate around the right to the city is well-worn and exhausted, at least quantitatively. There have been insightful and thorough analyses of this Lefebvrian notion, particularly by Harvey (2012), Mayer (2009); Mayer and Fezer (2010) and Marcuse (2009). Building on Lefebvre’s (1996) original work and that of other scholars, this subchapter unpacks the concept of the right to the city, explaining what an urban right is and how this can be misinterpreted. This further identifies the implications, complexities, and critiques of this concept within the specific context of this thesis.

Central to the entire discussion of the right to the city is what the right(s) entails and how this can be useful in an analysis of the new urban movements, and also the role of digital technologies in this process. Based on the writings of Lefebvre (1991b, 2003) and others (Burgel, Burgel, & Dezès, 1987; Purcell, 2002; Soja, 1996), the right to the city revolves around two main concepts:

**The Right to Participation:** Anyone who inhabits the city has the right to participate in planning, designing, and production of the city regardless of their national citizenship and political membership.

**The Right to Appropriation:** “Appropriation includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space” (Purcell, 2002, p. 102). This is not only an appropriation of the urban spaces that are already produced, designed, and planned, but also the right to produce urban spaces that are responsive to the needs of inhabitants.

Although the right to the city is well debated in analyses of many movements and in manifold scholarly studies, previous published studies are limited to the context of the study and the researcher’s interpretation of the concept. This is an advantage for the concept of the right to the city — that while it can be understood globally, it can be transformed, contextualised, and lived locally. Therefore, the following sections aim to unpack the general aspects of the right to the city as a concept that lays the foundation of the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement within the specific context of Istanbul.

### 5.3.1. What City? What Right(s)? And Why?

In this section, the concept of the right to the city will be scrutinised from three points of view. Expanding on Marcuse’s (2009) analysis, the concept is broken down into three elements. Primarily, it is vital to know what kind of city an urban movement is demanding, a critical point that is commonly reduced to what kind of urban services, housing, or amenities is desired. Secondly, this section sheds light on how these rights can be defined. Finally, it will be argued that why the right to the city matters and how this right is not a privilege, an amenity, a bonus, or a necessity. It will be argued that, on the contrary, the absence of the right to the city leads to the birth of totalitarian regimes in general, and particularly the death of the urban (Lefebvre, 1996).
What City?

Marcuse (2009) starts his analysis by specifically defining the rights and the ones who deserve the rights. He initially defines the rights, then the agents, and eventually their demanded city. Although his analysis is almost impeccable, the sequence of concepts can be challenged, in my opinion. Here, the city, the existing context, and the ones who demand it, will be defined first. The “demand and cry” for a new city can define and redefine urban rights and the process in which these rights can be understood, recognised and achieved. Lefebvre (1996) argues that it is not a demand or a cry for the existing city, nor for a traditional one; the right to the city is a collective action to produce a new city, a different city.

Although there is no explicit reference to the different city, an extensive and in-depth reading of Lefebvre depicts that the different city is a city that is not homogenised, oppressed, fragmented or deprived of emotions, of life and oeuvre, which thereby signifies the city as a work of art rather than a product of rational and modern thinking and systems.

The different city of Lefebvre can be drawn based on exactly what Lefebvre argues against in the urbanised and industrialised city; the different city is whatever the abstract space aims to destroy: “To the extent that the contours of the future city can be outlined, it could be defined by imagining the reversal of the current situation, by pushing to its limits the converted image of the world upside down” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 172). Within this utopian thinking, the ultimate goal is the possibility of an urban reality in which differences are not the target of the state’s spatial and legal violence, the space is not homogenised and segregated through centralised planning mechanisms, and inhabitants have the power to produce, reproduce and use the space according to their needs and desires.

What Right(s)?

This argument by Marcuse unfolds what rights are at stake and how they can be defined.

It is a moral claim, founded on fundamental principles of justice, of ethics, of morality, of virtue, of the good. ‘Right’ is not meant as a legal claim enforceable through a judicial process today (although that may be part of the claim as a step in the direction of realizing the Right to the City). Rather, it is multiple rights that are incorporated here: not just one, not just a right to public space, or a right to information and transparency in government, or a right to access to the centre, or a right to this service or that, but the right to a totality, a complexity, in which each of the parts is part of a single whole to which the right is demanded. (2009, pp. 192-193)

Marcuse’s (2009) analysis clearly pinpoints the complexity of the right to the city. His argument demonstrates that the right to the city is not a simple and singular right to be formalised within the legal system, nor it is an individualistic right. The right to the city is a set of collective rights as a whole, demanded by collective struggles and resistance. It is a right to the totality of the city and not to fragments and elements of it, as if it was, it would perpetuate the same system of abstraction and fragmentation in which the same rights are denied or left unrecognised. In other words, it can be argued that the right to the city is not a right to a specific aspect, space, or service; it is a demand by the inhabitants to own, produce, and appropriate the urban — to reclaim it from the abstraction,
oppression, and the control of the state. It is a right to the independence and self-determination of the urban and the city from the power and its machinery.

**Why?**

The following depicts why Lefebvre (1996, 1991) finds the differential space and the right to the city as the only way to “prevent the abstract space from taking over the planet.” Explaining the goal of the right to the city, Marcuse states:

> Most immediately, the goal can be read from the main immediate contribution of the Right to the City: the claim is a claim to a totality, to something whole and something wholly different from the existing city, the existing society. (2009, p. 194)

The right to the city as whole is a necessity, not only to negate the existing oppressive system of the state, but also because the city as a whole is the immediate living space of its inhabitants. The city as the space of inhabitants becomes a part of the human condition. Therefore, it is essential for the inhabitants to have the right to claim to the totality of their city and its urban reality. Of course, this demand can be deemed utopian, and indeed it is within the current power structures, yet it is important to understand what the possibilities of these utopian demands are. To respond to this question, Marcuse clarifies that:

> Only in the experience of getting there, in the democratic decisions that accompany the process, can a better future be formed. It is not for lack of imagination or inadequate attention or failing thought that no more concrete picture is presented, but because, precisely, the direction for actions in the future should not be pre-empted, but left to the democratic experience of those in fact implementing the vision. (2009, p. 194)

Here, Marcuse’s (2009) point of view amplifies the complexity and continuity of the notion of the urban that Lefebvre (1996) addresses as the goal of the right to the city. As discussed in previous chapters, urban is a process rather than just a quality, and only in reaching and producing the urban can the right to the city materialise. Combining Lefebvre’s (2003) analysis of urbanisation and urban reality with Marcuse’s (2009, p. 195) understanding of the right to the city, it can be concluded that to achieve “a decent and supportive living environment,” the right to the city is the necessary involvement of the urban inhabitants in the production of space, in resisting and appropriating the existing system of urbanisation, and in fighting against the homogenising and segregative state’s urban policies that aim to control and deprive the cities of urbanity.

**5.3.2. Perils of the Right to the City and the Question of Scale**

As Purcell (2006) argues, an increasing amount of research within urban studies is concerned with the matters of the right to the city, urban movements, and public spaces (Brenner et al., 2012; Dikeç, 2002; Friedmann, 1995; Harvey, 2008, 2012; Holston, 1998; Holston & Appadurai, 2003; Mayer, 2009; D. Mitchell, 2003; Purcell, 2013a; Souza, 2010; Staeheli, Mitchell, & Gibson, 2002). Purcell (2006), being a proficient scholar in the understanding of Lefebvre and his concept of the right to the
city, warns of the perils of the local trap that can result from a misinterpretation of Lefebvre and his theories regarding his demands for a different city.

The local trap involved in the misinterpretation of the right to the city and urban movements relates to the ambiguities of the terminologies. Local, city, and urban do not conflate with good, democracy, and the participation of all, and that is a very brief and probably reductionist way of depicting what Purcell (2006) means by the local trap. However, considering the length that this thesis went through to define the urban and the city, the local trap can be avoided. As it is apparent, there is no mention of democracy in studies and processes discussed in this thesis, and that is exactly to avoid misinterpretation of the concept. Even a democratic public space, an ultimate differential space, or a strong urban movement demanding a more democratic urban space do not conflate with democracy. These urban problematique are discussed extensively in Chapter 9, discussion two.

5.4. Digital Technology and the Urban Movement

This subchapter approaches the relationship between digital technologies and urban movements from three points of view, which are strongly interwoven into each other:

- Digital representational space and digital resistance;
- The relationship between digital resistance and the physical spaces of resistance and urban movements;
- Digital technologies as a means of understanding urban movements.

These three aspects are based on the different roles of digital technologies in the formation and understanding of urban movement. The first aspect relates to digital representational spaces, in which the resistance emerges and appropriates the digital sphere. The second section focuses on how digital technologies and digital resistance interconnect with urban spaces and reinforces the mobilisation of urban movements. The last section is a different approach towards digital technologies, not as the tool that is used to produce and mobilise the resistance, but as a tool to reinforce the understanding of resistance and the knowledge of urban movement.

5.4.1. Digital Representational Spaces

Stewart (1995a, p. 611) maintains that: “Spaces of representation are sites of resistance, and of counter-discourses which have not been grasped by apparatuses of power, or which ‘refuse to acknowledge power.’” Lefebvre (1991b, p. 42) argues that “representational spaces are symbolic works” which are mostly dominated or structured by the “order” in the form of architecture and construction, or by verbal and physical control in the form of police and law.

The question that emanates here is whether digital technology is “producing representational spaces” or citizens utilises them to produce such spaces in the urban fabric. On the one hand, digital spaces and spheres created within the social networks expand on a daily basis with an incredible speed. On the other hand, we need to bear in mind that these spaces are created by certain groups of people
exclusively and that their accessibility, transparency, and affordability are defining factors; therefore
considering these spaces as the spaces of “inhabitants” may not be appropriate and representative of
the wider society from a broader perspective. As discussed before, digital spaces intersect with
physical spaces in manifold instances and analysing them as fragmented elements of social spaces in
society is futile.

To answer the previous question regarding the existences of digital representational spaces, and
without delving into complex philosophical discussions, it can be argued that digital spaces can be
read, seen, and heard; however, the notion of a lived digital space or a digital representational space
should be approached with scepticism. Accordingly, it is essential to question whether society can
actually live in the digital space. To unpack this issue, the role of emotions, passions, memories and
temporality – which are the integral dimensions of lived space – have to be closely investigated.

A thorough analysis of the above inquiry indicates that digital spaces may be able to represent the
representational space, or emotions and feelings of the individuals, however — due to the absence of
the physical and collective presence of individuals — digital spaces cannot be lived or inhabited fully.
Therefore, it can be argued that a digital representational space is a misleading notion that produces
false assumptions. Digital space, like an image, can produce a visual representation of any social
space, yet it does not mean that it can be equalised to that social space itself. To further clarify this
point, Kitchin and Perng (2016, p. 17) argue that “software [digital space] needed to be understood as
being both a product of the world and a producer of the world,” and therefore I can argue that digital
space may produce representational spaces while being produced by them, yet they are not equal.

5.4.2. Digital Technology and the Production of the Space of Resistance

At the heart of questions of resistance lie questions of spatiality — the politics of lived spaces. (Keith &
Pile, 2013, p. 27)

The collaboration between digital networks and the urban public realm is experienced in most of the
recent resistance movements, indicating that there is the potential in emerging digital spaces to reveal
the dominating characteristic of the space and to produce new differential spaces (Foth et al., 2008;
S. Graham, 2004; S. Graham & Marvin, 2001; Shepard, 2011). Hence there is a need to look at these
technologies’ impact on the spatiality of urban movements and on the city as a whole. Unfortunately,
there are barely any studies on why digital technologies are widely used during urban movements as
most of the research is focused on how these technologies are used and/or on the implications of
their use. In other words, according to Kitchin and Perng (2016, p. 24), “studies that focus on the city
tend to examine the effects of code but rarely unpack the constitution and mechanics of the code
producing those effects.”

Although the production of the spaces of resistance is associated with representational spaces,
Lefebvre (2003) in different instances emphasises that assorted characteristics of social spaces are
highly interconnected, whether in favour of the domination and oppression of space, or in aid of
producing resistance and deferential spaces. According to Stewart (1995a), Lefebvre investigates the
The term *resistance* embodies a multitude of concepts that are mostly associated with the term domination, and therefore it may mean that resistance is forever confined to authorised spaces of domination (Keith & Pile, 2013). Despite the facts indicating the strong ties between resistance and domination, Pile (Keith & Pile, 2013, p. 3) argues that “resistance might have its own distinct specialities.” This assumption has a critical significance in our investigation about the role of digital technologies in the production of distinct spaces of resistance. In short, it can be argued that digital technologies, due to their fluidity and spontaneity, are capable of introducing urban possibilities that are not necessarily triggered or tied by domination and the dominating power.

In addition, Castells (1983) brings to our attention the very notion of “identity,” its politics, and the inner spaces that it creates. These inner spaces, in Castells’ (1983) opinion, have a stronger resistance as they are radical and associated with the “spatial practices” of everyday life, as discussed in Lefebvre’s (1991b, p. 33) theories. There is a clandestine assumption in this argument that “the creation and occupation of a bounded physical space is not as progressive as that of ‘placeness’” (Keith & Pile, 2013, p. 13). This matter refers to the question of scale. The placeness of inner struggles has a global dimension, while local and place-based resistance are limited to the locality and the location that the resistance takes place in. These assumptions suggest that, in spite of annihilating some aspects of social life in public spaces and social interactions in the physical locations, digital technologies can reflect these global struggles through creating a peculiar and distinct spatiality that at the same time projects local and place-based concerns.

When focusing more on the role of digital technologies in the production of the space of resistance, it is understood that one of the key factors in the widespread use of digital technologies during urban movements and protests is the *fluidity* of the digital sphere. Kirsch’s (1995) analysis of Lefebvre’s thoughts on technology indicates that technology as a whole has a mediating role in the production of space. The specific characteristic of digital technology is that it mediates at a high speed, to the point that the space of resistance can quickly emerge from the interstices of the oppressive abstract space of the state and can be reproduced and appropriated accordingly. Digital technologies are also directly influenced, shaped, and formed by the inhabitant – even just a specific group, as there is a greater distribution of power between the state and the inhabitants in producing and appropriating digital spheres. This irregularity of the digital sphere and the networks presents unique opportunities for the communication of ideas and the mobilisation of a resistance for a short period of time, before the state immediately tries to block and disturb the networks.

In other words, it can be concluded that digital technology and the codes of the city are a chaotic and fast means of mediation for and through the production of the space of resistance. Kitchin (Kitchin & Dodge, 2011; Kitchin & Perng, 2016) and Townsend (2013) accentuate that by a further integration of digital technologies into our everyday urban life, “the city becomes more programmable, that is, open to recording and remediation, but also to being *buggy and hackable* [emphasis added]” (Kitchin &
Perng, 2016, p. 16). Hackable as an urban quality can indicate a greater possibility of revolt and the emergence of differential spaces, and also of more cracks within the abstract space and the existing power structures of the state. It must be noted that the city is always hackable, as it cannot totally homogenise itself, yet digital technologies, due to their chaotic and unregulated environment can introduce innovative ways of “hacking” or resistance more rapidly, which the system is incapable of mitigating or oppressing immediately.

5.4.3. Digital Information Fabric of Urban Movements
This section aims to unpack a new and significantly critical aspect of the emerging relationship between digital technologies and urban movements. The discussion is concerned with how the urban movement can be digitally coded, which later translates into a fabric of knowledge in which some complexities that have been induced or reduced in traditional information fabrics may be unfolded and understood critically. Recently, an in-depth and critical analysis of the relationship between the software, or the code and the space, has been published. Code and the City (Kitchin & Perng, 2016), further accentuates the relevance and significance of this matter in the digital era.

Information fabric can be defined as a multidimensional, complex and abstract representation of space, entailing verbal and graphic signs and symbols. Information fabric visually and verbally explains and identifies the spaces, geographies and territories according to their specific features and dimensions. Traditionally the information fabric of space was produced by specialists, including politicians, engineers, planners and architects. However, through the emergence of pervasive digital media within the urban space and the transformation of the meanings of citizenship and public engagement, this information fabric can be produced, manipulated, and appropriated anonymously, spontaneously, and by urban inhabitants.

In contrast to the digital information fabric, the analogue information fabric or representations of space that were produced in a traditional way are the abstract spaces of the specialists, and are specialised, highly regulated, standardised and limited to the material world. This transformation in the production of information fabrics unfolds many difficulties and opportunities for understanding the contemporary city and the interconnected dialectic relations of urban and digital spaces.

As discussed before, the representations of space are abstract, symbolic, and “tends towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 39). These abstract spaces are closely related to the process of production and orders that are imposed by the relations of production. The representation of space is the information fabric, which imposes itself on to the city while it is produced by its agents, mostly by the power apparatuses. In other words, Speed (2010, p. 172) argues that:

[Representation of space] can be understood to be the detached by-products of the machinations of both industry and academia. These machinations include maps, plans, coordinates, diagrams and any abstractly quantitative and artificial interpretation of space.
It is vital to understand that the emerging spatial information fabrics are not merely tied to the system of order, including the order imposed by planners and designers, but are dependent on the citizens too. This will give an in-depth insight into contemporary and emerging urban spaces, with their unpredictable urban characters, reflections, and social dynamics. The image of the space, the rules, and the visual and verbal codes, sees and projects the space from above and from far, then it visualises and renders it with abstract elements, including lines, ideological symbols and words (Shields, 1999). According to Speed (2010), this can be explored through the concept of the “Overview Effect”, which was studied by Frank Stewart (1995b). Speed argues that due to the Overview Effect, space and time are separated, however the Overview Effect resulted in and produced by the mobile digital technology continues to bring together the telephone, networked computing, and GPS. Subsequently, time and space are becoming increasingly connected:

Now coupled with awareness of space, locative media offers some of the ingredients for supporting a complementary sense of place because it has the potential to bind geographical, social and cultural dimensions. (Speed (2010, p. 173)

As Speed (2010) indicates, the emergence of locative digital devices takes the interconnection and integration of cities with digital technologies to a more complex level. Contemporary cities around the globe are producing a geo-social information fabric every moment, reflecting new dynamic and fluid flows of information, people, and activities. The same technologies are providing opportunities to visualise this phenomenon and, as a result, we can record and study a significant amount of information in the form of big data, static and dynamic visualisations and maps. The digital information fabric is produced through coding, data collection and data visualisation. This process is explained thoroughly in the case study of this thesis in the next chapters. However, before delving into the mechanics of the production of digital information fabrics, it must be considered that this process has its own perils and possible misleading outcomes.

Although the digital urban fabric has some unique characteristics, it has some validity and credibility issues that need to be discussed. The user-generated information fabric, when compared to formal and conventional representations of city, has contained features that are rooted in its user-generated dimensions. Here, some of these concerns regarding digital data collection and digital information fabrics can be addressed:

Rather, coding needs to be understood as a complex and contingent process, shaped by the abilities and worldviews of programmers and engineers, working in companies or on their own time, situated in social, political and economic contexts. (Kitchin & Perng, 2016, p. 17)

To comprehend the problematic aspects of this process, this discussion considers a digital information fabric that was produced by Twitter and the digital activities of its users, commonly known as tweets. As Kitchin and Perng (2016) point out in the above account, the first issue that needs to be noted is the socio-political and economic context of the code and the coder of Twitter. It is vital to consider how Twitter is coded and how it operates. It is widely discussed that coding and code are not neutral to ideologies, politics, and the everyday practices of people; rather, these codes, networks,
and technologies are heavily influenced by socio-political factors, ideological bias and also by the geo-political context of the code. Although the digital sphere is increasingly being decentralised, it is known that the main domain and context of the digital sphere is within the western context, and therefore some of the critiques of the domination of western knowledge and its homogenising ideology can be applied to the way that the knowledge of coding and the production of the digital sphere is constituted.

In addition to the context of the code and the coder, it is essential to investigate the geo-political context of where the code is used. Through the process of data collection, it can be understood that some of the data is normalised for security or archiving matters. For instance, a big part of our datasets have normalised geo-locations. This means that the geo-location of the tweets is generalised as to the origin country of the tweet. This issue can lead to misunderstanding and misleading outcomes as the entire geography of an area is treated equally. Many other challenges can be addressed here, including the possibility of VPNs or proxy software used by users to project a fake location, to the governmental manipulation of data, and to the consideration of retweets as either one independent element of the fabric or a dependent fraction of the data.

Furthermore, in this research and in many other studies based on geo-tagged information, location based users, and in general geographical entities of digital social networks, we assume that the digital sphere is entirely geo-located. In the best case scenarios, the outcome of digital data mining is a very small fraction of the digital sphere. Therefore, the maps produced, or any other form of the information fabric can be very limited or misleading. Particularly in the case of urban movements, influential users are aware of digital surveillance systems and hence it is impossible to track or locate them fully or comprehensively. Obtaining an accurate and credible quantity of digital data during an urban movement requires sophisticated and highly complex tools and skills, considerable financial support and a time consuming and thorough analysis of the data, none of which could have been adequately provided or addressed in this research.

Apart from the technical challenges contained within this method of understanding, there are some concerns that revolve around the nature of the digital information fabric and its relation to complex interconnected urban dynamics. A very crucial and critical instance regarding the nature of digital information fabric is the total disregard of some urban spaces, neighbourhoods, and urban dynamics. As discussed before, a fragmented knowledge is misleading and mostly it is used in favour of abstraction, oppression, and the control of difference. This issue applies to the understanding of digital information fabrics — that unless they are understood within a critical unitary thinking, and in relation to other aspects of the production of space, they only further perpetuate a system of misreading the cities based on hegemonic knowledge that is produced by the state or the existing power relations. This peril of the digital information fabric is succinctly explained by Kitchin as he states:

The problem with examining individual socio-technical assemblages in detail is that the city largely disappears from view. Certain elements are examined, but in isolation, meaning that a
more holistic understanding of how various systems combine and interact to produce the whole is never formulated. (2016, p. 21)

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that the state and its abstract space is the central force of homogenisation and the control of the city. If the domination of abstract space over the reality and lived space exceeds a certain level, resistance and differential spaces appears. This chapter has demonstrated that differential space as an embodied, dynamic and emotional space is where urban movements are engendered. It further discussed the theoretical aspects of urban movements within a specific context and locale to shed light on contextual differences and particularities. Considering these characteristics of the spaces of resistance and urban movement, this chapter further depicts why and how digital technologies, due to their irregularity, pace and decentralised nature, play a very significant role in the formation and further appropriation of urban movements.

To elaborate on the theoretical discussions of this analysis, the next part of the chapter provides some historical narratives to appropriate the required theoretical framework to understand urban movements and particularly the Gezi Park movement. In addition, the chapter approached the relationship between digital technologies and urban movements from three points of view, which are strongly interwoven; digital representational space, the relationship between resistance in and through digital networks and urban movements, and the digital information fabric in urban movements. Focusing on the digital information fabric of urban movements, the last part of this subsection has argued that, despite its limitations and short-comings, digital information fabrics can unpack some of the opaque and complex layers of the urban reality of the city at times of unrest, including urban movements and resistance. Lastly and most importantly, the chapter as a whole has built a theoretical foundation for the next two chapters, in which the Gezi Park Movement and the context of Istanbul are introduced and discussed extensively.
6.0. Introduction

The last five chapters outlined the theoretical and critical context of this thesis, aiming to politicise and problematize the process of rethinking public space in relation to unfolding urban movements and digitally augmented geographies of resistance, aiming to tackle the abstract spaces of the state and its overbearing spatial ideologies that are imposed over the fabric of the city. This chapter sets out how the elements of the last four chapters converge (or diverge) in one urban phenomenon and in a case study: the Gezi Park Movement. It firstly explains the background, historical context and urban dimensions of the Gezi Park Movement and secondly, introduces the Gezi Park Movement as a process and a hybrid, complex and multifaceted urban phenomenon.

In the last three years there have been a number of studies centred on the Gezi Park Movement, focusing on different aspects — from the causes of the movement like the privatisation of public spaces and environmental protectionism, to the concept of the right to the city and reclaiming Istanbul (Arat, 2013; Ay & Miraftab, 2016; Can Gürcan & Peker, 2015; Eken, 2014; Gül, Dee, & Nur Cünük, 2014; Lelandais, 2016; Örs, 2014; Yıldırım & Navaro-Yashin, 2013). However, most of the research to this date has either been:

- Descriptive in nature
- Purely conducted from a Eurocentric perspective without analysis of the contextual language (symbolic and verbal), the geopolitical context, and everyday practices and/or;
Fragmented in theory and analysis in terms of their disciplinary approaches, whereby their explorations are seen through a specific field, for instance a geographical analysis, a political study, or behavioural research on the movement.

Thus, this chapter tackles these issues by establishing the context and the history, projecting the controversies, and exploring the lived experience of the movement. This chapter is solely dedicated to the Gezi Park Movement, not as an event but as a deeply rooted urban phenomenon that was born in the process of the modernisation of Turkey since the 19th century, which transformed the present urban life of Istanbul. This process has been a continuous transformation of the city, engendering a constant struggle between the domination of the state and the resistance of the urban inhabitants, which changed the morphology of the city and will shift the emerging social and physical boundaries of future Istanbul. Çoban (2016, p. 73) pinpoints the fact that “the Gezi Resistance was a ‘leap’, the leap of a tiger that feeds the poetry of the future; the start of a long march”.

This chapter contains two subchapters. An Urban Introduction introduces the urban dimension of the movement through an urban analysis of Istanbul (which has roots in the historical and wider geographical context) and its morphological, political, and economic history, which led to the emergence of the Gezi Park Movement. The second subchapter provides a brief description of the movement and how it was presented through the media and understood by the people. The chapter aims to set out the context and shed light on some complexities of the movement, which are further discussed in the following chapters, based on interviews, informal conversations, ethnographic observations and analysis of digital social networks.

### 6.1. An Urban Introduction

Most studies on urban movements are concerned with behavioural patterns, political dimensions, and social consequences (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Badiou, 2012; Juris, 2012; Örs, 2014), which indicates that the urban character of the movements and their spatial dimensions may have been underexplored. The spatial dimensions of a movement address transformative urban practices and emerging spatial practices. This part of the study depicts urban transformations that have occurred in the recent history of the city as being significantly relevant, influential, and mostly unnoticed or underestimated within the literature of the Gezi Park Movement.

The negligence of the historical roots of urban movements, and of how the convergence of various violent and abstract processes, including the homogenisation of public spaces and urban areas leads to displacement, urban dissent and uprising, can be the reason that design and urban developments are misinterpreted as apolitical and divorced from the power and politics of space (Dovey, 2014). Therefore, exploring the historical context of urban life and the everyday lived experiences of a city’s inhabitants is essential for a critical approach to urban knowledge and specifically to the urban design theory in the context of Istanbul (Gül, 2009).

In addition to the theoretical and historical exploration of the context, this subchapter reveals some of the unique characteristics of the locality of the movements. During the research, it appeared that
some elements were unique to the Gezi Park Movement, elements that are now an inherent part of
the identity of Gezi Park and its surrounding neighbourhoods.

The following sections are based on two spatial scales: the urban scale, and the place itself.
Discussion of the regional context of the phenomenon would not fit the scope and limitations of this
thesis, yet the complex historical processes of reformation, regenerations and waves of globalisations
in Istanbul led to manifold waves of gentrification, which had a strong tie to the process and
conception of the Gezi Park Movement. Lelandais (2016, p. 284) argues that the Gezi Park
Movement was “the nodal point” where many urban struggles and protests converged that had been
developing since early in the 21st century.

Lastly, the investigation is directed towards the local scale and the spatial transformation of Gezi
Park, Taksim Square, and other public spaces in Istanbul. Interestingly and predictably, Gezi Park
had experienced radical and drastic transformations before it became the subject of the Gezi Park
Movement and this thesis. Therefore an investigation into its local transformation further assists the
analysis of the movement, which follows immediately after.

6.1.1. Transformation of Istanbul and the State’s Urban Ideology
This section explains the process of the commodification of Istanbul, depicting the impact of “neo-
liberal” policies (Elicin, 2014) and the commodification of urban spaces in intensifying the domination
and homogenisation of the city as a whole. Part of this process has been the elimination of public
space as the space of difference in particular (Eder & Öz, 2015; Ekmekci, 2014; Enlil, 2011;
Lelandais, 2016). This sheds a light on how this process eventually led to numerous urban
movements, including the Gezi Park Movement, and to on-going urban unrest. The focus here is
political and politicised public spaces and how they transformed during this period, yet all the
processes have deep roots in the historical transformation and planning reforms of the city.

After military rule between 1980 and 1983, and the deregulation and reduction of the state’s role, the
city saw more power given to local government to increase competitiveness and to open it up to the
free market. Enlil elaborates, “part of the policy agenda was to enhance the image of the city and to
brand it in international markets for tourism, business conference traffic, international organizations,
and so forth” (2011, p. 15). This caused the first wave of globalisation and liberalisation in Istanbul.

The second wave of globalisation in Istanbul was accompanied by the de-industrialisation of the city.
Many scholars point out that the decline of manufacturing and the emergence of the new economy
that manifested in “employment in finance increasing by 37%, insurance by 36%, real-estate and
business services by 220%” (Enlil, 2011, p. 15). This new form of economy and the commodification
of the city by the state in order to increase the growth and merge into the neoliberal market, led to a
strong wave of gentrification and the contestation over urban spaces, particularly in the areas
desirable for emerging businesses and the new urban bourgeoisie (Berköz, 1998; Enlil, 2011; Robins
& Aksoy, 1996).
The following discussion focuses on two central and critical aspects of the commodification and recent globalisation of Istanbul. These are fragmentation and gentrification, which are dominant urban phenomena in contemporary Istanbul and in the Gezi Park Movement analysis. One of the initial and probably most destructive impacts of the economic shift towards banking and services was the “fragmentation of population within the borders of the city” (Erkip, 2000, p. 372). To provide the space for emerging and powerful businesses and financial firms, the urban fabric had to be reshaped in order to accommodate the “mix of development (which) has created a lively and even pleasantly-congested urban environment of business, trade, tourism and culture, be that at the expense of authentic community life” (Erkip, 2000, p. 372, quoting Akpınar, 1998). As a response to the high demand for housing, and to open the central city up to the market, the local government planned new residential developments.

This neo-liberalism redressed in an atypical form supported by the state’s economic and political ideologies, and subsequently the gentrification of several neighbourhoods, became a peculiar aspect and cause of the Gezi Park Movement. The Gezi Park Movement occurred in an area that has been subject to gentrification from the 1980s, which is well debated and documented in academic literature (Arslanli et al., 2011; Dokmeci, Altunbas, & Yazgi, 2007; Ergun, 2004; Islam, 2002; Uzun & van Weesep, 2001). The process of gentrification in this central area led to a significant demographic change. The case of the gentrification of Beyoğlu, and especially of the Cihangir area, indicates how the neo-liberal market influenced the formation of the city, what is often called the hidden-hand of the market, facilitated by the state’s apparatus, including planners, designers and police.

6.1.2. Urban Transformation of Istanbul’s Contemporary Public Spaces

The coexistence of different worlds within one city, constantly impacted by reforms, historic migrations, gentrifications, disputes, and conflicts, resulted in a strong and rebellious civil society where, sometimes, opposing communities would eventually revolt against the establishment and the dominant powers (Erkip, 2000). Historically, the conflicts between opposing urban dwellers were resolved and settled through different means and strategies, depending on the historical and political context of the time (Erman & Eken, 2004). These strategies included the intentional and informal segregation of the city through the creation of elite neighbourhoods, gated communities, ethnic enclaves and disenfranchised migrant settlements, sometimes associated with the polarised phenomena of gentrification and community displacement (Duben, 1992).

It is impossible to study the current urban spaces of the central city of Istanbul without referring back to the process of gentrification that has occurred over the last three decades, and which is widely discussed in the relative literature (Arslanli et al., 2011; Dinçer, 2011; Eckardt & Wildner, 2008; Eder & Öz, 2015; Ekmecki, 2014; Erkip, 2000, 2003; Karaman, 2014; C. Keyder, 2005; Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010; Robins & Aksoy, 1995). The gentrification of urban areas — in all forms and shapes — has clearly influenced and reshaped public life and public spaces of Istanbul. This process is on-going and the emerging shifts in the perception and conceptions of contemporary re-politicised public spaces of
Istanbul are partially the result of the perpetual gentrifying processes that are shifting the social and physical boundaries of different areas and realities.

Public space in Istanbul is highly contested and — most importantly — highly heterogeneous (Ç. Keyder, 1999). The main point of difference from many western urban public spaces and their universalising reflection and impact in shaping the nominal urban theories is this spatial irregularity and social heterogeneity of space within Istanbul, something inherent throughout Middle Eastern cities. In addition to the irregularity and heterogeneity of the space, the contestation for and within Middle Eastern public space is not dominated by market forces or authoritarian governments, or them versus us, powerful versus weak, it is also a contestation between the inhabitants, which further contributes to the complexity of the space (Inceoglu, 2015).

In Istanbul, these irregularities, and this over-controlling and contestation, are palpable. These characteristics are even more vivid within the public squares and streets, as there is a visibly high density of users. This leads to a higher rate of conflict, a larger presence of state control, and constant transformation of spatial boundaries and configurations and hence, the spatial irregularity. The urban practices of inhabitants also play a key role in defining these characteristics in Istanbul’s public spaces.

Another important place that has been the centre of study and that can reflect the dynamics and transformation of public space are meydans (Maurice Cerasi, 1999; Cerasi, 2008). Historically, meydans were open areas accommodating the flow of people and vehicles. Gradually, they became the equivalent of public squares and plazas and a main part of Istanbul's urban life, yet a “meydan evades the rigidity and the intentionality of the plaza or square’s structural form” (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010, p. 51). Again, this evasion of “rigidity and intentionality” becomes a distinctive character of the city's public spaces. Accordingly, Aral (Eckardt & Wildner, 2008, p. 123), quoting Maurice Cerasi (1999, p. 199), argues that:

Meydans were used in astounding ways: tents and huts were set up and there were groups of people sitting in circles, others eating, and some playing games on horseback. The meydans were multi-functional and they also provided the milieu for mediating, as a group or a person appropriated a location in the space to sit, like a corner in the field.

This argument regarding the evasion of rigidity in meydans, in addition to the unregulated and heterogeneous space of cafés, bars, and streets, unfolds a highly significant aspect of Istanbul’s urban reality: the role of design, appropriation, and the production of space by the daily spatial practices and the urban life of its inhabitants. The importance of this aspect will be further magnified through the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement.

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In contrast to the square and plaza of the European city, which is defined spatially, politically, and culturally to represent the public life of the city, the meydan "is mundane and accidental, a junction of axes which brings together structures and spaces that were not designed intentionally to define one integrated spatial entity” (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010, p. 52).
6.1.3. Spatial Transformation of Beyoğlu and Taksim Square

The Beyoğlu area (historically Pera) was initially established by foreigners and minorities outside the historical city of Istanbul currently known as Fatih (Yacobi & Shechter, 2005, p. 501). Pera, which was built by Europeans and others on the European side of Istanbul, was influenced by peculiar socio-political, economic, and morphological forces. Pera and Galata were two separate and autonomous countries, inhabited by a combination of Asians, Albanians, Persians, and Native Turks. Pera, which in Greek means “beyond” or “far away,” was independent of the Greek Byzantine Empire and was “established as a Genoese trading colony in the thirteen century” (Bartu et al., 1999, pp. 32-34).

The Beyoğlu area, apart from its historical, architectural, and strategic values and significance, has had a unique and distinct importance. Its symbolic value is most importantly political within urban, national, and international contexts. Due to its history, specifically its financial history, geolocation, and the place of the others, the area has always been subject to intense state control, transformation and urban intervention, and has also been at the centre of political contestation, conflicts, and shifts (Aksoy & Robins, 2011). It would not be an exaggeration to say that Beyoğlu is shrouded by an ultimate urban iconography, as it strongly symbolises Istanbul to the western world (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010). The result was decades of westernisation until almost three decades ago, when the area became the centre of an emerging debate regarding the Islamic and Orientalist image of the city.

Thus, Beyoğlu had to go through a new form of image making, this time to become the urban symbol of an Islamic city, resurrecting the glory of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic values. Despite the ideologies imposed on this area, Beyoğlu has been the heterogeneous soul and centre of Istanbul and has played the role of a “space of resistance, challenge, as well as mediation, intended for the voices of ‘minorities’ to be heard and, hopefully, understood” (Demirkol-Ertürk & Paker, 2014, p. 176).

Around the 1730s, the first urban construction occurred within the area; this was the water distribution building, Maksem, which is still visible and is also the origin of the name for Taksim Square or Taksim Meydanı, meaning the place of “allocation” or “to divide” (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010, p. 53). In the middle of the 19th century, and by the order of the Ottoman Empire, the graveyards of Catholics and Protestants were removed to open up the space for the construction of a military barracks (Demirakin, 2012). In the mid-19th century, Ottomans established parks for recreational purposes as part of their urban agenda, which led to the emergence of the first urban park, Taksim Park. Taksim Park was behind the barracks and should not be confused with Gezi Park. Figure 2 depicts the location of Taksim Square and Gezi Park within the Beyoğlu area and the wider fabric of Istanbul.

In the 1920s the barracks building was found to be no longer functional; hence it became Istanbul’s first sport stadium, hosting football matches. The historic football pitch is currently where the trees of Gezi Park are rooted. During this time, Pera, which had changed its name to Beyoğlu, was transformed into a uniquely European environment, compact and urban. During this period, Tanzimat, or Ottoman urban reforms (Gül, 2009; Ç. Keyder & Öncü, 1994), intensified the process of apartment building, westernisation, and the regeneration of the area as a new symbol of the city.
Figure 2 - Location of Taksim Square/Gezi Park, Background image retrieved at 26/08/2017 from Google Earth Pro (Google Earth Pro, 2017)

Taksim Square — initially as a meydan and an urban intersection — was built in 1926 and was one of the first public squares to have monumental and political symbolism. In 1940, Dr. Lutfi Kirdar, influenced by Henri Prost and French planning concepts, demolished the military barracks and developed the symbolic, political, and cultural centre of Istanbul, known as Taksim Square (Ayataç, 2007). Taksim Square and the surrounding area became so prominent in the political and cultural sphere of Turkey that in 1994 the mayor of the time who eventually became the prime minister and is currently the President of Turkey, described it in an interview in this way:
Taksim is a crucial region for tourism in Istanbul... When we gradually bring out the historical and cultural texture of our city, tourists who visit Istanbul will understand that they are in a city populated by Muslims. (Bartu et al., 1999, p. 41)

Another spatial and political transformation that one must take into account is the development of roads, boulevards, and expressways around Istanbul and the Taksim area, influenced by American planning and political hegemony post WWII (Erkip, 2000; Gül & Lamb, 2004). This was materialised and practiced specifically by the expansion and development of İstiklal Cadessi (Independent Street), by Tarlabası Boulevard leading to Taksim Square, and also by the establishment of the Hilton Hotel on the edge of Taksim Park.

Later, in 2011, as part of a bigger project, which led to the Gezi Park Movement, the Prime Minister proposed to pedestrianize the square and move the traffic underground [Figure 2]. This part of the project was implemented, the traffic was shifted underground, and a central underground bus and metro station opened to the public in September 2013 (Dailynews, 2013). The improvement in accessibility and transportation to and from Taksim Square since the 1940s and through initial urban regeneration projects increased and accentuated the importance of the square and the park as an accessible, open, public space for the citizens and for the authorities at the same time.

Another process that is profoundly related to the symbolic and political meaning of Taksim Square as public space is the tragedy of 1 May 1977 (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010). On this day, thousands of union members and workers gathered in Taksim Square to celebrate the Labour Day. Many were killed through the chaos that engulfed the celebration, as, during a moment of silence for the workers who had lost their lives for the causes of the working class, a sound of gunshot broke the peace. Other gunshots followed and the term *May Day massacre* was collectively used to describe the tragedy. The collective memory of that day is still alive within Taksim Square and the minds of thousands who lived through that time or heard the story of the day. As a result, mass protests were banned, and to date the May Day celebration has become a formal and controlled celebration from which most of the workers unions’ are banned. That was one of the key moments in the conflict between the state, attempting to *de-politicise* Taksim Square and Gezi Park, and the people, struggling to re-politicise the space, its urban reality and also its memory.

Today, Taksim Square is located at the upper end of İstiklal Street and contains a very complex urban life, as it draws the tourists, the workers, the ordinary, the *othered* and a heavy number of police forces together in one place. The high intensity of social interactions in its spaces is supported by its magnitude, spatial centrality, and accessibility. However, particularly important to its success is the fundamental indeterminacy of its spaces, which form a unique in-between realm activated by major civic and commercial amenities: the commercial cluster on the İstiklal side, the major hospitality facilities, and the outstanding set of public institutions that include the Istanbul Technical University, and the Atatürk Cultural Centre. The connectivity of this key location on the historical European side of Istanbul is exceptional and makes it a prime meeting point and the preferred site for large-scale social gatherings of cultural, political and even mundane events.
Figure 3 - The process of the pedestrianisation of Taksim Square - All background Images were retrieved at 25-08-2017 from Google Earth Pro (Google Earth Pro, 2017)
6.2. Taksim Square and Gezi Park Development Project

This section provides details about the last phase of the Taksim Square and Gezi Park Development Project, whose pedestrianised phase was initiated by the former mayor of Istanbul, in 2011. Satellite images of the square show that, by early 2013, Taksim was pedestrianised, the traffic was diverted, and the underground metro and bus station made Taksim Square one of the busiest commuter hubs in Istanbul. However, the local government was pushing for further expropriation of the land, to cleanse the area of the undesirable, as the square and the park were considered a refuge for the homeless (Örs, 2014). The controversial part of the project involved the redevelopment of Gezi Park on the northeast side of the square, which lead to national debate and eventually the Gezi Park Movement.

At the centre of the debate was an argument for and against a specific phase of a prominent urban renewal project, requiring Gezi Park to be demolished and redesigned as part of Taksim Square and the Gezi Park Development Project. This push was aimed at repurposing Taksim Square and the Park as a major urban public space for central Istanbul as it had a symbolic meaning and also social, institutional, cultural, and commercial functions (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010). The development programme included both infrastructural and public space interventions, with the extension of pedestrian areas and the further development of an underground mobility system to ameliorate the vehicular network and improve the integration of a multimodal public transport node. Gezi Park was in fact presented as the collateral damage of this process.

A major element of the public space redevelopment was the transformation of the 600-tree park into a mixed-use complex that included the reconstruction of the three and a half hectare wide Ottoman military barracks that had been demolished in 1940 [Figure 3]. The redevelopment of the park, which constitutes the background of the phenomena discussed in this section, became the centre of controversy. This controversy originated from an interpretation that saw the redevelopment as a crucial step in the commodification process currently permeating the central public spaces of the city. This seemed all the more plausible as the development of the 94th shopping mall of Istanbul was part of the Taksim regeneration project (Kuymulu, 2013; Lelandais, 2016). It was read as the ultimate extension of the space of consumption, entertainment, and leisure that was rapidly transforming the character of the centre of the Beyoğlu district (Gül et al., 2014; Karasulu, 2014).

The development project, as seen on online broadcasting websites (such as the ones documented on the BBC (2013) website), was an almost identical replica of the Ottoman barracks, which had been demolished in 1940. Although the project appeared to be just another urban redevelopment project, it was steeped in deep historical, symbolic and political connotations. The resurrection of the same Ottoman architectural iconography within the secular and modern heart of Istanbul did not go unnoticed. The barracks were a signifier of Ottoman glory and military might, and some saw in that a tendency towards a revitalisation of the past Ottoman Empire, which is identified as “neo-Ottomanist”, an ambition nourished by the current authorities of the country (Saraçoğlu & Demirkol, 2015, p. 302).
The project was seen to go beyond the commodification and privatisation of space; it was also seen as an imposition of the state's ideological vision, a combination of nationalism, Islamism and neoliberal urban policies, upon the city. This further fuelled the crisis and triggered more urban resistance. The project also faced fierce criticism within urban and architectural circles; it was seen as the symbol of "a permanent stamp on the country," "authoritarian urban management," representative of "government's arrogance," and so on (Gül et al., 2014, p. 68). Finally, the area is hinged on Istiklal Street — the major commercial axis of the city, characterised by a distinctive history of social and cultural diversity, which has also in recent times undergone a large number of important urban transformations, including the notorious transformation of the historic Emek theatre into a shopping mall (Eder & Öz, 2015).

Spatial transformations aimed at modernising and regenerating the historical city recently combined with specific ideological and neo-liberal planning policies often reflect the increasing antagonism between groups of people (Erkip, 2000). They impose market-driven processes that attract national and international investment capital, making Istanbul a city in continuous redefinition of its social reality, urbanity, and morphology (Dinçer, 2011). Policies and strategies that were specifically aimed at governing this change, which started in the 1980s, have been discussed in previous sections (C. Keyder, 2005; Kuymulu, 2013). The cumulative effect of all these policies resulted in various forms of urban dissent and uprisings, including the Gezi Park Movement.
6.3. The Gezi Park Movement

The Gezi Park Movement, according to many media outlets, started on May 27 and 28, 2013, with a protest by environmental activists against the bulldozers that excavated the western fringe of the park in the first phase of the development programme. This was the catalyst for a much wider movement that had been growing and fermenting for a long time in different forms as a response to the new urban policies, and also in response to decades of commodification of the city (Eken, 2014; Elicin, 2014; Gül et al., 2014; Karasulu, 2014; Lelandais, 2016). The Gezi Park Movement was indeed a convergence of many other urban movements and uprisings that had occurred in Istanbul (Lelandais, 2016).

Figure 5 - Panoramic of Taksim square protests. Events of June 6, 2013 (Chernov, 2014)

During the first two days of the movement, the uprising was considered an environmentalist’s struggle against another urban project. At 5 a.m., May 30, the police intervened and attempted to remove the protesters from the park, who were blockading the bulldozers. The images of the confrontation spread so quickly that, by the night of June 1, around 20,000 individuals seized the square. The police were forced out and the square turned into a self-organised and autonomous space known as “Gezi Commune” or “Gezi Occupation” (Göle, 2013a, p. 9; Karasulu, 2014, p. 168; Lelandais, 2016).

The most surprising aspect of the occupation was the enormous support from a generation of apolitical youth that emerged as a political force capable of mobilising and politising the city (Polat & Subay, 2016). Göle (2013b, p. 8) elaborates on this dimension: “Gezi distinguishes itself as a youth movement, with its own generational characteristics,” which demonstrates the significance of its impact on the future of the city and its urban reality. In addition, a peculiar phenomenon unfolded during the occupation. A collection of fragmented, antagonistic and divergent groups of protesters, organisations and individuals came together and occupied the park. As can be seen in Figure 6 (this map is produced based on similar maps circulating on social media (Postvirtual, 2013) at the time, and further validated during the interviews), the groups occupied different parts of the park, creating a replica of Istanbul that depicted the politics of coexistence and convergence, despite fundamental differences and demands. For almost ten days, the occupation of the park was peaceful, while these previously antagonistic groups and activists’ organised forums, discussions, concerts, a communal kitchen, a garden, and a library. This was a turning point in the practice of radical politics in Istanbul. These aspects are further discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8.
Other cities also witnessed an increasing number of protests and an increasing amount of street resistance, as well as violent clashes with the police (Ay & Miraftab, 2016; Göle, 2013a). Around mid-June, the police intervened; the activists were evicted from their tents and the area was cordoned off from any gatherings or protests. This led to further clashes with police, while the movement was already spreading around the country. As a result of the clashes and excessive force enacted on protestors by the police, and the lack of management and transparency, there were many casualties, and damage was caused to people and to their lives. By the end of June, the movement diffused and dispersed into other, more implicit forms of urban resistance.
6.4. Conclusion

This chapter was constructed based on the theoretical analysis of the previous chapters, which have identified the gaps, concerns and shortcomings of current approaches towards political public space and urban movements. This chapter has argued the issues identified above by establishing the context and history of the Gezi Park Movement. It has also focused on the Gezi Park Movement, not as an event but as a deeply rooted urban phenomenon that is tightly interconnected with the process of the modernisation of Turkey, beginning in the 19th century. That process transformed the urban life of Istanbul and is still influencing the urban reality of the city (Gül, 2009; Ç. Keyder & Öncü, 1994; Kuban, 2010; Uzun & van Weesep, 2001).

The first part of the chapter introduced the urban dimensions of the movement through an urban analysis of Istanbul, its morphological, political, and economic history and its interrelated struggles, which led to the emergence of the Gezi Park Movement. This section has argued that an urban movement needs to be considered within its specific morphological, political and social context and cannot be analysed in isolation. The second part of this chapter provided a description of the movement and how the media conceived it. To sum up, this chapter has shown that the Gezi Park Movement was indeed a moment, albeit a critical one, in a perpetual struggle against a specific form of urbanisation that has been imposed in Istanbul since before the 19th century. Unpacking the historical urban transformation of Istanbul, specifically the reforms of the Tanzimat period, has shown that the state has long had a significant interest in the Taksim area and in Gezi Park due to their strategic, political and cultural centrality within the urban fabric of Istanbul.
A Methodological Critique

7.0. Introduction

The questions about architecture, urban planning and design, urban policy and politics all appear insignificant when the city and its urban context cannot be understood. The methodology to understand the city has a critical importance in this context. Lefebvre (1991, 1996) argues that the city and the urban cannot be understood fully. However, it is possible to rethink the notions and phenomena of the urban to challenge the dominating powers that are oppressive of a new urban understanding and a different city. This attempt to understand the city requires a critical rethinking that tackles many preconceptions of urban studies. Rethinking a basic and universal notion or concept can lead to the collapse of the inquiry, a collapse that can give birth to a differential and emancipatory theory and space. The critique of this research’s methodology is one of its key findings.

This chapter is the result of revisiting and rethinking the methodology after the field studies, conducting the interviews and ethnographic observations. Through the course of field studies, it appeared that a complex and in fact very personal issue needs to be addressed in this thesis. My personal perceived and lived space, to say it in Lefebvrian terms, my positionality and the power dynamic between I, as the researcher, and the researched – Istanbul and its inhabitants, played a significant role, in both shaping the research and also interpreting the data. This chapter elaborates on these particularities, before presenting the analysis of interviews and the field studies.
The methodological critique of this research can illustrate that the process of thinking has been based on universal concepts and foundations, which may be perverted by hegemonic ideologies, and that itself is a valid outcome of the process of rethinking and research. This chapter aims to explain how the process of rethinking the urban and public space within the context of the Gezi Park Movement led to a collapse within the research, a questioning of the theoretical framework and, most importantly, a critique of the methodology.

This research was conducted based on certain assumptions, concepts, theories and enquires. The initial assumption was that cities are transforming and hence there is a need for a better understanding of the city and specifically its public spaces as their urban core. The research set out to approach the city and the urban as universal and homogenous concepts. Thus it aimed to rethink the notion of public space generally. It can be argued however that the generic methodologies for urban research may have roots in hegemonic theories that are not necessarily reflective of specific urban realities in specific geographical contexts. Therefore, the research could encounter a methodological collapse, as the methods and the theories that are the basis of the research or process of rethinking tend to reproduce and solidify a hegemonic understanding of the space and the city, upholding the existing power structures that are controlled by the state (not only the nation-state but also the global state) and its ideology. This process depicts the vital need for the destruction and disassembling of universal and homogenising forms of urban knowledge, theory and practice, in order to produce a contextualised and alternative urban understanding that is more capable of grasping the distinct and peculiar urban reality of the specific geography of the study, particularly in historically heterogeneous urban contexts.

A methodological collapse of research within the institutional context of academia is not limited to this specific research. Rather it is rooted in the wider process of knowledge production, which is the fundamental reading of this chapter. Thus, it aims to provide a critique of rational theories, planning and design “in which designed utopias come crashing down under the weight of the hard-gritty realities of power, politics and economics” (Miraftab, 2015, p.305). In other words, it aims to highlight the significance of the contextual differences of each city within the realm of urban theory and practice; a point that Watson accentuates:

…perhaps one of the most difficult problems that have to be faced when trying to draw on understanding or ideas developed in a different context is that of how transferable they are: what is unique to a particular time and place, what is more general? It is only the depth of contextualizing detail (thick description) that will allow this judgment to be made. Deep situational understanding is essential input when dealing with new problems and circumstances. (2002, p. 184)

The chapter presents a critique of the methodological approach of this research by analysing two aspects of the thesis and its theoretical framework: 1) a foundational critique of Lefebvre and his urban epistemology and critical urban theory, using his own notion of blind field and 2) a critique of
the research methodology by questioning validity of my methodology, ethnographic observations and Critical Discourse Analysis within the context of Istanbul.

7.1. The Blindness of Theory; the Blind Field of Lefebvre

Between fields, which are regions of force and conflict, there are blind fields. These are not merely dark and uncertain, poorly explored, but blind in the sense that there is a blind spot on the retina, the centre — and negation — of vision. A paradox. (Lefebvre, 2003, p.29)

This section contains three theoretical aspects of the blind fields, yet they are inseparable. On the contrary, they are tightly interwoven or, as Lefebvre (2003, p. 30) himself indicates, they are “complementary aspects of our blindness.” According to Lefebvre (2003, p. 30), this blindness is related to representation in two subsequent moments. Primarily, it is the presentation of “facts” or sets of facts presented together, which, as they are facts, we accept “dogmatically.” This is what Lefebvre (2003) calls the blinding, which explains why many concepts discussed throughout critical urban theory and in this thesis are left unchallenged and accepted without their meaning, context, and implications being scrutinised. It is a matter of urban language and discourse. In essence, this is why urban theory – even critical urban theory – fails in understanding the complex “mental and social” fields of conflict and force. Lefebvre (2003, p. 31) succinctly points out the ideology and the matter of language and discourse: “There are ‘blind fields’ whenever language fails us, whenever there is surfeit or redundancy in a metalanguage (discourse about discourse, signifiers floating far from their signifieds).” For instance, in the research and interviews, the notion of difference has never been challenged or inquired about to assess its validity within the context of Istanbul.

Urban knowledge is blinding through the ideology (and knowledge itself). Lefebvre (2003, p. 31) maintains that “the blinding is the luminous source (knowledge or ideology) that projects a beam of light, that illuminates elsewhere.” This thesis sheds a light on the matter of the public and the urban; meanwhile, it would be fair to say that the politics, aesthetics, and dynamics of the private realm have been left in darkness, along with many other issues and concepts. While I scrutinised the fluidity, extraordinariness, and passion of urban movements, the mundane, underexplored, and dull aspects of the urban — the everydayness — were relegated to the side. The dominance of Lefebvrian theories has diminished other theoretical and intellectual terrains of thought in this thesis. In fact, through any ideological and “intellectual illumination,” some aspects of public space, urban movements, digital technologies, and the city as a whole can be bracketed (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 30). And Lefebvrian theory and thought is not exempt from this occlusion of knowledge by a specific theory as it can preclude other terrains of thought.

Secondly, the complementary aspect of the blinding is the blinded. It is the urban that is misunderstood by our dogmatic assumptions and representations. This addresses the fact that, regardless of the extent and the depth of the research, some aspects of any urban phenomenon will be neglected or ignored, and hence the urban phenomenon could be misinterpreted. The second
aspect of the blind fields is more concerned with the verbal language, history, and social elements of urban thinking.

According to Lefebvre, the blinded is the victim of the abstraction, the ideology, and the only communicable knowledge. The blinded is what is unknown, or at least forced to be unknown by the known, by knowledge, and the illuminating intellectual. Yet blinding is both partially avoidable and an impossibility, depending on the context. Of course, the knowledge and ideological illumination cannot shed light on all aspects of urban phenomena; however, there is a way to resist, to investigate, and to problematize the known and the unknown. This is through constant and persistent scrutiny of the transforming and emerging urban phenomena, a careful examination of the realities and relationships through epistemological, phenomenological and theoretical studies, and also by putting the analysis of lived experiences at the heart of the research.

The blind fields of urban knowledge are a fundamental issue that needs to be acknowledged and discussed in any urban research. In many studies, this aspect is presented as the limitations of the research, or as a self-critique that addresses problematic assumptions, concepts or conclusions. In this discussion, it has been argued that it is not just the matter of limitation; it is a much deeper problem within the structure of knowledge and urban theories.

7.2. The Methodological Critique of the Research

The innate difference between the context of the researched and the researcher, both the personal and institutional contexts, the theory and the case study, is the critical and methodological problem, specifically in the case of this thesis. If this methodological problem is not dealt with with rigour, integrity and in-depth criticality, it can lead to the implosion of the research. This section focuses on this difference and its impact on the research methodology. The difference here includes manifold forms of differences and is rooted in the socio-spatial and temporal contexts of the case study, the researcher and the researched.

It must be noted that difference as a theoretical concept and within the context of this thesis is different from the ways in which many feminist geographers and theorists define the different from gender, race, ethnicity and social class points of view (Barrett, 1987). The task of defining the notion of difference within the context of Istanbul, despite its critical importance, has been overlooked in this thesis, and could be a critical aspect for future research. “Maximal difference”, defined by Lefebvre (1991b, p. 372) as the “produced difference” which is rooted in history and it is irreducible to celebrated diversity or induced difference within a set of systems, is the closest to what this discussion aims to convey by the notion of difference.

The most explicit, yet not the most conclusive example is the difference in the socio-spatial and geographical contexts of the researcher, the case study and the theoretical foundation. Encapsulating the argument behind this section, Yiftachel maintains:
The planning of Tallinn, similar to Sarajevo, Kuala Lumpur, Belfast, Gujarat, Jerusalem and Cape Town, to name just a few, also illustrates ... the need to create new conceptualizations, not premised on the material and political settings of the dominant regions of the ‘North-West', from which most leading theories emerge. Hence, it is high time to conceptualize from the ‘South-East' (the wide range of non-western, non-northern societies), and create meso-level theories, which would genuinely engage with the framing realities of various south-eastern regions. Such theories would avoid the pitfalls of false and domineering universalism; reject the postmodernist retreat from substance and values, yet offer meaningful generalizations to guide and inspire students, scholars and practitioners. (2006, p. 212)

Yiftachel (2006), in an attempt to present a meso-level vision of planning and urban design, critiques the dominance of “English-language” and European and Northern urban studies, in which the focus of analysis is based on western/northern experiences that may not necessarily “speak to the reality of cities and societies of the rest of the world” (Miraftab & Kudva, 2014, p. 306). There is no doubt that there are many similarities between the global North and global South cities due to the processes of industrialisation, globalisation and migration, yet there are distinct characteristics and differences that are systematically and specifically ignored, or dismissed entirely.

The other difference is the inherited diversity and heterogeneity of the urban context of the East/South, compared to the relative homogeneity of western urban societies. Middle Eastern cities are, like Istanbul, in fact the actual melting pots, formed and being formed by various wars, migrations and emigrations, conflicts and political turmoil. Drawing on the case of Istanbul, it must be noted that many ethnic, religious and cultural differences converge within a united urban reality, while there are continuing negotiations, conciliations and contestations between different groups. The cultural heterogeneity is evident and palpable in both the physicality and the reality of urban life. This requires careful consideration in the design of both the research and the methodology, and has to be incorporated into the methods of data collection prior to the field research.

Another central point of contextualised difference is the language, both the language of theory and of life. According to Jacobs, there are a considerable number of qualitative studies of non-western cities, however the controversy around these studies is that they are mostly treated as the exotic other and hence have become the trendy subject of ethnographic research without an in-depth understanding of the language of the place, literally and metaphorically:

Non-Western cities have received some of the most extensive and sustained ethnographic attention. In every sense, this is a product of the tendency, to anthropologise the exotic “other”. Non-Western cities, conceived as a hybrid of modern and pre-modern forms, were deemed appropriate for ethnographic evaluation. (1993, p. 828)

To avoid these kind of misleading, misinforming, and theoretically problematic treatments, this study scrutinises whether the terminologies — the conventional notions such as public space or difference — can be applied to Middle-Eastern cities and particularly Istanbul, or rather, due to historical and social complexities, these terminologies have to be revised and reinterpreted to reflect the reality of
urban life in this specific context and time in a better light. Chattopadhyay succinctly critiques the
language of hegemonic universal theories with regard to their efficacy in dealing with the other cities:

The descriptive vocabulary cannot seem to keep pace with political critique or changes in urban
morphology, unable to see through the metaphors of death, disease and toxicity the contours of
creativity and resistance that give depth to these [non-western] ‘abominable’ geographies. (2012,
p. 73)

The differences discussed above are some of the key and spinal aspects of difference between what
universal urban theory assumes and the lived reality of Istanbul. Although most of these differences
are rooted in historical processes of colonisation, wars, struggles and geopolitical power relations, this
section argues that the main reason these differences are left in the shadows, underexplored, is the
hegemonic power of universal theories and existing power structures within the knowledge economy.
Despite the criticality and importance of the analysis of colonial knowledge, Istanbul has a very
peculiar position within the global context and also in the realm of knowledge and urban theory, as it
seems that the city, its geography and its urban reality, escapes the binaries of West-East and South-
North, presenting itself as an ultimate hybrid and historically heterogeneous territory.

7.2.1. Hybrid Linguistic Misinterpretations
In addition to the hegemonic influence of universal theories on preconceptions and positionality,
simple linguistic misinterpretations might have diverted or distorted my understanding of the city and
Istanbul’s urban life. These misinterpretations do not result solely from the confusion, reduction and
distortions that can result through translation from one language (Turkish) to another (English). The
situation was rather atypical; my understanding of Istanbul, its signs and symbols, overheard words,
urban banners and so on was the result of a linguistic triangle; Turkish, the local language and my
father’s tongue – though from a different descent and hence a different dialect; English – my
theoretical and academic language – which I contemplate in when the subject is the urban, the city or
politics, and Persian, my mother tongue (there was a fourth dimension as Turkish and Persian are
both heavily influenced by Arabic, which I studied for seven years through intermediate and high
school).

As a result, the reduction of the meaning of Istanbul in my mind through the translation is an
incomplete and unfair statement. On the contrary, the meaning of Istanbul and its daily urban life
becomes more confusing, ambiguous, mysterious, and fascinating, as I am constantly making
connections between the languages and deciphering the signs and symbols based on my recent life
in the west and more distant experiences in the Middle East. This hybrid and complex situation can be
clarified through two practical and experienced examples, which I encountered during my field
research:

1. The public space: in my research the public space plays a substantial role, as it is the subject
   of rethinking in the topic of the thesis. The matter is extensively discussed in Chapter 4.
   Considering its weighting in this thesis, a significant part of my ethnographic observations and
interviews in Istanbul revolved around the meaning of public space and its role in both the Gezi Park Movement and the use of digital technologies.

As discussed earlier, the *urban* public space, in a Eurocentric context, is conventionally assumed to be a piazza, plaza or central square where people *appear* as citizens. In Turkish, the square is called a *meydan* (like the Taksim Meydani). Here we can observe a relatively small but significantly complex issue within this type of urban analysis: *meydan* in Turkish does not simply mean a square, as it “evades the rigidity and the intentionality of the plaza or square's structural form” (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010, p. 51). Meydan means an open area, a common ground, a forum and the public, though the meaning of public is complicated in itself.

The etymology of the word is the combination *Mey* plus *dan*. In Persian *Mey* means wine and *dan* refers to “nouns denoting a place by adding *dan* to the end (Andrew, 1830, p. 24). The word refers back to the Persian Empire when they used to drink wine during official and spiritual ceremonies, which were celebrated in grandiose open fields; hence the word *meydan* as the place of drinking wine.

In today’s Middle East, *meydan* has been transformed into a signifier of any open and *central* area, with multiple meanings depending on the context. Meydan sometimes implicitly implies centrality and hierarchy; in some cases, it is the reflection of authoritarian aesthetics and state power. In the context of *Ottoman* cities, Alanyali Aral describes the notion of meydan as:

…‘an open space to serve the whole city for some urban-social functions’ – *meydans* were different in design from those in the west (M Cerasi, 1999, p. 201), not being defined by buildings on at least three sides and not having a geometrical order, as was prevalent in western cities since the Renaissance [original emphasis]. (2008, p. 121)

Sometimes, a meydan is considered as a mundane and unregulated space of gathering, while, in other cases it has a strong spiritual, religious or sacred dimension attached to it due to the fact that most Islamic meydans of the Middle East adjoin sacred buildings like Naghsh-e-Jahan square, or as it is called today the Meydan-e Emam (Assari & Assari, 2012). In Sufism, meydan means the universe.

In Persian, sometimes meydan is used to describe enormous inner city roundabouts and also the grand spiritual, political and extraordinary public squares, which is applied to the Turkish context too. As it appears, the word is overloaded with meaning, value, spirituality and complexity. The only way to distinguish a meydan as a roundabout from a political/religious public square is accurate background knowledge of the context. Hence, one can imagine the possible misinterpretation or at least, the loss of the meaning through the process of translation and transcription of *meydan* to *public space*.

Despite the fact that many *public spaces*, within the context of Istanbul, are called *Meydan*, the theoretical term, *public space*, is translated as *kamusal alan*. It is suspected that the word
is imported from both Latin and Arabic. Kamusal comes from the root of Kamu, which is probably extracted from the Latin word communia, meaning a large group of people sharing the common good or the common world. Alan is probably rooted in the Arabic word Alaana, which means exposed to everyone, or seen by everyone, and according to Turkish dictionary, it means meydan or saha, as a platform. Despite, this multiplicity of the meanings, I suspect that kamusal alan is the closest literal translation to the notion of public space, as the theoretical concept, developed by western theorists like Habermas and Arendt. Therefore, I believe that the context of the word, in relation to the urban reality of Istanbul, makes the analysis of the public spaces of the city, rather impossible, as it is not clear how these terms, and their etymology translate from everyday spatial practices to an abstract analysis understood and written in academic English language.

2. **Mahalle:** the notion appeared as a central and critical concept through the informal conversations and interviews, and yet it was previously relegated as a secondary issue and hence was overlooked prior to my trip. The literature on urbanity in Istanbul later confirmed the role of the mahalle in the urban life of the city and subsequently in understanding the Gezi Park Movement (Mills, 2007; Seni, 2006). The lack of rigorous analysis of the concept was not the only problem, rather, through my conversations I constantly translated the notion of mahalle back into neighbourhood, while subconsciously I was aware that the two are significantly different. According to Gül (2009, p. 17) a mahalle “was an entity that represented the common identity of its inhabitants... beyond its primary function of providing a collective cultural and religious solidarity for its inhabitants, the mahalle was also a self-contained administrative unit for performing civic duties”. It appears the meaning of mahalle goes beyond the rigid and mechanical meaning of neighbourhood defined by rational urban planners and theorists. The concept of mahalle has been analysed in previous chapters and also in the next chapter.

The instances above indicate how the metaphorical and semiotic language of urban reality can alter our understanding of an urban phenomenon. The confusion and indeed the complexities of the translation of both meydan and mahalle revealed two major methodological limitations, particularly considering Critical Discourse Analysis was the main method of analysis.

The first limitation is the translated discourse. The discourse, including the transcription of interviews, informal conversations, and my notes, was translated into English. It is not that all the interviews were done in the mother tongue of the interviewees, or my own mother tongue; they were all translated in every single stage of the research. Initially the research questions were designed through the English language discourse, then the questions were appropriated and again translated according to the ethnographic observations and each interviewee, and their answers. No doubts the thoughts were materialised in Turkish but expressed sometimes in a limited English. Finally, the discourse was documented and transcribed again through a translated mode of English.
Now, it is evident that dominance, discrimination, power and control may have been misinterpreted, misunderstood, or mistranslated. To validate and assess the credibility of this aspect, one needs to fully live the language to be able to decode both its opaque and transparent structural and power relations. Therefore, it can be argued that relying solely on Critical Discourse Analysis for understanding a translated discourse, despite my familiarity with both the verbal and metaphorical language of the city, can be misleading and perilous.

The second limitation is the poetic discourse of Istanbul. This issue, in my personal view, lies in the poetic and hybrid characteristics of Middle Eastern languages and discourses. Similar to my mother tongue, Persian, the Turkish language is highly influenced by strong poetic and emotional traditions evident in centuries of literature. Deciphering all the symbols, poetic signs, and clandestine and opaque indications of fear, intimidation, oppression, melancholy and nostalgia, which are commonplace in everyday discourse, does require an exhaustive and profound understanding of the language, local semiology, history, and culture. This level of detailed understanding of the discourse is required only for a Critical Discourse Analysis of the interviews if they were performed in Turkish. Therefore, it is not in the scope of this thesis to conduct this form of thorough investigation, while it has to be noted that these considerations influenced the final findings and discussions.

7.2.2. Insider-Outsider Dichotomy of the Researcher

The last and certainly not the least important critiques of the self as a researcher that was raised through the observations were my positionality and the power relations in me versus us versus them. It is difficult to reduce this to the well debated matter of the insider/outside dichotomy of the researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). “Are you one of them?” was the question asked implicitly and explicitly at the start of any interaction. Even with a curious look in the eyes, my political, religious and ethnic background was being questioned. I, an Iranian-born male, was raised by secular parents of Muslim, Persian and Turkish decent. More importantly, I belonged to the generation that witnessed the transformation of society from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. I witnessed my father and his life journey from being a shepherd of Turkish nomad tribes to later becoming a walnut farmer, then a middle class technocrat in managerial positions in big industries. One may question the relevance of these personal anecdotes to my research regarding the public space, urban movements and digital technologies. In response, I can maintain that the relevance of my own personal background came to the fore through my research and interviews, rather than it being a factor prior to conducting my observations. The following paragraphs explain how the dynamic and fluid history of my personal life and background assisted me in navigating through the insider-outsider dichotomies and the complexities of the phenomenon in question.

The literature on the insider-outside dichotomy in qualitative research is substantial (Breen, 2007), nonetheless its implications do not apply to me and my research. The literature’s arguments are firstly based on the fact that you are either an insider or an outsider and in some cases, both. Subsequently there are recommendations for avoiding bias and misjudgement and gaining more genuine and in-
depth results. However, in Istanbul, being unbiased is not only a matter of dishonesty, it is an impossibility due to the innate political nature of life there, and this is not addressed in the literature.

Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p. 60) suggest that to challenge simplistic and reductionist results from the dichotomy of being an insider or outsider, the researcher can posit herself in “the space between”. They discuss the hyphen in between the insider-outsider dichotomy as the between space that a researcher can occupy to reinforce the understanding of the other and the self. Further investigation of postmodernist approaches to qualitative research is neither in the scope of this section, nor is relevant, yet it may suffice to say that “the space between” is too abstract and divorced from what I experienced in Istanbul. In addition, Asselin (2003) and Dwyer and Buckle (2009) suggest that a researcher may not understand the details of a subculture while being from the culture, making the researcher both the insider and outsider.

Thus, within my research and field research, I had to occupy a certain position depending on each socio-political context that I happened to be in. Despite the fact that this approach assisted me to navigate through the interviews and the observations, my positionality and possible bias can still be considered as a constraint in discussions as well as a methodological limitation, affecting both data collection and also critical analysis of the interviews.

7.3. Conclusion

The above discussion has provided a critique of universal theories and knowledge, depicting the lack of a contextualised and situated understanding of other and different cities within urban studies and practices. Although the cities are increasingly moving towards a homogenised image of a global city driven by market and neo-liberal urban policies, they still, however, contain a different urban reality. As Yiftachel argues, “despite major forces of globalization, the urban environment – and hence the practices and possibilities of planning – has remained vastly different in the diverse regions of the world” (2006, p. 213). This discussion presented and analysed the methodological shortcomings that arise from the difference between each specific city, the peculiar and hyper-heterogeneous geographies and also the linguistic complexities.

The first subchapter argues that urban theory and knowledge is blinding firstly because it is incapable of unveiling all the aspects of complex urban phenomena. Secondly, it argues that urban knowledge only understands and communicates what is understandable and communicable. The second subchapter specifically focused on the methodological collapse of the research. This subchapter argues that some contextual differences between the researched and the researcher can go beyond what is often called methodological limitations. Furthermore, this subchapter unveils some specific methodological issues such as linguistic misinterpretations, and the role of the insider-outsider dichotomy on defining the positionality of the researcher within the power relations of the research. These aspects had a noteworthy impact on the Critical Discourse Analysis of the interviews and how the Gezi Park Movement as an urban phenomenon has been interpreted. Lastly, this chapter depicted that reliance on any of the mainstream methods in isolation could lead to the implosion and collapse of research.
8.0. Introduction

This chapter specifically focuses on the findings of the fieldwork and includes analysis of the formal interviews, informal conversations and interpretations of Istanbul’s urban reality based on my personal observations. This chapter’s structure is based on the same theoretical framework as Lefebvre’s urban analysis. The first subchapter explores the process of production of public space through three conceptual moments: perceived (public) space, conceived (public) space, and lived (public) space. The first two moments are a reflection of daily urban life in Istanbul and how the abstract space of states has aimed to dominate and homogenise it. The lived experience of Istanbul’s urban public spaces is the third moment and is mainly about the experience of the Gezi Park Movement through the lens of the interviewees.

The concept of the right to the city, which was discussed extensively in Chapter 4, is central to this thesis. The second subchapter provides a report on the findings of the interviews and informal conversations I had with different participants, regarding how this concept is perceived within the context of Istanbul, and how difference and the production of a (public) differential space has emerged as a way to claim the right to the city and the process of urbanisation. The third subchapter revolves around the use of digital technologies and pursues two objectives. The first objective is to depict the impact of digital technologies, specifically digital social networks and Twitter, on the urban processes mentioned before as perceived by the interviewees. Secondly, the aim is to demonstrate how the conception of an urban movement through an analysis of digital social networks and the digital geography of resistance reinforces or hinders our understanding of public space and urban reality.
8.1. The Urban Process — Part A: Production of (Public) Space

From the outset of this study, and at the beginning of my research, the thesis considered the Gezi Park Movement to be a process with deep roots in the history of the city, rather than an event, a political protest or riot, or a contemporary social phenomenon limited to its time and place. This consideration specifically locates the movement within the urban realm and hence can be studied as an urban phenomenon. It was urban specifically due to its roots in urban processes such as gentrification and commodification of spaces that occurred in and around Gezi Park and Beyoğlu area for decades. Most of the literature on urban movements, including the literature on the Gezi Park Movement, is largely concerned with the space of resistance as an emotional, reactionary and very temporal event — in Lefebvrian terms as the moment of lived space — which directly correlates with the concept of the right to the city (Eryılmaz, 2016; Karasulu, 2014; Kuymulu, 2013). However, the Gezi Park Movement was not just a temporal event, it had roots in other moments of the production of space and the urbanisation of Istanbul so much so that the meaning of such moments is vital in advancing our understanding of the movement and the city.

8.1.1. Spatial Practices: Rethinking the Public-Private Dichotomy

Firstly, the notion of a public-private dichotomy, its perception and the relevance to urban transformation as the initial concern of this thesis, is questioned. This section argues how an analysis of the association between daily routines and urban patterns is centred on the understanding of a public-private dichotomy, or it is assumed so. In addition, it is shown how the concept of mahalle (neighbourhood) in Istanbul — as the in-between space of public-private dichotomy — is key to understanding spatial practice and the (lack of) dominance of a public-private dichotomy over urban life in Istanbul, questioning the relevance of continental theories and the universal knowledge of public space.

One of the initial and most fascinating factors that emerged in the early phases of analysis was that, in the opinions of the interviewees, it may be possible to draw a line between private and public life, yet the responding spaces to these concepts cannot be easily labelled in this specific context. In Lefebvrian thought, public space (even in its most political form) is inseparable from the gathering, leisure and religious spaces, as he saw them in relation to each other and thought of the social space as a social product. This reflection on the complexity and interrelationship of these spaces was noted in the interviews as well. The other issue, which was also raised in Chapter 7, was the linguistic confusion about the word public. This is evident in the responses below:

"I think private life is more about your family. Like you close the door, your house door, and it is private. But after that, everything is public." (Participant no.7)

"The border between public and private is really tricky in Turkey, like it is being collective and individual, it is also about that, I mean, like people are like in western culture, you know, you are more individually go to the cafe, drink your coffee, and there are many people doing that, but here it is just started I think, with Starbucks or something, so I don't think that, I mean everybody is in groups, so the first thing from a
very superficial analyse, I can say that people are more in groups, behaving in groups, that is why the characteristics is changing also. But, I mean there is no privacy much, so everybody is into everybody business, you know it is...but this is unseen culture, I mean I am talking about my of course my subjective point of view.” (Participant no.6)

I assume that the private space as mentioned in the above accounts has a clear definition, or rather there is less confusion as it is mostly confined to the space of family and intimacy, similar to a traditional western context. Yet, considering these two statements, that beyond the walls of dwellings, “everything is public” and “everybody is in groups”, it can be assumed that the public space has a far more complex and possibly ambiguous definitions, compared to the western context that has concrete and legal definitions of public. The second response also addresses the issues of individual and collective cultures. This addresses the dominating collective culture visible in the city and the pervasive and perceived publicness of everything and everywhere beyond the closed doors of dwellings. In addition, conflating ideas of social, public and leisure spaces due to translation and linguistic obstacles and contextual differences urge us to rethink or doubt the public-private dichotomy. It is possible to argue that within this specific context, publicness is a fluid moment within the urban sphere of the city, and contrary to many other places, it is not bound to legal or social definitions and norms.

Through my ethnographic observations and informal conversations with my interviewees, it became clear that even spaces that are mainly used for leisure, including cafes and parks, are highly controlled, contested, and politicised as any other symbolic political space. Many groups, with clear ethnic, religious or socio-political affiliation, may contest each other’s dominance over a certain area, park, street corner or even a café. A simple coffee table outside a modest coffee house is the locus of extensive political debates, resonating with the bourgeois public sphere of Habermas (1989). Istanbul’s coffee tables transcend the rational communicative theories of Habermas; rather they sometimes lean towards the opposite direction as antagonism appears as the core dimension of coffee table debates. The outside coffee tables do not solely resemble theoretical and abstract concepts of the public sphere, on the other hand, they are unique and distinctive in themselves as they mirror and project the contextualised, complex and sometimes confusing spatial practices of Istanbul’s urban society.

The impact of coffee tables within the public and political life of the city came to the forefront of the debate when the ruling government of Beyoğlu in 2011 banned outdoor tables in cafés, coffee houses, and restaurants, and demolished any fixed desks or wooden tables on the side streets (Arslanli et al., 2011; Dinçer, 2011). Some of the informal conversations I had in Istanbul addressed the fact that much earlier than the Gezi Park Movement even began, the issue of control of public-social space dominated the public realm as also scholars like Drinkwater and Platt (2016, p. 169) argue, “so-called table operations sparked protests and discussions about urban public realm in Beyoğlu and its management”. The municipality maintained that the reason for the crackdown was the citizens’ complaints about the blocked streets; however, people understood the move as an act of
oppression of public space, urban daily life, and the traditional spatial practices of society. Participant no.2 discussed this as follows:

“… but we wanted to claim the streets, because everybody was saying this city belong to us too and we were feeling exiled because, it’s like, ummm, because the new shopping malls every day and the streets’ life is being killed slowly and they banned the tables in Istiklal street to put the tables outside and it crippled the night life because people want to smoke outside.” (Participant no.2)

Apart from the peculiarities of the city and how mundane urban objects became the symbol of political contestation, my first line of inquiry was about the definition of public space and the relationship between daily routines and urban public spaces. The questions regarding this matter were posed in various ways, depending on previous questions and the positionality of the interviewee, some directly asking whether the public of Istanbul can be distinctively defined, some questioning the boundary between private space and public space, and some investigating the reality of the public spaces of Istanbul. Here are some of the answers:

What is the line between the public life and private life in Turkish context?

“It is thin, it is a very thin line and because as I said before people like to meddle and some questions they can ask it is considered to be rude in other cultures …” (Participant no.2)

The first dialogue is with participant no. 2, who, before the interview, had explicitly referred to the place of the interview – a shopping mall in the business district of Istanbul – as “safe and western”. Through our informal conversations, I could gather that the interviewee admires the individualism of the west and finds the collective culture of Istanbul somewhat problematic and agitating. According to my personal experience, this is a common point of view between many middle class Middle-Eastern citizens, yet, it is exactly my personal interpretation and positionality that make the Critical Discourse Analysis of the interviews and understanding of public space complicated and exhaustive, as I may diverge from criticality and lean towards subjective bias, an issue that is discussed in the previous chapter.

Nevertheless, through our informal conversations, I understood the interviewee inhabits an area that strongly manifests the state-led neo-liberalism of Turkey and the emerging modern lifestyle of Istanbul. The area is in the northern European part of the city called Levent, accommodating most of multi-national corporate towers, Kanyon shopping mall and high-end high-rise gated residential complexes. Being there had a role and an influence in the interview and the discourse. Therefore, the question of public and private dichotomy is also understood within that inhabited context, as the context of the interviewee’s habitat – as a process – is an outcome of the negotiation between a collective life, a desire for western individualism and a significant push towards market oriented developments by an ideological state. Therefore, the notion of public can be understood on par with the state, which has an increasing tendency towards a nostalgic image of the Ottoman Empire, and traditional values, combined with a neoliberal market, hence the use of the verb "to meddle".

10 Bold words are the interviewees’ emphasis on some words or concepts.
The translation of *meddling* in both Turkish and Farsi is *müdahale etmek* and *dehalat*. Both words have the same root in Arabic and unsurprisingly, they both indicate a type of *forceful* intervention. Yet, since the interview was conducted in English, I am not sure whether the interviewee intentionally used the term *meddling* to refer to the power structures and possibly forceful intervention of the state in people’s everyday life. Another limitation of the interviews was that I did not know whether the words are translated simultaneously between languages, or interviewees used them with specific socio-political intentions in mind, considering that both Turkish and Persian words, mostly, have obscured political, cultural or poetic undertones.

Following the discussion of perceived public space, the conversations focused on the defining forces of these spaces, how these elements are perceived, and how they are transforming the city of Istanbul. These discussions promptly brought the matter of *scale* and its politics to the forefront. As discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis, Lefebvre (2003) proposes different layers and dimensions for the analysis of urban phenomena. The following narratives from the interviews address the importance of these layers and dimensions, and how the perceived space of people has different relationships with the global, urban, and local layers of the city.

*What are the main factors in forming these public spaces?*

“...the economic barriers plus the cultural backgrounds. Because as I said like Istanbul, like there is the cultural background thing is still going on and even if it is not very visible in the global Istanbul today, you can go to the neighbourhoods scale, it is very strong... with that cultural background it has the history too together like all the wars and civil wars and everything and the lifestyle and like religiously we are not talking about just one religion here, we are talking about hundreds of ways of practicing that religion, like different cults and different understanding from west to the east, is a very melting pot in the city...” (Participant no. 3)

The answer unmistakably posits that there is a clear distinction between the neighbourhood (local), the urban and global Istanbul. During the early stages of research, it emerged that *mahalle* (neighbourhood) is a vital concept in understanding the city and its people. The concept penetrates all aspects of life, including the definition of the public-private dichotomy. Through my own observations and formal interviews, it was understood that a mahalle is not just an abstract zone or master-planned neighbourhood, similar to what is envisaged by Perry Perry (1998), Duany and Plater-Zyberk (1994), and E. Howard and Osborn (1965). Mahalle is a home turf; it is a spatial perception with complex social and political relations at play. Also, I noticed that any attempt to decode the social space of Istanbul, without considering the context of each single mahalle, would be impossible – a point that is addressed in many scholarly works (Mills, 2007; Seni, 2006). This quote from participant no. 3 accentuates the point further:

“I think this the most important first thing and ee one [...] influence of this is also the idea of community because you see the concept of mahalle. For example, mahalle literally means neighbourhood, but for us it also resembles something more deeply social is eee the community within the society and this community is really the essence of the city in Istanbul, it also was parallel to the fact it is fragmented so
An issue that was raised in the interviews and observed during the period I spent in Istanbul was the relationship between the neighbourhoods, either in the form of antagonism or coexistence. The debates over the fragmentation of the city in general, and the unique characteristics of a neighbourhood in Istanbul in particular, are becoming a commonplace topic in scholarly works regarding the urban reality of the city. However, what was most fascinating was the role of the edges of these mahalle(s) in defining the public space and how any two mahalle(s) meet, contest and coexist with each other. The initial informal conversations indicated a critical yet vague form of antagonism between “us” and “them”, reflecting on different neighbourhoods with different socio-political characteristics and identities. What the interviews demonstrate is how age, socio-economic class, and occupation define the mahalle, while being defined by it at the same time. This dialectic relation evolves into more complicated non-binary and non-linear phenomenon when we add religion, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, and other distinctive factors into the equation.

Lastly, one of the interviewees addressed the very fundamental complexity of the definition of public space and how it is perceived in Istanbul. The interviewee’s argument referred to the difficulty of the understanding of public space in specific contexts and what rights citizens have to that space. This refers to the contextualised meaning of public space and also the legal framework that people live, work and socialise within, challenging the dominance of universal theories in defining the urban knowledge and conception of urban space. The legal-governance framework of Turkey, despite arguments that it is a secular democratic system, is highly influenced by both religious and traditional thinking, and even has further diverged from western legal systems in recent years, affecting the notion of public space directly. This issue is not discussed nor questioned in mainstream urban and public space theory. Therefore, the literal translation of not only words, but also spatial concepts, into a universally accepted discourse that aims to conceive the notion of public space within Middle Eastern cities including Istanbul, is indeed a challenging attempt, and in fact, may be futile as it negates the local particulates of the place, such as the concept of mahalle, or how it is perceived according to the religious beliefs of people. Consequently, a new approach and discourse, which is based on differential characteristics of Istanbul that reflect its lived experiences, may require development. These issues were touched on by participant no. 8:

“... So in my opinion, in my mere opinion, ahh in Turkey, or maybe they, some of the countries around Turkey, in Turkey people are in the purgatory of understanding the public space, in modern terms, I mean.” (Participant no. 8)

8.1.2. Representation of Space: Rethinking the Abstract Space

As discussed in the Introduction and Theoretical Framework Chapters, the information fabric, the conceived space of the planner and the designer, and the abstract space of the state, are all part of an interconnected dialectic process of the production of space. Conceived space strongly amplifies the concept of the representation of space, “a semiotic abstraction that informs both how ordinary
people negotiate space (the mental maps studied by geographers) and the space” of the state, visualising the space through semiotic systems and numerical equations (Gottdiener, 1993, p. 131; Prigge, 2008). The interviews depicted that the power of the state, through its abstraction and domination of space, is increasing, specifically since the rise of the AK Party in the early 2000s. There is also a greater tendency towards regulating and homogenising the everyday urban life of the people. The theoretical dynamics of this process has been discussed in previous chapters, as the state aims to homogenise and colonise the entirety of the city and eliminate the difference.

Regarding the state’s ideology and its impact on the urban fabric, Lefebvre (1991, p. 42) argues, “Representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology [original emphasis].” Instead of pointing towards the aesthetics, or the design of the Gezi Park Development Project, most of the participants addressed the broader ideology and political motives that were driving such projects.

“I look around, like huge transformation in the city and they call it "urbanisation" … And it is a huge income for the administration… So this is like a big, I don’t know, like looting of the city in my opinion because they do not care about if the projects fits to the architectural characteristic of the city or neighbourhood they just put a huge skyscraper over very nice lovely two-storey houses around just for profit.” (Participant no.2)

The interviewee then goes even further and explicitly referred to the urban policies of the government, without explicitly mentioning their name:

“you can, and also you understand immediately and for example now there is this huge real estate is blooming in Istanbul, you see all the constructions and etc. and now the residential areas are divided and these suburbs are divided as well. So they have new luxurious type of homes. But you immediately, spot a mosque inside the sites, which tells you a lot about the target audience [of] that special residential project.” (Participant no. 2)

These quotes summarise the sentiment towards the process of “urbanisation” as a whole. It was also clear that the participant was aware of the fact that it is so-called “urbanisation,” accompanied by corruption and systemic mismanagement. This argument addresses how the new representation of space disregards the old conceived space of the designer; as the old silhouette of the city is destroyed by the new one. It also reaffirms the theoretical discussions presented in previous chapters regarding the role of the state in segregating and fragmenting the city. Many of my informal conversations included statements about “a mosque inside the sites”, with a reference to the state and its aim for the homogenisation of Istanbul by dislocating the population through housing projects. Although, these processes were historical, and dispersed around the city, yet they were more accentuated in public debates during and after the Gezi Park Movement, challenging the role of the state and its control over urban spaces.

In response to an inquiry regarding the role of the state in the development of Gezi Park and its objectives, participant no. 12 declared that:
“[The head of the state] is personally interested in Istanbul urban development because Istanbul is very important for all Turkey. Huge percentage of the overall population and is living in Istanbul [someone in background mentions: One quarter] One quarter, and the industry is here, and having Istanbul means having the country. He is aware of that and he has good PR people, that’s why he is very involved in Istanbul.” (Participant no.12)

All the above statements clarified and reaffirmed how and why the state and local government were interested, and in fact were very persistent, in pursuing the development of Gezi Park, not merely as a highly contested, symbolic and political place, but as part of the wider urban development projects that they were advancing at the time. The Gezi Park Movement resisted the state and the market’s desire and forces to eliminate one of the last public and heterogeneous spaces of the city. However, the resistance to the urban ideology of the state wasn’t limited to the movement. Participant no.8 reflected on the counter power — the emergence of differential spaces, underground processes and the negation of a formalised abstraction:

“[This] is connected to municipality but when we try to make something public some public art, some public (?), and some public installation, we you know we need some sharp strict permits so we are really suffering to help. So on that part, the rising generation the young generation is you know, are not standing against us they are just making it anonymous they’re making spontaneous. Yeah make it happen.” [Emphasis added] (Participant no. 8)

Two critical points are highlighted above: the emergence of anonymity and spontaneity in the context of the production of space. It was vividly evident that there were an abundance of anonymous and spontaneous moments within the urban life of Istanbul, as part of urban daily life or spatial practice, and the Gezi Park Movement transformed these spatial practices into a force that resisted the abstraction of space. Through my informal conversations, I was introduced to a growing underground realm of politics, arts, music, and life — something that was labelled as illegal, yet, it was being celebrated by the rising generation as a resistance to the dominant ideology of the state’s power.

Considering the situated meaning of the above notions and the context of the interviews, I suspect the conflict between people and the state’s spatial ideology is being addressed through the independent and spontaneous production of differential spaces, accentuating both the temporality and the differential power relations of the representational spaces of resistance.

8.1.3. Representational Space; Gezi Park and the Lived Space of Istanbul

According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 42), representational space is highly dynamic, fluid and alive, and he correlates these spaces to dwellings, houses, churches, graveyards, and other places that have significant symbolic meaning in daily life. In previous sections, one of the most problematic aspects of urban scientific knowledge and an understanding of urban phenomena is either negligence or the belittling of the daily urban experience as the daily life and its urbanity is not “calculable”, nor structurally principled (Eckardt & Wildner, 2008, p. 210).

As has been mentioned above, normative dichotomies such as public and private, centre and periphery, western and eastern and many other binaries, are problematic, insufficient, and sometimes irrelevant when applied to Istanbul. In my opinion, concepts and abstract structures of urban studies
and architecture – such as the public-private dichotomy or land-use zoning mechanisms – are divorced signs and symbols that are not connected anymore to what they claim to represent. This alienation of those concepts from the reality of urban life in Istanbul is supported by my ethnographic observations of public places, informal conversations, interviews, and by scholars like Eckardt and Wildner (2008). This disconnection and the alienation of formal urban practice, concepts, and theories bring the analysis of lived experience to attention. Accordingly, Ronneberger (2008, p. 135) argues that in contrast to the “orthodox Marxist agenda,” Lefebvre transcended the structural analysis of economy and “considered the everyday to be the decisive category linking the economy to individual life experiences.”

It would be ironic to approach the everyday lived experiences of Istanbul through the lens of concrete theories and calculable measurements to analyse phenomena that are full of passion, actions, and lived situations. Thus, here I rely on informal conversations, and my understanding of Critical Discourse Analysis of the interviewee’s accounts. Although this Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on detailed aspects of urban life related to the Gezi Park Movement, it also takes into account that the lived urban life of Istanbul is the moment that the superstructures, macro-politics, abstract power of the state, differential spaces and the aforementioned binaries are meeting each other, colliding, compromising, materialising, and being lived within the limits of urban space and the city.

**The Lived Experience in Istanbul**

What attracts many to Istanbul is not the extraordinary ornaments of Hagia Sophia or the underground ancient city of the Greeks and Romans; it is just as much the everyday life of the city itself. The life of Istanbul — the lived experience of the city, is the heart of this attraction. This is what many crave; with a short stroll in Istanbul’s mahalle(s), one can live the fear, the melancholy, the refined artefacts, and the penetrating smell of coffee. How can this space be analysed? Lefebvre (1991, p. 32) maintains that “the very notion of social space resists analysis because of its novelty and because of the real and formal that it connotes.”

“Subjectivity is not to be excluded, but to be reflected,” Eckardt and Wildner (2008, p. 211) maintain, reflecting on urban ethnography and how the researcher as an active agent can understand and subsequently unfold some of the aspects of urban lived experiences. In my subjective experience, I utilised ethnographic observations and my own lived experience of Istanbul during my stay in the city. I explored the city one year after the Gezi Park Movement, starting with being in Gezi Park at dawn of November 12, 2014, on the first day of my field research and further searching the traces of the movement by walking, seeing, and documenting some of the leftovers of the resistance in the colourful cracks of the city.

The most notable aspect of my observations, informed by my personal experience of living and growing up in a Middle Eastern city, is the constant negotiation between urban life, power – often the state’s power – and space, something that Yacobi and Shechter (2005) specifically discussed in their analysis of Middle Eastern urbanism. To clarify this point, I need to refer to a specific Lefebvrian analysis of everydayness. Through a critical and comprehensive analysis of *modernity*, Lefebvre
(1995) argues that modern everydayness is reproduced through a threefold process. The initial step is the socialisation of society by an overwhelming expansion of communication and social networks; secondly, it is through particularisation, which is a result of extreme individualisation, and lastly, through the production of a society of spectacle and extreme consumerism. The result is pervasive passivity and “non-participation” (Ronneberger, 2008, p. 136).

**The Process of the Gezi Park Movement**

As has been argued in Subchapter 6.2., the Gezi Park Movement was a process and a social space, produced through a social process, in reaction to a systematic, ideological and abstract power that attempts to colonise all moments and spaces of urban life. To explore the hypothesis of Lefebvre in regards to the process of abstraction and homogenisation, and the emergence of resistance and differential space, the participants were asked to elaborate on the reasons behind the movement and what triggered them to participate. The conversations illuminated many interesting aspects of the movement, the everydayness of Istanbul, and also the lived space of society:

“… and we went there and there was this show that this park is used, we went there and made a picnic, and it is a whole long process, it is not just that day, so there were again all the arguments like it is not safe, it is not used, there were arguments, and people were trying to change that, it is just perception of the Gezi park it is not itself, and so it is a long process but it exploded in the [Movement]…” (Participant no. 7)

This argument about the use of the park and the space was reoccurring in my interviews and in informal conversations with the locals. Here, Critical Discourse Analysis depicts the contradictions of this argument presented by officials – the state – and how these contradictions were deciphered and resisted by urban everydayness. The formal and official argument was that the park is not used because it is used only by the homeless and sex workers (Lelandais, 2016). It appears that either the homeless or sex workers are invisible, non-existing and abstract entities, or the official meaning of use differs from what it is known to be by the public. According to my understanding of the local context, it was both. Lack of recognition of sex workers and the homelessness, and also the use of the word used as an empty signifier, reflecting on the fact that the officials maintained that the place does not make any financial profit and hence it is not used. The formal argument of the officials addresses a fundamental issue that is unpacked by Lefebvre (1991b, 1996, 2003) in most of his work, and that is the difference between the use value of the space and the exchange value. Gezi Park was not appropriated for exchange, it was not commodified, and it was an eyesore for the spectacle of consumption in which the state was aiming for, in their project of homogenisation and domination: for the state, the space must be used as a place of commodification, shopping and entertainment.

“I think it is about, there are three elements why Gezi Park is so visible in that Gezi protest, first it is in the middle of the city, and it is “in” the centre of the city. And so symbolic, you know, secondly I think it is about Green space… Green is you don’t need any awareness or any intellectuality for defending green space, like because everybody needs some green, it doesn’t matter if you are educated or not, I mean, so everybody, gets it. And it is in the centre.” (Participant no.12)
This account not only provides us with some of the reasons why Gezi Park was the epicentre of the Gezi Park Movement, it also draws our attention towards key and defining concepts of the production of space — everydayness and centrality. The participant starts with centrality and the symbolic meaning of the space, then moves on to the functional importance of the space and lastly its importance for urban lived experiences. The everydayness of the place, the symbolic and vital role of the space that was imposed by its historical, spatial and cultural centrality, all transformed Gezi Park into a representational space.

The Occupation

My interviews and conversations included considerations of two types of resistance: resistance against passivity, and against abstraction or more specifically the spatial ideology of the state — the abstract space: the developments, the shopping mall and cycles of urban regeneration. The following sections briefly describe these emotional moments of resistance experienced during the movement, reflecting on translation, interpretation, and the documentation of the lived space of Gezi Park. One of the key and critical concepts that Lefebvre (1991a, 2014a) brought to the forefront of his Critique of Everyday Life and to his other works on modernity (Lefebvre, 1995), was the problem of passivity.

Regarding Gezi consequences, how do you think it affected the people's perception of their own cities and public spaces?

“I am just gonna give an example, this very old lady in Edirne [a city in the northwest of Turkey], she is like eighty years old, they were gonna get the park away, and she came and she put the chair and she said you know like 5 month after [Gezi movement]. . . . just in Edirne, and this is a very old lady maybe she doesn't know anything about public space or something but she is saying this is my park, and I spend my time here and I don’t want it to become a gas station, and this becomes the news, because of it is a park, there are many people you can find [who are concerned about it], but [when] Gezi became the centre issue for a while, it is like, the Gezi thinking, even back then prime minister, in the TV, to me, the first time, in my life, prime minister is talking to me, I mean he is talking to me, for the first time, because of Gezi Park, and it is not because of, I mean because it is our voice [that is] visible in a way they didn’t accept it.” (Participant no.6)

The above story narrated by the participant indicates a turning point, the Gezi thinking, and becoming of a continuous resistance to passivity and the belief of not being heard or valued in any form or shape. This passivity, or non-participation, was an aspect of the discourse around the demography and social dimensions of the movements. The state, urban planning system, media and authorities alongside the transformation of society towards modernity inflicted that state of passivity and non-participation as the urban inhabitants had to accept the spatial plans imposed by the state, whether it was a shopping mall in the case of Gezi Park or a gas station in the case of the story mentioned above. As a result of the Gezi Park occupation, people found a strong desire to participate and to resist the transformation of Istanbul and the very state’s ideology that is fashioning the city into another world of commodities and consumption. According to the participants and my informal conversations with people in Istanbul, everyone could find passivity or non-participation in the urban
process of Istanbul’s transformation, yet they did not know how to react. This participant elaborates on this further:

“It was amazing, that experience was amazing, people knew that some things were wrong, but they didn’t know how to react and specially the, the younger generations, they were not, they are not very involved in politics, Gezi movement showed them a way, to get involved and at the time in the Gezi Park, it was like a commune, it was a utopia … it was a micro cosmos of utopia.” (Participant no. 12)

The combination of the urge to do something — to “get involved” — and witnessing the implicit and explicit violence of the state were discussed as the main reasons for participation in the Gezi Park Movement. This narrative was not addressed in an emotional or nostalgic manner to describe the detailed accounts of the assaults and clashes between the police and protesters. On the contrary, most of the narratives ruminated on a profound spatial issue: the absence of the police and the emergence of safety. In a modern western context, even in the most antagonistic spatial conflicts between the police and the protesters, the police have some relational responsibility to safeguard the citizens and their right to expression and in most cases to protest. Within the context of Gezi Park however, the police symbolically represented the state’s authority over the space, alongside the neoliberal logic of the shopping mall, the abstract space, and its violent imposition of spatial and social order. Therefore, the participants have argued that when police were removed from the scene, real safety emerged:

“Yeah it felt exactly opposite. But it was totally different, the opposite, because police means violence.” (Participant no.9)

And,

“… but I […] but even though it was mad, with police and people and everything, and gas around and also my house is just there, so I was always under the gas thing, but I really felt safe, in the public spaces for the first time in Istanbul. It was really safe, feeling very safe.” (Participant no.9)

These accounts summarise the argument briefly, and underline what Lefebvre (1991, p. 33) maintains: “all power must have its accomplices — and its police” as a “frontal (and hence brutal) projection of power relations”. Nine out of twelve participants and many others whom I had informal conversations with noted that police brutality and the damage to the dignity and body of others was one of the reasons for protesting, as it is described in the following statements:

“I mean after Gezi, even though it was cleared out with a very brutal police crackdown, I had my hopes, and I was very proud to be participating” (Participant no.1)

“I’ve been in high school as an environmentalist but I wouldn’t like immediately identify myself politically as an environmentalist, it is an issue that I care about, which is not my trigger issue, my trigger issue was police brutality.” (Participant no.11)

8.1.4. Key Findings

The above subchapter provided an analysis of the movement and its different moments from the participants’ point of view, in addition to my own ethnographic observations and contextual
understanding. One of the key aspects discussed in the interviews and in this subchapter was about how cultural and historical perceptions of the city and its urban life has impacted the production of space, the meaning of public space and the understanding of the movement. For instance, the concept of mahalle (neighbourhood) penetrates all aspects of life, including the definition of the public-private dichotomy. Furthermore, the collective nature of life, outside the borders of private dwellings of Istanbul, depicts a different image of public space than of a western notion as a gathering place of rational individuals. The “sharp distinction between what is his own (idiom) and what is communal (koinon)” as a key factor of Arendt’s (1998, p. 22) public realm, is not applicable to the context of contemporary Istanbul – and possibly to many other cosmopolitan cities of the Middle East – since the personal is not separable from the communal. The roots of this interconnectedness in the context of Istanbul might be in religious beliefs, historical immigrations, urban transformations and strong senses of belonging to ethnic neighbourhoods.

The everydayness of urban life and the lived space, within the specific context of Middle Eastern cities, cannot be easily nor fully homogenised and individualised, similar to other cosmopolitan cities that have layers of conflicting histories and uses. Spirituality, religion, deep historical traditions, and historical collectivism all play a part. Centrality and the symbolic meaning of space have played key roles in the emergence of antagonistic representational spaces and shifting the meaning of public space. Passivity and resistance against non-participation were key drivers of the movement and also how public life is perceived. Police brutality and control of public space became a symbolic and eventual trigger of the movement and a reason for participants to rise to defend their right to the public space. However, the movement had roots in the implicit violence of state power, which through design and urban development has attempted to change the face and the reality of Istanbul for a long time. Building on these aspects, the following subchapter will investigate the concept of the right to the city and how it is understood and lived by the interviewees and also within the lived spaces of Istanbul.

### 8.2. The Urban Process — Part B: The Right to the City

The right to the city has a strong and direct relationship to the matter of difference and the right to difference. It is important to define the difference first, before discussing the right to difference. Abstract space is a “lethal one which destroys the historical conditions that gave rise to it, its own (internal) differences, and any such differences that show signs of developing, in order to impose an abstract homogeneity” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 372). Here, Lefebvre’s framing and definition of difference is essential to this analysis. In this discourse, we face two types of difference and subsequently two types of homogenisation and abstraction of difference:

**Minimal (induced) Difference:** Lefebvre (1996, p. 372) defines the induced difference as follows: “An induced difference remains within a set or system generated according to a particular law.” Minimal or induced differences are the ones that are reduced and accepted within a society.
Maximal (produced) Difference: Lefebvre (1996, p. 372) maintains that “a produced difference presupposes the shattering of a system; it is born of an explosion; it emerged from the chasm opened up when a closed universe ruptures.” Maximal or produced differences are the result of brutality and violence, both implicitly and explicitly, and are the attempts of abstract space to homogenise.

Maximal differences trigger resistance, and most importantly, a demand for the recognition of the right to difference. The right to difference is not a demand for the integration of difference into the system; on the contrary, it is a demand for the production of a space that resists the homogenising forces of abstract space and accentuates existing peculiarities and differences.

8.2.1. The Right to Istanbul
The history of the right to the city within the context of Istanbul is integral to the history of the city itself and its transformations. The history of the right to Istanbul and its associated movements is extensive and goes back to early transformations of Istanbul in the early twentieth century (Akpinar, 2003; Bilsel, 2007, 2011). Parts of this history were addressed in the last chapter, reflecting on the city’s transformation after reforms in 1937.

Social, political, and cultural (including religious and ethnic) exclusions in Istanbul as an explicit urban phenomenon, instigated through urban means, date back to the 1930s and the establishment of urban regeneration projects, as has been discussed in previous chapters. Urban exclusion in Istanbul is mostly seen as a consequence of urban regeneration, which in most cases has signified the process of urban gentrification (Gunay, 2012). These gentrification projects mostly caused displacement and the oppression of local communities, creating dissent and leading to social, cultural, and economic exclusion from the city. Subsequently, and as a result of market oriented urban policies, a series of urban and community resistance movements emerged (Ekmekci, 2014; Enlil, 2011; Erkip, 2000; Islam, 2002; Robins & Aksoy, 1996).

8.2.2. The Right to a Differential Istanbul
This section specifically revolves around the right to the city and also the right to difference within the context of Istanbul. Through an analysis of interviews and ethnographic observations, this section unpacks how the demand for a different Istanbul was materialised in the Gezi Park Movement. Through the following accounts, I explain how the interviewees defined difference, and why the right to difference was a central point within the Gezi Park resistance as an urban movement. One of the initial descriptions discussed by many in the field research was the collision and convergence of differences, the coexistence of different identities, and the acknowledgment that Gezi Park was a space that was produced to accentuate and recognise those differences rather than to integrate, induce, and normalise them:

*the dialogue started, and, that created a huge, … understanding, the sense of understanding each other and many ethnicities, many groups, football supporters…it was like people cheering and shouting and I think
that public space united every one against one common enemy which was the government.” (Participant no.2)

“For instance, I am Kurdish, I was there for the Kurdish people I was there for defending the public space definitely but I don’t want to be there for rights of the people, for instance, some of them were there because they cannot buy alcohol after 10. It not a major issue in my opinion.” (To protect the identity of the participant, the number is omitted)

This account points to some of the key aspects of the difference as a concept, which was discussed earlier. Firstly, it is obvious that there is a difference that is systematically produced, by the state, media, and authorities, and then recognised by the inhabitants, mainly the issue of Kurdishness, as a contradiction to the Turkish identity. The fact that many of the participants, except the only one with Kurdish ancestry, expressed a form of surprise in encountering a big section of the Turkish society (the Kurdish minority, according to interviews and my personal experience – who unsurprisingly do not often identify themselves as Turkish) is indicative of this produced difference. Later, it appeared that Gezi Park as a space of resistance, while accentuating these differences – specifically the differences regarding ethnic differences, also provided a platform for new perceptions, understandings, and possibilities. The Gezi Park Movement produced a differential perception of the city, though Gezi Park was not necessarily a permanent differential space, which accommodates and celebrates the differences in the long term. Rather, the temporality of the space has a critical significance in this analysis, depicting how the Gezi Park Movement temporarily transformed Gezi Park and other public spaces and vice versa.

Many have acknowledged that the Gezi Park Movement, and the space it produced, has accentuated the differences that the state aimed — and is still attempting — to eliminate. One of the interviewees raised an important and critical issue regarding the existence and perpetuation of the power relations between the majority and what is perceived as others or the different:

“Well that was I meant, that was I meant, like when I like being conscious about having different opinions in there, mainly the Kurdish movement was made to feel unwelcomed.” (Participant no.11)

This issue raises many questions regarding the role of difference in urban movements, and how it is perceived and conceived both internally within the movement and externally through the research. The dominant perception of many participants was that the Kurdish minority, a significant example of produced and maximal difference within the context of Istanbul and Turkey, was an important, central, and welcomed element of the movement, affirming the role of the production of differential spaces in bringing new possibilities into urban reality. However, the way this idea was contradicted by participant no.11 shows that the same movement, while it is being acknowledged within the movement, can reproduce a maximal difference.

8.2.3. Key Findings and Possibilities
The possibilities that are produced by the movement are certainly one of the most important matters of interest, both in regards to the main research questions and also in regards to urban studies and
urban design theory. Lefebvre (1996) argues that the right to the city is not just a right to the traditional city; it is a right to a new city produced by its inhabitants and based largely on use value and difference. The above discussion explained what use and difference mean within the context of Istanbul and specifically the Gezi Park Movement, and why the concept of the right to the city was central to the movement.

**The Differential Lived Space of the Gezi Park:**

The interviewees highlighted the Gezi Park Movement and the social dynamics during those ten days of the Park’s occupation as an extraordinary and rather utopian experience. Although, the Park became a temporal laboratory for testing and exploring different ways of organisation and community building, it projected the possibility of a different future for the city too. According to the interviewees, many participants of the movement experienced a safe and communal way of living, which was not envisaged as a possible alternative to individualised and neoliberal logic.

“... the scenarios which authorities scares you with, like basically [when people] occupied the main square of one of the big cities of the world for three [ten] days without [presence of] police or anything, with no authority and no one to make decision … [despite of that] no body was hungry, and everybody was fed, and the food was shared, now it is one of the things, which make urbanity, or a city a city, you need to share the surplus, and another thing is the security. [The park was portrayed as its safest time during the occupation.]”
(Participant no.3)

While the occupation and lived moment of Gezi Park demonstrated that “temporary autonomous zones” (Bey, 2003, p. 93) are possible in a real and material sense, it also transferred and suspended the mainstream meaning of urbanity, the political public space and the notion of difference. What seemed impossible in the minds of many Istanbul inhabitants suddenly appeared to be not only possible, but also practical and palpable, as many groups with contradictory and sometimes conflicting principles came together in one space. Not only did they interact with each other, they also produced a space that at least paved the way to conception of new ways of thinking about public space, urbanity and the city as a whole.

**The Differential Conception of Istanbul**

One of the aspects of the movement that was discussed through the interviews was the emergence of new spaces of resistance. Indeed, these emerging spaces of resistance were in the lived spaces of Istanbul — they could be understood profoundly through what Arendt (1998) discussed as the space of appearance and the political public realm. One of these spaces of resistance and appearance was the Bostan (garden) Forums, discussed by seven of the interviewees:

“For example one the consequences of Gezi it was like this the urban forums, like they appeared in different neighbourhoods that people came together every night, and talked about the [purpose] of the city and so on. Like for their own neighbourhoods...” (Participant no.3)

“In all these forums that there were like people sitting around and they were talking about issues, they were just discussing each other’s ideas…” (Participant no.11)
“I think, but for example in Kadıköy, it is going to be like [...], they made this civil organisation, like TAK, they are making more like public spaces, creating or more Bostans…” (Participant no.7)

“In little parks of Istanbul and also in Turkey, there might be some forums, but I have attended dozen of forums in Istanbul after Gezi resistance, eee people now have the concept, I mean the idea of public, and there being, being together, in the public, they have, they start to think about that, that is very interesting.” (Participant no. 9)

The geo-locations of these Bostan Forums that engaged in the process of protests and were active in the wider resistance movement have been identified and are shown in Figure 7. This figure contains 27 Bostan Forums. As Figure 7 depicts, the concentration, proximity and size of these Bostan Forums differs, possibly depending on each neighbourhood, its demography and availability of space. Within the same discourse of neighbourhoods as the key-defining factor in the movement, the concepts of centrality and periphery play a substantial and critical role. In many studies, the centre is the space of resistance that is occupied by the marginalised community, minorities, and in general, the periphery of the social geography of the city. In most urban movements, the place of uprising or protest is in the central squares and streets; however, in the case of Gezi the scenario was slightly different. Even the binary of centre-periphery was suspended through the process.

Although Gezi Park is the historical, political, and cultural centre of the city, the movement did not take place in, or occupy, only and merely the park and the square. The network of spaces scattered around the city produced and appropriated the spaces of resistance, to reproduce the concepts of centrality and periphery in a different way and hence the centre floated around the city, as required by the inhabitants and their needs. The reason for this was not only the oppression and obsessive control of Gezi Park, but also the roots of the movement, which were spread around the Asian and European sides of the city.

In addition to the Bostan Forums, other spatial practices and representational spaces appeared within the interstices of the city. Ay and Miraftab (2016, p. 555) define these temporal representational spaces as “Invented Spaces of Activism” that are appropriated for “Performative Practices of Citizenship”. Apart from the occupation of Gezi Park, which was called the Taksim Commune, Ay and Miraftab (2016, pp. 564-568) name some other practices and phenomena that occurred during and after the Gezi Park Movement, including “The Resisting Piano”, a piano recital performed in the square as an act of protest and civil disobedience by a German pianist, Davide Martello, “the Standing Man”. He was one of my interviewees and stood still in Taksim Square for six hours to protest the ban on gatherings and resistance. There was also “Table on Earth”, an event that took place a month after the Gezi Park occupation, which was a combination of protesting and the Ramadan ritual of breaking the fast at sunset. The “two pious groups in the Gezi Commune (Anti-capitalist Muslims and Revolutionary Muslims)”, as described by interviewees, occupied the main commercial street of Istanbul, Istiklal Street, which leads to Taksim Square and Gezi Park, and people joined each other to break their fast, while some were there just to show solidarity.
Figure 7 The Public Spaces and Bostan Forums of the Gezi Park Movement of Istanbul Produced by Author via CartoDB (CartoDB. Inc, n.d.) and © OpenStreetMap
The other project to re-appropriate the urban space was the repainting of the famous steps of the Jahangir area by the LGBT rights group during the movement [Figure 8], which was later co-opted by the Istanbul municipality to attract tourists. These representational spaces played a key role in expanding and reaffirming the right of the citizens to their city, yet due to the limited scope of this thesis and the multiplicity and complexity of these phenomena, their in-depth analysis can only be presented in future research.

Figure 8 Emerging spatial practices post the Gezi Park Movement, photographed by author in November 2014. (Zamani Gharaghooshi, 2014)

Figure 7 and the information extracted from the fieldwork and the interviews, are also a differential conception of Istanbul. The information fabric of the Gezi Park Movement and the Bostan Forums – as maps and two-dimensional images like Figure 7 – depicts how resistance and representational space emerge and occupy the urban fabric and the urban reality of the city, to some extent. Although these maps may highlight some understated aspects of the geography of the resistance, at the same time they conceal other aspects of the urban reality, which needs a different way of thinking, understanding and theorising.

8.3. The Gezi Park Movement and the Twitter Effect

During the Gezi Park Movement, the already existing, even if oblique, use of digital technologies and the growing pervasion of social networks constituted fundamental platforms to collect, share and interpret information, generating virtual spaces for encounter, debate, and resistance. These platforms, through continuous engagement in the form of interactions occurring in physical spaces, led to the constitution of an extraordinarily spatiality. This spatiality embodies a core phenomenon of the contemporary transition of urban life: the contradictory and complex evolution of the dialectic between different actors and agencies involved in the conception, construction, and representation of the city as a civic body.
To understand the digital layers of the movement and how these layers intertwined with the layers of the urban fabric, this study conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis by investigating the multidimensional networks of the users in the digital geographies of resistance. The first part of the following analysis investigates the contradictory yet interrelated accounts of the different interviewees about how digital technologies, specifically digital social networks, played a role in the Gezi Park Movement. The second part will specifically analyse the residue or the image that was produced by the digital interactions during the movement, attempting to develop and enhance the understanding of the emerging layer of digital urbanity.

8.3.1. Digital Social Networks and Everyday Urban Life

Digital technologies impacted the urbanity of Istanbul much earlier than the Gezi Park Movement, as many interviewees argued that mobile devices transformed the complex fabric of urban life and public spaces. Reflections on the impact that digital technologies have had on the spatial practices of the city varied according to the interviewee. Some perceived digital social networks as part of the continuum of the urban sphere, while others treated it as a specific phenomenon. For instance, one interviewee argued that the discourse is the same, both in urban public space and in the digital sphere:

“... You know ... either, and people fight over politics since forever, people fight over football since forever, so whatever happening in the public space is actually being carried to the digital space, we don’t know how to communicate democratically as a culture, that is what is missing in the essence of culture ...” (Participant no.2)

Some of the interviewees were more specific in differentiating between the digital and physical public sphere.

“Of course this is never like a substitute for real actual face to face interaction, when I always think… I have done a research about on-line video games and how it changes like social interaction, but I do not think that it alters reality, I think it amplifies reality.” (Participant no.11)

“People became more aware of digital space but they tried to make it you know, relate it or connect it to the public space in a way [that], graffiti [does]. The content was created in digital space but the context was all ... physical.” (Participant no. 8)

The important point addressed above is the fact that the participants were conscious of the context as a connection between the physical and digital public spheres. The comparison with graffiti is an interesting issue, as the creators of digital media content and graffiti are both often anonymous, yet both present themselves in the public sphere to be seen and heard. Of course, graffiti is more political and has a political history, probably due to its anti-private property and anti-authoritarian aspects, while digital social media is not necessarily political or anti-authoritarian or against power structures. However, within the context of the Gezi Park Movement, the digital social networks were acting as virtual and mobile graffiti walls, reflecting on the advancement of the movement and communicating with others and mobilising the resources.
One of the main points revolved around the democratic dimension of physical public space and the digital sphere. Many pointed out that the digital public sphere could be more democratic, since an opposing opinion can be expressed and heard. They argued that since digital social networks are more accessible to strangers, it can be more democratic as it provides a space of appearance for the anonymous inhabitants of the world, while physical urban spaces are more inclined to turn to parochial and exclusive spaces, where power relations are at play, as are the physical limitations of space.

Interviewee no.3, an urban researcher, in response to the impact of digital technologies on the public spaces of Istanbul pointed out a significant and critical aspect of digital technologies, and how their role is understood in the transformation of contemporary cities and urban knowledge, by addressing the issue of scale:

“[I]t’s like a global public space, and just like when a system get too, too big it needs to fragmentise in, in itself. Like that is the thing about global cities for example, of like in the third phase of globality now we said that, we see that it creates its own localities right? And it’s, there is the same thing about the city, it is the big society, the global society and we have the neighbourhoods, and I see the same thing around the digital public space too… and it is what the meaning of public space is and that is what the urban experience is, you know sharing knowledge and sharing work and that is what we are doing with that …”

A discussion on the impact of digital technologies on the public and everyday spaces of Istanbul could be extensive and requires in-depth ethnographic and qualitative research through a long period of lived experience of the city, which was not the intention or in the capacity of this thesis. This thesis has rather aimed to understand the impact of these technologies on the perception of public space in that specific temporal and spatial context. The above account only indicates the deeper influence of digital social networks on the urbanity of Istanbul, regardless of their role in the transformation and production of spaces of resistance, and the Gezi Park Movement. The next section will explicitly focus on the role of Twitter throughout the Gezi Park Movement, and its impact on the representational space of resistance and the perception of political public spaces during the movement.

8.3.2. Production of a Digital Differential Space; Occupation by Twitter

The dominant perception of the digital social networks’ role in the development of the Gezi Park Movement was expressed with a feeling of scepticism, as the last interviewee, who was an academic and researcher in the realm of digital public spheres and Internet content analysis, noted:

“I think I am always a little bit um sceptic about you know giving too much credence on technology when it comes to social change or social movement.” (Participant no. 10)

This opinion was often reflected in most of the interviews. They either saw the general role of digital technologies as that of a secondary tool, complementary to the place and the movement, or even somehow irrelevant. Many argued that the Gezi Park Movement would have happened regardless of Twitter’s impact. At this point in the research, I had to shift the focus of the discussion and the questions towards the more important matters perceived and described by the interviewees. However, some critical aspects of digital social networks and their role in the Gezi Park Movement
were not directly palpable and accessible to many participants. The *effect* of these networks on the movement can be traced to deeper layers of urban reality and its transformation.

The first and most important point, which was raised on multiple occasions, was the importance of digital social networks for *communication* and organisation. Digital technologies have been used as a communication machine. It would be more precise to say that digital social networks, and specifically Twitter, were used to *organise* and *mobilise* people and resources, rather than to create content or express independent opinion regarding the Gezi Park Movement. This may be the reason that digital technologies are perceived as a complementary tool to the Gezi Park Movement, rather than a central space for the political public debate:

> “The internet in that instance, social media, became a ah perfect way for people to communicate with each other and to organise in that case but ah the you know, protesting is not new in Turkey, I mean and protesting in Taksim Square is not new in Turkey either I mean.” (Participant no. 10)

> “It is just helps the resistance, it really helped the resistance. But people learned alot because Turkish media doesn’t give any news about this, there were just, showing the penguin documentary during [giggles] during [the time] Taksim was burning, so people just started to talk and think about media ethics, and started to build a new media for their selves and twitter was very strong platform for that ..” (Participant no.9)

However, Twitter, despite its simple function of curating 140 character statements by its users, was not just a strong platform to help the movement. Digital social networks are not neutral machines, detached from the context in which they function. Twitter has permeated the space of resistance and transformed it in different ways, as it is proven that many political or social campaigns or movements have been superficially redirected or manipulated by digital media or fake information and data. As noted above, the other instance that emphasised the role of digital social networks came from the comparison between the digital public sphere and the state’s media, which attempted to divert the attention through what was called the *Penguins’ Documentary* phenomenon. This refers to a streaming of documentaries about penguins during the time of protests. Thus, penguins wearing gas masks became another symbol of the Gezi Park Movement. Twitter helped to amplify that message by foregrounding the issue of penguins, and other symbols of the Gezi Park Movement, without any centrality or leader to orchestrate the flow of information, something that normally occurs within the formal media and by the editors in chief:

> “it was really incredible to see how something spoken between us could [through twitter] just affect millions of people, you know just one tweet, made so quick and without a leader and without a certain hierarchical system, and somehow, you know it, created a platform for people to [express themselves] ...”

A very important aspect regarding digital social networks that was not discussed often but had critical and vital importance was the non-structural nature of this sphere and the absence of *hierarchy*. Although many claimed that the Gezi Park Movement was a leaderless movement, there was a collective of organisers – mostly the organisers of Taksim Solidarity and Taksim-Gezi Commune – who were leading and mobilising their own groups and resources. These features and dimensions
can lead us to a unique understanding of digital technologies, not as a separable sphere of life, but as a highly integrated mechanism, facilitating a scalar transformation of the public space from local and urban to the digital and global public sphere. This understanding and these aspects of digital technologies are central to the second discussion of this thesis, presented in Chapter 9.

The impact of Twitter on the spatiality and sociality of the Gezi Park Movement and other uprisings has been discussed above and in other works (Adanali, 2013; Bezmez, 2013; Christensen, 2011; Juris, 2012; Varol, Ferrara, Ogan, Menczer, & Flammini, 2014). Twitter transformed Gezi Park from a public space to an intensely integrated multi-scalar geography of resistance, while Twitter itself became the locus of resistance against the state’s (mediated and other) power. Yet while the movement unfolded, all digital activities were virtually engraved on an information fabric, better known as big data, which produced a digital geography of resistance. The next section aims to investigate how this new information fabric can be utilised to enhance our understanding of urban movements and to transform the cities of the future.

8.3.3. Analysis of Digital Information Fabric of the Gezi Park Movement

Technological advances, in a relentless “cumulative process,” supported the peculiar form of the amalgamated production of space that emerged during the Gezi Park occupation (Kirsch, 1995, p. 534). Its power has not only been recognised by the media with the naming of the movement as a “Twitter revolution” (Odabaş & Reynolds-Stenson, 2017, p. 16); but also, the significance of digital networks has been revealed by multiple blockings of access to social media and YouTube during key political conjunctures. Ogan and Varol (2017) state that after the Gezi Park Movement “at least 29,000 websites had been blocked by the government in 2013.” However, at the time of the movement, Twitter and other digital networks were accessible and produced a powerful participative platform, both locally and remotely, democratising the movement so that people of any nationality, political intention, and orientation were able to be included.

The focus of this section is on the digital information fabric of the movement and how it transformed during the protests and the occupation of Gezi Park. To create the digital information fabric of the movement, data has been collected from Twitter. The method to collect the digital data and the obstacles I faced in this process are explained in detail in Subchapter 3.10. After processing the data, filtering and categorising them, they have been transformed to a geospatial visualising platform, called CARTO DB. To remind the reader of the second code – which will be analysed later, an extract of Subchapter 3.10 is presented here:

The second code contains:

Rule Text: (#DirenGeziparki)
Start Date: 06/02/2013
End Date: 06/03/2013
Estimated Activities: 396,000v

The following figures depict the geography of activities accessed through the first code.
Figure 9 The Intensity Map of Twitter Users in Metropolitan Istanbul — Code 1 — Produced by Author via CartoDB (CartoDB, Inc, n.d.) and © OpenStreetMap
Figure 10 Digital spatiality of tweets during the Gezi Park Movement — The data mining code includes all the geotagged tweets mentioning pro-Gezi hashtags – Code 2 — Produced by Author via CartoDB (CartoDB, Inc, n.d.) and © OpenStreetMap
As the figures depict, apart from Beyoğlu, home to Gezi Park, the intensity of the users in two neighbourhoods is notable: Beşiktaş and Kadıköy. Considering the proximity of the Beşiktaş neighbourhood to the centre of the protest, and its own political and social background, noted by the interviewees as a traditionally leftist neighbourhood, it is predictable that a high intensity of users involved in the discussions of the Gezi Park Movement are on Twitter. In the northern neighbourhoods of Beşiktaş, including Bebek, there are some pockets of users. This can be explained by the analysis of interviews with local activists. Bebek is one of the most elitist neighbourhoods on the north of the European side, along the Bosporus, and it is home to famous celebrities, journalists, and politicians. This may have contributed to the engagement of the users with the movement, as it is traditionally an affluent neighbourhood, often associated with the seculars and socialite. Based on my ethnographic observations and conversations I had with my interviewees, I suspect that the motives of the affluent and secular groups’ engagement was that the concerns of bourgeois and westernised fractions of society may have been dismissed by AK Party and hence the Gezi Park Movement was found as a suitable platform to project those concerns.

The other neighbourhood that had a key role in the digital information fabric is Kadıköy. As discussed before, in terms of socio-economic characteristics it has many similarities with Beşiktaş and Beyoğlu, however, its distance from the centre of the movement raises many questions and unfolds new dynamics of urban engagement in the digital and physical spheres. Given the level of intensity of activities in Kadıköy and its proximity to the centre, it can be understood that the place is not accidental. It is not a coincidence that Kadıköy, both in the physical urban spaces and in the digital sphere, is active and played an influential role. The intensity of digital activities in Kadıköy is tightly connected to the spatial dimension of this neighbourhood. Kadıköy’s historical and social layers, its young and progressive demography, and its complex urbanised environment all contribute to its significance as an urban centre and a digital node, which is reflected in the digital information fabric of the Gezi Park Movement.

The following paragraphs presents an analysis of the possible relationship between the urban form, the neighbourhoods, and the network of urban public spaces, with the digital information fabric of Istanbul during the Gezi Park Movement. At this point, and for the analysis of the networks and their intensity, I have used the visualisations of the second code, since it includes a greater number of activities, and there is less ambiguity around the content or the users of the information fabric.

The analysis of the digital information fabric produced by Twitter can be established based on two assumptions. The first is that during the movement, whenever the urban fabric could not accommodate the encounter of the differences or simply the city was incapable of producing an appropriate space for public engagement, new centres were produced in the digital sphere. The opposite assumption is that due to the different conditions of digital users and active participants of the movement, digital technologies, due to their specific characteristics including speed, relative autonomy from the state, the irregularities and easy access for organisers and activists, became the machine that transformed and appropriated the existing public spaces. Given the interviews and the ethnographic observations and also the unreliability of digital information, this analysis suggests that
neither of these two assumptions precisely and fully articulate the dynamics of the phenomenon and the production of the space.

As the illustration of the tweets in the digital map of the movement [Figure 10] shows, contrary to what one may expect, the concentration of digital activities is not just around Gezi Park or central parts of the city. The digital geography of the Gezi Park Movement, as the limited data depicts, is more scattered and decentralised, to the point that no concrete conclusion can be drawn, except that the digital information fabric does not necessarily follow the spatiality of the movement on the ground. This difference in the geographies of resistance can be due to digital divide, accessibility of participants to both the media and the site, and socio-political dimensions of each neighbourhood as mentioned above. Even the Gezi Park Movement was not solely concentrated around Gezi Park, but quickly spread around different neighbourhoods and local public spaces and that may be a relevant reflection of the digital geography of the movement.

The use of digital technologies in urban movements and practices has been discussed in a number of studies in recent years (Aurigi, 2005a; Coyne, 2010; Houghton, 2010; P. N. Howard, Agarwal, & Hussain, 2011; P. N. Howard & Hussain, 2011). With regards to the Gezi Park Movement, the digital sphere, and in particular Twitter, were noticeably active when measured both quantitatively (e.g. the total number of tweets in Turkey on 31 May surpassed 15 million, 50% higher than the average) and qualitatively, as the amount of prosaic (non-political or non-related to Gezi Park) content dropped (Ay & Miraftab, 2016). Hence, it can be argued that the case of Twitter in the Gezi Park Movement, was not the same as or comparable to other urban movements utilising the digital networks. It was the geopolitical and social context of Istanbul and Turkey that made the case of Gezi Park and its representation on digital public sphere rather extraordinary and complex.

Contesting and occupying the digital space, due to its limitlessness and pervasiveness, seemed to be extremely effective within the context of Istanbul at the time. The physical public space was being intensely controlled, while the emotional and material costs of being physically present in Gezi Park was becoming unbearable for the protesters. As depicted in Figure 9 and Figure 10, the geography of the digital sphere is a compensatory agency to urban segregation in the dichotomous centre-periphery of the neoliberal city. The paradoxical condition of the physical centre and the struggle to reclaim it though the digital sphere seems more challenging and problematic than occupying the digital sphere as a whole.

Digital technologies have acknowledged and reflected their presence not only within the city of Istanbul, but also on the global planetary urban reality, independent of state, physical geography and relative cultural and social constructs. Ultimately, the recombination of Gezi Park and its symbolic and political spatiality, the movement and occupation of the park and the hybrid digital space of resistance have produced the novel possibility of a new networked, polycentric pluralistic environment, even if it is only temporary. However, this method of approaching an urban phenomenon through digital social networks has many problematic aspects that are discussed in the next section.
8.3.4. The Critique of Digital Information Fabric

As discussed in previous sections, the digital information fabric can reveal some of the urban layers that are underexplored in urban studies. Although the digital urban fabric has some unique characteristics, it has some concerning validity and credibility (or lack thereof) issues that need to be discussed. The user-generated information fabric, compared to formal and conventional representations of the city, contains features and obscurities that are rooted in its user-generated characteristics. M. Graham and Shelton (2013) state; “we have seen that far from being inclusive, advancements in information and communication technologies have often amplified the socio-spatial unevenness of representation and participation in a range of online data sets.” This section describes some of these issues and some of the methodological limitations of digital data mining and the spatial analysis of the digital geographies of urban movements, aiming to outline further possible research on the relationship between urban phenomena and digital social networks.

In this research, and in many other studies based on geo-tagged information, location-based users, and, in general, geographical entities of digital social networks, it is assumed that the digital sphere is entirely geo-located. For instance, in many cases the titles or the terminologies may suggest that the produced maps are the actual map of the Twitter users, or the geo-location of the tweets. This is a misinterpretation. In a best-case scenario, the outcome of digital data mining is a very small fraction of the digital sphere. In the case of Twitter, only 1–2% of the tweets are geo-tagged and probably at the time of urban movements a smaller percentage of users make their geo-location properties available due to safety and security reasons. Particularly the influential members of the movement have been and are even more so aware of digital surveillance systems and hence it is impossible to track or locate them. Therefore, the produced maps, or any form of information fabric based on that digital data could be very misleading.

Another issue with this method lies within the content of the information. While conventional maps are an official information fabric of our cities, users, experts, agents, or official institutions could have manipulated the digital information fabric as a whole— and every single entity or input on it. This has been seen and discussed in recent years and particularly since the rise of right-wing populist figures like Donald Trump in political establishments. The manipulation of data can be done manually and mechanically and the problem that is central to this issue is that it is almost impossible to differentiate the genuine data from the manipulated or fabricated information:

...because even when data are available they can be refracted through aggregation, modelling, and filtering mechanisms. This leads to a state where it becomes the norm to make decisions based on layers of complex and ephemeral data, mediated by black-boxed algorithms, presented on none-open hardware and software platforms (M. Graham, 2013). Not only, therefore, should there be concern about absences in big data but attention should also be paid to the often opaque and proprietary mechanisms through which those data are filtered, ranked, presented, and enacted. (M. Graham & Shelton, 2013, p. 259)
Furthermore, through the process of data collection it is understood that some of the data is normalised for security or archiving matters. For instance, a big part of our data sets have normalised geo-locations. This means that the geo-location of those tweets are generalised as the origin country of the tweet. This issue can lead to misunderstanding and misleading outcomes as the entire fabric of a country is treated equally. Many other challenges can be identified here, including the possibility of VPNs or proxy software being used to expose a fake location, governmental manipulation of data, and the consideration of retweets as either one independent element of the fabric or a dependent fraction of data. Therefore, easy-to-collect data becomes the most accessible. Accordingly, Kitchin argues that:

The hype surrounding big data suggests that it is superior to traditional ‘small data’ studies due to its inherent characteristics. The danger is that funders and policymakers shift their emphasis to big data at the expense of small data, marginalising the worth of small data studies. Such a move misunderstands both the nature of big data and the value of small data. Big data may seek to be exhaustive, but as with all data they are both a representation and a sample. What data are captured is shaped by the technology used, the context in which data are generated and the data ontology employed. The world is vastly complex, and it is impossible to capture a whole domain and all of its nuances, contradictions and paradoxes. Big data generally captures what is easy to ensnare – data that are openly expressed (what is typed, swiped, scanned, sensed etc.; people’s actions and behaviours; the movement of things), which it takes at face value. It is much weaker at capturing complex emotions, values, beliefs and opinions; the varied, contextual, rational and irrational ways in which people interact and make sense of the world. (2013, p. 265)

As well as the technical challenges within this methodology, there are some concerns around the nature of the digital information fabric and its relation to the complex and interconnected urban dynamics. A very crucial and critical instance regarding the nature of the digital information fabric is the total disregard for some urban spaces, neighbourhoods, and urban dynamics. For instance, in all the maps that reflected the activity and location of the users in Istanbul, the Gazi neighbourhood (20km north-west of Gezi Park) is represented as inactive, thus can be interpreted as indifferent towards the movement. There is neither a sign of digital activity within the area nor any active public forums or spaces. However, through the interviews in Istanbul, it was found that this peripheral neighbourhood played a very active role during the time of the protests.

Due to socio-political conditions in the area, the neighbourhood has always been subject to heavy police brutality and oppression, and had the highest rate of casualties during the time of the movement. However, due to many factors — including limited access to digital technologies, the cultural and social background, and censorship — this neighbourhood is completely underrepresented through the means of the representation of space. This instance also addresses the significance of local urban knowledge, particularly in the context of Middle Eastern cities, which may have many unexplored geographies of resistance and difference. Most studies on the relationship between digital technologies and cities underestimate the relevance of the locality,
context and culture in producing a new urban knowledge; something that this thesis aims to partially address. Therefore, the argument of Crampton et al. is useful in the hesitation of reliance on this data:

At once, such massive data sources are already under the dual, and often interrelated, threats of commodification by private corporations and surveillance by government intelligence agencies. While we obviously eschew such nefarious motives when using such data sources for academic research, …such as social network analysis of retweeting patterns shown above, are already being used to disambiguate and identify opinion leaders within various groups, whether to more successfully market particular products or to track potential terrorist threats. As such, we also see significant potential not just in using big data as a source of information on which to construct analysis, but also in studying the ways that big data is embedded in particular social and institutional configurations and employed to achieve particular, and not always benign, ends.

(2013, p. 138)

8.3.5. Key Findings

Technology has had a substantial role in the processes of transformation and globalisation of cities (Castells, 2000, 2010; Harvey, 1998, 2007; Lefebvre, 1991b). In many cases it has been argued that globalisation and the rescaling of urban governance and the production of cities has led to the annihilation of public spaces, and has subsequently disenfranchised people from the right to participate in the production of space. The new urban movements, particularly the Gezi Park Movement, are a symptom of this process, yet they reflect another complex and contradictory phenomenon. The presence of the digital machine of social networks as a mediator and a catalyser of a collision between the state’s abstract power and cities’ lived spaces has redefined the politics of scale and the production of space. It is essential to understand how the process of globalisation and the new urban politics that have benefitted from technological advances can disenfranchise citizens and, furthermore, how citizens can reclaim their rights by using the very same means — the digital machine of Twitter, in the case of the Gezi Park Movement.

Digital technology can be utilised to address some of the shortcomings of our urban knowledge if the data is produced, collected, and analysed with honesty, ethics, and an acknowledgement of the ideological and political bias, both in the users’ and the researcher’s mentality. In relative democratic and transparent societies, where data is not censored, normalised, manipulated, or duplicated, either through the process of production (in the case of Twitter flooding) and/or through analysis, digital social networks can provide a hybrid and multi-layered information fabric that is able to unveil manifold underexplored aspects of urban reality. Also, addressing the digital divide locally and globally can reinforce our understanding of urban inequalities and how these impact the analysis of digital social networks and information fabrics. Some of these matters are further explained in the next chapter.

The digital information fabric that forms as a result of digital activities on social media, if produced and processed in a valid and credible way as described in the previous section, can identify some of the concealed virtual aspects of the production of space, which our traditional urban knowledge may not
be able to explain. The network of digital activities and the geography of digital resistance can depict how segregation will be challenged, and the centrality of the city can be reproduced through a complex and unpredictable process of mobilisation and communication between urban activists and inhabitants. Further studies on the specific dimensions of these networks of activities and digital geographies could illustrate how cities are transforming. These studies also depict how the context of Middle Eastern cities are increasingly being incorporated into the mesh of digital networks and are producing interesting and complicated urban layers. However, due to the reasons already articulated, this study was very limited in terms of its accessibility to valid and credible data, which could be addressed in future research.

8.4. Conclusion

To summarise the key findings of this research, the concluding points are structured around three main research questions, which also reflect the Lefebvrian theoretical framework of the thesis. The first part of this chapter revolved around the perception of public space and the production of space within the context of Istanbul as a response to the first research question:

- **What is the role of political and social transformations in the definition of public space and conception of urban theory within the context of Istanbul in an age of digital technologies?**

The first part of the interviews and this chapter has revolved around the meaning of public space within the specific context of Istanbul. It appeared that cultural and historical perceptions of the city and its urban life are integral parts of the meaning of public space. The collective nature of life, outside the borders of private dwellings of Istanbul, depicts a different image of public space than of a western notion as a gathering place of strictly rational individuals. The roots of this interconnectedness in the context of Istanbul can be in religious beliefs, historical immigrations, urban transformations and a strong sense of belonging to ethnic neighbourhoods. It is also suspected that with the Gezi Park Movement as a socio-political transformation of the city, the perception of public space not only has changed, but has found new ways to envisage the city and its urban spaces.

Part of this shift was about how the inhabitants of Istanbul approached the centrality and the symbolic meaning of space as a key role in the emergence of a political public space. By re-activating public spaces, people of Istanbul rediscovered how to claim their rights to the city and to difference. Contradictory and confusing translations of the notion of public space, the history of the traditional public spaces of Istanbul, both during the Byzantium and Roman period and throughout the Islamic Ottoman Empire, all point to the vital need for a different urban theory that differentiates Istanbul and similar cities from some of the post-industrial cities of the global North. Istanbul is distinct from the cities that are mostly planned according to rational modernity and western economic liberalism and is different from some of the parochial cities of the Middle East that are profoundly formed based on religious and traditional cultural practices. This analysis depicts that difference has to be considered not only as a spinal factor in defining public and urban space, but rather as a critical issue within urban knowledge, theory and practice globally and locally, as each city is different and also requires a
differential understanding. Chapter 9 includes an extensive discussion on the findings of this chapter regarding the process of rethinking the notion of public space.

Part of the first subchapter and second subchapter has responded to the second research question, which revolves around the production of differential spaces through urban movements:

- **How can urban movements go beyond the disruption of the state’s urbanisation processes and produce new possibilities, utilising the emerging and complex nexus of digital and physical spaces?**

The interviews described the ten-day occupation of Gezi Park as an extraordinary, influential and rather utopian experience. Although, the park became a temporal laboratory for testing and exploring different ways of cooperation between different groups, it projected the possibility of a different future for the city too. Many participants of the movement experienced the city as the platform of a communal way of living, sharing the space and its amenities and having a peaceful coexistence despite difference, possibilities which were not envisaged as an alternative to individualised and neoliberal logic of the status quo.

Another aspect that highlighted the role of urban movements in producing a differential space was the shift in perception and the emergence of palpable possibilities through the occupation and production of temporal spaces of resistance. A different and new understanding of the city was accentuated through the interviews as one of the key outcomes of the Gezi Park Movement. This transformation of perception due to emerging possibilities was further reinforced by the analysis of the Bostan Forums and the transformation of the Gezi Park Movement into localised resistance within the context of specific neighbourhoods of Istanbul. The network of spaces scattered around the city produced and appropriated the spaces of resistance to reproduce the concepts of centrality and periphery in a different way. The reason for this was not only the oppression and obsessive control of Gezi Park, but also the roots of the movement, which were spread around the Asian and European sides of the city.

Lastly, the interviewees’ narratives regarding the role of digital technologies and digital social networks in the Gezi Park Movement have unpacked the complex and complementary relationships that exist between physical urban spaces and the digital public sphere, responding to the third research question:

- **How are digital technologies transforming both the lived experience of urbanity and resistance, and also, how can the digitally augmented public spaces be studied, mapped and understood through the digital technologies?**

The analysis of the interviews depicts a hybrid network of inhabitants, digital devices and augmented geographies of resistance, all of which had a profound influence on the urbannity of Istanbul. The discussion on digital technologies and their role in the transformation of Istanbul inhabitants’ urban perception and scalar transformation geographies of resistance goes beyond a utopian description of virtual communities of techno-romanticists and a fragmented analysis of techno-rationalists. The interviewees’ accounts shed a different light on this matter, as they were mostly reflecting on a rather
vague and contradictory role of digital social networks in weaving the physical and the virtual worlds during the movement, resulting in a perpetual implosive/explosive process of the production of space on all levels and scales. Digital social networks have created a parallel world, detached from the spatial constraints of the Gezi Park Movement, while still being strongly defined by the urban spaces of Istanbul and its geo-spatial borders and social fragmentations.

It can be concluded that, based on interviews and Critical Discourse Analysis, the context and the narratives of the interviewees question and challenge some of our mainstream conceptions of urban phenomena, the process of urbanisation and also the notion of public space. The interviews did not provide concrete and simple answers to complex questions in this research; rather, they addressed the existing uncertainties, reservations and limitations that exist in urban theory, practice and research. These issues are extensively discussed in Chapter 8.

The Gezi Park Movement was the “leap of a tiger” that had inhibited the city for centuries and had been struggling with the domination of an abstract space imposed by different authoritarian states (Çoban, 2016, p. 73). It was the peak of the intensity of the struggle between the inhabitants demanding their rights to their own city and the congealing power of the state to impose its abstract ideology upon all aspects of the urban life in Istanbul. The Gezi Park Movement and the occupation of the park foregrounded this struggle. Not only did it transform the urban reality, perceptions and the future of the city, but it also caused ambiguities regarding the meaning of public space and how it can be redefined according to the emerging hybrid, complex and unpredictable interrelationships between urban movements and digital technologies. These ambiguities, alongside proposals for a different theoretical framework and concepts, which reflect and accentuate the contextual differences that were unveiled here, are discussed in Chapter 9.
Discussions: Rethinking the Urban

9.0. Introduction
This chapter discusses how the notion of rethinking public space is explored and analysed through the theoretical and empirical research, focusing on the specific context of the Gezi Park Movement as a relevant urban process in the hybrid Middle Eastern city of Istanbul. These discussions challenge the mainstream urban theories and practices concerning how the urban space is perceived, conceived and lived.

The following chapter consists of two discussions. First, it reflects on the analysis of the case study, according to the theoretical framework of the thesis, to elaborate how socio-political transformations, antagonistic urban movements and digitally augmented public spaces are redefining the urban discourse and the understanding of the cities. The second discussion reveals how the concept of public space has been approached in this research. It argues that the antagonistic and contradictory urban reality created in the context of Istanbul requires a profound rethinking of the notion of public space in which undoing the ideological understanding of the production of space and the deconstruction of unchallenged definitions of public space are central and essential tasks. This analysis further develops the understanding of this process towards a reformulation in which the notion of public space reflects its continuous scalar transformations and how it transcends temporal and geographical limitations of its historic territory. The combination of these two discussions, which provide different points of view, develops an understanding of a multifaceted urban phenomenon.
9.1. Discussion One: Rethinking Urban Movements and Urban Theory

9.1.1. Summary
This thesis set out to rethink the notion of public space, responding to the problems that emerged from the complex urban conditions of Istanbul in May 2013. It has focused on the transformative dynamics of the digitally augmented urban movements in contemporary cities. This discussion looks back at the Gezi Park Movement to interpret the theoretical implications of a peculiar phenomenon that involved a process of urbanisation led by governmental authorities through violent imposition of privatisation and abstraction with “homogeneity as its goal” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 287). This discussion further elaborates on this process that suspended and re-appropriated the notion of public space.

This thesis has found that there are ambiguities in the current understandings of public space, and highlights their roots in unaddressed contradictions within the conceptualisations of various stakeholders; state, private and professional organisations, and citizens, and their agency in processes of urbanisation and place-making. These ambiguities will be addressed in the following discussion, using evidence found from the Gezi Park Movement analysis to outline a revised discourse on public space in the age of digital technologies, articulating its expanding ambivalences in status and meaning.

9.1.2. Introduction
During the last decades, globalised neo-liberal cities have been subject to “uneven spatial developments” (Brenner & Schmid, 2015, p. 151), imposing new challenges and crises within and through their implosions/explosions under capitalism. The crisis of these cities is emerging more boldly in contexts of socioeconomic difficulties and rapid transitions, along with a violent surge in racial, ethnic and class segregations, extreme inequality and alarming degeneration of the natural environment (Mayer, 2013). One of the consequences and symptoms of this crisis has been the rise of antagonistic and contradictory conflicts, negating the establishment and its power, both on international and local scales. With the emergence of new actors and advanced technologies, the geography of radical politics, urban dynamics and particularly the meaning of political public space is changing.

This discussion critically elaborates on the impact of this transformation on socio-spatial urban processes, specifically the geographies of urban movements, as a foundation for the following task of rethinking and re-situating the notion of the public space. This argument centres on the way that urban movements lead to a formation of a differential lived space in opposition to the expansion of abstract space and ideology promoted by governing authorities. Particularly on the urban scale, the antagonism is part of a systemic imbalance in the forms of spatial production, which, as Wilson elaborates, “include the contradictions between exchange value and use value, between the conceived space of the planners and the lived space of the inhabitants, and between the abstract space of the state and the traces of pre-existing spatial practices and representations” (2014, p. 520).
Resistance to the implementation of a state-led, neo-liberal ideology promoted through a centrally controlled urban project is exemplified in the Gezi Park Movement. In this case, the negation of an urban paradigm is the driver of legitimate antagonistic urban practices that exercise the right to the city, which should be considered a citizen’s basic right. Therefore, and precisely for its focus on public space, this process of negation, opposition, and dissent, rather than deliberation, communication and consensus, gains a crucial status in collective spatial production.

The rejection of a state’s urban project is the stepping stone for the formation of a new urban alternative, with the creation and stabilisation of far-reaching socio-spatial networks. The urban movements that emerged in antagonism to the abrupt homogenising action of the state are posited as situated relational systems able to resist and abate the state’s power for the re-establishment of an inclusive, open, agonistic and genuine public realm. The negation of a redevelopment plan, within this discussion, is defined as a trigger for combined actions of contestation, resistance, occupation, and association that substantively empowered marginalised urban inhabitants. Few studies have critically investigated whether and how the negation of implementation processes of urban renewal programmes involving public space can have an epistemic influence on theory or practice of urbanism per se. In contrast, most studies are concerned with the sociological impact or outcomes of some urban or social movements on the city or on the urban governance particularly.

The danger in these one-dimensional approaches to urban movements is to overlook the effectiveness of forces supported by the private sector or state for the splintering and/or “co-optation” (Souza, 2006, p. 328) of the opposing movements and their concepts and demands in order to re-establish the status quo ante of centralised decision-making processes. This normalisation associated with the degrading of struggles to empty-signifiers and superficial slogans, is an extremely challenging enterprise. There are powerful obstacles in the limited capacity of analytical means framed in monodisciplinary realms to address such a complicated framework. Therefore, to validate the hypothesis proposed in this discussion which redefines the realm of application of the notion of public space within the wider domain of urban knowledge, this study has concentrated on the core days of the protest, the occupation of Gezi Park, which is when the apparatuses of power of state and private organisation were still organising their countermoves.

This analysis is structured based on the above hypothesis. The first section focuses on the influence of the political and economic ideology of the state on the definition of urban disciplines, specifically urban design. The second section draws on the Taksim Square and Gezi Park Development Project, and how these urban practices and projects embody the imposition of the state’s power through urban regeneration projects. The third section focuses on the process of negation of urban projects and ideals through resistance, occupation and production of a differential space which creates new urban possibilities. This process is explored through analysis of the Gezi Park Movement as an instance of anti-establishment resistance in Istanbul, shedding light on the relationship between the urban and the state, something that is underexplored in the urban design theory and literature.
Finally, this discussion argues that an epistemic alternative for urban theory and practices is not an apolitical and fragmented form of knowledge, but has to critically address normalising, dominating and co-opting forces that operate to reinstate the status quo ante, undermining the critical ideas of the opposing movements; this new understanding acknowledges the agency and self-determination of urban inhabitants to negate, appropriate, realize and produce their own possibilities and alternative cities. Accordingly, this argument can lead to recognition and conception of the right to the negation of urban projects as part of the right to the city discourse.

9.1.3. The State, Neo-dirigisme and the Definition of Urban Disciplines

In this section, the discussion focuses on the meaning of urban design as a signifier for a much broader dilemma, which faces all the urban disciplines. The prevailing reference point for the establishment of urban design as a distinct discipline is the international conference held at Harvard University Graduate School of Design in 1956 (Krieger, 2009). Following the conference, Sert identified the discipline of urban design as “that part of city planning which deals with the physical form of the city” (quoted in Krieger, 2009, p. 114). Distinguishing urban design as distinct discipline and science is one of the fundamental and spinal problems in the process of de-politicisation of urban practices and theory.

Even if it is considered as a distinct discipline, the definition of urban design has been insufficient, vague and controversial between many scholars. For instance, Madanipour (1997, p. 363) and others (Cuthbert, 2006; Moughtin, 2003; Rowley, 1994; Schurch, 1999) have aimed to clarify the ambiguities of the urban design definition. Still the definition of urban and design, and together as urban design, is not reflective of the complexities involved in transforming the reality of the city. Indeed, the definition – as may be the case of any definition - is reductive. For instance, despite the fact that Madanipour (based on Rowley, 1994, p. 195) acknowledges that “finding ‘a short, clear definition . . . simply is not possible’, he attempts to “look for a definition that addresses these uncertainties”, it is unclear why such uncertainties that are often rooted in people’s urban life and contradictory dimensions of urban reality are not considered as de facto elements of the urban and thus the urban design discourse.

To demonstrate the reasons for this reductionist approach to the urban problematique, Lefebvre (2003) argues that two strategies are applied which reflect the process of abstraction and homogenisation of the cities. According to Lefebvre, these strategies shape our urban knowledge, produce the space and solidify the state and its power apparatus:

What we know is that in capitalist countries today, two principal strategies are in use: neoliberalism (which maximizes the amount of initiative allowed to private enterprise and, with respect to urbanism, to developers and bankers) and neo-dirigisme, with its emphasis (at least superficially) on planning, which, in the urban domain, promotes the intervention of specialists and technocrats, and state capitalism. (2003, p. 78)

Therefore, what does the definition of urban design mean and what forces are concealed within that? Lefebvre’s (2003) analysis of urbanisation that is increasingly moving towards total oppression of society by the state and the market, shows that the practitioner, the academic and the intellectuals
(and hence their discourse) are all in one form or another influenced by neoliberalism and/or neo-dirigisme. Neo-dirigisme can be interpreted as an uneasy combination of neo-liberalism and state control over social and economic affairs. For instance, to illuminate the role of the designer within the process of urbanisation – and abstraction – Lefebvre argues that “the architect is caught in the world of ‘commodities’ without realizing that it is in fact a world. Unconsciously, that is, in good conscience, he subordinates use to exchange and use values to exchange values” (2003, p. 90). This elaboration further demonstrates that even the well-intended practitioner cannot negate his role, presence and interests while defining the discipline of urban practice within the status quo and the state’s ideological framework. In fact, the architects, planners and their techniques are blind to their positionality and often tend to overlook the broader picture of exploitation and oppression (Mayer & Fezer, 2010).

As Sassen (2005, p. 32), Harvey (2012), Madanipour (2006), Olds (2002) and others argue, the globalisation of design and urbanisation based on the neoliberal economy has “neutralised the distance and place” and resulted in mass production of cities without local identities or urbanity. What some scholars see as the root of this aspect of globalization is the political economy and its influence on the process of urbanisation through iconography and urban image making, reflecting both the symbolic power of the state – the global state – and abstract space, and also the competitiveness of the city within the global urban market (Dovey, 2005). Through this process, urbanisation will be reduced to the techniques of image-making, branding and marketing of the place, for consumption rather than to use or to live in. The state has a pivotal role in this process as Lefebvre maintains: “in this sense reduction and reductionism appear as tools in the service of the state and of power: not as ideologies but as established knowledge; not in the service of any specific state or government, but rather in the service of the state and power in general” (1991b, p. 106).

The above enquiry briefly illustrated the futility and inaccuracy of urban design definitions, as they mostly do not address the urbanity, the heterogeneity and hybridity of the urban reality of our cities that urban design is supposed to serve. The definitions explored, reduce the life and its complexity. Subsequently, it is impossible to rethink the notion of public space, in a discipline that itself has been homogenised and reduced by the state and ideology. The reason for the reductionism within the discipline can be unpacked through the analysis of the abstract space of the state and how it operates to eliminate any form of difference from the urban fabric and life. Yet, providing a pure criticism of this process and the state’s power is not the ultimate goal of this study, as it is not the goal of urban movements either. There must be an alternative. Souza succinctly addresses this issue:

Even if we accept that the (local) state apparatus not always plans for residential segregation, for the interests of enterprises and against those of working-class residents (although the state does it very often, and although it is part of its structural essence to assure the reproduction of capitalist and heteronomous status quo as whole), we must try to overcome the intellectual (possibly the ideological) prejudice which prevents us from seeing that civil society does not only criticize (as a ‘victim’ of) state-led planning, but also can directly and (pro)actively conceive and, to some extent, implement solutions independently of the state apparatus. (2006, p. 327)
The next section elaborates on the process of abstraction and its homogenising implications for the theories of urbanism through the analysis of the Gezi Park Development Project.

9.1.4. Gezi Park Development Project and Abstract Space of the State

The urban space as the locus of heterogeneity, anonymity and spontaneous activities, poses a significant challenge to the status quo ante of a centralised and dominating state and the hegemonic establishment of a specific territory. Harvey (2008, p. 40) declares that “Lefebvre was right to insist that the revolution has to be urban, in the broadest sense of that term, or nothing at all”. The state, therefore aims to eliminate any form of threatening heterogeneity. Abstract space of state aims to achieve homogeneity through the process of abstraction and production of abstract space in order to abolish any differences and to assert its power (Lefebvre, 1991b). The implementation of this ideology is violent, both explicitly, through material intervention (e.g. urban redevelopment processes) and control (e.g. law enforcements through actual policing of space and militarisation of the city) and implicitly, through national and local policies such as “revitalisation” programmes resulting in gentrification, displacement, segregation, and deprivation (R. Atkinson & Bridge, 2004, p. 90; Smith & Williams, 2013, p. 92).

Abstract space tends towards the abstraction of the space fully, in totality and in all directions. This process is often left unchallenged as the state is perceived as of the people, an element of the society that is “the sole planning agent, since it possesses some privileges de facto and some prerogatives de jure, such as power to regulate land use in the whole city through urban law (e.g. zoning ordinances), as well as the formal power to enforce its determinations (‘legal monopoly of violence’, police)” (Souza, 2006, p. 328). This process was vividly palpable through the process of the Taksim Square and Gezi Park Development Project, which showed an abstractive approach to commercially redevelop a public space, privatising it and eliminating the nuance of difference. This difference was represented by the chain of public institutions of which this open space is a fundamental component of (including the major cultural centre and public square of the city). This abstractive approach aimed at homogenising the centre through a process of “revitalization” framed in a neo-liberal urban vision that importantly extends the existing landscape of consumption (Batuman, Baykan, & Deniz, 2016, p. 190). The project encountered fierce and unique resistance due to historical and cultural characteristics of Istanbul and its urban peculiarities that have been extensively discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.

As the construction of the 94th shopping mall of Istanbul (at the time of the movement in 2013) was part of the Taksim Square and Gezi Development Project, the redevelopment was seen as a crucial step in the commodification process, currently permeating the central public spaces of the city (Kuymulu, 2013; Lelandais, 2016; Manfredini, Zamani, & Leardini, 2017). It was read as the ultimate extension of the space of consumption, entertainment, and leisure – uncannily recombined with an institutionalised and governmental interpretation of religious aesthetic – that is rapidly transforming the character of the area and the centre of Beyoğlu district (Arat, 2013; Eken, 2014; Gül et al., 2014).
The Gezi Park Development Project was a direct reference to the Ottoman Empire, its past glory and the neoliberal-Islamic hegemony of the ruling AK Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi meaning Justice and Development Party) (Moudouros, 2014). The project was intentionally designed to impose and reflect the Islamic aesthetic of the city and rebrand the imperial part of Istanbul as a specifically Turkish urban quarter merely built to reflect the state’s authority and power. The process could be seen as the peculiar marriage of the state’s traditionalist, nationalistic and religious ideology with neoliberalism – something that one may call Turkish neo-dirigisme – for a new space of consumption, consumption of the space and control of the city. Even after the protests, the Prime Minister himself contended that “Turkey is not only [current] Taksim Square and Gezi Park” (Moudouros, 2014, p. 184) and hence Taksim Square and Gezi Park needed to be reconceived to reflect the true identity of Turkey as a homogenous – Muslim nation-state.

It is important to note that the opposition of the Gezi Park Movement to the development project was not focused on its Islamic image. Rather, it was the reaction to an overdetermined and culturally loaded project, reflecting the strong Islamic hegemony of the state power, vis-a-vis the indeterminacy of Gezi Park, representing itself as an open system, an architecturally neutral urban space with much less explicit celebratory qualities. This partial and ideological neutrality was in fact highly political and embodied in its legacy as the first public park of the modern Turkey with its foundational ideas of secularism and pluralism. The opposite of that modern and secular vision, indeed, the contemporary state and sole ruling power soon assumed to be one of the most resilient forms of centralistic, totalitarian and neoliberal governance. However, the indeterminacy of Gezi Park meant it could not be relinquished and traded for a state-sponsored space of consumption and commodification.

Within the discourse of planners, designers and politicians, before the emergence of the movement, Gezi Park was considered as the space of difference (Karasulu, 2014), consistently reflective of its original conception. It is extensively argued that difference within this context was often misrepresented and ideologically described as the lack of safety and hygiene (Ete & Taştan, 2014), which was fostering crime, immoral behaviour and, even, perversion. The manufactured necessity of removing the disturbing diversity of this differentiating element is often partially blamed on these forceful descriptions. Municipal officers and senior politicians, including the Prime Minister of the time, labelled the park as the place of undesirables, such as transsexuals, prostitutes, and drug dealers (Lelandais, 2016, p. 300). Multiple media outlets were initially used to promote a vision of a sanitised space, where the undesired would be transformed into the desired. This was the vision of designers and politicians, as part of implementing a well-established logic and aesthetic of neo-liberal urbanism. This urban regeneration project aimed to generate and produce the spectacle of consumption that is commonplace around the world, and had similar agents, forces, aims and consequences as elsewhere (Smith, 2002; Smith & Williams, 2013).

Despite the authorities’ insistent arguments around criminality, hygiene and safety of the park, the reception of the Gezi Park Development Project immediately included a fierce opposition. Importantly, the antagonistic groups included many architecture students and academics, as well as architects and their professional organisations. The Chamber of Architects and Engineers united under an umbrella
group called Taksim Solidarity which played a vital role in the formal and legal process of resistance in the environmental courts (Elicin, 2017). The specific dimensions of urban society, the symbolic and the geographical importance of Gezi Park and the spatiality of Taksim Square in Istanbul produced the possibility of negating the establishment and the state’s urban paradigm. Indeed, throughout the interviews and conversations regarding the role of the state in the process of urbanisation, the urban designers of the project were ignored and considered as irrelevant by the interviewees, since they were merely the agents of the state’s power structure and abstract space. Rather, it was the ideology, the hegemony of the state, both nationally and locally, and its imposition of power through urban design and redevelopment projects that triggered the Gezi Park Movement, what was to become one of the most significant urban movements of Middle East and the world.

9.1.5. Negation of Urban Design as a State’s Ideology

The Gezi Park Movement started on the 27th and 28th of May 2013 with a protest by environmental activists against bulldozers ready to excavate the park and the trees (Örs, 2014). This was the catalyst for a much wider movement that had been efflorescing, in different forms, for a long time as a response to the new urban policies imposed by state (Elicin, 2014; Gül et al., 2014; Lelandais, 2016).

The issue of Gezi Park and whether the park itself was central to the Gezi Park Movement has been subject to debate (Eken, 2014; Moudouros, 2014; Örs, 2014). Yet the theoretical implications of the movement on the definition, meaning and the process of urbanisation, and its future possibilities, is underexplored. This section specifically focuses on the relationship between state-led urbanisation as the Gezi Park Development Project and the Gezi Park Movement as an anti-state urban resistance movement. The Gezi Park Development Project was seen as an imposition of the state’s ongoing ideological repositioning and faced a strong opposition from manifold individuals, groups, and organisations, some antagonistic some with consensus, yet all unified to produce a peculiar fragmented hyper-geography of resistance that not only challenged the abstract space and urban ideology of the state, but injected new meanings into Istanbul’s urban reality.

When design explicitly became a primary instrument of the state’s representational agenda, it immediately triggered a series of situated and spatially-based actions. The opposition, as it emerged through interviews with the activists and Istanbul’s inhabitants, did not target the design and the architecture; rather, it identified the design as the state’s means to impose its totalitarian, ideological, and somehow sectarian image of urban space onto the symbolic, logistic and cultural heart of Istanbul. This triggered wider dissent, protests and riots.

It was not the design or the concept of development that ignited the fierce and unprecedented level of dissent and resistance. Rather, it was the way that the state utilised design, the urban designers’ discourse, and the technicity of architecture to de-politicise Gezi Park and Taksim Square, and diminish difference. The collision between the lived space of people and the abstract space of the state ignited violent clashes. It was when the bulldozers set out to excavate the first few trees of the project that conflict erupted. Architects and designers were the cogs within the state machine of abstraction, part of the apparatus of power and indirectly involved in this manifestation of the state’s
ideology. Lefebvre draws a picture of the architect and his/her relationship to the designs, plans and the bulldozers, which were instrumental in the realisation of the Gezi Park Movement:

The sheet at hand, before the eyes of the draughtsman, is as blank as it is flat. He believes that his neutral space which passively receives the marks of his pencil corresponds to the neutral space outside, which receives things, point by point, place by place. As for the ‘plan’, it does not remain innocently on paper. On the ground, the bulldozer realises ‘plans’.

Certain elements were highlighted through interviews with protestors. The most significant element that reflects on the above interpretation is that most of the protesters were dissenting against the transformation of the park into a shopping mall, not merely for environmental reasons, but precisely because of the inevitable implications of such socio-political urban transformation. Many argued that the park was being intensely used, and rejected the opposite claim of planners and designers who proposed to improve the alternative use of the area through mixed commercial, religious and residential developments.

The antagonism towards the state’s ideology and its abstract space, which was intended to further solidify and materialise the economic and financial ambitions of the government, is palpable throughout the qualitative data included in this thesis and was also reflected in the performative and visual symbolism of the movement (Ay & Miraftab, 2016, p. 571). The space around Taksim area and Gezi Park during and after the movement was inscribed by anti-market and anti-state graffiti and sentiments. This explains the role of the movement against the underlying socio-political motives of the Taksim Square and Gezi Park Development Project which was a mechanism to reinstate the role of space as the locus of capital accumulation and exchange value. Both Lefebvre (1996) and Harvey (2001, 2012) point out that, within capitalist society, the regeneration and reproduction of urban space is tightly related to the accumulation of capital and exchange value in contrast to the use value of urban space. Lefebvre argues that:

City and urban reality are related to use value. Exchange value and the generalization of commodities by industrialisation tend to destroy it by subordinating the city and urban reality which are refuges of use value, the origins of a virtual predominance and revalorization of use [original emphasis]. (1996, p. 67)

Through the urban movement the above process of commodification and abstraction was resisted at its core. The moment of negation, confrontation and appropriation of the park, became a legitimate urban practice, shifting the discourse and the meaning of public space within the context of Istanbul. This instigated a process of re-politicisation of space, the city and urban practices. The new urban practice did not produce a durable material and site-limited architectural building; rather, it produced a differential urban reality that transformed the physical, mental and social space of Istanbul, and to this date, its effects on the perception of and possibilities for a different city can be felt despite a recent apparent shift of national politics towards more totalitarian and ideological governance.

To clarify this argument, the Lefebvrian (1996) framework of the right to the city is helpful. What is mostly considered within the discourse of the right to the city is the “right to difference” (Butler, 2012,
p. 152) and the “right to appropriation” of urban space (Purcell, 2002, p. 103). The two concepts are interpenetrating and highly dependent on each other. Appropriation refers to any process of occupation, use and the production of space based on its use value to the differentiated, marginalised and disenfranchised. Here, another dimension to the discourse of the right to the city and the discipline of urban design can be added: the negation of an urban paradigm must be considered as a driver of legitimate antagonistic urban practices.

Mayer (2009; 2010), and Marcuse (2009, 2013), based on Lefebvre’s (1996) conception of the right to the city, suggest that this right is not inclusive and applies to those subject to the fierce power of the system. It is a right to challenge the power. Recognising the right to negation of an urban paradigm, including regeneration of public spaces and gentrification of marginalised neighbourhoods, can address some of the critical issues that are inherent in representative democracy and as well as the way that urban disciplines and their agents understand and treat the role of inhabitants in the production of space and transformation of cities.

The right to the negation belongs to the inhabitants, and by the virtue of inhabiting the city, marginalised groups and dissent can be re-enfranchised at an urban scale. This not only provides us with new opportunities to understand and conceive the city differently, but also means we can practice different radical urban politics that may lead to a city where no one is dominated by the state or power structures. But, to reach that point, we need to return to the initial aim of this thesis: to investigate the meaning of public space as the locus of political struggles, in a time where urban movements, spaces of resistance and a complex network of digital spaces are transforming the cities and the process of production of space. This inquiry will be the critical topic of the next discussion.

9.1.6. Conclusion

The unfolding discussion regarding the phenomenon of the negation of state-led urbanisation through an urban movement such as the Gezi Park Movement is complex and multidimensional. This argument highlights the vital necessity for a new theoretical framework, which recognises that struggle and resistance to the state’s mechanisms of urban domination and control are legitimate urban practices. This framework is not an apolitical, fragmented form of knowledge, co-opting the critical ideas of movements and institutionalising them through centralised and abstract urban policies or superficial strategies; on the contrary, this framework recognises the agency and self-determination which urban inhabitants have and use to negate, appropriate and produce their own spaces and cities. In the end, this discussion proposes the foundations for a framework which can critically understand the role of the state in urban processes and reinforces that inhabitants have a right to negate the state-led urban projects and ideology.

Fragmentary and divisive urban projects need to be refused and negated at the point of formation through both formal and informal means, such as legal challenges, formal participation in urban governance and everyday resistance. The re-development of urban centres, specifically historical urban centres, is becoming a commonplace urban strategy to further cleanse and marginalise those who have already been pushed to the peripheries of society. The systematic renewal of urban centres
– through concealed violence – must be resisted, negated and reimagined by the inhabitants of the urban centres and the wider city, as the consequences of these agendas of abstraction are longer lasting and felt more deeply than those processes which have a direct effect. Therefore, it can be understood why the Gezi Park Movement, even if was considered as a movement without any concrete outcomes as some technocrats often stated, continued to resist and negate the deeply-rooted processes of segregation, oppression and disenfranchisement, producing a differential reality and possibility.

To conclude, this discussion argues that the notion of urbanisation in specific and generally urban theory in a time of unexpected – despite the historically familiar – socio-political events must be rethought. One of the possibilities for future study that this paper puts forward is a more in-depth and rigorous consideration of grassroots, anti-establishment movements within the disciplines of urbanism, investigating the role of these movements in redefining theory and practices, and how these disciplines can mediate conflicts between the state and urban inhabitants. Lastly, if urban movements are producing a counter narrative against the state’s abstract space, ideology and hegemony, then there is an indispensable need for an alternative, radical and critical reframing and redefining of the meaning of public and urban space. This is presented in the proceeding discussion.
9.2. Discussion Two; Rethinking the Public Space, Rethinking the Difference

9.2.1. Summary
This subchapter principally discusses the main question of this thesis, investigating how urban theory reframes the understanding of public space and its meaning in response to emerging socio-spatial practices of antagonistic urban movements whose communication realm is augmented by pervasive digital networks. This discussion develops a different understanding of public space, considering urban conditions, in which urban movements have produced far-reaching, digitally augmented networks within the specific context of Istanbul.

The universal concepts and notions within urban studies have critical significance in explaining global structures and transformations, yet they fail to hypothesise urban transformations of cities like Istanbul since they are entrenched in a dominant universal theory that is unable to capture the complexity of situated socio-spatial practices. This reflects a mainstream cultural approach to urban studies that often is acritical of crucial spatial effects of peculiar adoptions of western economic liberalism, such as the situation in contemporary Turkey. The foundation of a fresh rethinking is proposed to acknowledge the alterity of cities like Istanbul, focusing in particular on the significance of the emerging geopolitical movements that, precisely in this city, transform the multiple dimensions of contemporary citizenship.

9.2.2. Introduction
The initial and central inquiry of this thesis is concerned with the question of public space, scrutinising what public space means when processes of re-politicisation, instigated by digitally augmented urban movements, disrupt existing spatial practices and generate unprecedented hybrid geographies. This theoretical inquiry into the becoming nature of public space, in highly contested urban geographies, is rooted in my personal experience, observing the socio-political shifts throughout my life that suddenly introduced a collective dimension into the everyday struggle for the right to the city. To respond to this inquiry, the spectrum of the study has been narrowed to the specific context of Istanbul’s Gezi Park Movement, since it embodied the key characteristic of digitally augmented and antagonistic processes of re-politicisation of the city.

Through a cross-theoretical analysis of the literature on the relevant ideas of Arendt, Habermas and Lefebvre, and the study of lived experiences of the Gezi Park Movement’s participants, this discussion challenges the conventional meaning of public space. It critiques the construct of the public space discourse as defined by urban theories, arguing that this discourse is inadequate to the task of engaging with local urban practices and conceptions such as the ones found in Istanbul. Using the data produced from interviews, ethnographic conversations and spatial analysis of digital social networks, this discussion reflects on the theoretical analysis of the thesis thus far. This discussion aims to develop a different understanding of the urban reality of non-western heterogeneous cities like Istanbul, leading to rethinking the public space and the processes that are transforming its meaning.
It is suggested that the resulting understanding of public space should embrace the profoundly hybrid character of its spatialities, enabling the theory and knowledge to deal with the (in)consistency and complexities of the relationships between the digitally mediated public sphere and the physical public realm. The Gezi Park Movement illustrates how the inseparable link between these two forms of publicness is in a permanently discontinuous, multi-chronic and diffusive condition. Lastly, this discussion shows the ways in which the movement projects and transcends its relational sphere of parochial-local scale with its deep rooted cultural and socio-spatial dimension into the augmented and unbounded global public sphere through digital technologies.

9.2.3. Contestation of Theories and Contexts

Most discussions on public space in the continental literature hinge on Arendt’s (1998) notion of public realm and Habermas’s (1989; 1992a) theories regarding the public sphere. These notions have been discussed in Chapter 3, Sections 1.1.3 and 1.1.4. This section explores the reception of both these theories and puts forward some critical and cautious considerations. The analysis addresses studies on public space by prolific scholars such as Sennett (1996, 2000a), Mitchell (1995, 2003), Low and Smith (2013), Calhoun (1992), Madanipour (2013) and others who trace the further elaboration of theoretical and conceptual meanings of Habermas’s idea. Benhabib (1990, 1994, 1996), Fraser (1990, 2004), Howell’s (1993) and Mitchell’s (1995, 2003) works are studied to describe the cultural lineage of Hannah Arendt’s thought. This section focuses on these two theoretical streams, since they have also illuminated this thesis in the process of rethinking the public and the notion of public space in Istanbul.

Arendt’s (1998) theories, although not as prolifically cited in urban studies as Habermas’s ones, focused on the analysis of the human condition and provided a very significant critical explanation of modern publicness. The Arendtian notion of public realm, as discussed in Chapter 3, refers to a condition of citizenship that includes the presence of places where anyone that appears in is seen and heard by everybody, the similar and the different, and through this process each individual distinguishes herself as a distinct being. Also, within the public realm of Arendt, there is a material common-world shared between all, which includes resources such as the city, the space that the inhabitants occupy. Limitations in her research have been highlighted by critics, such as Low and Smith who argued that her theories are rooted in an interpretation of Greek agora that requires a profound critical reconsideration:

The narrow definition of public space that pertained in ancient Greece may therefore be an unintentionally appropriate inspiration for the present, yet the most cursory scrutiny suggest that it also represents the converse of what we take to be the ideal public space. (2013, p. 4)

Arendt’s work had profoundly influenced Habermas’ discourse, as several comparative explorations of these theories have revealed (Dean, 2001; Fraser, 1990; Howell, 1993; Madanipour, 2013; D. Mitchell, 1995; Sennett, 1977, 2000a). Regarding this relationship between the two intellectuals’ scholarly works, Canovan (1983, p. 107) states that: “Habermas certainly owes a great deal to Arendt, and certainly did find in her work the features he mentions”, as Habermas (1980) admits that he
based his communicative action theory on Arendt's work. Yet according to Canovan (1983, p. 107), "in the course of taking up her ideas, he transformed them very considerably, with the result that what he learned from Arendt was not quite what she would have liked to teach him."

Habermas’s ideas are widely criticized, and year after year, there is further evidence that his vision of democratic public sphere, without consideration of irreconcilable differences and hegemonic power relations, is doomed to fail. Bridge and Watson (2000) and others argued that a democratic public sphere is not predicated on consensus, rather it is based on agonist relations (Dahlberg, 2007a; Fraser, 2009), and difference (Dahlberg, 2005), and permeated with “acts of exclusion” and “contestation” (Mouffe, 1992, p. 30). Meanwhile others, like Fraser (1990) and Hartley (1992), declared that Habermas’s ideals were indeed never democratic, or supportive of publicness in a real sense.

Although both the theories and their critique are significantly insightful, reinforcing the process of rethinking the public sphere, and explaining the conditions and the basis for the vital need of a democratic public realm or public sphere, it appeared that there was a fundamental difference in how the public space was perceived through the interviews and the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement. Critical and defining factors like the concept of mahalle, the issue of collective being and lived experience of space, and inseparability of individual from the cultural, religious and ethnic identities mainly differentiate the notion of public space within the context of Istanbul with the more universally accepted western public spaces. Most universal urban theories discuss the public space in light of Arendt and Habermas’s intellectual investigations that were rooted in the basis of secular and democratic contexts, in which the individual is presumed as an independent and rational entity. These theories are also deeply-rooted in modernity and western modern culture, the Enlightenment project and economic liberalism which to some extent exclude overpowering and complex relationship between the state and the heterogeneous and diverse mosaic of individual and collective identities that occupy Middle Eastern cities. This factor produces a maximal difference (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 372) between the context of Istanbul and these theories.

As noted in the interviews, the Gezi Park Development Project includes a public space that results from a neoliberal process where the state alienates the publicness of the park, to create a demarcated privatised social space that further exacerbates the existing segregation, fragmentation and alienation of the inhabitants of Istanbul. Yet in the process of its implementation a new force appeared to reaffirm the public space as an agonistic central place of emancipatory communicative acts. This is the emergence of a third collective and grassroots macro institution, this one is the Gezi Park Movement and the Gezi Park Commune.

This institution operating as primary actor in the struggle for publicness, precisely because of its being in continuous redefinition, was able to activate a process of differential becoming to affirm a political public realm, while coping with both the impossibility of a Habermasian rationality via consensus and the geopolitical ineffectuality of an Arendtian molecular antagonism. Through the appearance of this institution, public space was produced as a common world for an antagonistic action of the plurality
through a process that requires neither an *a priori* (or externally controlled) spatiality for its *theatrical* performance, nor a unified and shared project for its democratic implementation. The state has a specific role in this process within the context of Istanbul, as it attempts to redefine the everyday and extraordinary space of appearance based on its ideological paradigms. Regarding the role of the state in production of public space, Low and Smith maintain that:

> The state is not by any means conterminous with the public sphere, but rather the product of specific power relations in any society - power relations that can exclude as many parts of the public as they include – yet many of state’s actions do indeed mould and frame what specific societies take to be the public. (2013, p. 5)

The influence of the state and its spatial imposition of its ideology emerge differently in different scales, something that is vividly underexplored in Habermasian and Arendtian discourse. Within the context of Istanbul, public space also has a very different role when it is studied in relation to the defining factor of *mahalle*, a formative and foundational unit of the city in Istanbul and many Middle Eastern cities (Erkip, 2000; Kubat, 1999; Mills, 2006, 2007). Indeed, the scale and politics of scale defines how the space and the production of space can be understood in that specific context. This analysis contends that in such a context, public space is an ultimately fluid and suspended notion, which may not necessarily reflect the reality of the urban life that it encompasses.

The last critical difference between the contexts of the aforementioned theories and Gezi Park as a public space in Istanbul is imbedded in historical *heterogeneity* of Istanbul and its urban reality. Although no modern nation, society or community is fully *homogenous*, Habermasian and to a lesser extent Arendtian notions and concepts are predominantly rooted in relatively monolingual and monocultural settings, as Santos’ analysis of Habermas’ public sphere depicts, thus bringing to the question the validity and universality of these concepts:

> Accordingly, its theoretical and cultural presuppositions are entirely European: it is based on the individual bourgeois and life experience; it assumes the separation between the state and civil society; it sees the bourgeois citizen and his public sphere as external to the structure of power; it takes for granted its informal and equal inclusiveness. (2012, p. 44)

The heterogeneity of Istanbul is unique, peculiar, and impossible to fully analyse; it is a condition of historical accumulation of cultures, religions, languages and struggles. Nonetheless, it is clear that Habermasian and Arendtian thought, considering the context these two German philosophers emerge from, cannot fully and adequately reflect the antagonistic, hybridised and augmented urban spaces of Istanbul. The next section elaborates on these complexities in order to produce a differential understanding of public space which reflects the alterity of cities like Istanbul, whilst building on Habermasian and Arendtian ideas.

### 9.2.4. Reinterpretation of Public Space within the Context of Istanbul

Chapters 3 and 6 argued that signifying an urban space within everyday Istanbul as public space, as a universal notion, can be problematic. My lived experience in Middle Eastern cities, observations of
Istanbul and also the interview data suggest that the public space of everyday life is not as it may universally be accepted, one of the interviewees addressed “the purgatory of understanding the public space” in “modern” Turkey. The reason for this agony in understanding public space as explained before, is rooted within spatial practice, language, power structures, history and the reality of urban life in that specific context. Chapter 3 and 5 described specific and contextual particularities of Istanbul, which are focal in understanding what is somehow conceived as public space, yet perceived and lived differently. This section unpacks these contextual particularities, specifically in relation to the scale and politics of scale in Istanbul and other Middle Eastern cities in order to develop a differential understanding of public space that is reflective of the context and the process of re-politicisation of the space through augmented geographies of resistance.

Initially, it is essential to look at the position of the public space within Turkish language. Indeed, using the Turkish words like meydandn for what Arendt and Habermas regard as a political space of appearance or public sphere may convey the political nature of the concept better than a literal translation of public space, considering the history and etymology of the notion of meydand discussed in Chapter 7. Furthermore, meydand has a flexibility and innate hybridity that can encompass different moments of urban life, as it may refer to a place of everyday social interactions to highly politicised and contested open spaces of the city.

Despite the fact that many public spaces, within the context of Istanbul, are called Meydan, the theoretical term, public space, is translated as kamusal alan in scholarly works as discussed in chapter 7. Despite, this multiplicity of the meanings, kamusal alan is the closest literal translation to the notion of public space, as the theoretical concept, developed by western theorists like Habermas and Arendt, yet it does not mean that all the open spaces where politics is practiced or discussed are called kamusal alan. In other word, the lived experience of public space is detached from its literal translation as kamusal alan.

On the other hand, one can translate the term public space as haika açık alan, meaning people’s open area, a term that is rather vague, abstract and somehow strange, as it is detached from the historical urban practices of the region. This term is not used in everyday or formal language in Turkish and other Middle Eastern cultures, the public space is defined based on or in relation to other socio-political factors, influence or space. For instance, meydans are often accompanied by religious buildings or an institution, carrying the name of the other space. For instance, Beyazit Meydanı is located in front of Beyazit Mosque of Istanbul and “depicted as a space of confrontation between secularists and Islamists” (Gökarkin, 2012, p. 4). Meydans are also defined within a very specific locality with strong collective identity like Meydane Jolfa in Isfahan, which is reflective of parochial space located in the Armenian quarter of the city and is “in the vicinity of three ancient churches” including the Armenian church of Vang (Karimnia, Ahmad, Ibrahim, & Omar, 2010). These linguistic particularities – deeply-rooted in the scalar definition of space – have critical significance to the way that a differential understanding of public space can be developed as they unveil many clandestine socio-political dynamics of the space that universal theories and theorists may not notice.
Based on modern rationality, Enlightenment values, “liberal thought” and western practices of citizenship, many urban scholars classified urban space into the realms of work, private space and public space (Mnookin, 1981, p. 1429). This further developed into variations on these spaces such as “parochial spaces” (L. Lofland, 1994, p. 30) or semi/pseudo-public spaces (Banerjee, 2001). Yet the fundamental question of dividing life into different spheres is problematic, highly contested and also impossible within certain cultures and contexts (Zubaida, 2011). That may relate to the fact that in these contexts religion, spirituality and emotions, the elements are that are often devalued and perceived as opposed to reason and rationality within the Enlightenment project (Barnett, 2010), are inseparable from the physical world or at least the everyday life of people. Hence a fluid and contradictory undercurrent penetrates into any scale of life within the city. This specific aspect has a direct influence in the way that one thinks about public space within that context, particularly considering that the private and privacy are dominantly defined by religion.

In addition, it also must be noted that Turkey went through extensive and intense modernisation and westernisation processes during different historical periods parallel to its Islamic Ottoman development (Ayataç, 2007; Cerasi, 2008; Gökarkısel & Secor, 2015; Gül, 2009; Ç. Keyder & Öncü, 1994). These were later accompanied by “secularisation” processes (Mardin, 1982, p. 176), which led to a contradictory and significantly complex situation in the fabric of Istanbul, as an in-between city, which does not fit geographical or socio-political settings of West or East, North or South. Istanbul appears as a city that is the locus of contestation not only between powers, but also between ideas and ideals. Therefore, a rigid classification of urban spaces in Istanbul will miss the contextual nuances that defines the urban reality of the city.

Another contextual particularity that significantly affects the definition of public space is how an individual or citizen is perceived within a given society. Arendt and most of the continental philosophers consider individuals as distinct beings or in the process of distinction. Based on the interviews and my ethnographic observations, this assumption falls apart promptly within Istanbul’s context due to the influence of religion, secularism, ethnic and collective identities and the fact that an individual appears as a distinct being. This was discussed in Section 8.1.1., addressing one of the interviewee’s statement: “people are more in groups, behaving in groups that is why the characteristics is changing also.” However, the interviewees reminded us that this collective identity and the definition of individuality is being transformed through globalisation, cultural modernisation and also the domination of individualist values over traditional, more collectivist ones. Nonetheless, the notions of collective identity, tribal and parochial being and togetherness are still influential within the Middle Eastern pop culture, history, literature and the social psyche of citizens (Bayat, 2013). It may be possible for one to leave the private self and the household behind as Arendt (1998) demands, yet it would be impossible to disregard a collective identity of that is produced through history, struggles, wars and migrations. Therefore, the appearance of an individual within a space has significant collective consequences, which was reflected in the occupation of the park during the movement, as the camps within the small hyper-geography of resistance were strictly divided based on ethnic, religious or socio-political boundaries.
As discussed in Section 8.1.1., scale plays a defining role in the way an individual appears in the space of appearance, differentiating between a neighbourhood gathering place of a specific mahalle, and a differential, political and contested urban space that can be lived as representational space. The distinction between the spatial scales within this context is crucial, as everything means different things when it is beyond the boundaries of neighbourhoods and also in the dominating shadow of the state. In the context of Istanbul, it is within the antagonistic and contested urban space that an individual or a group of people appear both as distinct and collective beings to contest and struggle for their right to be, to use the space and to be acknowledged against the homogenising power of the state and its abstract space.

The occupation of Gezi Park, as a political space of resistance, was the embodiment of universal public space par excellence, one may argue. Gezi Park, before the occupation, was accessible to everyone (in close proximity) to enter, however not to be seen and heard. Undeniably, the park was the locus of the differentiated, the undesired and the other – namely the sex workers, refugees and drug dealers – and concealed within the formless, overshadowed and insignificant spatiality of the place. The park appeared as quiet urban space, not necessarily politicised but highly political. During the protests and confrontations and occupation, the Park became the locus of difference, maximal and historical differences. The space became highly re-politicised through merely the agglomeration and convergence of antagonistic groups against the abstract space of state, commodification of the city and privatisation of urban reality. The appearance of thousands of individuals did not transform and re-politicise the symbolic centre of Istanbul, rather, it was the appearance of the collective differences within the same spatiality that produced a differential understanding of the public space, the city and its possible futures.

During the occupation, the park became the space of political appearance, and this dimension was strongly accentuated through interviews, contributed to the radical redefinition of public space in the context of Istanbul. Everyone within the spectrum of power relations – from Kurdish rebels and LGBT groups to anti-capitalist Islamists on one side and the police and government supporters on the other side – engaged in and with the space, physically, mentally, socially and also virtually. Canovan (1985), in line with Arendt, argues that “where people are together, speaking and acting, a space of appearance comes into being” (p. 180) and within this framework, Gezi Park appeared as a utopian and antagonistic public space when the movement unfolded. Yet the Gezi Park Occupation, by antagonistic groups against the abstraction process and imposition of the state ideology exceeded the social dimension of the Arendtian public realm, or rational and the consensus based discourse of Habermasian public sphere.

Through the critical analysis of interviews and ethnographic observational recordings, it is understood that the lived experience of the Gezi Park Movement constituted an exemplary instance of Lefebvrian (1991) representational space to assert their “right to the city and bring counter-development against exclusionary urban development projects and processes” (Ay & Miraftab, 2016, p. 571). Accordingly, it might be valuable to see the public realm of Arendt (2013) in conjunction with the production of space and the way Lefebvre (1991) approaches the space of appearance and encounter. This can
reflect the complex space of politics and of public life in an age when the social aspect of Arendtian thought is significantly transformed or even suspended in a nexus of digital space and hyper-geographies of resistance. Therefore, Lefebvre’s (1991) representational space can be considered more appropriate as it accentuates the emotional and irrational complexities, symbolic meanings and historical layers of the space that the universal theories and thought may be incapable of digesting.

Approaching the Gezi Park Movement and its spatialities as digitally augmented forms of representational space paves the way for a deeper and more critical interpretation of a dynamic process that constantly resists an analysis using traditional spatial instruments. This approach illustrates how Arendt’s public realm or space of appearance underestimates the definition of lived experience as temporarily placed in a historical instance and embracing the complex temporal, spatial and social dimensions of uncertainty that characterise everyday life in the post-social age.

Representational space and its understanding relocates the concept of public space within the specific context of Gezi Park as a temporal differential space. It assists the reader – of the theory, this thesis and the city – to comprehend why Gezi Park as the space of appearance has emerged and also why it has disappeared – while the park proceeds to exist as it used to. The case of the Gezi Park Movement and the temporary occupation of the park by antagonistic and fragmented individuals and groups, who were also united against the domination of the abstract space of the state, further solidifies the concluding points of this last section, discussing that Arendtian or Habermasian notions of public realm or public sphere are not directly relevant to this context, yet they are still beneficial to the understandings of complex transformations and suspended dynamics, as the locus of contestation over ideas, power and radical politics.

9.2.5. The Digital Machine and the Collision between the Abstract and the Lived

Here, I discuss the impact of digital social networks on representational space, the scalar transformations of public space and the emergence of differential space of the Gezi Park Movement as a new possibility. Digital social networks suspend and further complicate the meaning and implications of the public realm of Arendt (1998), and the public sphere of Habermas (1989). This is because digital networks are theoretically open but practically are not accessible to all the individuals of a society and locality at any given time. Also, the meaning of presence or appearing has been transformed by the emergence of digital social networks. The questions of time, context, geography and multiplicity are found to be central in defining the discourse of digital technologies.

The development of digital social networks within urban movements is mostly considered as part of the penetration of digital technologies into the public realm and public space. As McQuire (2016, p. 19) argues: “geomedia has become critical to the politics of contemporary public space”. In the specific context of this discussion, digital social networks became the machine of the augmentation of representational space of appearance, with an implosive/explosive dimension, that on one hand, it is expanding the lived experience of the Gezi Park Movement and the occupation beyond the physical
limitations of the space. On the other hand, it simultaneously transcends the notion of place and the scale of public space, displacing the movement into a suspended temporal and global realm.

Digital social networks have become a spatial and temporal “monstrous machine” (Coyne, 2007, p. 57), encrypting and decoding a collision between abstract space of the state and lived space of the movement. These networks have been constituting a counter public sphere with radical politics (Downey & Fenton, 2003; Fraser, 1990) against the abstract space of state, and Habermasian (1989) singular and rational bourgeois public sphere (Çoban, 2016) which is often materialised as representative and parliamentary politics. The key to conceptualising the digital technologies and networks as a machine is in the situated, contradictory and material dimensions of the notion of the machine in our daily life. Machines, as social products of the society reflect the context that they are produced and function in. They have a contradictory aspect as they can “turn against us” (Coyne, 2007, p. 58), while they reshape our collective and individual identity. They can both code and decode the space while transforming the scalar understanding of it, something that has been described as “under-view and over-view effect” of the space (Speed, 2010, p. 169). They are also material objects, which like any other machine have glitches and are hackable.

Considering the conceptual triad of Lefebvre (1991b), the perceived, conceived and lived space, one can argue that Lefebvrian space cannot be reduced to a network, “rather we come to see space as amalgam of different kinds of space, material and conceptual” (Kirsch, 1995, p. 532). On one hand, the conceived space of state, planners and designers utilises the technology –including the digital machine of social networks – and its abstractness to homogenise and dominate the everyday life (perceived space) and the struggle for urban rights. Fenton (2016b, p. 9) argues, “The ever-increasing entanglement of media and communications corporations with politicians and state agencies constrains the opportunities and possibilities for being political through limiting public knowledge and policing dissent whether covertly or not.” This again signifies the contradictory and fluid nature of the digital machine, in this case in favour of the abstract space of state and authorities.

On the other hand, as discussed before, digital networks are monstrous in a way that, during the Gezi Park Movement, they turn against the system and the state that used to control and dominate them through censorship and digital surveillance. The monstrosity of the digital machine is not about its destructive power towards its basic existence or towards the spatiality that it functions in, the city of Istanbul in this case, yet it can destroy “the symmetry and order” (Coyne, 2007, p. 58) of the (infra)structures that produced it, or of the mechanisms that hold the totality of the system intact. When the digital space of the Gezi Park Movement exceeded the locality and even the national geography of Turkey, Gezi Park emerged at a global level, threatening the totality of the state from outside, something that couldn’t be tolerated by the authority. That could be one of the reasons that Twitter was shut down during and after the occupation of Gezi Park. The scalar transformation of Gezi Park was one the key aspects of its urban and global significance that attracted the attention of media and many scholars. This scalar transformation of Gezi Park not only suspended the meaning of public space within the context of Istanbul, it also introduced new possibilities for both the understanding of urban reality and the practice of urban life.
For Lefebvre (1991b), the process of abstraction and the emergence of “global scale space” does not diminish the importance and the role of perceived and lived space of a society (Kirsch, 1995, p. 532). Quite the contrary, this process can be reversed for the struggle at local and urban scale. The global scale space can become a force of power for the occupation and production of a differential space at local and urban scale, yet a contextual analysis is crucially required to understand this contradictory process. The Gezi Park Movement and the way it utilised Twitter was an example of this reverse process of abstraction par excellence. This point is clearly underlined in Kirsch argument which states:

On one hand, there are technologies which facilitate the ongoing globalization of space – the space of sovereignty and homogeneity (Smith, 1990) [(Smith, 2010)]. But on the other hand, the accumulation of technology and techniques in society has also shaped space at the local scale, and facilitated the processes through which space is not only homogenized (and global), but always fragmented as well. (1995, p. 532)

This “accumulation of technology and techniques” in Istanbul’s urban society was indeed an important factor in the struggle against abstraction of the space by the state and against the domination of locality and local context by the global scale space. Nevertheless, it was fragmented in a sense that sustained its locality and spatial dimension, creating a hybrid and hyper geography of both local and global at the same time. Gezi Park was indeed in constant scalar transformation between local (mahalle), urban (Istanbul and Taksim area) and global (the digital sphere) levels. This relationship was dominantly formed by the way the movement used the limited technology it had at its disposal. The movement used Twitter and the abstract space that it produced – the machine – to claim the rights of inhabitants over Istanbul and its urban spaces against the exact same abstract space that aims to homogenize and dominate it, hence the constant implosion/explosion that occurred on different scales.

Furthermore, the machine of Twitter not only crucially contributed to the formation of the space of resistance in Gezi Park, it was transformed by the resistance, contextual politics and the place itself. The machine was reproduced through the movement. The machine has become a constitutive part of social and networks through mediation of the production of space. In other words, it is the public space, its spatiality and socio-political dynamics that are utilising this digital machine to go beyond the spatial scale and temporal limitations of Gezi Park, trespassing the limitations of Istanbul’s mahalle (neighbourhood) and projecting Gezi Park beyond its urban limits, into the global digital public sphere.

Although this phenomenon and its implications are a great achievement for radical politics and a reaffirmation of right to the city, both practically and theoretically (Elicin, 2017), a profound restraint needs to be practiced, when such an exceptional process is being generalised or theorised. The contextual and situated meaning of digital communications must be central to this analysis. The Gezi Park Movement unfolded with specific temporal and spatial dimensions, within a limited period of time and within the specific spatial context of Istanbul, it then transcended its spatiality and meaning through digital social networks, and created a hybrid and complex network of lived spaces at all
scales of local, urban and global levels. Therefore, it must be noted that “the wider social contexts in which networks are formed and exist have a political architecture that predates the Internet” (Fenton, 2011, p. 197), which accentuates the critical significance of the context and contextualised politics of space in analysis of digital social networks.

Considering these dynamics and the politics of scale in this specific context, Istanbul and its emerging urban reality can be redefined as it is no longer bound to a highly contentious political image and a complex natural and urban geography, thanks to a highly anarchic and complex machine of digital social networks and global public spheres. In this section, it has been shown that the digital machine of an urban movement can further suspend the meaning of public space, accentuating the multiplicity, fluidity and complexity of the emerging hyper-geography of such territories. The digital machine, while being situated within a specific context, forming and being formed by that context, produces a mechanism that takes the space of resistance and urban movements, and exceeds the spatial limitations and temporal dimensions of the event into a global public sphere. This scalar transformation of public space can illuminate how the rethinking of public space in digital age requires a contextualised, place-based, critical and radical analysis to unpack the hybrid interrelationship that exists between production of space, urban movements and digital technologies.

9.2.6. Conclusion

The main goal of this discussion was to respond to the first research question of this thesis, scrutinising the role of the power structures and their ideological vision – in the form of urban knowledge and theory – in the re-definition of public space through the political and social transformation of Istanbul in an age of digital technologies. The discussion has been structured to depict the process that leads to a differential understanding of the notion of public space in light of a peculiar and complex phenomenon that requires a complex, contextualised and critical analysis.

This discussion argues that rethinking public space needs to be specifically contextualised. Public space and its definition, as the space of the people, must reflect the specific conditions and contextual characteristics of those who occupy such space. The power structures and the role of the state and its abstract space are critical to the way that public space is defined, specifically within the context of Istanbul, in which the space is highly political, controlled and contested, not only by the state, but also by different groups, the market and institutions. Therefore, the theory, the context, the scale and levels of local, urban and global public space must be studied in relation to each other, addressing the complex and interpenetrating relations of production of space.

The discussion revolves around three key arguments. Firstly, public space needs to be considered as more than a theoretical concept or outcome of an abstract process. It is not the result of planning regulations and designs, which label and signify a physical place within the urban centres, mostly known as the plaza or city square. On the contrary, public space must be perceived as a moment of a bigger process, as the moment of struggle and contestation, in which one cannot dominate the other, and where abstract ideology of the state cannot homogenise and control the lived space and experiences of urban inhabitants. Secondly, public space as part of the process of production of
space has different meanings within different scales of local, urban and global. A local public space, within a specific mahalle in Istanbul, can turn into a counter public sphere, engaging the urban inhabitants of the city, and transforming the perception of the space within the city. This process can only unfold through urban movements and Gezi Park was an instance that embodied the process perfectly. Applying the Lefebvrian notion of representational space, this discussion has relocated the meaning of the public space to address the contextualised dynamics and also scalar transformation of space more accurately. Considering the Gezi Park Movement and the occupation period as a process that is strongly temporal, irrational and antagonistic, it clearly appears that rethinking public space requires advanced theories, possibly based on Arendt and Habermas, to reflect the processes by which an internally-fragmented space is unified against the domination of the state’s abstract space and its ideological implications.

Thirdly, the Gezi Park Movement utilised a digital machine to exceed the urban and spatial limitations of Istanbul, which produced a peculiar scalar transformation in such a way that Gezi Park as a public space, was in constant transformation from its locality and urban limits to a global public sphere. This depended on the process and on the spatial and temporal dimensionality of the phenomenon, establishing itself as an urban resistance, engaging the neighbourhoods, exposing itself in the digital global sphere, and immodestly imploding and re-emerging within the neighbourhoods as Bostan forums. Digital machines of the movement empowered a spontaneous collision between the abstract space of the state and the lived space of the movement, and spatial practices of inhabitants shed light on unpredictable, unescapable and profoundly complex and interconnected moments of production of the space. Despite the seemingly impossible task of analysis of this phenomenon, a contextualised and radical study based on thorough and in-depth phenomenological and ethnographic methodologies proposes new possibilities for a different understanding of the digitally augmented fabric of cities. This contributes to the radical knowledge and practice of urbanism and can radically materialise the differential city that is at the heart of many urban movements and intellectual endeavours.
10.0. Introduction

I started this thesis as a theoretical inquiry into the meaning of public space in relation to the political, social and technological transformations that we are witnessing in our contemporary society. This inquiry has been further refined to address a very specific process: the production of public space where and when urban movements, supported by digital technologies, resist the implementation of strategies inspired by an overbearing spatial ideology of the state and power structures that aim to homogenise and dominate public spaces. A critical analysis of urban theories identified a specific gap within the urban knowledge, which is related to a lack of understanding of the interplay and tension between lived urban experiences and the state’s conceived spatial models within the specific context of Middle Eastern cities.

The temporal and spatial context investigated in this work is the city of Istanbul in 2013. In this context, the thesis has suggested that due to specific linguistic and cultural particularities, universal urban theory may be incapable of grasping the totality and complexities of urban life in cities like Istanbul. The city was also the context of important transformative and radical democratic processes that occurred during the Gezi Park Movement, and which have not been thoroughly analysed, theorised and publicised from a critical urban perspective.

The following subchapters address the research objectives and main research questions by discussing the main findings of this research. Subchapter 10.2 summarises the key findings of the thesis and their relevance to the research questions. Section 10.2.1 addresses the findings of the
discussions on the notion of *public space* and its meaning within the context of Istanbul as the locus of emerging possibilities and spatialities, as a response to the first research question:

- How do socio-political processes in specific urban geographies, like the Gezi Park Movement of Istanbul relate to the universal definition of public space and our understanding of urban theories?

Section 10.2.2 summarises the findings of this thesis regarding the relationships between urban movements, urban transformations and power structures. This section responds to the second research question:

- How can urban movements go beyond the disruption of the state’s urbanisation processes and produce new possibilities, utilising the emerging and complex nexus of digital and physical spaces?

The role of digital technologies both in the production of urban space and also in the reshaping and rethinking of urban knowledge and understanding is discussed in Section 10.2.3, as a response to the third research question:

- How are digital technologies impacting the role of public space, its meaning, political powers and its spatiality during specific socio-political conditions like the Gezi Park Movement?

Subchapter 10.3 returns to the theoretical framework and methodology of the research, summarising the theoretical and practical limitations and self-reflective critique of the research. Subchapter 10.4 introduces the new research possibilities, recommendations and opportunities. The last sections speculate on the heart of this thesis, its utopian objectives and questions, to see beyond the known, accepted and imposed.

**10.1. Key Findings**

This subchapter encapsulates all the findings and concluding discussions of this thesis. The following sections are based on the theoretical investigations, interviews, urban ethnography and personal observations conducted throughout the research and extensively discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

**10.1.1. Rethinking the Public Space**

‘Public space’ envelopes the palpable tension between place, experiences at all scales in daily life, and the seeming spacelessness of Internet, popular opinion, and global institutions and economy. It is also not a homogenous arena: the dimensions and the extent of its publicness are highly differentiated from instance to instance. (Low & Smith, 2013, p. 3)

Through this investigation, Chapter 4 argued that the discourse on the public has transformed, but it is still grounded on a theoretical approach that is not adequate to address the emerging transformation of public spaces within contemporary urban space. The case of the Gezi Park Movement shows the
limitations of the current concept of *public space* in elaborating the dynamism and diffusiveness of its extraordinary everyday political dimensions and spatialities of interaction, resistance and *appearance*.

The case of the Gezi Park Movement shows the limitations of the current concept of *public space*, which is rooted in continental theories and is universally reproduced. These limitations are about the inability in elaborating the dynamism and diffusiveness of the extraordinary everyday political dimensions and spatiality of interaction, resistance and *appearance*, particularly in the context of Istanbul. This research set out to rethink the notion of public space, however, it came to the point of negation of the notion of public space as a *universal* concept, and challenged the translation of spatial and urban spaces that are deeply rooted in place-based local knowledge and practices. One of the critical points of the research was the impossibility of Taksim Meydanı’s (which contains Gezi Park and is known as Taksim Square) translation to *public space*, as the word *meydan* has multi-layered and historical meanings, which do not necessarily conflate with the notion of *public space*.

The thesis established that the socio-political processes that led to the Gezi Park Movement, including years of gentrification and ethnic displacement, a combination of neoliberal and theocratic ideologies of the state and the translation of these ideologies into urban practices, ultimately triggered the question of *public space*, its meaning and who has a right to it within the context of Istanbul. The Gezi Park Movement has epitomized an emergent spatial condition that can be defined as a *differential geography of resistance*, in which the conventional or historical understanding of public space is profoundly challenged. This is a condition in which private and public relationships are redefined by mobile and multi-layered realms. In addition, digital technology has profoundly transformed the nature of communicative acts, displacing their making and reach with permanent spatial dislocations and temporal multiplicity, further challenging the theories discussed in this thesis. Thus, *public space* not only has to be defined spatially and based on local linguistic and discursive particulates, but also the definition of *public space* is a temporal and fluid definition by itself and requires continuous *rethinking* and persistent critical examination.

Through the final discussions in Chapter 9, this thesis developed a new framework to redefine and re-envision the meaning of *public space*. This framework has included temporal, spatial and contextual (linguistic, cultural and historical) aspects of the *public space*. This discussion utilised the findings of the interviews and the digital information fabric of the Gezi Park Movement to depict the scalar transformation of its public space. The discussion on public space in Chapter 9 has suggested that the complexities of the temporal and spatial conditions found in this public space indicate the emergence of a form of citizenship rooted in a discontinuous and disseminated fluidity that projects the socio-political and cultural context of the locality into an unbounded *space of appearance*, always in a state of reconfiguration and change.

### 10.1.2. Rethinking Urban Movements

Chapter 5 initiated a discussion on urban movements, defining them as distinct urban phenomena. To meet the second objective of the research, which is to demonstrate the relation between a specific state’s ideology, urban developments and urban movements, this chapter utilised Lefebvre’s theories
and analysed the process of abstraction and the imposition of the state’s ideology as the root of most urban movements. This chapter has argued that when the abstract space of the state is conceived and implemented through overbearing processes that homogenise the urban reality, a differential space of resistance emerges. The differential space of Gezi Park has been produced in the form of negation of the implementation of the state’s spatial ideology. This movement did not merely emerge as opposition to a gentrification process that alienates a valuable public asset, rather, as an antagonist expression and conception of a crucial instance of public space, where inhabitants through their integrated perceived and lived spatialities considered the park as the theatre of radically irreconcilable differentiating forces present in the cosmopolitan multitude of Istanbul.

This thesis has argued that the Gezi Park Movement, the park as a public space, and the transformation of the city, cannot be explored in isolation. Therefore, it is essential to unpack the historical relationships between the state-led processes of urbanisation, the violent abstraction of the city and urban struggles that took place in Istanbul. It emerged that the Gezi Park Movement was entrenched in the historical urban struggles of Istanbul, going back to early stages of modernisation and the urban reformations of Tanzimat during 1839-1876 (Gül, 2009). Further analysis of the movement has shown that, although the theories of Lefebvre and his analysis of the state’s abstraction process and urbanisation are insightful, there are some specific characteristics that are unique to Istanbul, which are not adequately addressed in critical and structural urban theories. These specific aspects, including the role of emotions, language, collective culture and identity, and the innate heterogeneity of Istanbul, are key findings that differentiate the Gezi Park Movement from most urban movements and anti-neoliberal urban struggles.

Lastly, Chapter 9, through a contextualised analysis and based on the findings of the research, argued for a right to the negation of state-led urban paradigms as a legitimate urban practice and as part of the right to the city discourse. Through the analysis of urban theories and practices, this discussion has offered an alternative understanding of the urban transformations in Istanbul, unveiling the role of abstract space of the state in the imposition of certain ideologies – in this case, through urban development and regeneration projects. This discussion reaffirmed even further the need for radical rethinking of the notion of public space, which is based on difference, contextual lived experience of the inhabitants and the ambiguous and diffused augmented urban reality of the city, rather than abstract theorising or the state’s urban and spatial power structure and discourse.

10.1.3. Rethinking Digital Technologies

The thesis has explored the relationship between digital technologies and urban movements from three points of view, all of which are strongly interwoven with each other; firstly, digital representational space or the digital space of resistance, secondly, the relationship between the machine of digital networks and place-based urban movements, and lastly, the digital information fabrics of geographies of resistance, produced by digital activities during urban movements. It has argued that digital social networks can be both the locus of the resistance and also a reflection of it. They can enhance the process of mobilisation and production of differential spaces while they can
also be the temporal differential spaces themselves. Digital social networks, while playing these roles, can also produce an information fabric documenting the collision between the lived space of inhabitants and the abstract space and ideology of the state. Accordingly, the temporal digital information fabric of the Gezi Park Movement was produced, analysed and discussed in Chapter 8. It further elaborated that in the case of the Gezi Park Movement, it was the public space, the park and its spatiality and re-politicised space that utilised the digital machine of Twitter and other social networks to go beyond the spatial scale and temporal limitations of Gezi Park itself, trespassing the limitations of Istanbul's *mahalle* (neighbourhood) and projecting Gezi Park beyond its urban limits, and into the global digital public sphere.

Lastly, the analysis concluded that if the digital activities are produced, collected and analysed with integrity, ethics, and an acknowledgement of ideological and political bias both in the users’ and researcher’s subjectivity, this method can explain some of the complex layers of urbanity and the urban reality of Istanbul or similar hybrid and cosmopolitan cities. Although this method can be useful in capturing some of the underexplored layers of the city, the local context, specifically the local understanding of the city, should be considered carefully. The combination of analysis of the digital information fabric of the Gezi Park Movement and the interviewees’ accounts of Istanbul during the time of protests has shown that digital technologies indeed influenced the urban reality of the city – socially, mentally and spatially. However, the role of social networks and mobile devices was more complementary of the existing political architecture of the movement, reflecting, publicizing and politicising complex relationships that interconnect the state, the city and its inhabitants.

### 10.2. Methodology and the Limitations of Research

This research established its investigation based on a theoretical framework that is deeply rooted in critical urban theory, continental philosophy and universal knowledge. However, through the analysis of the case study, it has appeared that the Gezi Park Movement, Istanbul, its public spaces and the urban life of the city contain many particular layers and concepts that are the defining forces in how we understand the notion of *public space*, yet they are not included in the universal definitions of the concept. Language and discourse, both verbal and symbolic, have played a profound role in revealing these differences, discrepancies and power relations between the theory and the lived urban reality of Istanbul. To address these issues, this thesis has reflected on its methodology, theoretical framework and the concepts that have been utilised throughout the research. The notion of *public space* can be and is translated in different ways in Turkish, yet, the translations of words like *meydan* as the signifier of a specific open space, or *kamusal alan* as the literal translation of *public space*, have different connotations that may not necessarily demonstrate accurately the meaning of public space and vice versa. In addition, some specific cultural practices in Istanbul, including gathering in religious places, cannot be ignored in relation to *rethinking* the notion of public space in that specific context.

*Critical Discourse Analysis* played a central role in the methodology of this research. Using a specific approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, this study has focused on the *situated meaning* of the
language through the analysis of the interviews and ethnographic observations. Yet, due to manifold methodological limitations that are discussed in Chapter 7, such as linguistic misinterpretations, insider-outsider dichotomy and also political and social constraints in disclosing controversial and sometimes-risky opinions and/or narratives, the analysis of the situated meaning of the discourse is not fully possible. Many particularities and details have clearly been lost in both literal and theoretical translation and transcription. I utilised my personal experiences and recollection of ethnographic conversations I had with my participants to address these limitations. These limitations are not merely obstacles that have been identified in this research; rather they can enable a different understanding of the phenomena and lead to future research and new possibilities.

Some of the limitations were related to the existing power structures between the inhabitants and the city, between the interviewees/the researched and the researcher and also between the participants and the non-participants. Turkey is not necessarily famous for freedom of speech; it has its own complex controlling mechanisms and censorship machine for maintaining power over public opinion. Thus, it was expected to observe self-censorship, caution regarding expressing controversial issues and a lack of transparency regarding the role of central and local government in the process of urbanisation of the city. This aspect has overshadowed some of the conversations regarding the relationship between the state, the power structures and ideologies and the process of urbanisation in Istanbul. However, using my contextual knowledge and memories, I attempted to address and acknowledge these issues through the analysis process.

Furthermore, the relationship between the interviewees and the researcher has always been a critical aspect of qualitative research (Asselin, 2003; Baxter & Eyles, 1997; J. Miller & Glassner, 1997). In this instance, this relationship was not dominated by the western academic versus eastern subject or similar narratives discussed in many postcolonial critiques of qualitative methods, yet the context of my research and the role of my subjectivity and positionality – as someone who is dislocated from the Middle East, first to the United Kingdom and then Aotearoa-New Zealand, someone educated in western universities and highly influenced by Post-Marxist and critical theory scholars – has had an impact on the ways that the interviewees were selected, the methods of conducting interviews and the analysis of the discourse. Through the process, I aimed to address these issues as much as possible; however, there may be unconscious bias and negligence of my own positionality in the analysis.

It has to be noted that in this research, the investigation is solely concerned with the Gezi Park Movement and those inhabitants who opposed the urban policies of the government. The government, its supporters, the local planner and the designers of the Gezi Park Development project were all approached through a theoretical lens. For security and safety reasons, I could not approach any of the officials or even the supporters of the state or its urban policies. Therefore, clearly, some aspects of this movement that relate to the non-participants of the movement including both the supporters of the state and indifferent inhabitants are missing. This is a limitation that could be addressed if the circumstances, both technically and politically, were different.
As a result, Chapter 7 has argued that the theoretical framework and the methodology of research within the context of Istanbul must be contextualised. This contextualisation has reflected the interconnectedness and hybridity of the urban layers of Istanbul. Universal concepts and urban theories that are hinged on western experiments and economic liberalism are not able to fully grasp and comprehend the complexity, fluidity and multiplicity of the urban reality of Istanbul, even though Istanbul itself cannot be considered as a fully non-western geography, considering its history and geo-location. Accordingly, the analysis of the Gezi Park Movement encompassed a careful consideration of the language of the city, the discourse and perception of urban life as well as the historical layers that all played a significant role in the production of Gezi Park as a political public space and a contested urban symbol.

### 10.3. Opportunities and New Possibilities

There are manifold opportunities for further research and also new theoretical and practical possibilities revealed in this research. Since this research has been conducted as a theoretical investigation to rethink the notions of public space, urban movements and emerging technologies, most of the new possibilities can be defined within the realm of theory, perception and conception of cities. However, these new possibilities can build the foundation of new urban experiments, insurgent urban planning and design, and innovative and targeted use of digital technologies to produce a different space and city.

One of the main limitations of this research relates to the context of Istanbul. Istanbul, a peculiar city, is the locus of manifold ambiguous urban phenomena emerging within the interstices of the city, which are often underexplored within the wider critical urban theory and literature. This gap within our urban knowledge is a profound opportunity for further research on the city, not merely to gain a better understanding of Istanbul, rather to reflect on its peculiarities and complexities to further challenge the mainstream urban concepts and theoretical frameworks. In order to address the limitations discussed above, such research can be conducted in close collaboration with local scholars, practitioners and activists. Accordingly, not only the context of the city can be assessed more carefully, but the research can also address the ethical and social limitations that may arise. In this way, perception, the processes, the lived experiences and the urban reality of a city like Istanbul can be documented, publicised and understood globally. This suggests new possibilities and a differential knowledge that can be applied to enhance our understanding of other cities and also shed a better light on the notion of difference within the cities of the global North.

In addition, in a more transparent and democratic socio-political context, there are great opportunities for further studies on othered cities, which could investigate a differential and contextualised process of production of space accordingly. In this research, the relationship between the production of space and the governmentality of Istanbul has been discussed on a theoretical level, however, this relationship can be further analysed both in theory and practice in more appropriate circumstances. The emergence of differential spaces in Istanbul, like Bostan forums for example, suggests new
possibilities for understanding and experiencing different relationships between the production/reproduction of space and the governmental and institutionalised process of urbanisation.

Digital technologies are evolving at an unprecedented rate. At the time of data mining, many technical and theoretical obstacles limited the study's ability to conduct a precise and complete data collection. Now, many of these limitations have been addressed technically and theoretically and both the technology and its application to the geo-spatial analysis of digital social networks have advanced considerably. Digital technologies can produce very accurate data if they are planned and programmed for research purposes. Although this will diminish the autonomous, unregulated and spontaneous nature of the data, it can reinforce, complement or critique the analysis of urban layers through traditional methods of research. Also, it can be argued that, with a strong technical and theoretical foundation, there are many possibilities for innovative research and experimental urban practices using digitally augmented geographies of politics and antagonism to address and practice a differential and radical form of urban participation and citizenship.

Lastly, it must be noted that this research had a specific task, with a broad scope. This research aimed to rethink the notion of public space through a specific temporal phenomenon in a very particular geo-political urban context. Although the research was conducted to understand a complex interrelationship between the theory, the process of production of space and the lived experiences of digitally augmented urban movements, it had to cover a wider range of subjects. This research, therefore, can be considered as a foundation for more specific investigations. For instance, the relationships between the concepts or phenomena discussed in this research with more local aspects of the city, such as a specific mahalle or community in Istanbul, could be another focal subject for future research. Lastly, certain concepts like digitally empowered urban autonomy and differential and augmented urban and architectural practices against the state's urban ideology, when carefully applied in particular contexts, have manifold potentials to lead to studies that have significant relevance to the current socio-political climate of global cities.

10.4. The Legacy of the Thesis

Through years of training, practicing and teaching architecture and urban planning, I encountered a critical question regarding the role of ideology, power structures and the way we, as urbanists, understand and conceive the space and cities. This research on a very fundamental level was a personal investigation into my questions regarding the role of different structures in reshaping and transforming our knowledge and understanding of cities. Since I personally lived through the rise of digitally infused urban movements, I decided to explore the thesis’ research questions in a context that culturally, politically and geographically is close to my heart and mind.

Reflecting on the literature and the previous studies conducted on the meaning of public space, I can conclude that this thesis has shed light on a different approach to the public space and urban theories that aim to interpret the meaning of political and contested geographies of resistance. This approach to the space and the city has focused on the processes that are involved in the production of space rather than the space as an outcome. This thesis specifically looked at the interrelationships between
space, the political, the power structures and technology. Analysis of these interrelationships within
the context of Istanbul and the Gezi Park Movement further explained the new and emerging layers of
urbane that are mostly left neglected or under explored in urban studies and literature.

This thesis, based on Lefebvrian theories and a qualitative analysis of the Gezi Park Movement and
Istanbul, has investigated the process of the production of public space as a space of antagonistic
appearance and political contestations within this context, which is the locus of a peculiar city on the
edge of both western and eastern worlds. By critiquing the Habermasian notion of the public sphere
and cautiously considering the Arendtian understanding of public life, this thesis depicted how Gezi
Park as a public space and more importantly as an urban space became the locus of lived urban
experience, difference and reaffirmation of the right to the city. Through the analysis of this process of
becoming, this thesis has highlighted the significance of local particularities, history, language and
other contextual dimensions of the contested geography to the project of conceiving and theorising
the urban phenomena.

The process of unpacking the complexities involved in the production of space within the context of
the Gezi Park Movement has faced many theoretical and technical constraints. There is vital need for
future research to address these limitations. Future research can build on the strong foundation
created by this thesis, taking note of its limitations by reflecting more on local understandings of the
city, the urban language of Istanbul and the geospatial history of its urban fabric. This research,
instead of a return to traditional theories and concepts, has envisaged a different way of thinking,
reading and conceiving the city and its urban reality, aiming to illuminate a differential utopia, in which
the state and its dominating abstract space cannot eliminate difference, dissent and the other. Lastly,
this thesis suggests a differential understanding of utopia and a different Istanbul, in which the city is
enabled by an unbounded, fluid and augmented space of resistance and antagonism to promise a
world that is not homogenised or controlled by power or ideologies.
Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Interview Questions Approved by Ethics Committee

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Project title: Rethinking Public Place [Later changed to Space]: A Critical Analysis of Urban Social Movements in Age of Digital Technologies
Researcher: Farzad Zamani Gharaghooshi
Supervisor: Dr. Dermot Molloy
Co-supervisor: Dr. Manfredo Manfredini

1. Background and Self-Reflections:
   - What is your name?
   - Where are you from?
   - How long have you been living in Istanbul?
   - What is your position in the School of Architecture?
   - When did you start to work as an academic?
   - What kind of subjects are you teaching? And what are your research interests?
   - Are you working in the practice of architecture? For how long?

   On Spatial Practices:
   - Apart from the architectural aesthetics and features of that specific place, how did you see the social atmosphere of public places of Istanbul?
   - Do you think that social interactions in the place you mentioned above, affected your perception of the public place?
   - According to your experience, how do you define the social life of the city?
   - Have you ever designed any public place?
     - If the answer is yes. How do you interpret and define the specific social practices of Istanbul? What kind of social interactions and social conventions affect the design process of your projects?

2. On Representations of Space
   - What is Public? Can you define Publicity?
   - Who defines the public in the society? What is the role of social and political forces in defining the public life of the citizens?
   - Do you think that there is a relationship between the meaning of public and matter of social equalities? How do power relations impact on this relationship?
   - What is the relationship between public and publicity with citizenry?
   - Are all the citizens theoretically included in the definition of public?
   - Do you think the definition of public in Turkey is different with other countries? In
other words, do you contextualize the definition of public? Why?

- What is the most important factor in your society which can affect and define the line between public and private? (e.g.: religion, government, social norms, traditions, lifestyle?)
- Do you see any role for economy and market in defining the public? How?
- How do you see the historical transformation of public in the social context? Do you see any shift in the way that public is formed in the modern Turkey with the historical Turkey?
- What forces can define, produce and appropriate public spaces within public places?
- How does the architecture of public places respond to societal changes?
- How does contemporary architecture of public places reflect the new social spaces of interaction and complexities of modern Turkish society?
- Do you think that architecture of public places can underpin or undermine a social equality in the participation and expression of citizens? Do you think that citizens are capable of appropriating the public spaces based on their social characteristics?

3. Digital Technologies and Social life in the Digital Atmospheres

- Can you discuss the emergence of digital social spaces in terms of enhancing or undermining the social life of people?
- Has there been any change in the social interactions of people after the emergence of digital technologies? If the answer is yes: what are these changes?
- Do you see digital communication devices as a new tool of communication or as a completely new social atmosphere with different meanings and concepts?
- Do these digital technologies define a new public space?
- Do you think the new ways of social communication changed the ways that people use, perceive and inhabit the physical spaces?
- How do these new social technologies produce a new social space?
- How do you see the differences between digital social spaces and urban public places?
- Do you think emergence of digital technologies has changed the role of public places in the cities?
- Are the issues about digital social spaces that I mentioned before applicable to the city of Istanbul and social life of its people?
- How did these technologies change the social space of the public places of Istanbul?
- Do you perceive any shift in architecture of public places and social spaces of Istanbul as a result of the new ways of communicating that have emerged through digital technologies?
- Can you discuss to what extent digital social technologies can enhance our understanding of social public places?
- How do these digital spaces change an architect's perceptions about social differences in the society?
- Do you think that growing digital spaces that promise more equality and freedom can affect the architecture, meaning, and concepts of urban public places? Does your answer apply to the case of Istanbul?
Appendix 2 – Application for Ethics Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

15-Jan-2014

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Dermott Mc Meel
Architecture & Planning

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 010742): Approved with comment

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Rethinking Public Place: A Critical Analysis of Public Place in Age of Digital Atmospheres.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

1. Please correct the spelling of the word "Individual" in the heading of the PIS and CF for individuals as requested previously by the Committee. The spelling on both these documents is 'Individual'.

The expiry date for this approval is 15-Jan-2017.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 010742.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Architecture & Planning
Mr Farzad Zamani Gharaghooshi
## Appendix 3 – The Nodes of Interviews’ Transcription

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Figure 11 The Theoretically Themed Nodes of Interviews’ Transcription [page 1] - Produced by Nvivo 11 for Windows (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2016)
### Figure 12 The Theoretically Themed Nodes of Interviews’ Transcription [page 2] - Produced by Nvivo 11 for Windows (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2016)
References


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